



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is *The 99*?**

*The 99* is a resource designed to empower all those who serve the Church, in the work of evangelization. If we want to be effective evangelists, we must continually be growing in our relationship with Jesus and in our relationships with our co-workers in the vineyard. We must find ways to engage the many Catholics who are currently unengaged. This resource offers a way to build an evangelization team, form new relationships, and grow community.

### **Who is *The 99* for?**

*The 99 Masterclass* videos and guide are designed to help any Catholic learn principles and practical tools for effective evangelization from seasoned experts in the field, but it has a specific focus on helping parish-based teams (parish staff, dedicated volunteers, and engaged parishioners) prepare to implement an evangelization plan using *The 99 Experience* and *The 99 Handbook*.

While *The 99 Experience* videos and *The 99 Handbook* are designed to be beneficial and informative for every Catholic, they have a particular focus on reaching out to those who are not fully engaged in their relationship with Jesus and the Church. *The 99*, then, has been intentionally created to be accessible to everyone, meeting them where they are and engaging them, regardless of their knowledge of the Church's teachings.

### **How is *The 99* a “new system for evangelization”?**

We know that *programs* do not evangelize; *people* do. Our hope is that *The 99* will be a new “toolkit” for Catholics to evangelize more effectively at the parish level and beyond. *The 99* is ultimately about building community—for it is in community that effective evangelization takes place.



## How does *The 99* work?

*The 99* provides training for an evangelization team, providing it with multiple resources for creating an environment in which relationships can be formed with those that need to be evangelized.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Build your team	Host <i>The 99 Experience</i> mission series to invite and build new relationships in your parish or community	Offer <i>The 99 Handbook</i> and organize book study groups to build ongoing community	Return to Step 1 and repeat as necessary

### STEP 1: BUILD YOUR TEAM

**Train your leaders with *The 99 Masterclass*** to equip and encourage them to go out and invite the unengaged of your parish to attend *The 99 Experience* mission series. *The 99 Masterclass* is designed to train leaders to become more effective in reaching and engaging people where they are. It is about building a stronger, more inviting community. *The 99* offers leaders a system and the tools to do this with videos, a *99 Masterclass* Guide, and *The 99 Handbook*. The first step, then, is to help leaders “build their team” in solid and tested principles of evangelization using *The 99 Masterclass*.

### STEP 2: HOST THE 99 EXPERIENCE

**Plan a mission series or event using the videos and outlines of *The 99 Experience*.** This is an opportunity to build new relationships and experience community at the parish outside of Sunday Mass. It is also an opportunity to have thoughtful discussions about things that matter to every Catholic. *The 99 Experience* seeks to create an environment in which your parish community can slow down and be open to an encounter with Jesus through the working of the Holy Spirit.

### STEP 3: OFFER THE 99 HANDBOOK

**Provide follow-up for your community to grow together in faith by reading *The 99 Handbook* and organizing small group book study.** This is an opportunity to continue the conversations that began at *The 99 Experience* event and “building stronger community” within the context of the Catholic Faith. This activates and grows engaged small group communities and offers the opportunity to invite others in, even if they did not participate in *The 99 Experience*. That is why we would encourage a parish to have a copy of *The 99 Handbook* for every parishioner.



## STEP 4: REPEAT

Repeat *The 99 Experience* at least once a year, so that the ongoing tasks of building your team, forming new relationships, and growing a more vibrant community of faith can take root and lead to effective total parish evangelization. Again, *The 99* is not just about getting unengaged Catholics to come to an event; rather, it is about building a stronger parish community—the kind of community where people can share the Good News and encourage one another in deepening their relationship with Jesus.

## What materials are needed for *The 99*?

1. *The 99 Masterclass* Guide (which includes outlines for the facilitation of *The 99 Experience*)
2. *The 99 Experience* Video Series (Includes both the *Masterclass* and *Experience* Videos and is available on DVD and through online streaming at [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com).)
3. *The 99 Handbook*

*Note:* Each member of the evangelization team should have a copy of *The 99 Masterclass* Guide, and each participant in *The 99 Experience* should be provided with a copy of *The 99 Handbook*. These materials can be purchased at [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com) or by calling 1-800-376-0520.

## What are the different components of *The 99*? How do they work together?

### THE 99 MASTERCLASS GUIDE

A guidebook offering advice for those seeking to evangelize within the parish and beyond. Session outlines for both *The 99 Masterclass* and *The 99 Experience* are included to make planning and implementing *The 99* easy for a team of any size. Each member of your evangelization team should be provided with a copy of *The 99 Masterclass* Guide.

### THE 99 MASTERCLASS VIDEOS

A video series that offers advice and guidance for those seeking to evangelize within the parish and beyond. These eighteen, short videos are used in conjunction with *The 99 Masterclass* Guide. Each video presentation has corresponding prompts in *The 99 Masterclass* Guide for individual and group learning, as well as reflection. They can be implemented in multiple session formats depending on the training needs of your evangelization team.



## THE 99 EXPERIENCE VIDEOS

*The 99 Experience* is a powerful video series designed to be used in event or group setting to invite people into conversation about deepening their relationship with Jesus and his Church

This series consists of three mission videos, each of which is divided into two or three segments—for a total of eight video segments. The total length of *The 99 Experience* videos is approximately seventy-five minutes. It can be implemented as a one-day evangelization mission retreat or in multiple session formats, depending on the needs of your group.

Each segment examines a theme in our relationship with God:

- Hiding
- Wounds
- Identity
- Return
- Home
- Connected
- Mercy
- One

The videos are designed to spark reflection and discussion, with the hope that this will lead to an encounter with the Lord.

## THE 99 HANDBOOK

This short book explores many of the themes and topics that are covered in *The 99 Experience* mission series. Study questions are included following each chapter.

For those who participated in *The 99 Experience*, the *Handbook* provides a means for them to continue working through their experiences, building community through a small group book study, and deepening their relationship with Jesus and others.



## How does *The 99 Masterclass* work?

*The 99 Masterclass* presents strategies for inviting and ministering to the unengaged in your parish. The *Masterclass* has six sessions, each of which is divided into three segments.

Here is a description of the main components of each segment:

### SHORT VIDEO PRESENTATION

#### CALL TO PRAYER

A prayer based on the content of the session is provided. Leaders can also select another prayer in its place or can choose to offer an extemporaneous prayer.

#### SUMMARY

A summary of the key points and concepts from each video presentation are offered. This is a quick reference guide to help jog your memory on the content of each session.

#### WORDS THAT INSPIRE

Quotations from Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the saints are presented. Each has been chosen to emphasize a main point from the video. Discuss each quotation as a team.

#### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you are utilizing the *Masterclass* as a team, these discussion questions will your team process the content of the video presentation. If you are short on time, select one of two to discuss. In general, the earlier questions are designed to be icebreakers for your team to get to know one another better, while the later questions are richer in content.

#### WORKSHOP / TEAM PROMPT

If you are completing the *Masterclass* as a team, this prompt will help you process key concepts and turn them into practical, actionable items.

#### PERSONAL PROMPT

This prompt, which appears at the end of each session, can be done in three ways: If you are implementing *Masterclass* sessions as a parish team (e.g., as a retreat or a workshop), these can be breaks for each team member to reflect on the session's content. These prompts can also be done as "homework" and used for personal prayer and reflection. If you are completing the *Masterclass* on your own, use these immediately following the video presentation.



## How many sessions is *The 99 Masterclass*? How can it be run?

Some teams will choose to do *The 99 Masterclass* in six sessions, with three workshops in each. Others can choose to do one lesson at a time over a more extended period of time (e.g., eighteen sessions). The components of the *Masterclass*, then, are at the service of the needs of your particular team. You could elect to do each component as a group in a session or choose some components to be done together and others individually. Here are three options:

Option	Plan	Video component	Team Discussion and workshop	Follow up
<b>6 Sessions</b>	Six, ninety- minute sessions as a parish team.	During each session, view all three videos as a group.	Begin with prayer. Watch the first video and follow up with fifteen minutes of discussion. Repeat for Video 2 and 3. Spend 30 minutes on one of the prompt activities.	Encourage the team to follow up by doing the personal prompt at home.
<b>18 Sessions</b>	Eighteen, forty-five to sixty minute Master class sessions done as a parish team (For example, two per week for nine weeks).	Watch each video as a team and follow segment outline.	Begin with prayer. Watch the video. Follow up with discussion for 20 minutes. Follow the workshop prompt. 30 minutes.	Personal journaling prompts are done as "homework" in between team sessions.
<b>Individual Option</b>	Eighteen, forty-five to sixty-minute Masterclass sessions as individuals (Depending on journaling and reflection).	Watch each video and follow the segment outline, choosing one to three small group questions to use as journaling.	(No team workshops in this option)	Personal journaling prompts close each segment.



## What is an evangelization team?

The *99 Experience* is most effective with team members who are empowered to take on various roles.

These roles include:

### **PASTOR (OR ASSISTANT PASTOR)**

As the unifying force of your parish, the presence of your pastor (or assistant pastor) will signal support for the event while demonstrating his availability to those that may have drifted far from the Church. Your pastor could take an active role as the host, or he might simply offer prayer at the beginning and ending of each session and offer hospitality to participants. Two sessions include options for the closing prayer that call for a priest to be present. Reach out to your pastor (or assistant pastor) well in advance so that he can put the three sessions to his schedule.

### **TEAM LEADER**

The team leader is like a coach. He or she is responsible for fostering communication among teams, delegating tasks, empowering individuals to excel, and serving as the point person for the event. The team leader's primary role is to lead others and empower them to perform their tasks well.

### **HOST**

The host is the “face” of the event. The host guides participants through each session and is responsible for managing the schedule, including transitions, and working with the media team to ensure that the video presentations, as well as any other media, run smoothly.

### **SMALL GROUP LEADER**

Small group leaders are utilized in Format 1 (see the format outlines below) to guide discussions during each session. An effective small group leader will follow up with group members as needed. He or she will remember prayer intentions and actively pray for group members, as well as check in with them. The small group leader's role is to develop community that potentially continues after the event ends.

### **HOSPITALITY TEAM**

A dedicated team that is solely responsible for welcoming attendees—both the engaged and unengaged—and providing hospitality is critical. The hospitality team provides directions, handles registration, offers needed materials, manages refreshments.



## **MEDIA TEAM**

*The 99 Experience* utilizes video presentations to present its main content. It is essential to have individuals that are skilled in using media equipment. The media team must be ready to quickly address any technical problems that might arise.

## **What different formats are provided for *The 99 Experience*?**

*The 99 Experience* is a powerful video series designed to be used in a group or event setting to invite people into conversation about deepening their relationship with Jesus and his Church. It can be implemented as an evangelization mission in a one-day retreat or over a number of days or even weeks.

There are multiple session formats depending on the needs of your group:

- *Format 1* – Large Group with Small Group Discussion
- *Format 2* – Large Group with Individual Reflection
- *Format 3* – Large Group with Partner Discussion

Each format has its advantages, depending on the needs of your parish or group. As a team, you will need to discern which approach works best for you. Here are some considerations for each format:

### **FORMAT 1 – LARGE GROUP WITH SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

*Note: This is the recommended format, assuming space and time allow.*

This format will work well for any size group as long as you have a meeting area of sufficient size and a means of breaking the large group into smaller groups for discussion. To be successful, you will need to have a method for placing participants into small groups as they arrive. One recommendation is to set up tables in advance, with the small group leaders already gathered and sitting at an assigned table. Other team members will welcome attendees as they arrive. This will help organically create a community of small groups that can continue each week. Each small group should be limited eight or fewer participants (including the small group leader). Groups larger than eight make it difficult for everyone to be “heard” and for the discussion to be fruitful.

### **FORMAT 2 – LARGE GROUP WITH INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION**

This format is ideally suited for larger groups that are limited in the space they can use. For example, it would be impractical to fit three hundred people (and divide them into small groups) in a parish hall. Therefore, if you have a large group but a space that offers no means for facilitating small



groups, consider using this format. Your team should ensure that every participant has a journal or a notebook and that the reflection questions are clearly displayed on a screen or handed out ahead of time. The challenge with this format is to build community given the focus on individual participant reflection. To help address this issue, schedule time to socialize so that leaders and participants can become acquainted. During your final session, encourage participants to sign up to be a member of a continuing, “organic” small group with others they have met during the Mission Series.

### **FORMAT 3 – LARGE GROUP WITH PARTNER DISCUSSION**

The format is similar to Format 1–Large Group with Small Group Discussion, but instead of dividing the group into small groups, participants will discuss the content as partners. This format is ideal for groups that do not have a sufficient number of small group leaders or for those that simply desire a more intimate sharing among their participants. In this format, discussion questions need to be distributed to participants in advance or as they arrive for the session. Another option is to project them on a screen. Leaders will need to ensure that everyone has a partner. One drawback to this format, however, is that participants will not “organically” be drawn into small group communities and will need to be invited into such groups during the final session.

### **What does a session of *The 99 Experience* look like?**

Once you have chosen your format, read through the session outlines in *The 99 Masterclass Guide* that have been specifically tailored for your format. Whether you do it all in one day, over several days, or even weeks, we suggest breaking down *The 99 Experience* into three, ninety-minute sessions, during which three video segments are viewed with a brief discussion following each segment.

They can be adapted as needed for shorter sessions or a series. You know your community best and know what will work best given your specific group, past offerings, cultural dynamics, and space issues, so be sure to pray as you plan.

### **GATHERING AND WELCOME (3 MINUTES)**

Have your hospitality team welcome participants as they enter or even in the parking lot as they arrive. This section offers various hospitality suggestions for your team, including how to gather everyone together and logistics for beginning each mission session. It also includes some brief notes for the host to use as a way of introducing the session topic.



### **OPENING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)**

Every session begins with a prayer. The host (or pastor) leads this prayer.

### **TRANSITIONS (1 TO 5 MINUTES)**

These transition notes help keep the sessions flowing seamlessly from one piece to the next.

### **VIDEO SEGMENT ONE (7-12 MINUTES)**

Each session contains several video segments designed to be watched and then processed. Have these segments ready to go in advance—and make sure that your media resources are in place and functioning well.

### **DISCUSSION / REFLECTION (10-15 MINUTES)**

The questions provided here are designed to help foster discussion and allow participants to process each video segment. These vary based on the format you are using. Have copies of these questions available for distribution or display them on a screen viewable by the entire group.

### **VIDEO SEGMENT TWO (7-12 MINUTES)**

### **DISCUSSION / REFLECTION (10-15 MINUTES)**

### **VIDEO SEGMENT THREE (7-12 MINUTES)**

### **DISCUSSION / REFLECTION (10-15 MINUTES)**

**CLOSING PRAYER** *(This could be an additional 10-30 min, depending on whether your team chooses to include adoration, confession, or some other group prayer experience. Recommendations for each session are included in the Masterclass Guide.)*

Each session closes with a prayer dynamic. Ultimately, it is God's grace that will change the hearts of your participants, not videos and discussions. Ending each night in prayer provides an opportunity for transformative grace.



## How do I lead the small group discussions that are recommended as part of *The 99 Experience* and as follow-up using *The 99 Handbook*?

Both *The 99 Masterclass Guide* and *The 99 Handbook* have discussion questions that can be used to facilitate small group discussions as part of *The 99 Experience* and as follow-up for building ongoing community afterward.

### WE RECOMMEND YOU UTILIZE THE “TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A SMALL GROUP” IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS:

1. Enjoy yourself!
2. Speak with respect and charity.
3. Do not ridicule or dismiss what others say. Keep comments positive.
4. Come prepared.
5. If you were not able to prepare, let others speak first.
6. Stick to the topic and questions at hand.
7. Start and end on time.
8. Allow silence. Give people a chance to think.
9. Listen to others without interrupting.
10. Keep personal matters within the group.

~Adapted from Thomas Smith's original “10 Commandments of a Small Group.”



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