LAYPERSON IN THE CHURCH
(Background and Summary)
(Given by a Layperson)

This talk focuses on life and activity within the Church. The *Evangelization* talk concentrates on bringing Christ and the Gospel to “the world”; to people and conditions outside the Christian community.

**Note:**
A. To help the speaker better understand the proper contents of each talk and not stray into the area of the other talk; careful attention should be given to the accompanying sheet entitled: “Differences Between These Two CEW Talks”.

Talk content:
LAYPERSON IN THE CHURCH is a natural follow-up to the Grace talk. (The speaker should study that Summary and Outline here in the Manual as part of the background needed.) What should one do with the “gift of grace”? – Share it!! First, with “those who are of the household of faith” Then with others, which is the focus of the *Evangelization* talk.

After giving a basic explanation of what the CHURCH is, the speaker should talk about the lay member’s mission in the Church. The Scriptural and sacramental basis, or origin, should be explained.

Chapters 1 and 2 of the Acts of the Apostles sketch the formation of the followers of Jesus into “the Church”, by God the Creator sending the Spirit. The response and mission of the members is then briefly described. The meaning of the Gifts of the Spirit to individual members is more explicitly covered in St. Paul’s 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, chapters 12-14. The central point of the Layperson talk is, in a sense, summed up in Paul’s words: “To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)

What are the “community gifts” of grace for the good of the whole Church? The many and various forms of Lay Ministry expanding in the Church today are some, but the speaker should bring out others in his/her own life and the lives of other, ordinary, “non-commissioned” lay people. The various examples chosen should be guided by these words of St. Paul: “Since you have set your hearts on spiritual gifts, try to be rich in those that build up the Church.” (1 Corinthians 14:12)

**NOTE:** The shortage of priests and religious is NOT the reason for greater lay involvement. *Every person*, by reason of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation is called to mission and ministry in the Church. The participants deserve a good explanation of life and growth in the Church and this talk is the proper place on the weekend.
The concept of the “Domestic Household Church” needs attention here. Background ideas for it are found in places such as: Acts of the Apostles 18:8; 16:31; 11:14 “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (Vatican Council II) …Papal letters: “On Evangelization in the Modern World” (#71); “On the Family” (#21); New Catechism of the Catholic Church (Part 2, Chapter 3, Article 7, #VI).

Some of the key ideas are: Domestic Church refers to the community of faith that begins in the home. It is in the family unity that the faith is transmitted by word and by example. The prayer of blessing over the parents of the child in the Baptism ceremony says this: “Parents are the first teachers of the young; may they be the best of teachers, by what they (you) do and say.”

What goes on in the Christian Catholic home today? Is there prayer, charity, generosity? Before outside church involvement, we must be people of Jesus in family unity first, the domestic Church. Do we share the Word of God in our family? And do we ask how the Word of God is calling our family to live? This is where the mission of the Layperson in the Church begins. It is what is called “family catechesis” (faith formation).

Suggested length: 25 minutes. A 20-minute discussion follows this talk.
LAYPERSON IN THE CHURCH (Outline)

Introduction:
This morning, we first looked at the need and purpose of IDEALS in our lives. Then, the central Christian ideal – GRACE; a life of union with God. Now, we look at our basic apostolic ideal: **The Christian’s Ministry to Others.** There are two aspects to that mission. “Within” and “Beyond” the church…This talk will deal with the first aspect, namely, the layperson’s mission “within” and “to” the church.

1. What is the Church?
   1) A community formed by:
      a. The call of God – “No one can come to me unless the Father draws her/him.” (John 6:44)
      b. The call/faith is a gift, which usually comes through the family, the “domestic church”
      c. Give an example from your own or another’s life
      d. Sharing the life of the Risen Lord. That **Life** which is Grace is the bond between members of the church, like blood is the bond in the natural family.
      e. Give some simple illustration or example. (This is different than membership in the Knights of Columbus or Parent Teacher Association)

   2) The sending of the Holy Spirit
      The death and resurrection of Jesus was not the end of the story. Pentecost was needed. The existence of the church is the personal mission of the Second Person of the Trinity. “I will send you the Holy Spirit who will teach you all things.” (John 16:13)

   3) A community united “internally” by:
      a. Faith in Christ and His Teaching – Gospels and central teachings of the church
      b. Grace coming through Baptism and other Sacraments
      c. A moral way of life

   4) A community united “externally” by:
      a. Community worship (Liturgy) of Word & Eucharist
      b. Profession of faith
      c. Authority and leadership structure (Pope, bishops, pastors, theologians)
      d. Public witness and mission Might use the example of how a person’s church denomination is usually mentioned, especially in scandals, etc., or the admiration for Mother Teresa in a positive way)

   5) Other descriptions
      a. The **Body of Christ** with many members. (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27) Might use the comparison of the different children in a family, and what each contributes in their own way.
      b. “**The budding of the Kingdom** of God.” (Vatican Council II)
2. What is the Layperson’s Mission? What is every member called to do?
   1. To contribute to the “common good” of the church, according to each person’s gifts and talents. (1 Corinthians 12:4-31) Many examples are obvious here.

   2. Be serious about one’s own “domestic church”.  
      **Note:** See the Summary sheet preceding this page in the manual.
      a. Often hear the saying: “Charity begins at home.”  But how often: “Faith life and growth begins in the home.”  Yet this is the first responsibility of parents.

      b. Stress that with the breakdown of families this issue is most crucial for the future.

3. Active participation in the parish
   • Sunday Mass attendance with as many members as possible; making provisions that the others get there **every weekend**.

   • Be a model of active participation in the Liturgy (singing, responses, discussion of the homily and readings at home.)

   • Various ministries of the parish: liturgical, bereavement, youth, adult education, sacramental preparation (Baptism classes, confirmation, Marriage Sponsor Couple program), hospitality (welcoming new parishioners), etc.

   • Parish committees, Parish Council, boards, organizations

   • Social, evangelizing and fund raising events

**Conclusion:**
Lay people active in the church was the way the church began and grew. For many centuries, that participation was discouraged. Since Vatican Council II, the rightful place of the laity has again been recovered. There are many opportunities available in every parish. Each person needs to discern where God is calling them. Deep satisfaction comes from being active in spreading the Kingdom of God through service in the church.

*So…how is God calling YOU??*
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO CEW TALK

LAYPERSON IN THE CHURCH

-- Christian activity primarily within the Church, toward other members

--In-Reach; In-Love

--The “activity” can take many forms besides strict actions, e.g. spoken or written support, prayer, personal sacrifice, study (adult education), building community.

--Purpose: To support, strengthen, develop and improve the existing Christian Community.

--Will usually happen, or be done, through established channels or structures, and authority.

--Results are often quickly seen, recognized and can be evaluated.

--The focus of effort is more on the explicitly spiritual dimensions of life; the relationship of people to each other and to God.

EVANGELIZATION

--Directed primarily to non-members (or inactive members) and the various human environments

--Out-Reach: Out-Love

--Primarily a “doing”, though the evangelizing action has various possibilities.

--Purpose: To expand the Kingdom and the Christian Community
  1) By putting new, or inactive, person in touch and relationship with Jesus;
  2) By removing the obstacles to grace.

--More commonly will be diversified; often spontaneous, the result of personal or community planning and strategy.

--Effects usually delayed, uncertain, and sometimes never seen.

--The target of the action is most often the condition, circumstance, attitude, law (policy), internal or external restraint that keeps a person from being free to respond.
TALK EVALUATION LAYPERSON in the CHURCH

Background:
This talk focuses on life and activity within the Church, the laypersons mission to the Church. How the gift of grace is shared with those who are of the faith community.

Goals of this talk:
To show that every person by reason of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation is called to mission and ministry in the Church.

The talk should:
1) Explain the meaning of CHURCH.
2) Discuss the laypersons call to mission/ministry within the Church. 3) Give practical examples of sharing Christ’s love.
   a) In the family
   b) In the parish
   c) Within the community
   d) Ecumenical activities
   e) Social, organizations, employment
4) Show the importance of supporting and strengthening the existing Christian community.

Delivery:
1) Effective use of Eye Contact
2) Volume & Pace.
3) Rapport with the audience.

Organization:
1) Were the specific goals of the talk met?
2) Was the central idea of the talk clear to the audience?
3) Were the main points easy to follow?
4) Did the speaker capture and hold the attention of the audience?

Use the back of this page for your notes and comments.