

What does evangelism look like?

By [Diane Roth](#)

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Almost every Sunday after church, I stop at the grocery store. I don't want to cook after a busy Sunday morning, but we do have to eat, so I peruse the deli selection and bring something home. And I'm not necessarily proud to admit this, but a lot of the people who work at this particular grocery store know me now. It's a grocery store where they still have baggers who will carry your groceries out to the car, in the event that you have bought more than a couple of sandwiches and some hot deli-made soup.

Sometimes I would do a little grocery shopping along with the deli-perusing, and I often have brief conversations on the way out to the car. Some are teenagers, others not.

I remember having several conversations with one woman who worked almost every Sunday. This particular job was not the only place she worked. I got the impression that she did at least two things in order to make the month come out in the black.

Because I usually wear my clerical collar on Sundays, most of the people who work at the grocery store know I am a pastor. So among other things, this woman would ask me questions about my church. What kind of a church was it? What did we do there? They were basic questions. It turned out that this woman did not have much experience in church-going.

I often invited her to come and visit us sometime. She indicated interested, but would always say (of course) that she usually worked on Sundays.

Then there was on Sunday that she said she would be giving up her weekend work schedule. I invited her again to come, and especially to try our summer outdoor worship, which had a sort of "come as you are" feeling and a lot less liturgy (though more old-fashioned hymns). And she seemed really interested in coming.

"If I come, will you sit with me?" she asked.

Then I realized just how easy, and how hard, evangelism is. It's as easy as inviting someone to church with you. But here's what's hard: it's hard to realize the distance other people might have to come, and the barriers they might have to overcome, to respond to your invitation.

I have spent my whole life in the church. (except for a couple of years in college). It's the air I breathe, the water I swim in. And there are a lot of positive things about this. But for many people, the church is a strange, a foreign and even intimidating place. Every day I remind myself about this.

So evangelism is a lot of things. It can be serving where people are hungry or homeless , having conversations with neighbors or family members, any way you share your faith. It can be as simple as an invitation, except that, as it turns out, the invitation is never as simple as it seems. Because the invitation will inevitably require us to see everything: the church, the world, our faith, through another set of eyes.

"If I come, will you sit with me?"

*Originally posted at [Faith in Community](#)*