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WHY FOCUS?

WHY WE EXIST

According to recent studies, nearly 80% of those who leave the Catholic faith do so by the age 23. Today, so many people in this nation — especially young people — do not know their true worth or purpose. So many never know what it is to have an authentic relationship with someone. So many are starving for hope, peace, joy and love.

FOCUS exists to help others come to know Christ Jesus and fulfill His Great Commission.

WHO WE ARE

FOCUS is a Catholic collegiate outreach whose mission is to share the hope and joy of the gospel with college and university students. Trained in Church teaching, prayer, sacred Scripture, evangelization and discipleship, FOCUS missionaries encounter students in friendship where they are, inviting them into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and accompanying them as they pursue lives of virtue and excellence. Through Bible studies, outreach events, mission trips and one-on-one discipleship, missionaries inspire and build up students in the faith, sending them out to spread the good news and to live out the Great Commission: Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19).

OUR MAIN THING:

Inviting college students into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church; inspiring and equipping them for a lifetime of Christ-centered evangelization, discipleship and friendships in which they lead others to do the same.

WHAT WE DO

FOCUS missionaries desire to share with others the joy and happiness they have received through their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and their participation in His Catholic Church. To keep their spiritual vessels overflowing with God’s life, missionaries sustain and grow in their relationship with the Lord through daily prayer and a rich sacramental life.

As the inner life flows outward, FOCUS looks to Jesus’ own example to find the best method of reaching the world. To reach all people with His saving message, Jesus came at an exact time, to a specific nation, to 12 particular men and, even then, focused much of his time on three of His Apostles (Peter, James and John). Jesus humbled Himself to meet us on a human level, taking on humanity Himself, and He spent most of His time investing deeply in a few. Yes, Jesus preached and healed the masses, but His lasting impact was realized through His Apostles. Jesus reached the world through those who followed Him.
WHY FOCUS?

The missionaries FOCUS sends to campuses strive to imitate Christ with the same approach. FOCUS believes the best way to meet students is in their own environment: on campus, in the cafeteria, on the athletic fields, in the dorms, etc. After missionaries have met students, the primary means of evangelization is small-group Bible studies and discipleship. Discipleship is a personal (sometimes one-on-one) mentoring of two or three students in FOCUS Bible studies. FOCUS’ goal in diving into the lives of a few students is to allow Christ to leave a lasting and profound impact on their lives as He did with His Apostles. The missionaries teach students by engaging them in genuine friendship and training them in the necessary leadership skills they will need to invest in others and in their campus ministry/Newman Center. By investing in a few and training them in leading their peers, there is a multiplication effect (which FOCUS calls “spiritual multiplication”) that allows the witness of Christ to spread even further.

Our Ultimate Goal: Spiritual Multiplication

After FOCUS begins serving on a campus, there are many ways in which numbers tend to increase. Increases in Mass attendance, Bible study/small group participation, or RCIA candidates may all be great signs that the missionaries are helping bear fruit. While we celebrate and work towards many different areas of growth in a local campus ministry, our greatest measure of success on a campus is the number of students who take the step into discipleship with the goal of intentionally raising up more disciples of Christ. We often look to 2 Timothy 2:2: “...and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Note that Paul emphasizes not just raising up one generation of disciples, but generations who have the vision to teach others how to raise up disciples. By raising up students who make a commitment to intentional discipleship and relational evangelization, our work together will impact the campus and the world.
WHO WE ARE

ON CAMPUS

Missionaries

These individuals make up the core of the on-campus team. Missionaries have a highly significant role in FOCUS as they work directly with students to draw their hearts toward Jesus Christ. The terms “missionaries,” “FOCUS missionaries” or “FOCUS staff” are used interchangeably as they refer to the same people: men and women who have made a two-year commitment to dedicate their lives full-time to the work of campus evangelization. The missionaries provide peer ministry on campus to students; they are relevant to students because they are recent college graduates themselves. The missionaries’ development is ongoing through spiritual, human, intellectual and apostolic formation. All FOCUS missionaries raise their own salaries by cultivating personal support teams, which are composed of individuals who support the work of FOCUS both prayerfully and financially.

Team Director

The team director is one of the campus missionaries who undergoes special leadership training and who is responsible for leading the team of FOCUS missionaries on a campus. The team director interprets how the general FOCUS approach works for his/her team and with the particular campus. The team director serves as a point of contact between the Regional Director (RD), the campus team and the chaplain and campus minister(s). While chaplains and campus ministers are always encouraged to communicate with the entire missionary team, the team director is designated as the formal contact person for any communication needs.

Regional Director

The Regional Director (RD) oversees up to eight missionary teams within a given area, and is responsible for providing leadership and direction for those teams. An RD typically serves as the Team Director's manager and the chaplain and campus minister’s primary contact with FOCUS National, and will visit their campuses occasionally throughout the year.

Area Director

Across the country, missionary teams are divided into 3 areas. Each area is led by an Area Director (AD), who is responsible for the overall care and growth of the area as well as national strategy for Collegiate Outreach. The AD oversees the RD, who is the FOCUS team and the campus chaplain’s primary contact within the Denver Support Center, and provides additional national support when needed.
WHO WE ARE

DENVER SUPPORT CENTER

FOCUS Chaplain Ombudsman

The FOCUS Chaplain Ombudsman serves as an additional point of contact with FOCUS National to address the needs and desires of chaplains and campus ministers. While chaplains and campus ministers will work primarily with their team director and RD, any outlying questions, concerns or comments regarding FOCUS can be directed to the ombudsman. The ombudsman will work as a liaison to find solutions for concerns as quickly as possible or to connect chaplains and campus ministers with the appropriate person(s). The best way to reach the ombudsman is through the chaplains email address: chaplains@focus.org.

Other DSC Departments

The Denver Support Center works for the betterment of the missionaries and the overall FOCUS apostolate on a national level. There are various departments within the Denver Support Center with specific facets to FOCUS’ mission. The departments with which chaplains might interact are the following: Collegiate Outreach; Quality, Growth and Innovation; Marketing and Communications; Varsity Catholic; FOCUS Greek; and Mission Development.

FYI — DSC Physical Address and Contact Information

FOCUS Mailing Address:
PO Box 18710
Golden, CO 80402

(303) 962-5750  info@focus.org  603 Park Point Dr. Suite 200, Genesee, CO 80401
FUNDING MODEL

The Funding Model for FOCUS

FOCUS’ financial investment in the campus teams is raised to provide the highest quality training and support for our missionaries. The three revenue sources to support campus teams are the following: (1) personal fundraising of each missionary; (2) campus investment; and (3) donations from FOCUS National benefactors. The campus investment total excludes resources put into FOCUS conferences and supplementary initiatives.

Training and Recruitment

In an ongoing effort to provide the most qualified missionaries for the field, FOCUS conducts an extensive hiring and training process. Each missionary receives more than 800 hours of training and formation during their first two years on staff.

Missionaries Salaries, Benefits and Support

A significant portion of this training is designed to equip missionaries with the tools they need to raise their personal salaries. This also includes their housing and benefits. Salaries are modest but sufficient to enable the missionaries to live prudently and responsibly, covering their ordinary costs of living. FOCUS strives to enable all missionaries to earn a sustainable wage, which will allow them to continue to serve with FOCUS beyond their two-year commitment, if they are called to do so. Retention of the top missionary leaders provides more consistency amongst campus teams.

FOCUS retains 5% of donations to cover the costs related to administration and fundraising. 8.5% of payroll goes to the government, which is used to cover payroll tax and therefore remain compliant with IRS rules for non-profits. FOCUS is also committed to providing staff members with the highest quality health insurance and encourages staff members to take part in a 403(b) retirement program. Costs incurred by FOCUS to support the missionaries include day-to-day operational expenses such as health insurance, workers’ compensation insurance, payroll taxes, travel and funding to support their campus outreach efforts. Campus investment and national support allow FOCUS to hire staff who support the missionaries in the field but who do not raise a personal support team — for example, those who serve in the finance and accounting departments.
Mission Partner Development (MPD)

Personal support-raising (known as Mission Partner Development, or MPD) is the process by which FOCUS missionaries raise 100% of their ministry budget, including salary and some ministry expenses. It is also the process by which the lay faithful in parishes across the country can participate in the work of evangelization. Just as St. Paul raised funds from the church in Philippi for his missionary journeys (cf. Phil 4), so also do FOCUS missionaries raise funds through their support teams. Each missionary cultivates a support team by reaching out to individuals and family contact to raise support. These mission partners make regular (often monthly) financial pledges to support that missionary’s work with FOCUS. The missionary receives a semi-monthly paycheck from their FOCUS support team.

In some cases, a missionary works with their parish priest to speak after the weekend Masses with the intention of meeting additional parishioners who wish to discuss the possibility of supporting the missionary. In each diocese where missionaries serve, FOCUS also asks for the blessing of the local bishop to fundraise in some parishes and engage some benefactors in the diocese. This is essential to the establishment of a missionary team in a diocese. Often this fundraising is directly tied to campus activities such as conferences and FOCUS events on campus instead of individual support teams.

While on campus, missionaries are expected to “tithe their time” and spend approximately four hours per week investing in their MPD. Missionaries create newsletters, write thank you notes, share updates and call their mission partners during this time to strengthen the mission partner relationship. Through this cultivation, mission partners become more deeply invested in the mission of FOCUS and are more likely to remain stable and reliable donors.

In the instance that a missionary’s support team is unable to meet their expenses, the missionary may be asked to take a step back from their campus responsibility by their regional director (RD) after advance consultation with the chaplain/campus minister. The missionary is then expected to dedicate a concentrated amount of time (usually about one week) following up with potential mission partners to secure new gifts.

Summary

The campus investment covers only a portion of the expenses incurred by FOCUS. National benefactors have been subsidizing campus teams in dioceses throughout the country through the Mission Development team and the local giving initiative since FOCUS’ inception in 1998. Thus, campus investment makes up only approximately 20% of the total financial investment needed to support at least four full-time, highly trained missionaries. FOCUS’ goal is to keep this fee lower than what it would cost the campus Newman Center or parish to hire one full-time campus minister.
TRAINING FOR MISSION

HOW ARE MISSIONARIES TRAINED?

New Staff Training

NST is designed to form missionaries in the image of Christ who will go on as faithful Catholics to spiritually multiply. Through human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic formation, this five-week in-depth training aims to help missionaries develop the character, spiritual life, knowledge and skills to fulfill the mission of FOCUS. Elements of this training continue throughout the year.

Leadership Development Initiative (LDI)

In 2011, FOCUS expanded its training and formation of team directors and leaders. The Leadership Development Initiative, or LDI, was started as a world-class training program designed to raise up the next generation of leadership within FOCUS. It has been derived from the servant-leadership teachings of the Catholic Church and incorporates best practices from the world of leadership in the fields of education, communication, psychology and business.
HOW WE SERVE

HOW DO MISSIONARIES SERVE?

**Evangelization**

In the first few weeks of the school year, FOCUS missionaries will initially spend time on campus meeting students: helping with residence hall move-in, setting up a booth at a club fair, eating in the dining halls, having coffee in the student union, attending campus sporting events and more. They will also be present at Masses of the campus parish. Throughout the remainder of the year, the missionaries continue to engage in outreach activities on campus. In all of these situations, the goal of the missionaries is to meet students and develop friendships, ultimately inviting them to come to know Jesus Christ and His Church and to invite them into the community of the campus Catholic/Newman Center. Due to the relational nature of FOCUS’ outreach, not every missionary will be present at every single campus event but will strategically invest their time to engage as many students as possible. After relationships with students are established, the FOCUS model of discipleship calls missionaries to take these new relationships to a deeper level. Missionaries may exchange contact information with students and invite them into Bible studies, to attend activities or to meet one on one to discuss the faith further, thus beginning the personal investment process. Not every conversation on campus appears fruitful, but the mere act of beginning and engaging in these conversations strengthens each missionary’s confidence in speaking to others about God and matters of faith. As missionaries make themselves radically available, the students in turn will see a regular Catholic presence on their campus, making the missionaries in turn more accessible and approachable.

**Small-Group Bible Studies**

After the initial outreach, FOCUS missionaries will invite students to attend small-group Bible studies. These small groups systematically study the Scriptures according to the Church’s guidelines. Bible study leaders are either FOCUS missionaries or student leaders who have been trained in FOCUS’ approach and who demonstrate a depth of faith. The goal of Bible studies is twofold: 1) to know Jesus Christ better and to understand and love the Church He established; and 2) to establish and deepen Christian friendships. Ideally, these studies will happen on campus in places such as the student center, residence halls, etc. to bring the word of God into the public life of the campus.
HOW WE SERVE

Personal Discipleship

As St. Paul says, “With such affection for you we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us” (1Thess 2:8). Bible study leaders typically mentor two or three of the students in their Bible studies, just as Christ invested in His Apostles. As an evangelistic organization, missionaries welcome students of all religious backgrounds (or no religious background at all) to encounter the living Christ. However, to be a leader within FOCUS — in other words, to be someone who disciples others within FOCUS — a student must be a Catholic committed to faithfully living and communicating the teachings of the Church.

While students are first disciples of Christ, in FOCUS discipleship, students are trained in leadership, including the ability to take the faith out to their friends and to the rest of campus. Students are encouraged to pray, to grow in virtue and to become more involved in the local parish, especially through leading a Bible study of their own and looking for students whom they in turn can mentor in discipleship. The discipleship relationship does not imply authority of the mentor or the obedience of the disciple. Whatever authority is gained is only in light of personal witness (moral authority) and the power of the particular teaching being discussed. The only obedience called for is to Jesus and the Holy Mother Church. The individual’s informed conscience, not the mentor’s, is to be obeyed.

The nature of the missionaries’ work shifts once they have a group of student leaders with whom they are working in discipleship. No longer do they engage in evangelistic activities alone (see section above entitled “Evangelization”), but they seek to bring student leaders with them. The emphasis of their time in evangelization is now focused on training students to reach their peers.

Fellowship

Supplementing discipleship and Bible studies, missionaries spend time in fellowship with students by involvement in events such as intramural sports teams, ski trips, BBQs and prayer groups as opportunities to deepen bonds of friendship with each other. The majority of the missionaries’ time will be spent on campus with students in their own environment.
HOW WE SERVE

Additional Divisions of FOCUS

In addition to on-campus evangelization, bare-handing, small group Bible studies, discipleship and fellowship, FOCUS missionaries frequently engage with certain populations of campus that have unique needs for evangelization and discipleship:

**FOCUS Greek**

More than 85% of Greek students are involved in campus leadership on their campus. Greeks on college campuses today have the potential to be influential leaders not only on their campuses but in shaping the future of the world. FOCUS has recognized this potential and founded FOCUS Greek to bring the light of the Gospel to this subculture on campuses. Greek students are often the hardest to win over to Christ due to the unique struggles and challenges they face daily from their fraternity brothers and sorority sisters. Oftentimes the culture in fraternities and sororities is the opposite of a life centered on Jesus Christ, making it very difficult for Greek students to come to know Christ or to continue living their faith during their college years. FOCUS Greek exists to revolutionize Greek culture for Jesus Christ and His Catholic Church, affecting today, tomorrow and eternity by raising up a transformed generation of fraternity and sorority leaders committed to bringing truth to the world. For more information, please email greek@focus.org.

**Varsity Catholic**

Collegiate athletes are among the most under-served students on the college campus by Catholics. Realizing the unique needs and challenges student-athletes face, FOCUS launched Varsity Catholic in 2007. Varsity Catholic desires to provide a comprehensive development of an athlete’s personal and spiritual life during college because the student-athletes’ status, time and/or energy do not always allow them an easy opportunity to invest in their own spiritual growth. Striving to reach athletes within their culture, Varsity Catholic trains missionaries who have a background in collegiate athletics and supports them in their full-time outreach within the athletic department.

In addition to Varsity Catholic missionaries, FOCUS has extended training and coaching to FOCUS missionaries with a heart towards reaching athletes. These missionaries do a part-time outreach to athletes and facilitate what is known as a Varsity Catholic extension program. This differentiates between part-time and full-time. Please visit varsitycatholic.org for more details.
TOOLS AND RESOURCES

WHAT TOOLS AND RESOURCES DO MISSIONARIES USE?

Acts 2:47

“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” Acts 2:47 is a website that helps missionaries and students track their efforts on campus. This site allows them to keep Bible study attendance records, to make a list of people to pray for, to communicate with groups and individuals and to follow up with new people whom they have met on campus.

Depth Chart

The Depth Chart is a tool students and missionaries use to keep track of the students they reach and reminds them to pray for those students. It also helps to identify where students fall on the path of the “Win, Build, Send” model (see #11 under Additional Questions). The “Win” column includes both the New Contacts and Meaningful Contacts whom the missionaries are “winning” over to the faith. The New Contacts section is used to remember people whom they have just met, whereas the Meaningful Contacts section helps a missionary identify those with whom they may be ready to share the Gospel. The “Build” category includes individuals who have taken a step forward in their personal discipleship by inviting Christ to be at the center of their lives. Those in the “Send” category are participating in discipleship (commissioned disciples) and/or have begun leading another student in discipleship (disciple makers). The overall goal is for students to move from the left of the chart to the right and for new contacts to be continually added. See Appendix B for a sample Depth Chart.

Discipleship Road Map

The Discipleship Road Map is a tool that missionaries and student leaders can use to help identify where a student is in their relationship with Jesus Christ. It is commonly used when a missionary is meeting with a student they are evangelizing. The leader walks the student through the document and then asks the student, “Where do you see yourself on this map?” This allows for the student to identify where they believe they are instead of the leader trying to impose an outside opinion. This is a helpful tool in identifying students on campus who want to be spiritual multipliers. Since the missionaries are trying to share the Gospel with as many students as possible, a student who does not desire to move down the road map will be invited to Bible study but will likely not be considered for discipleship at that time. See Appendix C for a sample.
TOOLS AND RESOURCES

FOCUS Equip

The purpose of FOCUS Equip is to equip students for lifelong Catholic mission through effective, dynamic and transferable resources and tools. FOCUS Equip distributes these resources through focusoncampus.org/resources and the FOCUS Equip mobile app. Resources include video clips, audio talks, articles, Bible studies and practical how-to guides on evangelization, discipleship, Bible studies and prayer. Students and missionaries on campus use these resources along with students from non-FOCUS campuses. They are available for anyone to use and are free on the website. See Appendix A.

Mission U

Mission U is an ongoing, online formation platform with content specifically for missionary use. It houses video and audio training, print resources, quizzes and information about books and other resources especially relevant to the mission on campus.

Missionaries are on campus as frequently as possible when school is in session. There are certain times during the school year when the missionaries will be required (in some cases with students invited) to attend an off-campus event. These events serve the students both directly by their attendance and indirectly by developing the individual missionaries so they can be more effective in their work.
EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

WHAT EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES DOES FOCUS ORGANIZE?

Large-Group Leadership Training

Large-group events are one way for brand-new students to encounter the Christian life in a non-threatening environment. These events are also a place for student leaders to be challenged. On campuses that organize large-group events, FOCUS staff invite those students who show leadership potential to organize the events on campus, featuring skits, music, testimonies and a short teaching. Since the goal is for these events to be student-led, it may take several years before they are seen on a new FOCUS campus. Some FOCUS teams also engage students in events other than large-group leadership training, such as inviting a speaker in to present on campus to the entire student body.

National FOCUS Conferences

FOCUS hosts several national conferences. SEEK, our biggest event, is an exciting and empowering conference that FOCUS presents, which draws students from each FOCUS campus and other schools across the nation. SEEK brings college students together for prayer, talks, breakout sessions, fellowship and participation in the Eucharist. These events are great opportunities for FOCUS to supplement the apostolic work on campus.

Alternative Spring Break and Summer Mission Trips

FOCUS encourages their campus missionaries and students to participate in FOCUS mission trips over winter, spring and summer breaks, which take place in various locations throughout the United States and the world. Students are encouraged to take part in trips led by the campus ministry, if already in place, but they are also offered the opportunity to join a FOCUS mission trip. A mission trip with FOCUS seeks not only to serve the needs of the materially impoverished of the world, but also to feed the often spiritually impoverished students on college campuses. After returning from a FOCUS mission trip, students find themselves empowered with the commitment, zeal and prayer life necessary to evangelize their peers and build a culture for Christ. More information about these trips can be found at focusmissions.org.

Spiritual Impact Boot Camps

In his last homily at World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney, Australia, Pope Benedict XVI called for a spiritual reawakening, saying, “The world needs this renewal! In so many of our societies, side by side with material prosperity, a spiritual desert is spreading: an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair.”

The FOCUS Spiritual Impact Boot camps were created as a response to the Pope’s call for spiritual reawakening. The boot camp is a two-night retreat designed to encourage, challenge and inspire missionaries and students to experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and to live the soul of the apostolate.
EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The retreat is called a “boot camp” because it is an intense and challenging experience, meant to launch participants into a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit and a new commitment to living the Christian life as they lead Bible studies and discipleships on campus. The retreat also provides the opportunity for participants to experience profound emotional healing. The weekend includes a number of talks, several hours of Eucharistic adoration and an opportunity for confession and prayer.

Spiritual Impact Boot Camps do not take place on every campus. The retreat team hosts about eight each semester as they are requested by the team director. For more information or details about the boot camps, please email formation@focus.org.

Regional Staff Gatherings

There may be some informal weekend gatherings during which the FOCUS staff from the region will come together in fellowship or to retreat and pray together.

Recruitment Weekends

Throughout the year, each region hosts a FOCUS Recruitment Weekend to invite those interested in applying to be FOCUS missionaries to come for a weekend of interviews and discernment. This weekend is hosted by a FOCUS team chosen in each region. The team directors and other veteran staff will attend the weekend to help interview applicants and to serve as support staff for the weekend. Recruitment Weekends are critical to the success of FOCUS since FOCUS must hire new missionaries each year to provide staff for its campuses. Applicants have three formal interviews, share their testimony and have time for prayer throughout the course of the weekend. More details about the interview process and the application itself can be found at focus.org/apply.
1. How many students will be involved in FOCUS in the first few years on a campus?

While FOCUS could organize large-group events on campus to draw crowds during the first year, this would not facilitate long-term growth or build up student leaders. FOCUS concentrates on reaching a few students and training them to reach a few students, so that growth happens exponentially. FOCUS refers to this as spiritual multiplication. In the first year on campus, FOCUS hopes to see each missionary leading 1 – 3 small group Bible studies and discipling 2 – 4 students. The net result is a few dozen students involved in the apostolate in the first year. The second year may have as many as fifty students involved. In just a few years’ time, there may be as many as 150 – 200 students involved in FOCUS Bible studies and discipleship. These numbers do not take into account those students who show up occasionally for an event; rather, they represent dedicated students who are actively involved in weekly fellowship and spiritual growth, those who are typically more involved in the life of a campus parish as well. These numbers represent the average experience FOCUS has seen on campus and may be higher or lower depending on various factors. If the FOCUS team on campus is not meeting these numbers, the regional director would want to explore the reasons.

2. How will FOCUS fit into my current ministry?

As mentioned earlier, the FOCUS campus outreach is designed to serve and integrate with a chaplain’s existing ministry and staff. The work of a missionary differs from that of a campus minister, but the two roles are closely linked. The missionary’s goal is to meet students on campus and bring them into the life of the Catholic community, training them to go out on campus to reach out to their peers. Campus ministers often work to meet the needs of the students coming through the doors of the Catholic Center. In this way, the collaboration between campus ministry and FOCUS outreach can be mutually beneficial and can accomplish the same goal of helping students encounter Jesus and the fullness of the Catholic faith.

3. How do I support my FOCUS team?

It is better to hear from the words of one of FOCUS’ former campus chaplains: “The role of the chaplain in relationship to FOCUS is a hybrid of the experience a priest already has with students and staff. He is a fine mixture of shepherd, employer, spiritual director, listener, confessor and visionary. He must communicate, be present to his missionaries and be a spiritual father. He should establish clear objectives and be willing to be flexible when pastoral situations dictate. He should pray with his missionaries and seek to develop their virtue. He should be heavy with praise and prudent with criticism. He should bring them together fostering unity as a FOCUS team and as members of his pastoral staff. He should manifest the love of the Father for them!” —Monsignor Ketcham, FOCUS Chaplain at the University of Illinois-Champaign, 2006 – 2014.
4. How will FOCUS National communicate with me?

The “Chaplain News” e-newsletter is sent out every other month (at the start of each even-numbered month) to keep chaplains and campus ministers informed of the important updates and exciting happenings on campus and in FOCUS National.

5. How do FOCUS staff members spend their time?

Missionaries are committed to bringing the Gospel to the students on campus. The focal point of their day is their commitment to Jesus Christ through prayer and Mass. Flowing from their relationship with Jesus, the majority of their time is spent in evangelization, one-on-one meetings with students (discipleship) and Bible study. A significant portion of their time is spent investing in relationships with students: joining them for meals, in the residence halls or on the basketball court for example, all directed toward the end of developing genuine friendships. While a missionary’s day does incorporate aspects of team development, strategic planning, personal and team fundraising, community outreach and campus or regional projects, the majority of their time is spent both reaching new students and training involved students to reach their peers.

6. When does the FOCUS team pray together?

The FOCUS team typically prays together in a regular holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament. This time provides the team with a necessary foundation in prayer and provides an opportunity for them to invite students to join them during this time with the Lord. On the days where the team does not pray together, the missionaries schedule their own time of prayer, done either by themselves or with the students whom they serve. Some teams choose to pray their holy hour together on a daily basis. Ultimately this decision is up to the team director and can vary from campus to campus.

7. What are the expectations of a FOCUS missionary in regards to involvement in the current campus ministry, office hours, Mass attendance and working on weekends?

The intention of FOCUS is to help create a vibrant Catholic community where young people can seek to follow Jesus Christ and share His love with others. Missionaries are committed to integrating with the local campus ministry and/or parish community. While FOCUS’ primary task is to be a presence on campus and to do outreach, missionaries also desire to be a part of the existing campus ministry community and to work alongside its staff and volunteers. It is efficacious for all if these two bodies — the FOCUS team and the existing campus ministry — are united and flourishing.
As the schedule of the team allows and depending on the request of the chaplain, FOCUS encourages attendance and participation in events such as student Masses, retreats and social activities. Typically, the entire team will not attend every event but will show active support by having a staff member(s) and/or key FOCUS student leaders present. Regular meetings with the FOCUS team director, pastor and/or campus minister(s) are essential so that expectations, schedules and priorities are clearly communicated. If campus ministry events or other activities require their presence, it will simply mean less time for the missionaries to spend on campus. This requires a balance of time which is best discussed with the chaplain and campus ministry staff to ensure proper expectations.

A FOCUS team may host certain events for students on weekends to supplement their weekly ministry. Typically the team will spend about 1 – 2 weekends per month working. If missionaries work on a weekend, they may take appropriate time off during the following week to catch up on personal activities. It is encouraged that the non-working weekends be filled with time of rejuvenation and leisure so as to give the missionaries the energy they need to keep up with their rigorous ministry schedule.

8. What do the missionaries do during the student breaks?

The missionaries work full-time during their tenure with FOCUS, and they receive vacation time appropriate to a full-time position. When there is a break during the school year such as spring break, Christmas break or summer break, missionaries will take the opportunity to use some or all of this time to concentrate on some particular part of the mission. Missionaries spend the majority of these breaks maintaining and improving their donor ministry. The main fundraising seasons are during the summer, Christmas break and sometimes spring break. Missionaries also spend their summers in a special training time, which includes New Staff Training (NST) and other types of formation such as mission trips and Mission Partner Development (MPD) training.

9. What is the FOCUS dating policy?

Missionaries not already in a serious relationship accept the challenge to fast from romantic involvement during their first year on staff with FOCUS. The fast is designed to help the missionaries keep focused on the apostolate and, therefore, to serve Christ with freedom of heart. The fast is viewed as a period of intentional vocational discernment without the distraction of potential relationships. Missionaries who join staff and are already in a serious relationship are asked to take a significant step back from the relationship. This may mean that they communicate or visit less frequently. After the first year, missionaries are able to pursue romantic relationships unless it involves two staff members in which one reports to the other. For more details and specific examples of how the dating fast works, please refer to “Free to Serve” in Appendix D.
10. What is the “Big Three”?
As an organization that seeks to bring Jesus Christ to the university students of the current day, FOCUS missionaries live and emphasize the three virtues of chastity, sobriety and excellence.

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” (1 Cor 6:19-20) “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit…” (Eph 5:18)

“Whatsoever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ.” (Col 3:23-24)

These virtues are sometimes referred to by members of FOCUS as the “Big Three.” Chastity refers to sexual abstinence outside of marriage and an overall commitment to purity of mind, body and heart. Sobriety refers to refraining from using alcohol if under age or if forbidden by school policy and using alcohol with moderation when of age. Excellence refers to striving for personal excellence in academics and in personal and professional responsibilities. While these virtues are certainly not above other virtues in the Christian life, these are three virtues which are frequently attacked on today’s university and college campuses. Conversely, when a student makes a commitment to chastity, sobriety and excellence, they rise above the culture and can radiate Christ in a very tangible and countercultural way.

FOCUS student leaders (those who will lead Bible studies and disciple other students) freely make a commitment to chastity, sobriety and excellence, and they undertake accountability with their discipler to live out that commitment.

11. What is “Win, Build, Send”?
As an organization, FOCUS desires to bring students to Jesus Christ and to equip them to share the good news of Christ with their friends. FOCUS operates by the simple principle of “Win, Build, Send.” Missionaries “win” students to the faith by first loving Jesus Christ themselves and allowing His love to radiate out of them. They build authentic friendships with students, get to know them and genuinely love them. Missionaries pray for them and share the truth of the Gospel with them through Bible study, discipleship and spending time together: playing sports, attending Mass, going to conferences, and more. FOCUS missionaries try to create an authentic Christian community in which students feel comfortable to be themselves, ask questions and get answers. Missionary disciples constantly want to be winning them to Christ and His Church.

Once a student has been won over, it is necessary to “build” that person in faith. The missionary will help the student build a prayer life, develop a sacramental life and pursue a life of virtue. The missionary may also encourage service as a way to grow by practicing the corporal works of mercy in the local community.
But it’s not enough to share the good news. Those who have heard the Gospel must learn to teach it to others. As St. Paul says: “And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). Teaching others how to teach is a bedrock principle of FOCUS missionary work; therefore, those whom the missionaries win and build must be “sent” to share the life they have in Christ with others. For some students, this will mean starting their own Bible study and discipling students within that study. Students involved in their Catholic faith on campus will eventually graduate and enter the working world to live an authentic Christian life in the midst of the culture. FOCUS’ hope is to equip as many as possible to win, build and send others, making more disciples for Jesus Christ.
...for equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
–Ephesians 4:12
...And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

–Acts 2:47
DISCIPLESHIP ROAD MAP

NOTE: Each section below describes a stage within discipleship with Jesus Christ. Each section builds on one another.

The overall goal in the Christian life is sanctification; all growth in the Christian life is done through God’s grace.

BEGINNING DISCIPLE • Acts 2:37-38; CCC 1427; CCC 1
• Change of attitude towards Jesus Christ and the Church He established (favorable) (Romans 10:8-10)
• Change of attitude towards sin (unfavorable) (1 John 1:5-9)
• Has made a verbal profession of commitment to Jesus Christ to others (Mark 5:18-20)
• Desires to grow spiritually (Philippians 4:8)
• Has received the sacraments of initiation or has gone to Confession if already a Catholic (Acts 2:37-38)

GROWING DISCIPLE • James 1:19-25; CCC 1694
• Has developed a heart for God that motivates his/her attitudes and actions
• Is willing to make any sacrifices to grow, even change his/her schedule
• Observable changes in attitudes and actions can be seen
• Is committed to chastity, sobriety, and excellence in their state of life.
• Consistent in continually growing in the basic habits of the Christian life, including but not limited to:
  • Seeks interior growth through daily prayer with Scripture and spiritual reading (John 1:1-18; Ephesians 6:18)
  • Grows in sanctification through the reception of the sacraments (Acts 2:42)
  • Builds character through the virtues and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-16)
  • Accepts suffering and uses it to unite him/her to Christ (Colossians 1:24)
  • Practices the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (Matthew 25:31-46)
  • Is open to the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; 12-13)

COMMISSIONED DISCIPLE • Matthew 28:18-20; CCC 905
• Has decided to answer the call to take part in the mission of the Church
• Is actively striving to win people over to Jesus and His mission, to build them up in small-group Bible studies and to send them out to spiritually multiply (John 15:8)

DISCIPLE MAKER • 1 Thessalonians 2:8; CCC 1816
• Led someone to commit his/her life to Jesus Christ and His mission and is helping them engage in the work of evangelization, disciplemaking and friendships through a mentoring relationship (2 Timothy 2:2)
• Has developed a heart for God’s people and is willing to make any sacrifice to help another grow, even change his/her schedule (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
• Makes life decisions (vocation, location, relationships, etc.) based upon how he/she can most effectively fulfill the Great Commission

SPIRITUAL MULTIPLIER • 2 Timothy 2:2; CCC 3
• Has been the major influence in helping others become disciple makers (has produced a strong third generation)
• Has been trained and equipped to go to another location and remain active in lifelong Catholic mission in which this process is repeated
• Regular participation in personal prayer and sacramental life of the Church; Fulfills Vocational commitments; Leading a life of evangelization and discipleship through small groups; Lives an influential life of faith, parish, community, and workplace

Mark 4:1-8, CCC 546
APPENDIX C
Discipleship Road Map + Questionnaire

DISCIPLESHIP ROAD MAP

Where do you place yourself right now on the Discipleship Road Map?

Why do you place yourself there?

Where do you feel God is calling you to be on the Road Map?

Why?

What is it going to take to get there?

What things do you need to do or change or sacrifice to make strides towards your goal?

Are you willing to do these things?

Together with an accountability partner, write down an action plan to get to the next step in the Discipleship Road Map.

GROWING DISCIPLE
1. Has a heart for God
2. Makes *any* sacrifice to grow

COMMISSIONED DISCIPLE
1. Has a heart for people
2. Makes *any* sacrifice to help another grow

The Discipleship Road Map is adapted from *The Fuel and the Flame* by Steve Shadrach (Atlanta: Authentic, 2003), p.110-113.

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“Be Soldiers.” Pope John Paul II has given each of us the marching orders of a soldier for Christ. We are challenged to answer the radical call of Jesus Christ and then help students answer the call as well. As Christians, our lives are no longer our own. We do not seek to use our lives for our own purposes but only for His, who is our love and life. We seek to know God and to serve Him with all the resources at our disposal, to have God alone as our portion and cup, our only treasure in this life. Thus we forsake many things that followers of Jesus Christ have a right to so that we may be completely available to Him and to live in undivided devotion to Him.

The commitment to fast from romantic relationships is counter-cultural, and yet it brings many blessings. Our experience demonstrates that, regardless of the background, life experience, personality or skills a person brings with him, the first year on campus always stretches the horizons of a new missionary. The freedom of a dating fast benefits not only the mission on campus, but also provides a rich opportunity for spiritual growth and the development of complete dependence on God alone. In the dating fast, we experience the challenge and blessing of allowing Jesus to be the supreme love of our life. It helps us to rely on Him, and Him alone, to satisfy the deepest longing of our heart.

FOCUS asks first-year missionaries to make a commitment to refrain from romantic relationships — i.e., to observe a one-year fast from dating. The Church teaches that fasting from an earthly good is one way to help us acquire “freedom of heart.” This freedom of heart is the emphasis of the FOCUS dating fast in three particular ways:

- First, the fast is designed to help the missionaries keep focused on the apostolate and, therefore, to serve Christ with freedom of heart;

- Second, the fast should be a period of intentional vocational discernment without the distraction of potential relationships, to listen to Christ with freedom of heart;

- Third, the fast provides a context for missionaries to look upon one another in non-romantic ways as brothers and sisters in Christ, to love one another in Christ with freedom of heart.
Serving Christ with freedom of heart

Any apostolate will always demand more than one may think it is possible to give, and missionary life within FOCUS is no different. Even if a missionary has been a student leader for three years, the learning curve is still significant. In addition, the first year for missionaries provides the opportunity to be radically available to the students in a unique way. By fasting from romantic relationships, missionaries are free to serve Jesus without distraction. We encourage missionaries to seize the opportunity during their first year to give generously as they have never given before, as they will rarely have the opportunity to do it again.

Listen to Christ with freedom of heart

We live in a society that does not take time to listen to God. Within FOCUS, missionaries will have more time to listen to Him than perhaps ever before in their lives, as they dedicate time daily to silent prayer and holy Mass. The fast helps clear away the cacophony of noise and activity that competes for their attention. It allows them to really ask the Lord: “What is your plan for me?” Even those who are already in a serious relationship may find that the fast, while difficult, provides clarity from the Lord which was previously unrecognized. In fact, often the fast will make or break a relationship. If a relationship cannot endure the test of the fast, it is unlikely to have the strength to endure far more challenging trials in the future.

Loving one another in Christ

Our culture is deeply saturated in imagery, ideas and attitudes about sexuality that are contrary to our Lord’s design for happy and healthy relationships. Even if we know the teachings of the Church, all of us have been influenced by a deeply flawed vision of reality. The fast from romantic relationships provides the missionary with an oasis of freedom in which to allow God to renew one’s mind with His design. By learning to love others as brothers or sisters in Christ first, it allows one to enter into marriage or religious life prepared to give of self even when the “good feelings” are hidden.

The dating fast is a personal challenge issued to all first-year missionaries. While each person’s situation is unique, FOCUS does provide some general guidelines toward living out the fast. Each missionary is asked to prayerfully and prudently discern how he can best observe the guidelines of the dating fast according to his or her particular situation. With our vision for the fast properly aligned, it is now appropriate to discuss the practical implications of the commitment.

There are two typical situations in which first-year missionaries find themselves upon embarking on the dating fast:

- If a missionary is not in a serious relationship, then they should observe a strict interpretation of the fast.
- If a couple is seriously dating, then the dating fast should be observed by taking a significant step back from the relationship.
What does it mean to observe a “strict interpretation” of the fast?

By a strict interpretation, we mean that one should not only cease their participation in any romantic relationships, but that one should also refrain from encouraging romantic feelings. In the same way that one should not spend one’s time thinking about food on a day that we are required to fast, one should not harbor romantic feelings in the heart when one is fasting from romance.

How do I know if my relationship qualifies as “seriously dating?”

There is no hard and fast rule for this question, as all relationships are unique. A good example, though, of a serious relationship is one that is longer than a few months and is strongly progressing toward, or already in the midst of, marriage discernment. We encourage you to honestly assess your relationship and ask the Lord whether He is calling you to the radical commitment, and the associated blessings, of the dating fast.

What does it mean to take a “significant step” back from the relationship?

The answer to this question is as varied as the people who ask it. Ultimately, this is a question for the missionaries to answer with the help of a spiritual director, their team director, and their significant other. (We highly recommend that a missionary’s spiritual director and boyfriend/girlfriend read this document before the discussion takes place.) Generally speaking, we encourage first-year missionaries to take a step back in three areas: electronic communication (e.g. text messaging, Facebook, email, etc.), phone calls and in-person visits. Even for a couple discerning marriage, we encourage eliminating electronic communications and limiting phone calls to one or two times per week with a maximum of one hour on the phone. In-person visits should only be scheduled during off-campus time, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas break.

We recognize that these guidelines can seem radical. In particular, the elimination of electronic communication may seem draconian. We encourage missionaries to examine whether the electronic communication carries with it the meaning their relationships deserve. Rather than frequent text messages and Facebook postings, we recommend missionaries to consider writing handwritten letters to one another to truly open up and deeply communicate.

When does the fast begin and end?

The fast begins at the start of New Staff Training and goes through the end of spring semester finals on your campus.

What if I am a second-year missionary and my girlfriend/boyfriend is an incoming first-year missionary? Do we have to fast again?

Couples that find themselves in this situation may request an exemption to the fast. With an exemption, the first-year missionary is still asked to fully devote him/herself to the mission to be radically available to the students.