

PROCEDURES FOR “ON THE STREET” BOOKBARROW APOSTOLATE

INTRODUCTION

These procedures pertain only to the bookbarrow when it is to be located in a public place, like a busy street corner. They have been designed to incorporate effective apostolic techniques, specific do's and don'ts, “tricks of the trade” and “rules of the game.” They are intended to enhance the bookbarrow apostolate by establishing uniformity without undue rigidity and order without unnecessary discipline or complexity - in short, to simplify the overall operation of the barrow. They are to be regarded as preliminary, since it is anticipated that as we gain bookbarrow experience revisions will be required in order to share with each legionary the benefits of that experience.

BRIEFING

Each active member of the Legion is to be briefed on the bookbarrow procedures. This briefing will consist in: (1) receiving a copy of these procedures, (2) hearing them explained by your Praesidium's representative on the Curia Bookbarrow Committee or your Praesidium President, and (3) having opportunity to ask questions, resolve doubts and hesitations concerning this apostolate, etc.

SET-UP AND WORK PROCEDURES

Legionaries will be assigned to work at the bookbarrow in groups of pairs - each pair consisting of two members of a given Praesidium. The first legionary pair on duty will be responsible for picking up the bookbarrow equipment, transporting it to the work location and setting up the barrow. The equipment is to be stored at our Legion Headquarters. It consists of: the literature, two metal stands, two plastic covers for the stands, two “Legion of Mary” signs, two money boxes, an adequate amount of change, an adequate supply of the required forms and cards, a folding card table and two folding chairs.

In scheduling of the bookbarrow operation care should be taken to ensure that at least six (6) legionaries at a time are on duty throughout the major part of the day. This will both ensure maximum coverage of our “audience” and provide mutual legionary support. All Praesidia should participate so that as many legionaries as possible may gain valuable experience in the bookbarrow apostolate and scheduling should be such that as many as possible may work with legionaries with whom they have not worked before. Throughout the work period two legionaries are to stay at the barrow - the rest go some distance away to contact the people (as a rule of thumb: not more than fifty (50) feet away -- and please, don't wander off and go shopping!) It is especially recommended that those going out to contact the people take leaflets of FREE literature to hand out as “conversation starters”. Specific literature will be recommended for this purpose and each legionary should not only be familiar with this literature but meditate prayerfully on its contents.

One of the legionaries of the team on duty will serve as team Captain. It will be his or her responsibility to oversee the entire operation, handle any required on-the-spot decisions (after due consultation with the team), designate which legionary or legionaries will handle the money, and finally, he or she may serve as a debriefer of legionaries going off duty.

APOSTOLIC APPROACH

It must always be kept in mind that the primary purpose of the bookbarrow is not to sell literature but to give Christ. It is with this in mind that the following helpful hints regarding the legionary's apostolic approach in the bookbarrow work are presented. No doubt each legionary will develop his or her own unique approach. The following hints are in no way intended to infringe upon this, but only to be specific suggestions which the Legion feels would

enhance the legionary's effectiveness. Prayerful meditation upon the points made is therefore recommended.

As a memory aid the hints to be presented have been summarized in a single sentence: The legionary should be a FRIENDLY LISTENER who's approach is SIMPLE, PRACTICAL and CONFIDENT.

A) Be FRIENDLY - thoughtful courteous - don't talk down to anyone - don't be over-serious or over-aggressive - don't argue - but do Smile!

Remember, "God loves a cheerful giver"

"The proposal to start a barrow will always elicit the objection that exceptionally well-versed Catholics would be required...But the lack of this need not deter from starting the work. For the PERSONAL APPEAL will be the great consideration" (Legion Handbook)

B) Be a good LISTENER - take the initiative in approaching people and in gently steering the conversation to religion, but once begun be patient, don't dominate the conversation, "play it by ear" -- offer an understanding and sympathetic ear.

"All these (types of people) will enter into conversation with the gentle and Sympathetic Legionaries in charge" (Legion Handbook)

C) Be SIMPLE - simply be yourself. Relax - no one will expect you to be a walking encyclopedia of your faith. When discussing religion strive not to get entangled in long complicated theological ideas that will lead to sheer confusion. Don't beat around the bush, but state the Church's claims in a direct and concise way. If you don't know the answer to a question simply admit, "I don't know" - and add, "but I'll find out for you if you let me have your name and address". And don't forget to recommend the Knights of Columbus FREE-No obligation Catholic Correspondence Course.

"The course to be taken by the Legionary must be that of persistently reducing the discussion to its very simplest elements..." (Legion Handbook)

"The Christians in the early ages of the Church were simple and often unlettered, yet they spread the Christian Faith to the ends of the then known world" ("A Formula for Conversion", by Frank Duff).

D) Be PRACTICAL and be down-to-earth. PRACTICAL doesn't mean "toning down" our religion so as to try to make it acceptable -- and don't "tone down" our Lady either. We never need to apologize for our magnificent God-given faith. That would be like saying, "Pardon me for giving you a gift of a million dollars".

Don't approach people who seem to be in a hurry, but do approach all others, even those who seem to be indifferent - they will surprise you. Remember: one prolonged and meaningful contact is better than many brief contacts. Always tactfully and courteously try to get your contact's name and address for possible follow-up (fill out a Contact Card as soon as your contact departs, while all is still fresh in mind).

"...the persevering following up of the introductions and friendships initiated at the Barrow is a necessary part of the whole work." (Legion Handbook)

The mystery of the Incarnation is the mystery of God being down-to-earth whereby He made His Word of Truth concrete and practical, so we could grasp Him -- easily knowable, lovable, livable -- in a truly human way.

Jesus says "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"
John 14:6

E) Be CONFIDENT - you are abundantly qualified for the bookbarrow task because you are one of the truly educated elite! You have received the very highest education -- education in the supreme Truth that is Jesus Christ who said, "I am the Truth". By your Catholic Baptism you have "put on Christ" (Gal 3:27) - you have put on the very infinite Truth of God. And by your Confirmation you have been confirmed in the Truth by the Holy Spirit Himself so that you can and must proclaim that Truth to all (Mark 16:15).

"My sheep know Me" (John 10:14). You know Him, not merely "about" Him. Throughout your Christian life of prayer and good works you are being ever more informed of the Truth that is Jesus: He is being formed in you (Gal. 4:19) and you in Him (Col. 3:9-10).

How can you recognize a truly educated person? There are two outstanding marks: gentleness and humility -- because Jesus said, "Learn of me, for I am gentle and humble of heart" (Matt 11: 29). Only the gentle and humble servant can be the truly confident servant (1 Peter 5:5), "because He has regarded the humility of His handmaid"(Luke 1:48).

"Experience has shown the immense value of this (bookbarrow) as a Legionary work. There is no more efficacious way of carrying on a comprehensive apostolate directed to the good, the mediocre, and the bad, or of bringing the Church to the notice of the unthinking many." (Legion Handbook)