



April 2nd, 2025

I had the privilege of doing the Evangelical Catholic training in my parish, and it has been an immense blessing and groundbreaking experience. While there are an abundance of Catholic programs and resources out there today, many of which I've seen and participated in, Evangelical Catholic was unlike any other. Behind every module was the intention and expectation that all this was intended not just to feed us, but to equip us to lead and feed others.

In terms of fruit, I am seeing my fellow participants start small groups, some of whom I doubt would have led such an initiative before EC. Furthermore, I've noticed that among my cohort, there is now a new vocabulary that we use in everyday conversations. Evangelization, apostolates, disciple-making: these words and themes regularly surface in our casual conversations, proof that this "leadership mentality" has permeated us on a personal level and now affects even the way we converse.

Looking back on the program, my favorite and by far the most effective session was the night we were invited to reflect on our own stories and share with the group. Before this session everyone was coming merely as individuals to voice their opinions in the conversation, but the personal sharing changed the entire trajectory of the cohort. Not only was it deeply fascinating to hear everyone's story, but there was so much vulnerability, love, support, and understanding poured out among us. After that session, we became a true team that loved each other and were eager to be agents of renewal in our parish. It was truly our "Pentecost moment".

I also really appreciated the genius of the Triangle we referred to each session. I loved that in a program focused on mission, there was a massive fundamental emphasis on nurturing the personal spiritual lives of the participants. The daily reflections were substantive and they improved my prayer life. I appreciated that there was an emphasis on basic relationships before disciple making. Many of us were timid about intentional disciple making going in, but rooting it in relational skills made a lot of sense and also increased our confidence.

One inspiring moment happened during one of the sessions focused on relationships. A participant raised her hand and objected: "Why are we talking about relational skills, we already know how to do this!?" Although it was voiced as an objection, I saw it as deeply inspiring as I think in that moment she discovered that she actually had within herself the capability to evangelize and make disciples. Being challenged to lead at the end of the training was an uncomfortable paradigm shift for many, but by then we could confidently rely on all of our training.

For me, not only has the training helped my ministry in this parish as a seminarian, but it has been a great complement to my priestly formation. In some of my seminars about priestly fatherhood as a diocesan priest, I found myself drawing from my experience of Evangelical Catholic. As hopefully a future pastor myself, I would be very happy if my future parishioners had the training and formation that we received from Evangelical Catholic.

Best Regards,



Robert Lane
Pastoral year
St. Ann, Edenton
Diocese of Raleigh
rland@svdp.edu