

Extending the Invitation

by Miguel Angel Escobar on March 27, 2012

<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/extending-the-invitation/>

Whenever I hear about how hard it is to evangelize in the Episcopal Church, I immediately think about five of my closest friends. These five friends are wonderful people. They're thoughtful, socially-engaged young adults who balance their commitments to serious issues with a serious sense of fun. And while none of these five currently attend a church, I believe all are open to spiritual/religious exploration.

To my mind, anyway, this makes them prime candidates for the Episcopal Church. Because of this, time and time again I have tried to work up the nerve to extend an invitation. And on all but one occasion, I've failed.

My reasons for not extending an invitation are plentiful and familiar: I'm worried about what my friends will think of me; I'm concerned over whether the sermon will be good and whether the music will be well-chosen; I wonder how I'd feel if, at the end of the day, they aren't interested.

This [short video from the Diocese of Texas](#) helps to correct all that. When I watched it last week, I realized how my reasons for not extending the invitation were largely about control and mainly about me. In contrast, this video shows how the initial invitation was just a spark for a much larger transformation. It shows how one person's journey began when a friend invited them to an Episcopal church, but how God and the Holy Spirit took over from there.

Like most people, I need regular reminders that it's not all about me. Evangelism isn't about inviting people to *my* church. There's no way to control what people will think of me, or what will happen during the service that day, or whether my friends are open to starting a new journey. This video highlights the fact that evangelism isn't so much about offering something that's ours to others so much as extending the invitation and getting out of the way.

Who have you been meaning to invite to church lately?