

What is FOCUS?

FOCUS stands for the Fellowship of Catholic University Students and was founded in 1998. It is currently present on 187 campuses across the nation. Their mission as can be found on their website at focus.org: “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 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).”

Relationship between existing Campus Ministry & FOCUS

FOCUS does not replace the Campus Ministry program. FOCUS is successful when the two programs work together for the same mission of bringing as many students as possible to love, know and serve Jesus Christ. The FOCUS missionaries are the hands and feet out on campus meeting students where they are at and building a relationship with them to then invite them into bible study, discipleship (1:1 mentoring) and to Student Suppers, Mass, etc. The Campus Minister provides the home, the space, the community for those students to enter into. They host all of the Student Suppers, community and social events and provide the space to receive the Sacraments.

Missionaries

Each campus is sent a team of 4 missionaries; usually two male and two female who are typically recent college graduates. They are responsible for finding their own housing as this is their full time job and fundraising their own salaries. The campus is notified in May if they are receiving a team and the missionaries arrive on campus in August. The Campus Minister and missionaries then work together the month of August to plan and prepare for students to return in September.

Interviewing

After submitting an application, an interviewee undergoes multiple rounds of interviews and an interview weekend. Then, if they complete the extensive interview process, they are offered a position. That newly hired missionary then goes onto the training phase.

Training

Based on their location, they are either sent to North Dakota or Florida for 5 weeks of training in May/June. Throughout this intense training period, they are receiving daily formation and taking classes as well as pouring into their own prayer and spiritual life daily.

Work on Campus

After training and spending the summer fundraising, the missionaries arrive on campus and are sent on mission. They go to where the students are: the library, cafeteria, gym, etc. They encounter them and first get to know who they are as a person and establish that relationship with them before even bringing faith into the conversation.

Win. Build. Send.

The model the missionaries use to encounter and engage with students is this: Win. Build. Send. They “win” the students over through events and gatherings that are more casual and social for example: root beer floats or any type of food, sports, campfires, etc. These are opportunities to meet students and form a foundation of a relationship with them; getting to know who they are and establishing trust with that person which may happen over a series of these “win” events. Then these students are built up in a variety of ways which could look like entering into 1:1 discipleship, joining a bible study, being invited to Mass, adoration or on retreat. The build phase continues on for months or even years before moving into the “send phase”. Once these disciples are encountered and have formed relationships with others and have been challenged and grown in their faith, they are sent out. Students are then encouraged to lead a Bible Study and enter into discipleship with other students themselves in hopes of meeting and building up other students through this process of spiritual multiplication.

Funding

The annual total to have a FOCUS team of missionaries on our campus is \$68,000. The payment process for this is as follows:

20% deposit down by March: \$13,600 is 20% of \$68,000

The remaining \$54,000 is paid monthly from June-May each year, so \$4,500/month

This sum of money goes mainly towards the missionaries training in May/June & on campus training in August. They fundraise their own salaries in July, then arrive mid August.

Fruits of FOCUS

Through fervent prayer, patience and hard work, we expect that FOCUS will bear fruit, however, we are unable to declare how many students will come or how quickly they will come. We hope that the fruit will be evident to all through student presence, involvement and energy. The parish will be updated consistently, but again the hope is that the results will be visible fruits within our church. The missionaries are working to bring students to Christ, not to the FOCUS organization itself. The students are encountered and then invited to events and Mass at our church.

Parishioner Role & Involvement

If FOCUS were present, the parishioner's role wouldn't change very much, if at all from the current role now. The hope would of course be that the fruit of FOCUS be present and evident in our church not only at Mass on Sundays, but every day. The parishioners can support FOCUS and their mission by continuing the efforts being made now, such as: welcoming and engaging with students whenever possible whether that be at Mass or any other encounter, providing food and treats for Student Suppers, goodies bags & retreats and generously supporting Campus Ministry through financial contribution and prayer.

We hope that with more students engaged and present, we can continue to increase and build our ministries. It would be wonderful to have more students involved liturgically outside of 6pm Mass and it would be crucial to have parishioners help and support in that. Parishioners' prayers & support are crucial in the success of FOCUS here. The missionaries seek out the students on campus and meet them where they are at and invite them to our space and our church. It is of the utmost importance that they feel loved, welcomed and at home here at Holy Spirit Parish and you all have a crucial role in making that happen.