



Saturate Michigan Evangelism Guide
(Church Training Playbook)



M I C H I G A N M I N I S T R Y N E T W O R K

SATURATE MICHIGAN CAMPAIGN 2024-2026

The vision of The Michigan Ministry Network (MMN) is to see Ministers *LIVE* healthy lives, *LEAD* thriving churches, and *LAUNCH* into their communities and the world with the message of hope in Jesus.

The dictionary definition of *saturate* is "to cause (something) to become thoroughly soaked with liquid so that no more can be absorbed." This is what we desire to accomplish through Saturate Michigan. We want to soak Michigan intentionally to reach as many as possible around our local church communities.

Saturate is a two-year plan for Michigan Ministry Network ministers and churches. It challenges us all to intentionally launch into our communities to reach people with the hope of Christ. We are reminded to live like the early church.

What would happen if we all focused on sharing, loving, and reaching the people in our sphere of influence? What would happen if we all worked at changing Michigan with a fresh sense of calling for the communities in which we live?

God has positioned us to accomplish what Jesus commissioned us to do...and thus saturate Michigan with the hope of Christ. Romans 15:13 says: *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (ESV)"*

Every believer is commissioned by God (Matthew 28:16-20) to go into the world and reach people.

Jesus modeled this himself when He said: *"And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:9-10)'"*

We believe that we can come together to impact our communities with the gospel of Jesus.

Michigan has approximately 692 cities and towns. We currently have 247+ churches. This means we have over 440 cities and towns that **do not** have an Assembly of God church. Additionally, many people within our cities have yet to be reached. WE HAVE A GREAT WORK TO DO!

We must mobilize our congregations to focus on those in their sphere of influence intentionally. We must plant more churches. We must do this better than ever before!

CHAPTER 1

WHO WE ARE TRYING TO REACH?

We believe that every person needs Jesus. It is one of the core principles of kingdom-minded people. That is why we devote time, resources, and effort to reaching every person we can.

One practical application of that core principle is that we take special care to ensure that the people who are geographically closest to us know how much we care about them. While we recognize the importance of impacting the world through global missions, our primary calling is to our communities and to reach the people we interact with daily. They are our mission field. They are our responsibility to reach.

That mindset was as crucial to the early church as it is for us. One of the key strategies of the early church was to reach the people closest to them, the people they were in direct contact with day to day. Peter and Paul were given different evangelistic responsibilities as they were sent into their world.

Paul said, *"Instead, they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews" (Galatians 2:7, NLT).*

If Peter and Paul intentionally focused on reaching specific people, we can! We believe God has given us the responsibility of reaching those closest to our church buildings.

Who did Andrew bring to Christ? He brought his brother, Peter.

Matthew brought other tax collectors.

The woman at the well brought the entire village.

The paralytic's friends brought him to Jesus.

Our churches won't reach everybody, but individually, we can each reach somebody! We must choose to reach the "somebodies" right in our neighborhoods.

Reaching the people in our communities also requires that we focus on who they are and understand what they need more than we focus on our desires and views of life. We can't reach people on our terms. We must be flexible. We must reach people where they are in life.

That is why we need to adopt a critical strategy of the early church: Reaching people in their context. Look at the words of the apostle Paul:

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Paul clarified that his goal was to do whatever he needed to win people to Christ, including meeting them on their terms. Like Paul, we need to reach people in the natural rhythms of their lives instead of our own. People don't care what we know—about Jesus or anything else—until they know we care about them. The best way to show them we care is by showing up in their everyday lives.

That is why we must practice what some call "saturation evangelism," which means we use every available means to reach people. We must reach out to specific groups of people in many different ways at many different times, at many different locations, every day.

This approach will assist us in being more effective evangelistically by reaching people on their terms rather than relying on one big event on our terms.

Teachers, firefighters, police, construction workers, sanitation workers, shut-ins, foster parents, special needs children/adults, families, and many more will all have an opportunity to meet with Jesus because we meet with them right where they're at.

CHAPTER 2

HOW UNCHURCHED PEOPLE THINK

We must remember that the longer we are believers, the less we think like unbelievers. This is a good thing regarding our lives with Christ. But we often lose touch with what it was like to be lost and therefore lose empathy.

Christ never had to cross the line of sin, bow to cultural pressure, or water down His message to reach the lost. He showed sincere care, friendship, and empathy for their situations and then offered to show them a better way to live. We should follow His example.

This made Jesus so effective: He was an expert at meeting the “felt needs” of the people he encountered. His care opened up the ability to speak into their lives. Read some examples in the Gospels where Jesus engaged people (Matthew 9, Matthew 12, Mark 2, Luke 5, Luke 9, and Luke 11, in particular). The Bible frequently notes that Jesus knew what people were thinking by understanding their needs.

It's much easier to reach people if you can understand their world. If it's true that the longer we are believers, the less we think like unbelievers, then what can we do to bridge the gap?

Some options can include talking to unbelievers, getting into conversations, asking people questions, tuning into what people talk about on social media, and showing genuine interest and concern for what's important to them. Don't forget that just because we experience Christianity as safe and friendly, that's not necessarily how the people we encounter in the community have experienced it.

We must be willing to do everything we can to make people feel seen, heard, and welcomed. Try walking into our community, and even your weekend church services, with fresh eyes, and see if there are areas and ways that we can be more welcoming to someone new.

We also need to remember that nobody likes to feel like a project. It is easy to become so focused on the “event” of outreach that we forget to be careful about how we're making people feel.

As Christians, we must remain sensitive to the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and perspectives of those we are trying to reach and remember to show them genuine care and empathy.

After all, outreach is about people, not projects.

CHAPTER 3

FOCUS ON THE PERSON NOT JUST OUR PURPOSE

If you've ever tended a garden, you know that plants don't grow out of season. You can plead with them, coax them, and even yell at them all you want, but it won't make them grow any faster. This is what the parable of the soil and the sower is about (Matthew 13:1-9).

Matthew 13:1-9

"That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear." (ESV)

Receptivity to the Gospel varies. Some people are especially open to it, and others are not. God's job is to make people receptive, and our job is to be faithful in sharing it.

Throughout life, we will encounter people from all different walks of life in various seasons. We need to observe, reach, and interact with people in the space at the pace they are ready for. We can't view people as an opportunity to check "evangelism" off our list of spiritual goals; instead, we must be willing to minister to them in the ways they need.

Sometimes, offering a warm smile and an open ear might be your best chance to introduce someone to Jesus. Other times, they might be more open to a deeper conversation. Remember, we are there to plant, water plant, and sometimes even get the privilege of harvesting maturing seeds.

Just rely on the Holy Spirit to lead you to know what to say and how far to go in conversations, and He will give you insight into the seasons of life of the people you encounter.

CHAPTER 4

HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION

It's not difficult to be enthusiastic about sharing your faith—until you realize that those conversations don't start themselves. At some point, sharing the gospel means starting a specific discussion, which can feel incredibly awkward and intimidating.

So, how does one start a conversation about faith? You start with a normal conversation about life. At [insert church name], we take a simple approach to life. We call it the "there you are" view.

There is a fundamental difference when someone walks into a room with an attitude that says, "Here I am," versus an attitude that says, "There you are." A "here I am" person is concerned with their comfort, preferences, and getting what they want from a conversation. A "there you are" person is concerned with making sure the people they encounter leave feeling encouraged and valued. We want to be "there you are" when contacting those in our communities.

One of the best ways to be "there you are" people is by becoming warm, easy conversationalists. We understand this can be nerve-racking, so here are some practical ways to help you get started.

Introduce yourself – It sounds simple, but it's easy to forget. Simply looking someone in the eye and introducing yourself to them is a great way to begin a warm conversation.

Express excitement (not overly) – "It's so great to meet you!" If we are genuinely excited about reaching out to people, we should be happy to meet them. Showing appropriate enthusiasm about meeting someone will make them feel valued and more at ease.

Focus on the other person – Always maintain a "there you are" attitude. Remember, the goal of this conversation is not your comfort but theirs.

Find common ground – The quickest path to a good conversation is finding something you can agree on and discuss. For deeper conversations, please find a way to identify yourself with their story.

Ask many questions – The best way to connect with people and understand more about them is to ask many questions and listen more than you speak. Make sure to ask open-ended questions. These questions can't be answered with a simple yes or no. "What kind of food do you enjoy eating on a hot day like this?" is more conducive to continuing a conversation than, "Do you like hot dogs?".

Be vulnerable and willing to share your life – Although the goal of your conversation should be to listen more than you speak, conversations always involve some give and take. Don't be so concerned with asking questions and listening that you come off as standoffish when someone asks you a question. Be willing to share enough of yourself to let people know that you are a real person who understands the ups and downs of life.

Don't dominate the conversation by talking about yourself – Nobody enjoys talking with someone who only talks about themselves. It's easy to think that you're having a great discussion and identifying with someone when, in reality, you're just talking about your own life. Always be aware of the balance of the conversation. You're probably losing them if you've spoken more than others.

Just be a person—This is hard to quantify, but you've probably experienced a conversation with someone in which it was clear that they were very focused on trying to make you think a certain way about them or on accomplishing a pre-determined agenda. Being preachy with people, pretending to be something you're not, or blowing through social cues is never a good way to reach someone.

CHAPTER 5

LIVING MISSIONAL

Being mission-minded requires us to live lives focused on His plans for humanity. We must be kingdom-minded in everything we think, speak, accomplish, and dream about. Our lives should overflow with hope as we trust in the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 says: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." This trust in God brings us joy and peace, comforting us in our journey. We must "splash" hope with all we encounter.

To do this, we must remember His kingdom goals and align our interests with His plans. When people encounter us, they should see these five things.

1. They should see a Christ-centered life. They should know that we genuinely believe what we say we believe and have experienced life change in Him. Our lives, transformed by the power of Christ, should be a beacon of hope and inspiration to others. People should see a real difference in our lifestyles as we live with the awareness that our lives should bring glory to God and nothing else. The greatest way to share Jesus is to show Jesus by the way we live. The world doesn't need another poor example of what it means to follow Christ. There are many reasons people choose not to follow Christ; let's not be one of them.

2. They should see genuine and authentic people. We are not perfect—no one is—but that is why authenticity is important. We know that Christ works through our weaknesses to demonstrate His redemptive work. While we must live holy lives, we must also never act like we have it all together. Our imperfections make us relatable, and our authenticity makes others feel accepted and understood.

3. They should see that we care enough to share with them.

If we truly love people like God does, we must be willing to share with them. Christians should feel compelled to do so. No matter your story, we must be willing to share that Jesus has made a difference. Because we love them, we must share.

4. They should see servant hearts and attitudes.

People should see that we lead through serving. Serving is where opportunity meets someone's needs. God often uses us to open the door to building relationships and sharing about Him.

5. They should see us as faithful people.

Christians can increase their witness by doing everything they do as unto the Lord. Colossians 3:23 says: "²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." We should be the most faithful people in all environments of our lives. Living this way can show God's love and grace in every area of our lives. This will cause people to notice that we are different and want to know why.

CHAPTER 6

PRAY AND BE SPIRIT-LED

The best way to prepare to reach people is to pray and be led by the Spirit. When Jesus was doing ministry on Earth, he would regularly withdraw to pray and seek guidance from God. Likewise, the apostle Paul would often speak of being led by the Spirit or having plans to do something but being prevented by the Spirit.

For some, “hearing from the Lord” may seem daunting. But if you’re a Christian, the Holy Spirit is already living inside of you, guiding you to act like Christ. The best way to learn to respond to him is to practice and believe.

Acts 4:29-30

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” (NIV)

Colossians 4:4

“Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” (NIV)

We will only reach the world once we have prepared through prayer. Prayer aligns our hearts with God’s. Here are some simple steps to help you learn to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit as you’re reaching out to others:

Recognize moments – No interaction is mundane, ordinary, or meaningless. If you have the Spirit of God living inside of you, every time you meet someone, it’s a chance for them to meet with God and experience His presence. Recognize that the moments you have with the people you encounter matter.

Pray in those moments – When you recognize that you’re in a moment with someone, take a second to pray and ask the Lord to lead you and give you understanding.

Listen – Listen more than you speak. Don’t be so quick to give advice that you steamroll over someone. Listen to what they say and try to understand the deeper issues. Ask the Holy Spirit to provide you with insight into each situation.

Follow His lead – When you get a sense of direction from the Holy Spirit, be obedient and follow it boldly. Remember, God is faithful in accomplishing His purposes and strong in our weakness. He will cover you even when you are unsure of yourself or nervous. It’s God’s job to draw someone’s heart to Himself. Your job is just to be obedient and follow His lead.

CHAPTER 7

START INTENTIONALLY REACHING

Luke 4:18-19

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (NIV)

Every move of God requires action. It always has and always will!

There are many different views on how to accomplish this. The greatest way to share your faith is to do so daily with those God has placed in your sphere of influence. God has positioned you for such a time as this to be His voice to the friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors around you.

So be bold. Be wise. Be Spirit led. Be faith-filled. Be expectant. Be diligent.

There are many different personal models of doing so. There is lifestyle evangelism, friendship evangelism, door-to-door evangelism, crisis care evangelism, Roman's Road evangelism, and many more.

There are also many ways churches can do group evangelism, such as through special services/sermon series, Go Serve, church outreach events, local city-wide mission trips, and many more. These are not exhaustive but can give you some thoughts to consider.

Here are a few things to remember:

- **We must ask God for a heart for those who do not yet know Christ.** Before we ever reach people, we need to have God reach us. We need to have a deep desire to share our faith.
- **We must study and know God's word.** Knowing the Bible is essential to understanding God's attributes, actions, and heart. We must know the word deep in our hearts.
- **We should pray for opportunities to share our faith.** God's anointing will empower us as we reach out to others.
- **We must look for moments to present the hope of Jesus.** We often miss moments God may have arranged simply because we are not looking.
- **We must be a good listener.** Hearing someone's story gives us insight into their life experiences. Listening well shows value and builds relationships.

- **We must be able to share our testimony.** We should regularly remind ourselves of what Jesus has done in our lives so we will be better able to share that with others.
- **Keep Jesus at the core.** We may not have all the answers and are certainly not perfect, but we do know Jesus. He is the answer!
- **We must share what Jesus has done in our lives.** Simply put, we need to share our faith.

LET'S SATURATE MICHIGAN TOGETHER!