

Can evangelization and ballroom dancing mix?

By Linda Weaver
CONTRIBUTOR

Today, I want to address this crucial issue: Is there fun after evangelization?

Some have preconceived ideas of how "evangelizers" should act. I did. My hobby is competitive ballroom dancing. I LOVE ballroom dancing—from waltz to cha cha. But after I was asked to join the Evangelization Committee, I thought that maybe I should stop. After all, it takes a lot of time to practice—time I could be saving souls. It is also fairly expensive to compete. I thought, "I shouldn't be spending so much money on myself. I should be giving it to the poor."

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Faced with this grave moral dilemma, I did what any good Catholic would do. I went to confession. I told the priest I had been selfish and promised to stop dancing. I was astonished when he told me to keep dancing. He said it was good for me.

A few months later, it occurred to me that he might have been wrong. Something so much fun couldn't be right for an evangelizer! I went to confession again, but to a different priest, in a more conservative church. He also told me to keep dancing. He said I needed the exercise!

Another four or five months passed. I thought, "I must not have explained properly that I am AN EVANGELIZER! If the priest really understood, he would tell me

to stop." I was certain that God had more serious plans for me. Ballroom dancing was so frivolous. Finally, one morning, I headed to St. Peter's in the Loop. I was determined to confess and give it all up. No one would change my mind this time.

In the church vestibule I grabbed a bulletin. I couldn't believe my eyes. On the cover was an article by the pastor about how much he loved ballroom dancing. He said it trained a person to be the perfect follower. That was a little too coincidental and I took it as a sign.

Now the question wasn't whether I, as an evangelizer, had to give up a hobby I enjoyed. Rather, how might God want me to use that gift to do his work?

Since then, I've managed to give ballroom dancing demonstrations in nursing homes and adult day care centers. This month, you'll see my picture in the Chicago Bar Association magazine for helping raise more than \$100,000 for children's causes with my ballroom dancing, and now I'll be helping public school kids learn to ballroom dance.

Is there fun after evangelization? You bet! Not only is there fun, there is joy. Don't let images of scary, sour-faced evangelists deter you from evangelization. See you on the dance floor and in church!

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