

BUS STOP MINISTRY - an ORIENTATION

**“I was hungry, and you gave me food,
thirsty, and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me....”**

Urban Bus Stop Ministry is an outreach and service to the people who travel the city by bus. Some bus riders have long rides, many wait a long to get their bus or a connecting bus. Sometimes bus riders have close bus connections and must run from one corner to another in order not to miss their connecting bus.

All bus riders must face the challenge of the elements: rain, snow, wind, hot sun... and sometimes they are blessed with comfortable weather.

Bus riders are workers, shoppers, people going on appointments to the doctor, dentist, etc., parents taking children to Day Care, people going to visit family or friends, and so on.

Bus riders are young, middle age, seniors and infants, too. Some riders are challenged by mobility issues and must board the bus with a cane, a walker, a wheelchair or an oxygen tank. There are some who take the bus to and from chemotherapy/radiation/ other intense treatment: their trip back home may be difficult for them.

Once the bus journey begins, the rider must endure with whatever happens in order to reach the destination. In some situations, there may be no opportunity to get a drink, grab a bite, find a restroom, etc.

Bus Stop Ministry is a ministry of hospitality and caring intended to bring the care and concern of the local church to the persons who ride the bus.

Location for this ministry — corner of 39th and Troost, Midtown Kansas City, MO

Frequency – one day a week (to expand); one hour at a time

Time— various throughout the day/week

What— drink, light snack and *Social Services Referral* flyer (developed by St. James Parish with the help of Troost Alliance)

Purpose—hospitality is primary: friendly communication, snack & drink and social services information

Volunteers—this is a totally volunteer-run ministry

VOLUNTEERS...

Before going to the Bus Stop

Dress appropriately for the weather.

Meet together at St. James' rectory 15 minutes before the designated bus stop time.

Fill cloth bags for each volunteer: one bag with drinks, one with snacks.

Put 25-30 Social Services Referral flyers in the bag with the snacks.

Put on nametag (name plus your church or agency).

At the Bus Stop

One volunteer (or more) stays on the SW corner and the others go to the NE corner. Introduce yourself to each person... offering a drink and a snack. Also offer the Social Services flyer... and explain what is in it. You may want to ask if they know of someone who might want a copy of this flyer.

Engage each person in whatever conversation seems appropriate... show your concern for each person. *That one person* is why we are there.... How is their day going? (Sometimes people do not want to converse at all, and that is fine, too.)

At the end of the hour

Volunteers from both corners get together...

If there are leftover drinks or snacks, decide if you will return them to St. James rectory or offer them to the people at St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store (right off the parking lot). Return the bags and contents to St. James rectory.... If you bring drinks back, please refrigerate them.

SOME RANDOM THOUGHTS

- v Coordination with St. James Place about bus riders' use of bathrooms
- v Safety issues- no one person should do this alone. There should at least two volunteers on the corner (usually one on SW corner and the other on NE corner); one volunteer should have a cell phone with him/her; wear nametag
- v If folks can't help on the corner, they can be asked to ride the bus. If they choose to ride the bus, ask for their thoughts about it, including reflection on before, during and after the bus ride
- v Holidays and special events could be celebrated on the corner
- v Other Troost Alliance folks can participate
- v This is not a venue for distributing bus passes
- v Purpose of this ministry is hospitality and solidarity with our bus-riding neighbors – not proselytizing
- v Different groups can help with this ministry even though they cannot come to the Bus Stop: e.g. we have a knitting group making caps and scarves to offer in cold weather; some group could obtain snacks or drinks for the ministry; some could help with the printing costs for the flyers, and so on
- v How to sustain the ministry— volunteers, cost of supplies...?

If Mary, Joseph and Jesus were passing here on one of their journeys, would they find anyone to help them along the way? They *are* here... in our neighbors.