

## Small Christian Communities Involvement in Evangelization through Catechetical Instructions and Charity Activities in the Catholic Church in Vihiga County, Kenya

Rose N. Njoroge, Sussy Gumo and Susan M. Kilonzo

Department of religion, theology and philosophy, Maseno University, p.o box 333-40105, Maseno, Kenya

**\*Corresponding author**

Rose N. Njoroge

**Article History**

Received: 22.11.2017

Accepted: 26.11.2017

Published: 30.12.2017

**DOI:**

10.21276/sjahss.2017.5.12.28



**Abstract:** This paper studies the important role of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Catholic Church. For effective pastoral work, the Catholic Church introduced a system of *Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo*- Swahili for SCCs which are meant to help in various aspects that contribute to the growth of the Church. This paper therefore, specifically analyzed the involvement of SCCs in evangelization through catechism and charity activities in the Catholic Church in Vihiga County. The study was based on both primary and secondary data. The study was conducted in 279 SCCs in the five parishes in the Catholic Church in Vihiga County. Through questionnaires, focus group discussions, observations and in depth interviews, the paper shows that the SCCs are contributing to the Church's mission of evangelizing that derives from the Lord's mandate: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations..." in Matthew 28:19. The SCC is seen as the vehicle for evangelization in the Catholic Church, which, through a bottom-up approach encourages their own, and other community members to join in the sharing of the word of God. This paper therefore particularly examines how the SCCs are involved in this evangelization.

**Keywords:** Small Christian Communities, Evangelization, Catechism.

### INTRODUCTION

Small Christian Community (SCC) is a small neighborhood, parish-based group in an urban or rural area in Eastern Africa that is a pastoral model of church. Participants in this study defined SCCs as a small group of about 10-15 people who meet weekly usually in their homes (but sometimes in a parish, a school or another institution), to reflect on the *Bible* especially the Gospel of the following Sunday, and connect it to their day to day activities.

The role of SCCs is to transform the parish into a communion of communities and an instrument of evangelization through the various activities that they engage in [1]. Rich Harter [2], defines Evangelization as the act of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. As the apex of God loves plan of Salvation History, Jesus is, in his person, message, and redemptive sacrifice on the cross, the ultimate saving good news for us. Jesus embodies the Gospel, indeed the very Good News of God. This is made eminently clear in Luke's Gospel when Jesus chooses this passage from Isaiah to explain his mission: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord" (Lk. 4: 18-19).

In the activities of SCCs, evangelization is understood not just as the conversion of neighbors to Christianity so that they become members of the Catholic Church, but importantly, it is seen as the

vocation of the lay faithful in the world to be accomplished in many ways. Through a life of harmony the lay faithful better realize the work of the Holy Spirit in their neighbors and experience God's providence in their neighborhood. Members of SCCs engage in a fellowship of life with their many neighbors and work together for the common good [3]. In this way, they fulfill their vocation in the world and accomplish evangelization. Evangelism is therefore, in this sense, not understood in the conventional meaning of conversion, but sharing among families, friends and neighbours in the community with an aim of enhancing both spiritual and social growth of those involved.

Catechism has always been considered one of the primary tools of evangelization in the Church as noted by Diego [4]. Consequently, the 1977 Synod focused on catechesis. Evangelization and catechesis are closely linked, that is, there is always the need to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world on one hand, but on the other hand, there is the need for Christians to continually deepen their awareness of the faith and the

life of the Church. It was in the 1977 Synod that bishops addressed the different ways and means by which catechesis can be effectively imparted to the people in the Church today. It was in the context of this discussion that reference was made to the phenomenon of SCCs as being effective means for catechesis. The Synod recognized that there are ongoing problems with some of the SCCs, especially their hostility toward the institutional Church, and even engaging in illicit pastoral and liturgical activities within the parish community. However, the Synod did not overlook the role of SCCs as effective instruments for parish catechesis. They possess a great potential for parish renewal as well. Diego [4] further explains that the Synod bishops also recognized that it is becoming increasingly imperative, to renew the parish by making it a community of communities through SCCs.

Each of the SCC members as emphasized by Jenkins [5] must always be fully aware of being a member of the Church entrusted with a unique task which cannot be done by another and which is to be fulfilled for the good of all. To fulfill their individual mission, SCC members can participate in the life of the Church through charity activities individually and in groups. All are called to individually participate in the work of the Church by living a truly Christian life. They are each called to spread the Gospel through both word and deed to friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, and even the strangers they may meet in their daily lives. This form of participation contribute greatly to a more extensive spreading of the Gospel, indeed it can reach as many places as there are daily lives of individual members of the lay faithful.

The study was pegged on the theory of functionalism, a theory developed by Emile Durkheim [6] and expounded by Branislow Malinowski, Talcott Parson and Alfred Radcliffe Brown; and much later by people like Francis Abraham [7]. The latter explains that every element of a system has a function that contributes positively to the continued operation of that system or negatively to its disintegration and change. The central focus of functionalism is analysis of such contributions, which are called eufunctions (positive), dysfunction (negative) or, 'survival', that is, an element that makes no contribution at all or has outlived its purpose.

Functionalism, to Abraham therefore, seeks the contribution of religion in human society based on its central characteristics, namely, its transcendence of everyday experience in the natural environment; uncertain nature of human conditions; and, their limited aptitude and conditions. Dissimilar parts of the society as Samirah [9] shows, make unique contribution towards collective life. Durkheim's functionalism therefore shows that to get to macro levels there is need for smaller internal mechanisms that contribute to the greater whole. The argument that we therefore make is

that SCCs, organs that are at the Church's micro level, are necessary components for evangelization, and are important in passing the message of Christ among members of these organs and communities around them. We also argue that, the SCCs, in an effort to function as ambassadors of the Catholic Church, they also use charity to take care of the destitute. This is a way of taking care of those among them that are not able to meet their daily needs, and, through this, attracting them towards the love of God. Both these – catechism and charity – are acts of evangelization.

### **Objective**

The study aimed at analyzing the role of SCCs in Evangelization through catechism and charity activities in the Catholic Church in Vihiga County.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study sought to analyse and give a descriptive scrutiny of how SCCs promote evangelization within the Catholic Church, and communities in Vihiga County, Kenya through catechism and charity. The study was carried out between 2016 and 2017 and targeted a strata of 74 SCCs from the 279 SCCs in the five parishes of the Catholic Church in Vihiga County namely: Luanda, Hambale, Buyangu, Chamakanga and Erusui. Qualitative methods of data collection, which included in-depth oral interviews and questionnaires, were employed. Open-ended questionnaires were prepared and administered according to the information required as per objectives of the study. For selected SCCs, a chairperson was purposely sampled for the study and issued with an open ended questionnaire. In-depth oral interviews were done with two respondents randomly picked in each SCC, using non-structured interview guides. Inductive coding was used because the questions used were open-ended. Data was classified and coded into meaningful themes. Thematic analysis was used in analyzing data where major concepts or themes were identified and discussed. Data from open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interview were organized into themes and presented using verbatim excerpts. This shed light on the participants' responses to questions regarding their roles in the use of catechism and charity for evangelization.

### **EMPERICAL FINDINGS**

#### **Evangelization through Catechism**

For this study baptism catechism was the center of interest because it is only through baptism that one becomes a member of the Catholic Christian community. Data on catechism in SCCs was collected through open-ended questionnaires, in-depth oral interview and observation. Study participants during the oral interview explained the meaning of catechism and its relevance in evangelization as discussed below.

*Respondent 11: Catechism involves teaching new members in the Catholic Church both*

young and old about the church teachings for a period of not less than six months. They are taught on the need of baptism as a requirement by the Catholic Church as one of its sacraments, the origin of baptism with reference to the biblical teachings and expectations of the church after one is baptized. After they have fully learned about these teachings they go through water baptism and they acquire new names. Therefore they become members of the Catholic Church.

*Respondent 28:* We encourage catechism to be done at SCCs level. All those who want to be baptized or have young babies who need to be baptized must get authority from the SCC. SCCs are churches at the local level. During our weekly meetings we also share some catechism classes. With the help of the catechumen instructor we learn together as a family. We are reminded of the church teachings on baptism. We ask questions and make clarifications on our Catholic faith and in return we share the knowledge with our neighbors. Through this catechism sessions we are re-evangelized and empowered and we are able to convince and convert our neighbors. We have also been able to preach to our neighbour of different faith during social gatherings.

*Respondent 38:* During catechism classes in our SCCs we gain a lot of biblical knowledge and exposure, which we cannot acquire during our normal weekly meetings. We are exposed to a lot of bible reading and interpretation. This makes us develop a habit of reading the bible often and in the process we get enlightened. We are able to face challenges when confronted by our friends from different faiths and we have managed to attract them to our church and even some being baptized as Catholics.

*Respondent 50:* Through catechism, we as members of Christian community are made aware of our obligation to support Christian parents in their difficult task of bringing up their children as Christians. We are reminded of our responsibility to inspire the newly baptized to their Christian faith.

*Respondent 108:* Catechism has helped in evangelization in our SCCs. It is the only channel through which learn a lot and at length about our church doctrines. The priest alone on Sunday during sermon cannot evangelize to us fully. We are able to explore the bible well during Catechism. For example

one cannot be a 'god mother or father' (those to be in charge of the new converts) unless you are fully equipped with the church doctrine. The only avenue to learn about this doctrine is through catechism at SCCs level. Therefore those who attend catechism classes as initiates (those to be baptized) or as 'god parents' are equipped with a lot of knowledge to evangelize to each other and to make converts.

*Respondent 165:* Those adults who are interested in becoming Catholics first pass through SCCs in their geographical area or neighborhood. The respective SCC submits the request forms for the baptism of adults to the parish priest. After that they are referred to the catechist for catechumen classes within their SCCs. They are issued with a card which serves as a register to be signed every Sunday after attending mass and after attending Catechumen class. Only the Catechist should sign the card to monitor and follow up their catechumen class attendance. We encourage the Adult Catechumens to pray and serve within the community. The first step in the Adult Catechumenate is usually for the individual to pray in his or her SCC.

The above data from in depth interview was also confirmed during observation. We visited some SCCs that were preparing for both infant and adult baptism as they celebrate their SCC saints day. Catechism was done during their normal weekly meeting. They had set aside some thirty minutes for learning. During this session the catechist read through various bible verses pertaining to baptism. He began with the reasons for baptism with reference to the bible, what the Catholic Church teaches about baptism and on the roles Christians after baptism which involved preaching and converting new members in the Catholic faith through baptism. We observed how the bible was used to teach and prepare converts for baptism. SCC members were exposed to the bible as the main source of reference in preaching the word of God and of making converts. There were sessions of oral testing to those who were to be baptized to ensure they were well conversant with the catechetical teachings before they were baptized. For the infants, their parents and their 'god' parents to be responded to the questions.

The study findings revealed how bible is used in evangelization in the SCCs. There were seven steps that were followed in all the SCCs. Oswald [4] states that 1978 saw the birth of Bible Sharing/Gospel Sharing at the Lumko Missiological Institute in South Africa. Excellent SCC training manuals were published that popularized the Lumko "Seven Steps" Method of Bible Sharing/Gospel Sharing. The Seven Steps have spread all over the world. They constitute a kind of "agenda"

for SCCs as they bring Christ into the center and encourage active participation in the mission of the church in the neighborhood which involves evangelization.

The following are the responses from respondents on how the seven steps were followed and their roles in evangelization. It was reported by an interviewee that the first step involved inviting God.

*Respondent 36: We begin our meeting by inviting God in our meeting in form of a worship chorus and prayer. After that, we recite the rosary which we share in leading.*

Worship songs varied from one SCCs to another. Some sang Marian songs in praise before reciting the rosary. Others sang Holy Spirit songs as a way of inviting the Holy Spirit in their meeting and then followed rosary recitation. This step prepares members for the meeting. They are to cleanse themselves and be attentive during the meeting. The worship song whether in praise of Mary or the Holy Spirit is meant to empower them in their evangelization as they begin their meeting?

The second step involves reading the word of God. Reading of the Bible is done in all SCCs during their weekly meetings. The Bible passage is read loudly, prayerfully and reflectively. Sometimes the SCC members read in turns around the circle.

*Respondent 73: We are encouraged to carry our bibles during our meetings. Before sharing, we read the verse of the Bible many times depending on the different bible versions available. The Bible is the life of SCCs as it is an important asset and an essential element for Catholics in SCCs and families. We believe the word of God in the scripture is the center of all our meetings.*

This step helps SCCs member to develop a culture of reading the bible and compare different versions for easy interpretation during evangelization in the group. The third step entails listening to the words (dwelling on the text).

*Respondent 15: From the bible verse that was read, SCC members are requested to choose words (that is, single words, or short sentences, or short phrases) which inspired them most in a special way. One by one, SCC members read the word or words that have impressed them aloud in a prayerful way. They are encouraged to repeat those words silently to themselves three, thus allowing the message to "soak in". No explanations and no comments are given in this session. Afterward someone read the same text again from a different bible version.*

*Respondent 45: we are asked to repeat in form of prayers the verses that touch us spiritually. We usually pick out any words or short phrases, read them aloud prayerfully and keep silence in between.*

Most SCCs groups seemed to pick a verse and recite it three times. All members are expected at least to have a verse or a word that that impress them most. The third step acts as a guide in evangelization. As members recite what impressed them in the verse that they read, it gives them an insight of what is expected of them as they evangelize to one another as per their understanding of that verse.

The fourth step calls for silence or meditation of the scripture. After spending time on the individual word or phrases, the entire verses are read again aloud and slowly. Then the chairperson announces a time of silence, mostly three to five minutes, during which participants listen to God in silence and meditate the text. Similarly it was reported during the interview that:

*Respondent 33: we normally have a moment of silence during this stage to allow God to speak to us.*

*Respondent 70: we keep quiet for five minutes to meditate on the verse that we have read. We are supposed to think on what God expects from us so that we can share our with others.*

This is a very important step in evangelization as members mediate on the text in silence and allow God to speak to them in a spiritual way. In doing so, they are empowered on what the God expects of them from the Scripture and be able to apply it in evangelization basing it on their daily situations.

Bible sharing follows in the fifth step.

*Respondent 70: we share what we have felt in our hearts during meditation. We share what we think God is directing us to do after the moment of meditation. It entails our relationships with Him, our neighbors and our families.*

*Respondent 112: our sharing is in form of application based on the life of the community and the church. All members are free to share their views accordingly depending on their understanding. Afterwards we choose a 'Word of Life' from the reading of the day. It is supposed to be the spiritual theme of the week to guide us in our relations with one another and with God.*

Members participated in bible sharing as they understood, and interpretation of the bible verse was in form of application on how members were expected to carry on the teachings from the verse in their day-to-day



activities in the community. This is the most crucial step in evangelization as it exposes one to the use of the bible in a rational way. One is expected to explore the Bible and analyse the verses and apply them in the daily activities of the community. In doing so, one is able to evangelize to the other through doing good deeds. It is an enlightenment stage where one is exposed to various ways of interpreting bible verses in evangelization.

The sixty step entails plan for action.

*Respondent 55: the secretary reads through the minutes of the previous meeting. Matters arising are discussed and agendas of the day presented and discussed. At this step members discuss any task, which the group should carry within the SCC, neighborhood or Parish.*

*Respondent 90: Normally, a practical action or task is chosen to be carried out during the following week, as a response to the Word of God. It may be connected to or flow from the Gospel text that was read, and may be related to the pastoral priorities and activities of the parish. In some cases they refer it to as ministries. The tasks include: visiting the sick, helping the needy, praying for the sick among others. Member also gives reports on the previous task.*

This stage is meant to connect the group, relates and applies the Gospel to their daily lives and experiences. The See-Judge-Act process is used. That is; perceiving and understanding the prevailing situation regarding to their lives in the community, making judgment lead by scripture and the tradition of the Catholic Church and a way forward as proposed in pastoral accompaniment of the faithful. The sixth step is important in evangelization in that it helps members of SCCs to connect to the gospel with regard to the lives of the community through listening or seeing. They share their commitment to the truth of the teaching of the church, and also struggles that accompany the commitment.

The last step is conclusion. It was reported that:

*Respondent 70: At this stage, the chairperson invites everyone to offer prayers of the faithful. Through prayer the Bible sharing session is summarized and concluded. The words of Scripture, the various experiences of God's word, the daily problems, all become fuel or the building blocks for prayer. Anyone who wishes may pray spontaneously. Afterwards the meeting ends with a prayer and a hymn which everyone knows especially those on praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary as an intercessor of Christians in the Catholic Church.*

In all SCCs visited, it was recorded that one of the members of the SCC led in final prayer. Some of the prayers included prayers to the patron saint of the respective SCC for example prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, St Teresa of Calcutta among others. This was followed by a chorus as the meeting adjourned [8].

John Paul I [9] in *Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization in the Modern World)* contended that a means of evangelization that must not be neglected is that of catechetical instruction. The intelligence, especially that of children and young people, needs to learn through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an ever richer fashion during the course of her long history. No one will deny that this instruction must be given to form patterns of Christian living and not to remain only notional. Truly the effort for evangelization will profit greatly- at the level of catechetical instruction given at church, in the schools, where this is possible, and in every case in Christian homes- if those giving catechetical instruction have suitable texts, updated with wisdom and competence, under the authority of the bishops. The methods must be adapted to the age, culture and aptitude of the persons concerned, they must seek always to fix in the memory, intelligence and heart the essential truths that must impregnate all of life. It is necessary above all to prepare good instructors- parochial catechists, teachers, parents- who are desirous of perfecting themselves in this superior art, which is indispensable and requires religious instruction. Moreover, without neglecting in any way the training of children, one sees that present conditions render ever more urgent catechetical instruction, under the form of the catechumenate, for innumerable young people and adults who, touched by grace, discover little by little the face of Christ and feel the need of giving themselves to Him.

In relation to Catechism as an instrument of evangelization, Phan [10] pointed out that Catechesis generally presupposes evangelization. It leads both communities and individual members of the faithful to maturity of faith. Through catechetical instruction, people learn the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an even richer fashion during the course of her long history. No one will deny that this instruction must be given to form patterns of Christian living and not to remain only notional.

On the importance of catechism in evangelization John Paul in *Ecclesia in America (EA)* [10] stated that, evangelization in which the whole continent is engaged means that faith cannot be taken for granted, but must be explicitly proposed in all its breadth and richness. This is the principal objective of

catechesis, which, by its very nature, is an essential aspect of evangelization. Catechesis is a process of formation in faith, hope and charity; it shapes the mind and touches the heart, leading the person to embrace Christ fully and completely. It introduces the believer more fully into the experience of the Christian life, which involves the liturgical celebration of the mystery of the redemption and the Christian service of others.

On the issue of adult participants in Catechism, John Paul II in *Catechesi Tradendae* (CT) [11] emphasized that adult catechism is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. SCCs cannot carry out a permanent catechesis without the direct and skilled participation of adults, whether as receivers or as promoters of catechetical activity. Adults govern the world, in which the young are called to live and to give witness to the faith which catechesis seeks to deepen and strengthen. The faith of these adults too should continually be enlightened, stimulated and renewed, so that it may pervade the temporal realities in their charge. Thus, for catechesis to be effective, it must be permanent, and it would be quite useless if it stopped short at the threshold of maturity, since catechesis, admittedly under another form, proves no less necessary for adults.

It can be noted that catechism acts as a bridge for membership into Catholic faith. This is because after catechism one is baptized to become a member of the Christian Community. It lays foundations for Christian's faith from the teachings offered during that period. Evangelization cannot take place without catechism. It equips one with evangelization skills. The study finding shows that other than infant baptism there are the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), which is carried out in a SCC setting. RCIA is catechism that involves adults who are converted in Catholic faith. Such a program is offered to the adult Catechumens in the parishes, sub-parishes and outstations. It involves Bible reflection, study of the Catholic faith and journeying together as a community. The knowledge gained during catechism instruction introduces a convert into the experience of Christian life. The catechism instructions play a very key role in conversion and faith formation which are essential elements in evangelization.

#### **(B) Evangelization through Charitable Activities in the Small Christian Communities**

Evangelization also entails charity activities that are carried out by members of SCCs that have a strong influence on their neighbour and the church at large. The study showed the various pastoral activities that SCCs performs that have boosted their evangelization. Through questionnaires and in depth oral interviews, we gathered information that showed that charitable activities happen during the weekly SCC

meetings and whenever needs arise. The in-depth oral interviews explained this:

*Respondent 3: As clergy, we encourage SCCs members to participate in various activities within the SCCs. For example during bereavement we encourage them to participate in funeral and burial arrangement as members of that SCC. In doing so, their active participation makes the bereaved family feel a sense of belonging and these acts have an impact on their neighbors who would wish also be part of the community.*

*Respondent 28: We as members of SCCs are also concerned with the welfare of the sick. We visit them in their homes and pray with them. Sometimes members of SCCs contribute money to buy drugs for the sick that may not be financially stable or in a position to buy drugs from the pharmacy. We also visit our sick members in hospital and pray for them and in some occasions we volunteer to take and accompany them in hospital to ensure they are well attended and assist where necessary. We inform the priest if the sick person requires the sacrament of the anointing of the sick.*

*Respondent 35: It our duty as members of SCC to identify the needy and the less privileged in the community. After we have identified them, we offer them the assistance they require. For example, we have a rehabilitation centre in Parish one that take care of street boys in the nearby market centre. Another example is a girl's orphanage in Parish three that provides home for orphaned girl child in the local community. We continue to support these centers and many others with food stuffs and other humanitarian assistance.*

These views are corroborated by Msangaambe [12] who states that SCCs members are in a special position to assume roles of service and leadership in matters of assisting the poor, eradicating hunger and poverty, and promoting human development, social reforms and peace. The involvement of SCCs in such an apostolate is a public witness to the dynamism of the Gospel message. The SCCs should be guided in such a way that the true evangelical vision and prayerful discernment should be the principles in holding at all costs the dignity and rights of the human person as the greatest values in spiritual and social life of the community.

SCCs are in a better position to meet the immediate spiritual needs of their members through their rotational visitations during their fellowships. In doing so, they are able to evangelize through their actions. Kilonzo [13] noted that it is at the SCCs level

that the problems of the people are known. From this problem, the SCC leaders are able to write a report and present it to the priest in-charge. The Church can then take action to help resolve the challenges. Through the SCCs the priest conducts church services (mass) at home level, and specifically in homes where there are needs. SCCs are used to enhance house to house visitations for spiritual nourishment.

SCCs members participate in various charity activities as part of evangelization. From the questionnaires it was observed that they participate in funerals of members and relatives; visiting the sick at home; pastoral care to the sick and those suffering; visiting families with social problems; bringing sacrament of anointing to the sick; and, visiting the sick in hospital. Additionally, issues such as child neglect, alcoholism and drug abuse, poverty, insecurity, crimes, hunger and many more are addressed at the meetings. The charitable individuals are at the service of the needy and the poor. The end product of these activities has been conversion of some members into the Catholic faith. The attention accorded to the needy has helped them realize their sense of belonging. There were some reported cases of those who have joined SCCs and converted into Catholicism. As Jenkins [5] argues, all members are called to individually, and in groups, participate in the work of the Church by living a truly Christian life. They are each called to spread the Gospel through both word and deed to friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, and even the strangers. This participation contributes to a more extensive spreading of the Gospel.

The findings show that SCCs has been effective in caring for the needy in the community. These communities have encouraged the Christians and the entire neighborhoods to become aware of their mission within their families, extended families and the surrounding neighbors. They have become a source of help against the dangers that threaten the lives of the people in these areas. By connecting life and what they draw from the Scriptures, on a day-to-day basis, their deeds are passed on to those in need of help. They put the Scriptural readings into practice and by so doing they are able to integrate the realities of life and their faith. They now transform family and parish life. The experiences of faith and community life in this religious environment are reflected in the lives of the people, in the parish and outside of it. Their cultural richness is shared in faith and love. There are some rehabilitation centers which are under the care of patrons/patroness from the SCCs that caters for children with disabilities and street children within the county.

Scholars consulted agree that through the charity activities, SCCs members have been in a position to empower each other spiritually leading to their spiritual transformation. They have been able to learn the need of team work and the benefits of leading

hand. In places where majority carried out SCCs charity activities effectively, the SCCs were strong and vibrant. On contrary, in areas where pastoral activities were given less attention, the SCCs were less active. Therefore, it can be stated that charitable activities play a very vital role in evangelization because they make members active in carrying out their roles and also transforms the lives of many spiritually. Through various charitable activities, SCCs have been able to evangelize to many who have witnessed these pastoral activities. Their works of charity and compassion have had a positive impact on many who have been transformed and converted into the catholic faith.

## CONCLUSION

SCCs in the Catholic Church in Vihiga County have achieved the mission of the church in evangelization through Catechism instructions. It can be pointed out that catechism offers the basics for evangelization. It equips SCCs members with evangelization knowledge. It is only through catechism that one becomes a member of the Christian community through baptism which is conversion. Through catechism one acquires a sense of identity that helps him or her relate with the members of SCC, and the Church at large. Catechism involves both young and old and is emphasized during baptism as a way of converting members into the Catholic faith. During catechism, those that need conversion or baptism, together with the already converted members of SCCs are given Catholic Church's teachings by trained personnel (catechumen instructor). Catechism serves as an evangelization tool in that it exposes the converts and the members of SCCs to the teachings of the Catholic Church, which are necessary for their faith formation. They employ the teachings to preach and make converts.

Evangelization is also done through charitable activities. These activities target to assist the needy in the society and have a positive impact on the faith of the Christians and their neighbours. Activities such as visiting and taking care of the sick and the needy have had a positive influence towards evangelization. Those who have benefited from these activities have bear witness of how their lives were transformed. Church based institutions such as rehabilitation centre and orphanage have been put in place where SCCs continue to evangelize through their works of charity. Evangelization therefore, is not limited to preaching the word of God but also works of compassions as evidenced in the Catholic Church in Vihiga County.

## RECOMMENDATION

From the study findings and observations made in the field, it is recommended that SCCs need to put a lot of emphasize on evangelization as the key mission of the church. Weekly meetings need to be enhanced and their importance emphasized to ensure participation of all members young and old, male and

female. Challenges in evangelization should be minimized at all cost by creating a friendly environment where all SCCs members will be in a position to interact freely without any feeling of biasness.

#### REFERENCES

1. Kleissler TA, LeBert MA, McGuinness MC. Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century. Paulist Press; 2002.
2. Schedule C. Diocese of Superior Chancery Bulletin. The school of. 2014 Jul.
3. Kim D. *The Church as Communion in Small Christian Communities in South Korea* (Doctoral dissertation, Catholic University of America). 2011.
4. Oswald H. *Our Joy in Being Catholic: Our Catholic Customs and Beliefs*, Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa. 2007.
5. Jenkins JR. *Disciples Called to Witness: New Evangelization*. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 2012. Washington DC
6. Durkheim E, Bellah RN. *Émile Durkheim on Morality and Society Selected Writings*.
7. Francis A. *Modern Sociological Theory*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1982.
8. Samirah. Functionalist Views on Religion. 2011. StudyMode.com. <http://www.studymode.com/essays/Functionalist-Views-On-Religion-569180.html>
9. John Paul I. *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi, On Evangelisation in the Modern World*. Nairobi: St Paul Publications. 1975;pg 67-68.
10. Phan pc. Catechesis as an instrument of evangelization: reflections from the perspective of asia. *Studia missionalia*. 1999;48:289-312.
11. John Paul II. *Apostolic Exhortation: Catechesis Tradendae*. Libreria Editrice. 1979. Vaticana page 60
12. Msangaambe C. *Laity Empowerment with Regard to the Missional Task of the CCAP in Malawi* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch).
13. Kilonzo S. *Christian Diversity and Community Development in Vihiga District Kenya*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Maseno University, Kenya. 2008.