



Church Innovation Insider

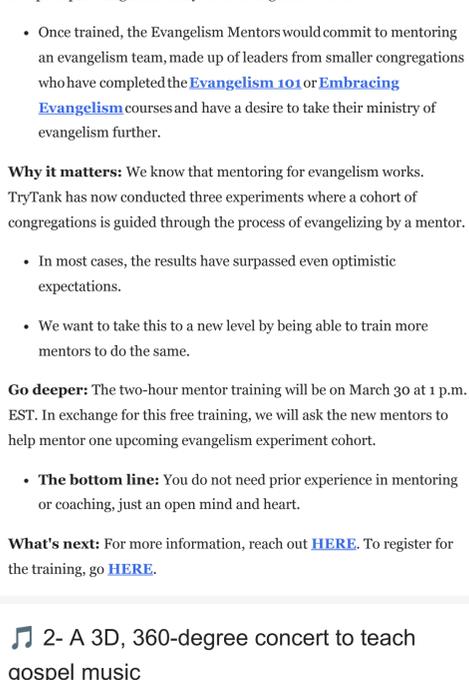
By Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija • Mar 04, 2022
Smart Brevity® count: 6 mins... 1551 words

Hi friends! Fr. Lorenzo Lebrija here.

Is it just me or is time just *flying* this year? How on earth are we already in March 🌱?

- **Before we get to the news**, we join with people of goodwill everywhere in prayers for peace and for the people of 🇺🇦 Ukraine 🇺🇦. [HERE](#) are some ways you can help them today.

📖 1 big thing: Training new evangelism mentors



What's new: TryTank is teaming up with the Department of Evangelism in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to train 20 Episcopal evangelism catalysts as Evangelism Mentors.

- Once trained, the Evangelism Mentors would commit to mentoring an evangelism team, made up of leaders from smaller congregations who have completed the [Evangelism 101](#) or [Embracing Evangelism](#) courses and have a desire to take their ministry of evangelism further.

Why it matters: We know that mentoring for evangelism works. TryTank has now conducted three experiments where a cohort of congregations is guided through the process of evangelizing by a mentor.

- In most cases, the results have surpassed even optimistic expectations.
- We want to take this to a new level by being able to train more mentors to do the same.

Go deeper: The two-hour mentor training will be on March 30 at 1 p.m. EST. In exchange for this free training, we will ask the new mentors to help mentor one upcoming evangelism experiment cohort.

- **The bottom line:** You do not need prior experience in mentoring or coaching, just an open mind and heart.

What's next: For more information, reach out [HERE](#). To register for the training, go [HERE](#).

🎵 2- A 3D, 360-degree concert to teach gospel music



What's new: Before the pandemic, TryTank had teamed up with the Gospel Choir from the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia for a teaching tour.

- The tour stops were to have a concert and a masterclass for the local diocese on how to add more gospel music to worship services.
- The pandemic paused the tour and the experiment for two years.

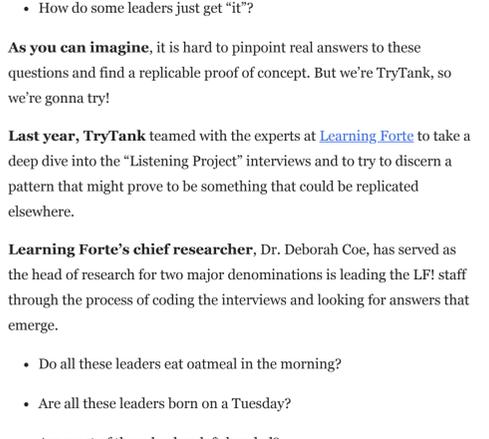
Why it matters: Unfortunately, many Episcopal churches are hesitant to use Gospel music either because they are not familiar with it or unsure of how to play it "right."

Go deeper: In thinking about how to revive this experiment, new opportunities arose.

- Technology now allows for fascinating new ways that will also allow the concert to reach more people than the tour could.
- One of those is a 3D, 360-degree concert. If a viewer has VR glasses they can turn and watch different singers and the sound they hear is of that of whom they are watching.
- If you don't have the VR glasses, you can still experience the concert (and the turning feeling and sound) in 2D.
- You can see a sample [HERE](#).

The bottom line: The concert and masterclass will be filmed in the late Spring and made available soon thereafter. Stay in-tuned! 🎧🎧

🔥 3- Web3Abbey holds first-ever Episcopal service in the metaverse



A screen-shot from the Web3Abbey worship space in the metaverse.

We asked the Rev. Sean Steele, the experiment manager for our metaverse church experiment, to tell you all how it went at the first Episcopal worship event in the metaverse. Here's his note:

- **It was a beautiful evening** in the metaverse on Monday, February 28th at 7:00 pm CST when 22 people gathered for Web3 Abbey's first-ever worship service.
- The community celebrated a vigil service for the feast of St. David with a specially curated liturgy.
- Our time together included music, prayer, centering breathing, silence, scripture reading, community discussion, a common confession, and a benediction.

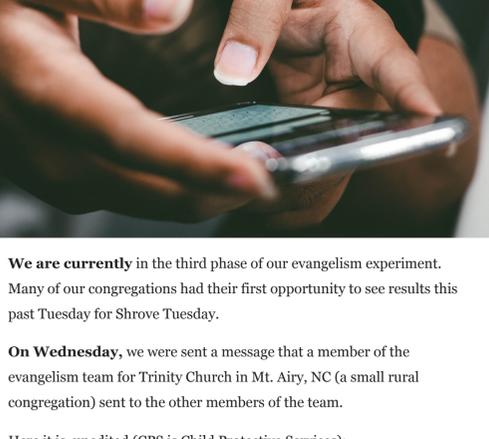
The bottom line: Feedback from the service was overwhelmingly positive barring a few technology glitches and expected discomfort with the new space and technology.

Big picture: The Web3 Abbey team hosted the service in a specially designed outdoor space on the AltSpaceVR platform that included ample space for worship, conversation, and fun.

What's next: They plan on meeting in the space on Monday evenings throughout the month of February at 7:00 pm central.

If you are interested in learning more please join their discord server [HERE](#) or simply come on Monday evenings, room code is **RBR302!**

💡 4- Listening Project experiment will soon have results



Big picture: The Listening Project, launched in 2019, aimed to find out:

- What makes an effective parish leader?
- What is the secret to parish growth?
- How do some leaders just get "it"?

As you can imagine, it is hard to pinpoint real answers to these questions and find a replicable proof of concept. But we're TryTank, so we're gonna try!

Last year, TryTank teamed with the experts at [Learning Forte](#) to take a deep dive into the "Listening Project" interviews and to try to discern a pattern that might prove to be something that could be replicated elsewhere.

Learning Forte's chief researcher, Dr. Deborah Coe, has served as the head of research for two major denominations in leading the LF! staff through the process of coding the interviews and looking for answers that emerge.

- Do all these leaders eat oatmeal in the morning?
- Are all these leaders born on a Tuesday?
- Are most of these leaders left-handed?

The bottom line: This research will help us identify patterns and seek proofs of concepts to help answer these questions and more.

What's next: In the coming weeks, Learning Forte will prepare a detailed research report to present to TryTank their findings. And you know we'll have an update for you here.

🇬🇧 5- TryTank is headed to the United Kingdom



It is possible that I am most excited about seeing one of the famous Scottish red cows.

From March 14 to 25, TryTank's director, the Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija (that's me!) will be headed to the U.K. to talk about innovation in the church.

Why it matters: At TryTank, we want to teach anything we have learned in doing this work to others so that they too can try stuff out.

Go deeper: The trip will involve three stops: Edinburgh, Norwich, and London. At each stop, workshops will teach TryTank's three-step framework for innovation and encourage new styles of church.

- [In Scotland](#), TryTank is also helping the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church how to set up their own version of an innovation lab.
- The London workshops are through HeartEdge and one (on [new frameworks to use post-covid](#)) is open to the public through Zoom.

One fun thing: Be sure to [follow me on Facebook](#) to see what I and my emotional support llama are up to!

❤️ 6- Sometimes, we are reminded why we do this work

We are currently in the third phase of our evangelism experiment. Many of our congregations had their first opportunity to see results this past Tuesday for Shrove Tuesday.

On Wednesday, we were sent a message that a member of the evangelism team for Trinity Church in Mt. Airy, NC (a small rural congregation) sent to the other members of the team.

Here it is, unedited (CPS is Child Protective Services):

Guys, I really love my church, and aside from that, I'm actually proud of my church. I don't feel like I've been able to say that at any other point in my life - aside from maybe the Wesley foundation at some points in college. Tonight we had a hotdog and marshmallows roast at riverside park. It was to celebrate Shrove Tuesday. Traditionally they have had a pancake supper at the church, but with Covid, crowding into a tiny building wasn't a good idea, so we took it to the park, and since Tuesday night is also youth group night, the youth came too 😊 and I invited their families. We had rich and poor people, drug users and non-drug users, people who have spent years and years in prison and people who have never run into the law, LGBTQ and heterosexual people, white people and black people, refugees, immigrants, and natives, homeschoolers, public schoolers, school dropouts, people who are working on their GED and teenagers suspended from school indefinitely, young and old people, republicans abs democrats, church members, and no church members, foster families, adoptive families, CPS workers and the families served by CPS and kids taken away from their families by CPS, white-collar, blue-collar and unemployed people, and on and on. And we had a good time and it was amazing and special. The darkness is scary and overwhelming, but I saw the kingdom of God at the park last night.

🍎 7- It's not too late for Prayer School

If you want to watch or listen to Prayer School, you can still do so. Just go [HERE](#) to find the resources, audio recording (great for the car), and video recordings.

8- 🚗 Upcoming events from

LIFELONG LEARNING

Virginia Theological Seminary

Click on any of the dates or the logo above to go to the registration page.

Mar 5 Godly Play Commuter Core Training Module 3: Supporting the Circle of Children and Liturgical Action Lessons (In-person)

Mar 10-Apr 7 Walking the Way of Lent through Storytelling with Bishop Porter Taylor

Apr 6 May She Flourish: Developing Your Well-Being Toolkit

May 13 Faith in the Future Talks (Part 3 released - Parts 1-2 will be available for registrants as well)

June 5-10 Deep Calls to Deep Residency 2022 - "The Future of Preaching in a Changed World"

July 6 TryTank's "Church 2032: A Church Transfigured" movie released (more details on this soon)

Thanks for reading! I'm on vacation for a few days to celebrate my 20th anniversary and then off to the UK. Have a fantastic weekend! 🍷

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