

Sam Deneffe and Kay Kay DeRossette: The evangelizers

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Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus called his 12 disciples to go out and evangelize. Today, Samantha Deneffe, 28, and Kay Kay DeRossette, 25, are following that same command.

Deneffe has been the director of evangelization and faith formation at Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church in Little Rock for two years. The married mother of 3-year-old Faith Ann and a boy on the way, knows all the troubling stats — for every person joining the Church, six leave; only 24 percent of Catholics go to Mass regularly; and by 23 years old, 80 percent of Catholics leave and do not return. But with changes needed, Deneffe said she’s always listening to Christ “to make sure the only changes I make are the changes he wants.”

When talking with others about faith, Deneffe can use her own story, describing herself as an “evangelical atheist almost, telling people that God is a lie” by the time she attended Hendrix College. A conversion experience changed her path.

“When I’m talking to people one on one, which is a big component of my job, and talking about their faith story I feel like I can use that to identify where they’re at and encourage them to ask questions because I had a lot of questions and a lot of objections,” she said.

DeRossette was hired full time this summer to be director of outreach and youth faith formation at Holy Souls. She will handle sacramental preparation, catechesis and promote small group and parish-wide service projects.

“I think it’s a huge responsibility to pass on the faith to our youth, and I’m excited to have that

opportunity and it's a huge gift," she said.

The two agree that working as a team to spread the faith is rewarding.

"I just feel like being able to bounce off ideas with each other and provide feedback after we've tried something new like how we can improve that in the future and get more people involved and to make it more successful has been my favorite part," DeRossette said.

• ***What is your favorite prayer?***

"The Prayer of St. Francis; it helps me get out of myself and encounter the world the way God wants me to. Not the way the world tells me that I should." (Kay Kay)

"I like using Lectio Divina — the divine reading of Scriptures where you read it three times and listen to how God is speaking to you. For me memorized prayer is awesome and amazing, but it's a lot of me talking to God, and I need to make sure I'm listening. I'm an extrovert and like to talk a lot. Lectio makes me shut up and listen to what God has to say to me." (Samantha)