

Creating G.R.E.A.T. Goals

Growth **R**ealism **E**xcellence **A**ttainability **T**imeliness

After the parish pastoral council has studied and summarized the results of the listening process and parish assessments, the next step is to discern and write the parish pastoral plan. After doing needed work on the parish mission statement and core values (described in other resources), the parish pastoral council can use a drafting committee or divide itself into teams based on Word, Worship, Community, Service and any other topics identified. The committee or each team is responsible to draft GREAT parish goals and related action steps using the framework provided, for further review and refinement by the parish pastoral council. These teams can be expanded to include non-council members to respect the work, wisdom and engagement of people from the parish staff and existing groups serving in a given area of parish life.

The overall intent of GREAT goals is to develop goals that each person, team and the overall parish pastoral council believes and feels can be “GREAT” for future parish life and ministries. A further perspective is given below:

Growth: The goal should address a specific direction that can truly grow and develop an aspect of parish life. Ideally it reflects a deeper dream and highest hope for something that can make a wonderful, exciting difference in bringing forth the more abundant life to which Jesus calls us.

Realism: The goal must be grounded in the listening process that has been done and the unique realities of parish life and people’s experiences. To be realistic, it must be something toward which people are both *willing* and *able* to work. A goal can be both high and realistic – a high goal can be easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs ever accomplished seem easier because they are a labor of love and passion.

Excellence: The goal should strive for excellence and substantial progress in a given aspect of parish life. Excellence honors God and inspires people.

Attainability: When people identify goals that are most important to them, they begin to figure out ways to make them come true. They *believe* it can be accomplished and cultivate a spirit of – “We can do this!” They develop the creativity, boldness, ‘break-through’ capacity, attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial means to reach their goals. They begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring the parish closer to the achievement of their goals.

Timeliness: The goal should be grounded within the parish story and reality, and have an appropriate sense of urgency and importance. It should have a specific and realistic time frame within the next 3-5 years. With no time frame tied to it, there’s no sense of urgency.

A community can attain most any goal it sets by planning wisely and creatively, and establishing a time frame that allows people to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become doable, not because the goals shrink, but because the community grows and expands to reach them.