

Parish Partnership Visioning Exercise

Introductory Statement for Personal Reflection – Guided Imagery:

Now, imagine 5 years into the future - it is the year 2019. Visualize our parish partnership living the fullness of God's gifts and blessings, inspiring people with life and hope, doing remarkable things. A series of stories appear in the local press. The reports focus on the successful transformation of our parish partnership based on the pastoral planning laid out by the parish pastoral councils in 2014.

One reporter stated: "These parishes are a model of vibrant and relevant faith communities where parishioners are genuinely excited about their faith. They are a beacon of service and hope in the wider community. Other parishes look to their collaborative approach as a bold, courageous and creative example of how to create a vision for the future that is reality-based yet full of hope. Not only are the parishes flourishing spiritually and in their service to the community, but church attendance is up, temporal affairs are well managed, lay leadership is flourishing, and the parishes have adapted to the shifting demographic patterns with sensitivity and agility."

Personal reflection followed by small group work to consider three questions:

1. Describe what our parish partnership in 2019 looks like in terms of its:

- a. Spirit and culture (What do you see? What do you hear? What do people experience? How does the world feel different to you? What images stand out to you and tell you something exciting has happened?)
- b. Structures (pastoral models for collaboration, community and the delivery of ministry and service; effective pastoral and finance councils, parish groups)
- c. Staffing (Full time, part time, paid, volunteer)
- d. Ministries (Word, Worship, Service, Community)

2. How did we get there?

- a. What were the major steps to achieve the outcome?
 - i. How did the parish pastoral councils and parish staffs work?
 - ii. What did the implementation look like?
- b. What tough issues arose/what decisions needed to be made?
- c. How did we overcome those issues? What did we do?

3. What were the handful of key facts, insights and inspirations that helped us decide what to do?

Process Goals are to gain understanding in the following areas:

- An emerging consensus on what the vision / desired outcome in 5 years might look like
- A hypothesis or hypotheses of what has to happen for the vision / desired outcome to be realized (i.e. envisioning the options and paths that are available)
- Based on the process and what we learn:
 - What do we know and what do we need to understand better (data or issues)?
 - What are the key issues we will face and hence need to analyze further?

(Over)

Possible Timeline

- 20 min **Introduction to exercise and background presentation**
- 45-60 min **Table groups of six (mixed from participating parishes)**
– **Focus on “vision / desired outcome”**
(Participants can be given a reflection worksheet to be filled out ahead of time to help focus their thoughts for this exercise in a common format – see Question 1.)
- Personal reflection – 5 min:
Reflect on the images from your worksheet for Question 1 and how you have imagined our parish partnership as profoundly blessed and guided by all that is possible with God’s grace. Identify the 2-3 most compelling and inspiring ideas and images in your reflection – things that speak to the deeper meaning and the heart of what most gives vitality and life and hope to our parishes and their future.
- Table Group Discussion:
Select a Discussion Leader, Recorder, Timekeeper and Reporter.
- Go around one at a time and share your insights – all listen carefully (4-5 minutes/person).
- Capture the most compelling themes and images from these reflections into a narrative statement to turn in.
- 45-60 min **Table groups – Focus on “How we got there”**
(Participants can be given reflection worksheet to be filled out ahead of time to help focus their thoughts for this exercise in a common format – see Question 2.)
- Personal reflection – 5 min:
Reflect on the images from your worksheet for Question 2. Identify the 2-3 most compelling and inspiring ideas and images in your reflection – things that make the difference in “How we got there” from your homework reflection.
- Table Group Discussion (as above)
- 30-60 min **Prepare Table Group Presentations**
Choose a creative way to present your vision for the news story as if it is happening now. Your group will give a 10-15 minute presentation of your vision(s) for the future. Have fun, be creative and present a compelling image of what’s possible.
- 30-60 min **Give Table Group Presentations – 10-15 min each**
Each group presents its creative presentation – this can be an experience of great energy, fun and inspiration!
- 60 min **Seek to Discern a Consensus View as a Full Group**

Logistical Requirements:

- Big room for full group session
- Smaller rooms/places in big room for table groups
- Flip pads with multi-color markers and tape to put things on walls.
- Each table group will designate a leader, recorder, reported, time-keeper

Background Information:

- *Parish Pastoral Planning Summary-Context for Exploring Possibilities for Parish Partnership* for each parish
- *Helpful Facts About Our Parishes* form
- *Example Areas of Planning as a Parish Partnership*
- Other??