

PILGRIM PEOPLE

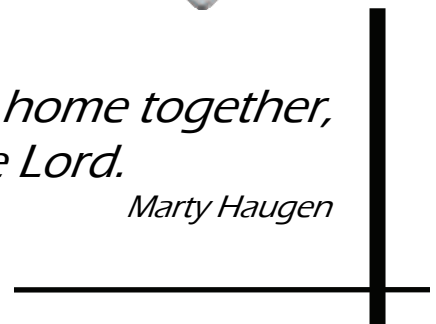
Pastoral Planning Toolkit

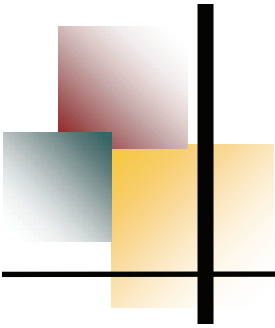
Diocese of Scranton 2013



*We are still on our way, we are going home together,
let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

Marty Haugen






The Journey: Planning Together

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We need to insure that Parish Pastoral Council members are grounded in faith and worship; they are formed and trained for their responsibilities; and their work is enhanced with the support and encouragement of the foremost leader of the parish, the pastor.
Bishop Bambera's Pastoral Letter 2011

1. Purpose, Rationale, Benefits

*Planning for the future is based on knowledge of and appreciation for the story of how the parish has evolved from the past. While appreciating what has been, a prophetic approach to planning seeks to **discern the movement of the Spirit and the will of God for your parish at this moment in time.** John Reid, Seattle*

The **major function of the Parish Pastoral Council is pastoral planning** — to structure ways that the parish can contribute to the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ and the Church. Prayer and faith-sharing helps the Council begin to discern the will of God for the parish, then to express it in:

- **Directional Planning** — Mission/Vision Statement, Core Values Statement
- **Strategic Planning** — Setting of Goals, stepping stones towards the vision, long-range in nature
- **Operational Planning** — Specifying goals into Objectives and Actions; Who will do What, by When, and at What Cost?
- **Administrative Planning** — Day to day performance; ongoing evaluation of the plan's progress; annual assessment
- **Celebration of Accomplishments** — Public acknowledgement, appreciation of all participants

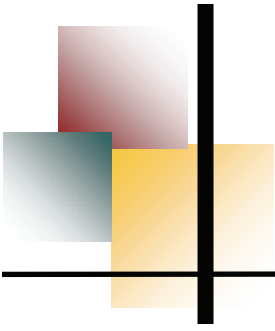
The Parish Pastoral Council needs to devise appropriate ways to **engage the entire parish in the planning process.** This could occur through a series of assemblies, personal interviews, or various forms of listening sessions.

PPCG 42-48

Why should a Parish do Pastoral Planning?

- *To envision in clear and specific terms what the parish should be and do in faithfully carrying forth the mission of Jesus amidst the trends and complexities of contemporary life.*
- *To strengthen the parish and its collective presence and ministries by building the commitment and collaboration of parish leaders and members around a clear, shared vision and focus.*
- *To provide a visible witness and sign to the larger community of what the parish stands for and how it hopes to serve people.*
- *To confront emerging challenges and take constructive action.*
- *To provide a framework to guide future decisions in both stable and changing conditions.*
- *To guide the wise use and allocation of limited parish resources.*





Principles for Effective Planning

To be successful in pastoral planning, certain underlying principles need to be understood and taken seriously. Many planning efforts fail to be successful in building the life of a parish community because these principles are neglected.

PRAYER: Planning is most hopeful and effective when parish members make a commitment to personal and communal prayer, seeking the presence and inspiration of the Lord in each step that is taken. “What is God calling us to be and to do as a parish community?”

RELATIONSHIPS: Relationships are the heart of parish life, and effective planning builds relationships and fosters unity in each step of the process. The planning reflects a common vision, shared purpose, mutual understanding and a focus on goals which people work towards together using each person’s God given gifts.

CONVERSATION: Planning involves having conversations that reflect what people most care about. Without honest dialogue and sensitive listening, there is no real community. Invite people to share stories, history, experiences and hopes — ask what is possible, not what is wrong.

CHOICES: After a period of listening, study and dialogue to bring together the voices of the community in light of the mission of the Church, choices need to be made:

Why are we here as a parish? What matters most? (Mission/Vision)

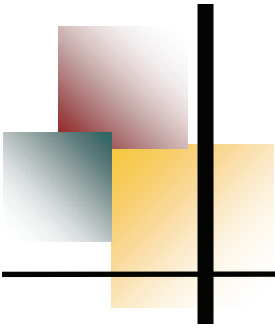
What do we most need to become or accomplish as a parish to fulfill our mission? Goals)

How will we achieve our goals? What are the steps and who will help? (Action)

ACTION: Planning requires follow-up and action. Getting things done, says Stephen Covey, requires that we “organize and execute around priorities.” The will to accomplish the plan, along with accountability, affirmation and evaluation are necessary elements for sustaining the effort and seeing results.

Who are the navigators and designated drivers for your pilgrimage?





2. ORGANIZING OUR PLANNING

1. What does our parish hope to gain from the planning effort? What do we need and want to learn? What is the purpose and desired outcome for our planning?
How will we know if we are “there” yet?

2. What are the key values that should guide our planning effort?

3. Whose voices, thoughts, ideas do we need to hear?

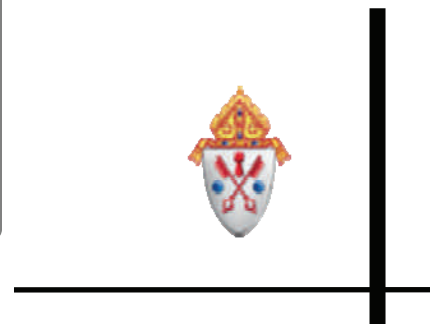
_____ Registered members of the parish

_____ Those who attend Mass regularly

_____ Certain percent of parishioners (how to select?)

_____ People in certain groups (i.e., age, family status, culture, special interest)

Other:



4. Which listening processes will we use, and in what sequence? Reasons for our choice?

_____ Historicizing; Reasons:

_____ Survey; Reasons:

_____ Interviews; Reasons:

_____ Community Meeting; Reasons

_____ Focus Groups; Reasons:

_____ Other – describe and give reason:

5. Special Studies (which of the following would be helpful?)

Type of assessment	Y/N	Person, Group Assigned	Target completion
Demographics: Parish			
Demographics: Local Area			
Facilities			
Finances			
Ministries/Staffing			
Other:			

6. What is our projected schedule for completing this round of planning?

a) Start Date:

b) Groundwork, team formation: (Months 1-2)

c) Listening Process/Investigation: } (Months 3-5)

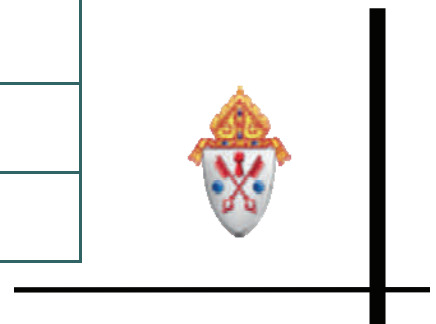
d) Special Studies/Scavenger Hunt: }

e) Analysis/Re-calculate (what have we discovered?) (Months 6-8)

f) Writing/Publishing the Plan (Travel Blog) (Months 9-10)

g) Ongoing Implementation, Evaluation, Where do we go from here? (Ongoing)

Sept 2013	Jan 2014	May 2014	Sept 2014
Oct 2013	Feb 2014	June 2014	Oct 2014
Nov 2013	Mar 2014	July 2014	Nov 2014
Dec 2013	Apr 2014	Aug 2014	Dec 2014



Sept 2013	Jan 2014	May 2014	Sept 2014
Oct 2013	Feb 2014	June 2014	Oct 2014
Nov 2013	Mar 2014	July 2014	Nov 2014
Dec 2013	Apr 2014	Aug 2014	Dec 2014



Do you have dates assigned to these communication steps, so that it will be enough ahead of the planning timeline you set?

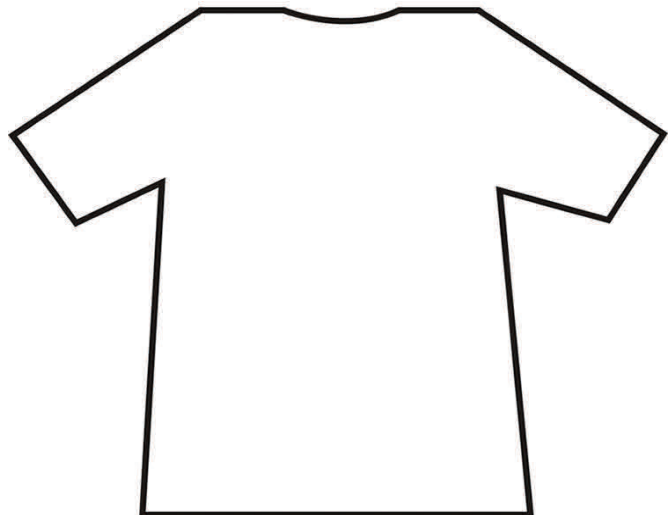
3. Parish-Wide Communication Campaign

Think of this as preparing for the Family Reunion – who is invited, what do they need to know about the planning process and what should they bring for their part? What information will help them participate as fully as you hope they will?

ONGOING COMMUNICATION

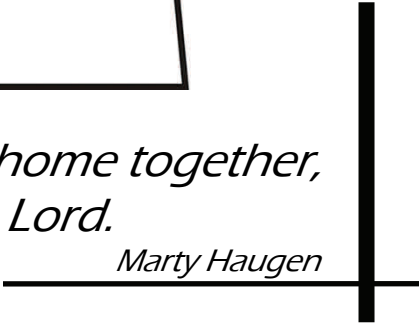
- _____ Bulletin Announcements :
- _____ Special Mailings:
- _____ Speakers at Mass:
- _____ Information Meetings:
- _____ Parish Newsletter: Tell parish stories
- _____ Parish Website:
- _____ Who will lead the ongoing publicity efforts?

Special theme or motto that will engage and inspire people?



*We are still on our way, we are going home together,
let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

Marty Haugen





4. Tools for the Journey Listening Phase

Appreciative Inquiry Approach – Comparison

A mindset for listening and planning, building on our strengths

Problem Solving (medical diagnosis approach)

- Identify the problem (symptoms)
- Determine the cause (diagnosis)
- Propose a solution (prescription)
- Implement it (treatment)

“Parish is a problem to be solved.”

Appreciative Inquiry (life-centered approach)

- Identify what gives life
Discover “what is”
- Imagine ways to enhance life
Dream “what could be”
- Co-construct the ideal
Design “what should be”
- Empower innovation
Do “what will be”

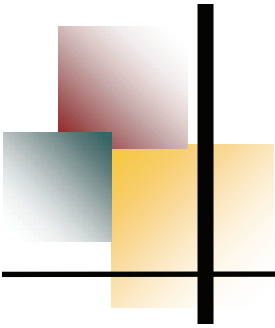
“Parish is a mystery of life to be embraced.”

Apply Appreciative Inquiry Principles to any of these tools:

- Historicizing
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Community Meeting (Town Hall)
- Focus Groups

See instructions and samples following, along with article:
[An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry](#) by Rick Krivanka

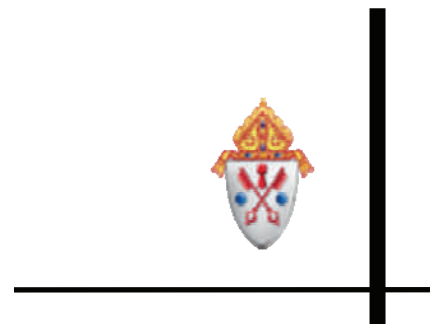


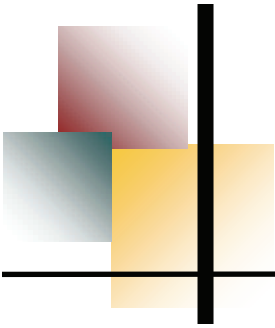


Which of these signs of vitality best describe your parish right now?

Do some of these sound more like a parish you knew in the past? Do you wish for something you are reading about in this article?

Which two of these indicators do you believe would be the most valuable areas to develop and promote in your parish?





5. Special Study Side Trips

Trends and Insights in the Parish and Surrounding Community

While the Parish Pastoral Council (and additional volunteers, if warranted) conducts the listening phase, some smaller groups or individuals could be researching supplemental information in sources of information such as:

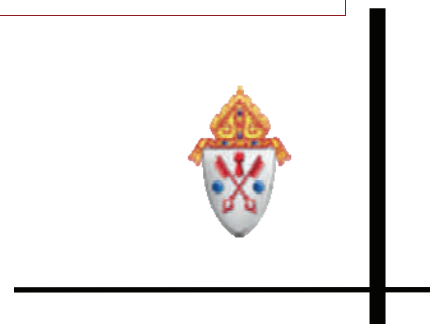
- Overall Parish Vitality indicators (see enclosed article, for example)
- Parish and Geographic Area Demographics (worksheets enclosed)
- Finances — income/expenses, trends, projections (Finance Council probably already has this, and could provide some highlights for Pastoral Council benefit)
- Facilities — capacity, conditions, needs and ways to share with other parishes or community organizations
- Parish Ministries — all existing services, who is served, when are these available, and in what ways are people better served by a collaborative effort with other parishes?
(These could be reviewed in relationship to Bishop Bambera’s Pastoral Letter, *“Wounded and Healed: Regathering the Scattered.”* — see sample worksheets)


You drafted this chart at the beginning of the planning process — need to revise?

Type of assessment	Y/N	Person, Group Assigned	Target completion
Demographics: Parish			
Demographics: Local Area			
Facilities			
Finances			
Ministries/Staffing			
Other:			

In regard to each assessment complete, highlight key findings:

- Trends (what is rising/declining/stable)
- Surprises and striking points of interest
- What is sustainable/not sustainable





The watershed question for people in many parishes is: "Do you believe that your best years are behind you, or do you believe that some of your best years are still ahead of you?" Effective, successful parishes live in the confidence of God's promise that some of their best years are yet to come.

Kennon Callahan, Twelve Keys to an Effective Church

6. Recalculate: Analysis, Trends, Direction

Bringing together all of the data you have gathered through the listening process and assessments you completed, the next important question is "How do we make sense and meaning from what our people have said?"

1. Begin with the end in mind...

Review the proposed model of the intended pastoral plan. Recognize and note how different voices from the feedback you received can contribute to different parts of the plan. As you read and discuss, note this for future reference.

2. Plan a comprehensive report for your working group (See DMP Sample worksheet)

- Use the basic framework of the survey/process questions
- Highlight "key strengths/what gives life" and "areas of parish life to improve, grow, enhance"
- For open-ended questions, identify key themes and supporting illustrative quotes in the words people used
- Identify themes and patterns that occur most frequently as well as the prophetic or compelling images that only one person might express. Sometimes only one individual can identify with just the right words an idea and possibility which becomes important to the whole parish plan.

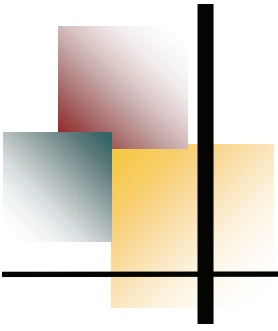
3. Plan a summary report to the parish community

- Use a length and format that will be most readable, with the option to talk with a Council member if someone wants to read a more detailed report
- Thank people and express care and appreciation for what they have said and how it will be used — how it will make a difference
- The published report does not include anything that will be a source of embarrassment or hurt to anyone

For more extensive open-ended question and interview data, see the enclosed handout with additional instructions for how small working teams can process the content and find key themes.

Who will be the navigators and drivers for this part of the journey?





7. Writing it Down: Travel Blog (3-5 yr Parish Plan)





Parish Name and Town/City:

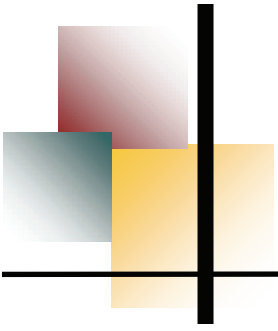
Parish Pastoral Plan for the 2014-2019

These pages provide a sample template — your parish might find it helpful to write your plan in this format, but you might also have a completely different format which better expresses your goals and objectives. For each goal identified, you will need to spell out the action plans for the first year of the plan (Who is going to do what by when and at what cost?). Each year of the plan, the Council members should carefully review the progress and adjust the action plans — gradually, as goals are achieved, the entire process begins again!

Mission/Vision Statement

Core Values to Live By in Fulfilling our Mission





Our Parish Goals for the Ministries of WORD (Reflecting the words of our members; add supporting quotes whenever helpful)

We will sustain and build upon these strengths:

1.

2.

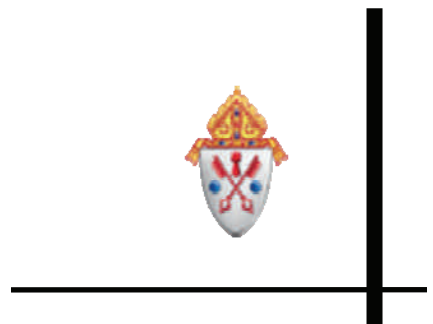
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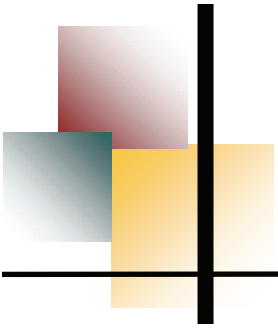
We will initiate—provide— develop— become:

1.

2.

3.





Our Parish Goals for the Ministries of WORSHIP (Reflecting the words of our members; add supporting quotes whenever helpful)

We will sustain and build upon these strengths:

1.

2.

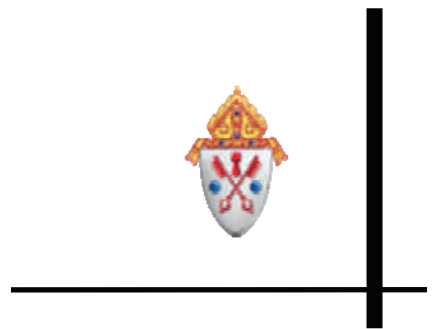
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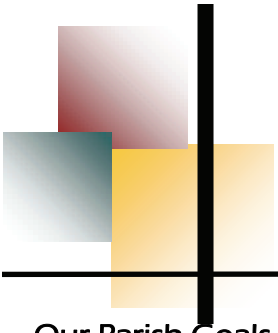
We will initiate—provide— develop— become:

1.

2.

3.





Our Parish Goals for the Ministries of COMMUNITY (Reflecting the words of our members; add supporting quotes whenever helpful)

We will sustain and build upon these strengths:

1.

2.

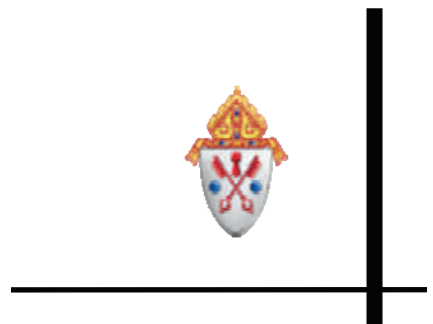
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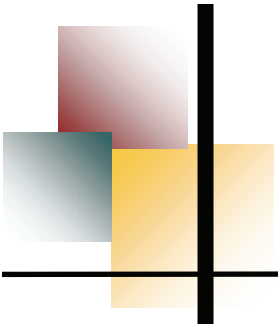
We will initiate—provide— develop— become:

1.

2.

3.





Our Parish Goals for the Ministries of SERVICE (Reflecting the words of our members; add supporting quotes whenever helpful)

We will sustain and build upon these strengths:

1.

2.

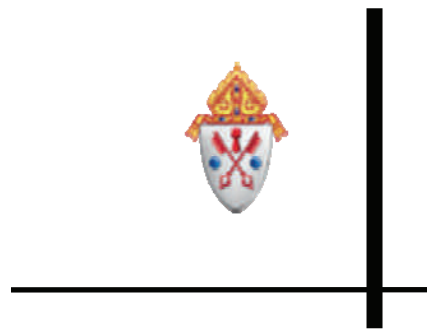
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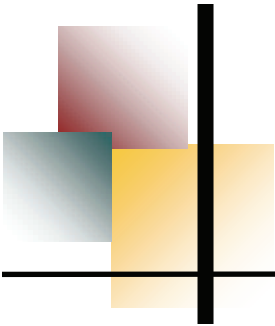
We will initiate—provide— develop— become:

1.

2.

3.





Parish Name and Town/City:

Light blue rectangular box for entering parish name and town/city.

Planning Summary – We Made It!

1. Our parish completed the following **type of listening process**:

2. As a result of this listening process and the assessments we completed, we have identified the following **elements for our 3-5 year pastoral plan**: (see attached)
 - Directional:
 - ___ **Mission/Vision Statement**: parish identity, purpose and vision
 - ___ **Core Values**: guide for everyday behavior

 - Strategic **Goals** for these years: _____
 - ___ 3-5 Key Strengths to build on
 - ___ 3-5 Challenges to address
 - ___ 3-5 areas for collaboration/partnership with other parishes or agencies

 - Operational Plans — **objectives and action steps** to achieve our goals, charted out across the three to five year period of our plan

We have also evaluated what we can do better in partnership, in order to:

- ___ Strengthen and enhance the quality of ministry and service to people
- ___ Wisely use resources without needless duplication
- ___ Prepare for new models of pastoral leadership

Parish partnerships working best for you:

Light blue rectangular box for listing parish partnerships.

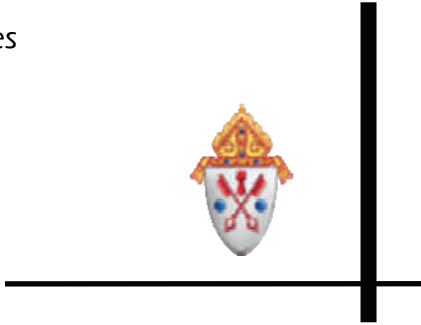
Travel Companions — Partnering with Neighbor Parishes:

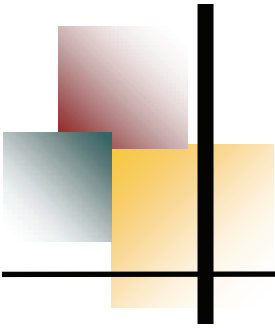
- **Facilities**:
 - We could share these spaces with another parish:
 - We would be helped if another parish could share this kind of space with us:

- **Staffing/Ministry**:
 - We would like to explore the following sharing of staff/volunteer positions and ministries with another parish or parishes:

- **Worship Life**:
 - We would like to explore sharing liturgical and prayer experiences between our parish and others.

- **Other Partnership Ideas**:





Appreciative Inquiry Interviews

Description – a process of listening, which involves doing one-on-one interviews focused upon “what most gives life in our parish” and hopes and dreams for “what could enhance parish life”.

Considerations – identify topics and questions, ways and settings for doing interviews, process for submitting interviews including use of an online tool as well as written forms. Questions will produce a large volume of responses, stories, images, hopes and dreams; will require time to read through responses collated by question and discern inspiring quotes, meanings, themes, etc.

Options – individual interviews can be done as part of a town hall meeting to foster further interaction around what is being expressed as well as in people’s homes, parish facilities, coffee shop, etc.

Time required – 2 to 4 months from planning through conclusion.

Advantages:

Creates opportunity for listening to individual persons in greater depth and exploring responses to questions.

The most personal approach to listening.

Can schedule interviews and therefore predict number of parishioners who will participate.

Disadvantages:

Requires time to set-up and do the interviewing.

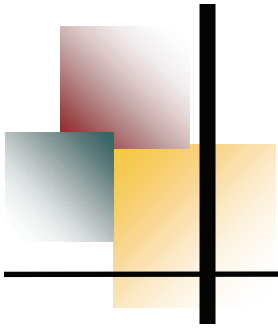
May limit the total number of people given an opportunity to speak.

Offers little opportunity for group interaction unless done in town hall setting.

Requires more time to discern meanings and summarize results.

Notes:





Historicizing Listening Process Option

Description – large or small group process of looking at the history of the parish and using that history to draw conclusions for the future, 2-3 hour session.

Considerations – final design using enclosed resources for agenda/process, prayer, selection of facilitator(s); scheduling with adequate notice for invited participants; requires parishioners to choose a specific date and time to attend; might not be as helpful for newer parishes.

Time required – 2 to 3 months from planning through conclusion.

Advantages:

Creates the opportunity for a large number of people to interact, share stories and hear one another.

Can reach large numbers of people in limited time.

Shows respect for the history that lives in people.

Disadvantages:

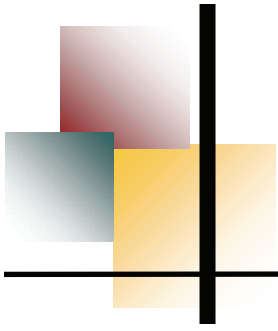
Some people may not speak up or be as honest in large settings, even in small groups.

Difficult to explore individual comments in an in-depth manner.

People may not attend either because they are new to the parish or don't understand the process.

Notes:





Survey Listening Process

Description – pre-printed and designed survey instrument which can be mailed to all parishioners, or to a selected portion of parishioners, or can be distributed at Masses.

Considerations – requires design and ordering of clear and concise questions that will properly address topics for study and generate responses that will be of value; consideration of intended respondents; selection of question scales to use; selection of demographic identifiers while preserving anonymity; use of open-ended questions and their placement; use of an online tool (e.g Survey Monkey) for collecting and summarizing responses.

Time required – 3 to 4 months from planning through conclusion.

Advantages:

Creates opportunity for listening to the most people in the least amount of time. Data can be summarized and analyzed through a computer program.

Disadvantages:

Impersonal, does not give the “sense of the parish” that interviews or town hall meeting can produce.

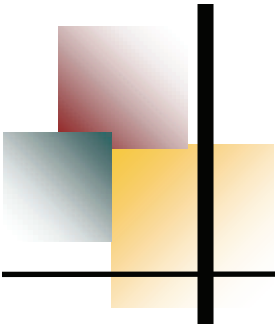
Data entry can be time consuming unless people use an online tool.

Offers little opportunity for people to hear one another and build on ideas, so parish should make an effort to share findings, possibly with discussion in a group setting.

May involve greater costs if survey is mailed to all registered parishioners.

Notes:





Community Meeting Listening Process

Description – large gathering, 50 - several hundred people, 2-3 hours, involving a mix of small groups (4-6 people) to maximize participation and subsequent reporting/discussion in the full group.

Considerations – final design using enclosed resources for questions, agenda/process, prayer, selection of facilitator(s); scheduling with adequate notice for invited participants; requires parishioners to choose a specific date and time to attend.

Time required – 2 to 3 months planning through conclusion.

Advantages:

Creates the opportunity for a large number of people to interact and hear one another.

Can reach large numbers of people in limited time.

Disadvantages:

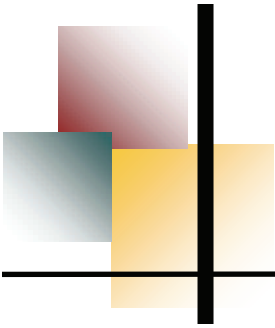
Some people may not speak up or be as honest in large settings, even in small groups.

Difficult to explore individual comments in an in-depth manner.

People may not attend either because of an inconvenient time, a dislike of large meetings or a feeling that they weren't personally asked.

Notes:





Focus Group Listening Process

Description – small gatherings of 6 to 10 people led by a facilitator; meeting time typically would last 1 to 2 hours and involves the use of about 5 to 10 pre-determined questions and free-flowing responses.

Considerations – requires design of questions, related script and meeting timeline, selection of facilitators, and identification and invitation to specific homogeneous segments of parishioners (e.g. people in a given age group, family status, racial/cultural group, level of parish involvement e.g. active, inactive)

Time required – 2 to 3 months from planning through conclusion.

Advantages:

Good way to gather opinions, beliefs and attitudes about issues of interest; test assumptions; and encourage discussion on particular topics.

Can build energy and deeper exploration of topics/questions through the spontaneous interaction among participants and their responses.

Can be used to focus in on listening to specific segments of parishioners.

Facilitator can assure the inclusion of all participants and specific exploration of points of interest.

Disadvantages:

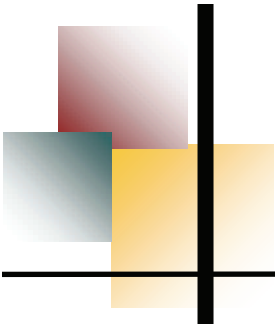
Listening process is limited to people who are invited.

Some people may not speak up as much as others or be honest in a group setting.

May be difficult to explore individual comments amidst the spontaneous interaction.

Notes:



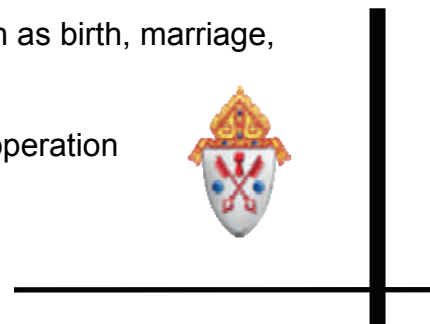


Excerpts from: ***Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,
A Pastoral Vision for the Church of Scranton, Bishop Joseph Bambera***

“I CALL us to be servant leaders who are people of the WORD, preaching, teaching, evangelizing and cherishing the Gospel message throughout our entire lives.”

Meeting this challenge calls for reflection and study around the following practical considerations:

- A. Promote on-going family-centered Christian formation through cooperative catechetical programs for all ages and groups with the special needs of individuals and families in mind;
- B. Use the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in all parishes as a primary means of fulfilling our mission to evangelize;
- C. Promote full incorporation of youth and young adults into the life of the parish through ministry programs and the inclusion of young people in parish activities, organizations, and structures;
- D. Develop and support teachers, catechists and others involved in Christian formation;
- E. Provide the opportunity for all the faithful to participate in ongoing programs of catechesis with special attention to lectionary based methods of learning in order to develop a greater understating of Scripture and its application in our lives and world;
- F. Engage a life-long Faith-Formation Minister to coordinate religious education and or youth ministry for the parish or regional partnership;
- G. Incorporate Catholic colleges and universities more fully into the life of the diocesan parishes;
- H. Impress upon all of the faithful our membership in the domestic, parish, diocesan and universal Church through catechetical initiatives;
- I. Re-focus our educational ministry or catechesis on events such as birth, marriage, death or other personal celebrations of joy and loss.
- J. Promote an ecumenical attitude by encouraging prayer and cooperation among various religious traditions.





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“I CALL us to be servant leaders who WORSHIP our God and celebrate the Sacraments in union with the universal Church.”

Meeting this challenge calls for reflection and study around the following practical considerations:

- A. Present Sunday as the “weekly Easter,” an expression of the identity of our community and the center of its life and mission;
- B. Develop a comprehensive catechesis of the Eucharist including the implementation of the Roman Missal;
- C. Find ways to promote: liturgical catechesis in the parish, an improved quality of participation by parishioners of all ages in Sunday Mass, the calling of men and women to liturgical ministries, the training of liturgical ministers, both spiritually and functionally, and improved use of music and art to enhance liturgical celebrations in a way that the world can comprehend;
- D. Help parishioners to understand that the same “Spirit” of God transforming the bread and wine at Eucharist is also breathing life into our scripture readings at Mass;
- E. Provide for the needs of new immigrants in the context of our liturgical celebrations;
- F. Engage a Director of Liturgy in each parish or cluster of parishes to coordinate worship for the community.





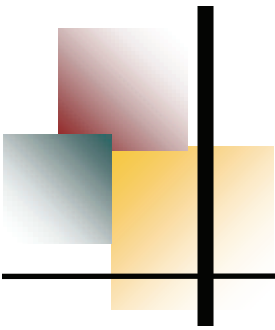
Excerpts from: ***Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,
A Pastoral Vision for the Church of Scranton, Bishop Joseph Bambera***

“I CALL us to be servant leaders who build COMMUNITY through hospitality, respect, inclusion and holiness.”

Meeting this challenge calls for reflection and study around the following practical considerations:

- A. Nurture the personal relationship of our members with God;
- B. Deepen everyone’s knowledge of God’s saving ways;
- C. Encourage and empower members to be evangelizers at home, school, in the workplace, neighborhood, marketplaces, and places of leisure;
- D. Reach out to the unchurched, inactive and alienated, inviting them to join in the Church’s belief and worship and life of discipleship;
- E. Strive to promote the consciousness that we are all part of a global community and our actions often have broader implications than just within our local community.





Excerpts from: ***Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,
A Pastoral Vision for the Church of Scranton***

“I CALL us to be servant leaders who engage in SERVICE to our neighbors near and far and who work for justice and stewardship to hasten the Reign of God.”

Meeting this challenge calls for reflection and study around the following:

- A. Involve all parishioners in social ministry and include awareness of human needs into all aspects of parish life and worship;
- B. Promote initiatives rooted in the Gospel of Life that both acknowledge and treasure all forms of human life as created in the image and likeness of God;
- C. Identify and act on local social concerns and educate parishioners in the common call to justice;
- D. Form regional or partnership “assessment teams” that determine strategies of service in the area;
- E. Include in our teaching and preaching an understanding of the Church’s social teaching and the responsibility of all Christians of every age to be involved in the work of justice, especially bringing the principles of justice and peace into their everyday life and work;
- F. Encourage all of the faithful to embrace fully their vocational calling as baptized Christians and to promote a deeper awareness of and appreciation for vocational calls to the priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life and lay apostolates;
- G. Take seriously the need to care for the Earth to create a sustainable future for the world;
- H. Address from a local and global perspective those in need by supporting opportunities provided by the diocesan office of the Pontifical Mission Society, Catholic Relief Services, and other efforts;
- I. Form parishioners in an understanding of stewardship as a responsible personal and communal use of time, talent and treasure within the Church and all of life.



