

COMMITMENT CARDS

Most parishes produce commitment cards, brochures, booklets, or flyers listing all of the ministries and activities parishioners can sign up to participate in. Some parishes choose to include a detachable sign-up card with the ministry brochure or directory. Others prefer to have a separate brochure and commitment card. Although the commitment cards can be designed in a variety of ways and will vary from parish to parish, there is some essential information that will be of benefit to include. First determine the groupings in your parish ministries if this has not already been identified in your parish. You might suggest some of the following groups: Worship, Faith Formation, Justice, Peace and Service, and Administration.

Some information you might want to include for each ministry or activity:

The name of the ministry and a brief description
The ministry's objective and connection with the larger organization
The meeting days, times, period of time involved, and the length of commitment required
Identify the training, support and resources available
List the name and phone number of the ministry leader or a parish staff contact
Include the benefits and challenges of this ministry

A sample copy of a sign-up Commitment Card and Parish Life Guide used at St. Philip Parish in Green Bay is attached.

MANAGING THE COMMITMENT CARDS

Keeping accurate and up to date records is an essential component to the success of the Stewardship of Service effort. A system of record-keeping begins when the commitment cards are returned. It is important that the commitment cards be kept in a central area, perhaps the parish office, to maintain current and accurate records of who is involved in a ministry.

Once all the information has been entered into a software program, the data generated from printed reports can provide you with current information on individuals who have renewed their commitment, individuals new to a ministry, individuals who want more information, and those who wish to discontinue their commitment. This data can also be compared and contrasted with last year's information.

At the same time that the information is entered, personalized thank you letters or cards can be printed. In addition to thanking them for their commitment, this thank-you should restate what they signed up for on their commitment card and when they will be contacted for follow-up.

Some parishes have a procession to the altar presenting the Cards while the Offertory Hymn is being sung during the Offering of the Gifts. In other parishes, the pastor/presider or ministers of hospitality go down the aisles and collect the cards from the pews. Brainstorm with your pastor and/or the Liturgy Committee creative ways to collect the commitment cards at your parish on Commitment Weekend.

It is important that everyone, new volunteers and those already involved in ministry, get used to the idea of renewing their commitment every year.

Renewing the commitments annually, collecting the commitment cards, and maintaining accurate and up to date records requires a team effort on the part of the parish staff and the ministry leadership.