

# PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY CHECK-UP

## Purpose

Every parish has some form of social ministry because the Catholic faith is profoundly social. We live our faith in our families, in our parishes, in our workplace, in the community, and in the world. It is important to periodically check how we are doing in terms of social ministry. The purpose of this tool is to assist parish teams and social concerns committees to assess how they are doing at any given time with parish social ministry efforts within their parish. The term social ministry is used as a broad term to encompass a variety of activities referred to with different terminology (Christian service, social concerns, social justice, pastoral care, respect life, etc) in different parishes. The common denominator is that social ministry involves putting our faith into action based on the principles of Catholic social teaching.

This check-up is a tool to be used to assess your current state of social ministry. It is designed to assist in identifying how you are doing in various areas and to be used as not only an evaluation tool but also as a starting point for further planning and action. It is helpful to utilize the check-up periodically to ensure that your parish is maintaining a healthy approach to social ministry, just as you would have a personal health check-up every year or two. It can reinforce good practices and it can identify areas of concern that require action. This tool is not something that is done once, put on the shelf, and then forgotten.

## Healthy Parish Social Ministry

In general, there are certain traits of a parish social ministry that is in good health. Examples of these traits are:

- ◆ Open communication with the parish team and parish community
- ◆ Encourages a variety of people to be a part of social ministry
- ◆ Offers ongoing orientation and training for those involved
- ◆ Provides a balanced approach to social ministry - charity, social justice, pastoral care, respect life
- ◆ Establishes goals and objectives that are realistic and measurable
- ◆ Evaluates progress as part of the ongoing planning process
- ◆ Affirms the efforts of those involved
- ◆ Is grounded in Catholic social teaching

## Process

This check-up is designed to be completed easily as an overview of the parish social ministry. Most answers require only a yes, no or unsure. It is best to gather input from a number of people in filling it out so that it is more than one person's opinion. This could be accomplished by gathering a group to discuss the responses or by having a number of people complete the check-up independently and then collating the responses. After the results are tabulated, the pastoral team, social concerns committee or parish council can then review the results and determine what should be affirmed and what additional actions need to be taken.

## PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY ASSESSMENT

### *The Social Ministry climate of the parish. Are we up and running?*

Does your parish have a mission statement?	YES	NO
Does your parish have particular concerns it is seeking to address?	YES	NO
Does your parish offer ongoing support, formation, recognition, and nurturing of leadership - volunteer and professional?	YES	NO
Are parishioners' gifts recognized and called to the service of the parish and the community?	YES	NO
Does your parish invite and support all cultures and ages? '	YES	NO
Does your parish coordinate its ministries?	YES	NO
Is information and encouragement given regularly to the entire parish about organizations and ministries currently in place, inviting people to volunteer?	YES	NO
Does your parish encourage social ministry witnessing in secular life- in business, community, and in civic life- acknowledging the extension of the Church in the world?	YES	NO
Are time limits in place on ministry commitments? Once people get a spot in ministry, can they get out?	YES	NO
Does your parish provide opportunities for people to initiate ministries, based on their gifts, expertise, talents?	YES	NO

Parish social ministry encompasses a broad range of ministry needs and possible responses. Please review the following ministries and notate which are active in your parish.

Presence to the homebound, sick, dying	YES	NO
Ministry to those in grief because of death, separation, divorce, etc.	YES	NO
Presence to those who are incarcerated or victims of crime	YES	NO
The care of the elderly	YES	NO
Involvement in social issues in a manner that promotes justice and peace	YES	NO

Opportunities for people to develop Peer Ministry Programs (Befrienders, Stephens Ministry)	YES	NO
Welcoming diverse cultures	YES	NO
Service to the poor and needy	YES	NO
Advocacy, justice, peace, and respect life initiatives	YES	NO
Discussions on End of Life issues	YES	NO
Efforts to educate the parish regarding peace and justice issues	YES	NO
Education on farm issues i.e., use of water, organic farming, etc.	YES	NO
Educate parishioners on lobbying procedures in order to affect legislation	YES	NO