

Hospitality, Community, Belonging & Prayer

Importance, Relationship to Stewardship & How to Further Develop

"The key to Stewardship and Sacrificial Giving is to build community in the parish: When you offer people a sense of prayer, hospitality, belonging, and community, then they'll be ready to hear the call for responsibility and service."

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Copied with Approval - St Francis Parish - Wichita, Kansas

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Practical Ideas for Greater Emphasis within your Parish

Overall Parish Hospitality Efforts: A marvelous video and exercise entitled "**How Welcoming is your Parish?**" The exercise is designed to help all parishioners come to realize not only the importance of hospitality, but that it takes the whole parish community fostering the attitude, not just the greeters. *"...welcoming touches the heart of who we areas a Christian community... The call to welcome comes with baptism and extends to the entire community."* This tape and exercise may be obtained by writing to the Office of Religious Formation, P.O. Box 4130, Omaha, NE 68104. Enclose a check for \$9.95 payable to "Diocese of Omaha" and reference the title above.

Calling people by name and offering a warm smile and welcome as they enter the Church on Sundays:

- Check with your diocesan Office of Worship to see if they offer training for Ushers and Ministers of Hospitality.
- Video tape, Training for Hospitality: The Ministry of Ushers and Greeters, 49 minutes, \$59.50, to order call Liturgical Press at 1-800-858-5450 or www.litpress.org.
- Booklet. The Ministry of Hospitality, 48 pages, \$1.95, to order call Liturgical Press at 1-800-858-5450 or www.litpress.org.

Coffee Hour/Refreshments after every Mass every Sunday as a Ministry of Hospitality and to Foster Community: All parish groups can be asked to host a Sunday or two each year. No charge but have a donation jar (unless it's the occasional pancake breakfast). Each hosting group can use creativity as to what is served, can showcase their ministry, no solicitation, they buy the food and can keep what is put in the cup.

Remembering Parishioners' Special Days:

- *Have volunteers send homemade hand-signed cards from the parish for birthdays, wedding anniversaries, graduations, sacraments, illnesses, births, deaths, appreciation, congratulations, and other significant events.*
- *Announce in bulletin: baptisms/weddings/those going through the RCIA or those who make their First Eucharist/First Reconciliation/Confirmation and others mentioned above.*
- *Consider attractively displaying photos for the above on the bulletin board.*

Funeral Receptions/Grief Ministry:

- *Check with your diocesan Office of Worship or Pastoral Care to see if they offer training for the Ministry of Consolation.*

Marriage and Family are basic components of community. If we are trying to build a strong parish community, it's also going to take efforts to build strong marriages and families.

- *Renewal of Marriage Vows: Have an annual or periodic event where parishioners can celebrate marriage and renew their marriage vows. This could include a guest speaker on the topic of marriage and/or family.*
- *List those who are celebrating Anniversaries in the bulletin: List the couple's name, date and number of year's celebrating each month.*
- *Marriage Moments: The Archdiocese of Chicago Family Ministries Office & Cana Conference has put together a perpetual marriage calendar containing down-to-earth bits of wisdom, reflections and quotations to guide those in marriage. Give these calendars to those just starting out in marriage or as an ideal marriage enrichment or anniversary gift to help your parishioners empower the marriage they created. This calendar maybe obtained by writing to the Family Ministries Office, 155 East Superior, Chicago, IL 60611. Cost of a single calendar is \$10.00, bulk rates available. Or contact familyministries@archdiocese-chgo.org for other marriage & family related resources.*

Sunday Morning Nursery and Providing child-care during some parish meetings/ activities

Annual Parish Picnic or similar where everyone can be invited and the event is not a fundraiser. A bare minimum amount is charged to break even and maximize participation.

Welcoming New Parishioners:

- Announcing in bulletin/at Mass
- Placing pictures of new members within the Church
- Potlucks or dinners to introduce new members to the parish, staff, ministry opportunities, etc.
- System of welcoming that includes a home visit from volunteer parishioners and a packet

Ask parishioners what they think (via survey, telephone, home visit):

- Are the Masses at convenient times for parishioners?
- Do the ministries offered within the parish fit the needs of the parishioners?
- Have an outlet for people to comment or make suggestions about parish life

Ask people how they want to be addressed/Do away with "Dear Parishioner" Letters:

- Ask how they wish to be addressed right on the census form:
- Make options available: Mr. & Mrs. John Smith or Kay and John Smith
- Then respect their wishes by addressing them in the manner in which they want to be called

Offer Parishioners lots of opportunities to get involved in the mission and ministry of the Church in meaningful ways both as participants and as leaders using their gifts and talents:

This presentation will offer resources and leadership training for conducting an annual Time & Talent Effort (education and commitment). Having a year-round systems approach (like Jean Morris Trumbauer's Shared Ministry [<http://members.aol.com/trumbauer>]) supports this. Offer Vocational and Gifts Discernment, Development of Gifts, and an Annual Time & Talent Festival.

Annual Appreciation Dinner/Dance or similar: Invite all those participating in Time & Talent and perhaps spouse or significant other. Consider showing a video or slide show with music that captures some of past year's moments. No charge.

Prayer: Last but not least! All efforts toward community building and hospitality should start and end here. Every parish does a whole number of things to foster a prayerful community. Here are a couple additional items to get your own creative juices flowing about further growth.

- *Some form of ongoing, 7 day a week - 24-hour prayer where parishioners make commitments for one hour per week. This could give hundreds or thousands an opportunity to become involved in the mission of the church in an area that can move mountains.*
- *Prayer Line: 24 hour phone line or voice mailbox where people can call to hear a prayer and maybe a spiritual thought and can maybe leave a message regarding an intention they are requesting prayer for.*
- *Prayer on the Web: If the parish has a home page on the internet, they could have prayer on the menu similar to the prayer line above.*
- *Small Faith Sharing Groups (or Small Christian Communities) that meet weekly to pray and share faith like in the Renew Program or the Little Rock Scripture Study. See "Called to be Church " by Father Art Baranowski, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1-800-488-0488.*
- *Annual Retreats. Missions and Spiritual Direction: The field of dentistry has promoted the importance of twice yearly checkups to maintain good dental health. Perhaps an ongoing year-round committee could exist just to promote parishioners attending an annual retreat at a local retreat center, the annual parish mission and having an appointment with a spiritual director*