

***GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER:
PASTORAL PLANNING FOR THE
DIOCESE OF PEORIA***

PROJECT GOALS

GOALS FOR *GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER*

The parish planning project for the Diocese of Peoria is inspired by the following goals:

1. To enhance the vibrancy of parish life in the Diocese of Peoria.
2. To strengthen the presence and ministry of the Church in the city and rural areas of the Diocese.
3. To foster an appreciation for and participation in Sunday Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.
4. To help make Stewardship a Way of Life throughout the Diocese.
5. To promote vocations to ordained and lay ministry.
6. To ensure that all parishioners have opportunities for quality lifelong Christian Formation, including supporting new initiatives for youth and young adults.
7. To strengthen service to those who are marginalized.
8. To build a greater sense of unity among the English speaking and Spanish speaking people within the local Church.
9. To increase collaboration among all entities in the local, national and universal Church.
10. To advocate for peace and justice in the Church and in the world.

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PLANNING COMMISSION JOB DESCRIPTION

NATURE

The Planning Commission for the Diocese of Peoria is appointed by Bishop Jenky and is advisory to him. It is made up of at least 16 people with the possibility of expanding it to no more than 20 people. The members of the committee are respected priest and lay leaders from diverse ethnic cultural backgrounds in the diocese. All geographic areas of the diocese are represented on the Commission as well as people with experience in Catholic Schools, Catechetical programs, Liturgy and Human Concerns. Some people may represent both a geographic area as well as a ministry area.

PURPOSE

The Planning Commission fulfills the following purposes by giving general advice to Bishop Jenky on the planning process and making recommendations to the Bishop in the following areas:

1. Models (e.g. consolidation, linkage, partnership, team etc.) for staffing parishes given the diminishing number of priests
2. Planning Assumptions and Criteria for applying the Models
3. Final Recommendations on application of the Models after the parishes have submitted their suggestions and had an opportunity to respond to the Planning Commission's Preliminary Recommendations
4. Recommendations for an Implementation Process

FUNCTION

Bishop Jenky selected Msgr. Paul Showalter, Vicar General to be the chair of the Planning Commission. The Commission will meet monthly on an as needed basis and schedule two 2-3 day planning retreats. One will be in March where the Commission will study the Parish Cluster Suggestions and make Preliminary Recommendations back to the parish clusters for a response. The second planning retreat will be in June and the Commission will study the Cluster Responses and make Final Recommendations to the Bishop about the structure of the parishes in the future.

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**ASSUMPTIONS
FOR *GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER***

Assumptions inherent in this planning process include:

1. The Paschal Mystery is both central to our faith and to this planning process. Changes in parish structures are potential examples of the life-death-resurrection mystery.
2. Parishes exist for the mission of the Church, and as a presence of Christ and His Church to the local area.
3. A commitment to Eucharist, prayer and spirituality is a necessary component of the diocesan planning process.
4. Stewardship of human, financial and facility resources is essential for quality parish, regional and diocesan life.
5. One's vision of the Church must be larger than one's own local, geographic or ethnic community. People must be helped and encouraged to think locally, regionally and diocesan-wide in a forward looking and positive fashion.
6. Strong leadership – by clergy, religious and laity – is needed for planning to succeed.
7. All parishes will be more effective if they plan for the future, especially when planning is an on-going process and not employed only in a crisis.
8. Parishes also will be stronger and more effective, if they work together.
9. When planning is done at the local level and there is meaningful involvement by those who will be affected by the changes, there is more ownership of and less resistance to planning (subsidiary).
10. If and when parish mergers are needed, they will be less traumatic and more natural if people and parishes have already been in relationship with one another. In the future, some parish mergers will be suggested by parish partners who have come to believe that consolidation is the best way to go forward.
11. When parishes merge there is a need for expert advice in the evaluation of buildings and assistance with the disposition of real estate.
12. Planning resources will be provided in Spanish where needed.

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**CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF PARISH
AND CLUSTER MINISTRIES AND FUNCTIONS**

Sacramental Life of the Parish

1. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the life and mission of the parish.
2. Sacramental celebrations, including Confessions, and devotional practices reflect the cultural heritage of the people assembled.
3. Parishioners are well trained for sacramental ministries.
4. Music is seen as an integral part of liturgy and all music ministers are well formed by trained musical ability and the liturgical norms of the Church.

Evangelization, Catechesis and Catholic Schools

5. Evangelization is recognized as essential to the life and mission of the Church.
6. The parish provides excellent lifelong catechetical formation, including but not limited to family catechesis, youth and young adult ministry and adult formation
7. The parish actively supports Catholic schools in their operation and mission.
8. Formation and education in vocational awareness is an integral part of all catechetical programs.

Stewardship and Justice

9. Parishioners are educated and formed in stewardship where all disciples share their time, talent and treasure.
10. Social justice, advocacy and outreach programs are well integrated into parish life.
11. Being good stewards of all God's gifts and contributing to and participating in activities of the larger Church are embodied in parish life.

Effective Administration

12. The pastor, staff, parish councils and finance councils exert effective leadership that embodies stewardship and points to the future.
13. The parish is financially stable and exercises good stewardship of its resources.
14. In its planning, the parish takes into account the diminishing number of priests.
15. The parish is taking into account its geographic proximity to other parishes and its Mass attendance when it plans for the future.
16. The parish has adequate and well-trained and compensated staff as well as appropriate and well maintained facilities to carry out its mission

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EIGHT STEP PARISH RESTRUCTURING PROCESS

In order for a parish restructuring process to be successful throughout an entire diocese leading to the merging, linking or partnering of parishes and possibly to the appointment of a leadership team in accord with Canon Law, many steps are required in a specific order. These include:

- STEP #1 -- Conversation** at the Diocesan, Parish and Cluster level
Parish Core Teams and Cluster Teams meet to evaluate their current situation and plan their preferred future.
- STEP #2 -- Suggestion** of a particular Model by each Cluster Team (Consolidated, Linked, Partnership, In Solidum/Team, with a rationale to the Diocesan Planning Commission.)
- STEP #3 -- Preliminary Recommendations** of the Diocesan Planning Commission with a rationale back to Cluster of Parishes.
- STEP #4 -- Conversation** about the recommendation at the Cluster level.
- STEP #5 -- Response** to the Diocesan Planning Commission about a particular Model with a rationale by the Cluster Team.
- STEP #6 -- Final Recommendations** of the Diocesan Planning Commission with a rationale sent to the Bishop
- STEP #7 -- Decisions** by the Bishop after appropriate consultation based on the Final Recommendations made to him by the Diocesan Planning Commission.
- STEP #8 -- Implementation** at the parish, cluster and diocesan level of all decisions made by the Bishop

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PROJECT TIMELINE

TIMELINE -- SUMMER 2011 – JANUARY 2013

1. The Bishop calls together all priests of the diocese to meet on June 23rd and to be oriented to the planning process, helping them understand their roles and his expectations for their support for the project.
2. Planning Commission meets
Meetings with Deacons, Parish ministry leaders such as DRE's
Final preparations for the regional training sessions, including completion of the guides and organizing of the Parish Core Teams.
3. Eight training sessions are held throughout the diocese for Parish Core Teams to begin the Conversation step of the project September 13 – 14, 2011.
4. Eight training sessions are held throughout the diocese for Cluster Core Teams in December 2011 to prepare clusters for their work of Cluster Evaluation and Cluster Suggestions.
5. Cluster Suggestions are due by March 2, 2012.
6. Planning Commission Preliminary Recommendations are completed by March 30, 2012.
7. The Conversation and Response Phase of the project is completed by May 15, 2012.
8. Planning Commission Final Recommendations are completed by June 22, 2012.
9. Decisions by Bishop Jenky are announced in August 31, 2012.
10. Planning for implementation of Bishop Jenky's directives begins by October 1, 2012
11. Implementation begins January 2013.

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KEY PARTICIPANTS DURING A PARISH RESTRUCTURING PROCESS

- Bishop – Bishop Jenky initiates the diocesan-wide parish restructuring project, approves the project goals, reviews all recommendations, and makes the final decisions after appropriate consultation.
- Diocesan Project Coordinator – Monsignor Paul Showalter manages the planning process within the Diocese and coordinates all planning initiatives with the Bishop, diocesan and parish leadership, and the consultants.
- Diocesan Planning Commission – A group of 20-25 ordained, religious and lay leaders broadly representative of the diocese who are delegated by the Bishop to study the parish/cluster evaluations and suggestions, make preliminary and then final recommendations after a review of each cluster response.
- Presbyteral Council and Other Diocesan Advisory Groups – These groups provide needed advice and/or consent to the Bishop as he requests.
- Diocesan Staff – These diocesan leaders provide input during the planning process and serve as resource people to parishes involved in cluster planning and implementation.
- Parish Core Teams – Groups consisting of the pastor and four other parish leaders who are responsible for seeing that all required work is completed at the parish level, including involving parishioners in the planning process, maintaining open and direct communications within their parishes, and representing the parish in all cluster meetings.
- Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Councils – While the Parish Core Teams are “responsible for seeing that all required work is completed at the parish level,” it is vital for input to be provided by the two councils in the parish.
- Cluster Core Teams – Groups consisting of parish core team members from all parishes in a given cluster who study the various parish self-evaluations, complete a cluster evaluation, decide upon a cluster suggestion and rationale, review the preliminary recommendation from the Diocesan Planning Commission, and make a cluster response and rationale.
- Staff and Parishioners – Active participants in the planning process.
- Consultants – A team of professional consultants from The Reid Group experienced in planning and parish restructuring.
- Diocesan Parish Facilitators – Experienced men and women from within the Diocese who will be trained and work to help in facilitating key meetings at the parish and cluster levels.

THE REID GROUP APPROACH PROPHETIC PLANNING FOR PARISH RESTRUCTURING

I. PROPHETIC PLANNING

The Reid Group has significant experience in planning within a wide variety of organizations at the diocesan, parish and school levels using an approach called “prophetic planning.”

This approach has four main elements as follows:

1. Planning for the future is based on knowledge and appreciation for the story of the organization that has evolved from the past.
2. The realities of faith, conversion and healing are central to quality planning and effective organizational development.
3. While appreciating what has been, this approach to planning invites leaders to be bold, and ask questions like, “What would we do if we were 10 times bolder?” and “What would we do if we REALLY considered ourselves a FOR PROPHET organization?”
4. Prophetic planning seeks to discern the movement of the Spirit and the will of God for an organization at this moment in time.

While believing in and being experienced with prophetic planning, The Reid Group also believes that a “one size fits all” approach to planning is not appropriate. Therefore, each planning process must address the unique circumstances of every organization within a particular diocese.

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ROLE OF THE PARISH CORE TEAM

WHAT IS THE PARISH CORE TEAM?

The Parish Core Team is made up of the pastor and four parish leaders whom he selects to help lead the *Growing in Faith Together* Planning Project in the parish and to contribute to the work of the cluster. Often, the four parish leaders include a Parish Council and/or Finance Council member, one staff person, and two at-large leaders or parish elders.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CORE TEAM?

The Core Team has six primary roles. These include:

1. To lead the parish through the planning process.
2. To be responsible for the parish's evaluation of itself according Criteria established by the Diocese..
3. To be accountable for the parish summary and verification of data.
4. To participate in cluster planning and in suggesting a model for the most effective way they can work together in the future.
5. To respond to the Planning Commission's Preliminary Recommendation for their cluster.
6. To ensure implementation of the Bishop's decision for their parish and cluster.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CORE TEAM CHAIR?

- Schedule meetings.
- Insure that there is a working agenda.
- Convene the group and lead prayer or ask someone to be prayer leader.
- Act as a communication link with other parish leadership groups.
- Insure that the parish as a whole is aware of the work of the Core Team through on-going communications.
- Keep the group on task.
- Insure that the group accomplishes its task according to the timeline.
- In cluster meetings, work with other Core Team Chairs to facilitate the work and accomplish the tasks needed to produce a Suggestion Form to be sent to the Planning Commission.
- Work with Cluster Committee chair to create a Response Form based on the Recommendation sent to the cluster by the Planning Commission.
- Insure that there is an implementation plan in place after the Bishop approves the Recommendation.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CORE TEAM SECRETARY?

- Keep notes or minutes from each meeting and distribute them appropriately.
- Insure that the various forms are properly filled out and presented in a timely way to the appropriate groups.
- Insure that there is on-going communication with the parish on appropriate aspects of the work of the Core Team and the Cluster Committees.

DIOCESE OF PEORIA
GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH (GIFT)

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR *GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH*
SEPTEMBER 2011

Information to Be Communicated

Any of the information can be used in bulletin inserts or news releases to local media or parish websites.

Bishop Daniel R. Jenky has begun a new initiative called *Gathering in Faith Together (Gift)*, a parish planning project structured to have parishes plan for the future in concert with other parishes. The bishop's over-all goal is to enhance the vibrancy of parish life in the Diocese of Peoria so that parishes will be signs of faith, hope and love to all God's people. Due to demographic shifts, the diminishing number of priests, and the financial situation of many parishes, a process was needed to lessen stress and remove obstacles so all parishes could be strong ones. Given the availability and leadership of the current priests and of well educated deacons, sisters and lay people, the Bishop thought that this is the right time to be good stewards of our human and financial resources and discover ways to reorganize parishes, so that current parishioners and future ones may be well served.

In the *Gathering in Faith Together (Gift)* planning process all parishes in the diocese will be involved in working with neighboring parishes to assess their strengths, name their concerns, and explore how they can work together to better serve the People of God. They will be asked to suggest a future model of parish life from four that also are used in many places in the country: linkage (sharing a pastor); merger or consolidation (2 or more parishes form a new parish); partnership (2 or more parishes work closely together at times sharing staff and programs or in-services, etc). The last model is one where a team of priests serves three or more parishes. The priests are supported by deacons, sisters and lay ministers in serving the parishes.

A Planning Commission appointed by Bishop Jenky made up of priests, deacons, sisters and lay people will review the suggestions and evaluative material presented from the clusters of parishes, make a preliminary recommendation with a rationale back to the cluster and ask for a response with a rationale. After studying the responses across the dioceses and considering demographic data and parish data, the Planning Commission will make final recommendations to Bishop Jenky. He in turn will consult with the Presbyteral Council and other consultative bodies before making a decision for each cluster. Once the decisions are made each cluster of parishes will begin implementation by January 2013.

Times of Transition

By their very nature, times of transition are unsettling. Some will believe that the decisions are already made and their voice does not count. Some will feel that, if only the diocese had the correct information, they would see how great their parish is. Because of these misperceptions, effective communication is vitally important. Those involved with change, both directly and indirectly, need accurate and consistent information regarding the future of the parish and the reasons for change. We have developed the following guidelines to assist parish leaders and anyone helping to facilitate the parish planning process, *Growing Together in Faith (GIFT)*.

When people experience tension, lack of communication is typically cited as a primary source of the stress. We must not underestimate the positive impact of effective communication — and the negative results when communication is lacking. Communication is more than simply putting forth information; it is a dynamic, a two-way process.

Please make every effort to communicate with the various groups in your area with sensitivity to appropriate timing and procedure, and remember that people need to hear information multiple times in order to process it. Help your parishioners to keep in focus the goals of the plan as stated by Bishop Jenky.

In these pages you will find:

1. Communication Goals
2. Audiences
3. Communication Strategies
4. Communication Tools
5. Tips for Working with the Media

1. Communication Goals

- Help people recognize and understand the reasons for change. (Resources: Bishop Jenky's statements, Question and Answer Sheet)
- Update the parish community *regularly*, sharing accurate and appropriate information in a timely manner.
- Communicate the same information to all parishes in the cluster
- Correct misinformation and control rumors.
- Manage the communication process effectively.

2. Audiences

Be aware of the various groups concerned with your parish situation:

- Staff
- Parishioners
- Volunteers
- Neighboring clusters
- Neighboring church leaders (both Catholic and other denominations)
- Neighborhood
- Civic community
- Elected officials
- Others of importance to your parish
- Media

3. Communication Strategies

- Respect for people should guide all communication efforts. *How you communicate is as important as what you say.* Openness to those whose opinions differ from yours is critically important.
- Keep a positive attitude and help parishioners and staff through the various stages of the planning and implementation process
- Maintain a calm presence. Your ability to do so will diminish the impact of rumors and can assuage fears.
- Receive critical comments simply as information that may be helpful to the process. Try to understand the reasons prompting the criticism, and do not take it personally.
- Show respect for the community's history while calling people forward to build the future together. Build on the image of ***Growing in Faith Together***
- Listen to people's concerns: calm fears when possible: help people see their importance to the new community.
- State facts accurately, and clearly explain procedures. Information shared clearly and directly will help to reduce the tendency toward "power plays."
- Recognize that premature information sharing, before decisions are actually made or before those most closely affected have been informed, may thwart the planning process and cause divisiveness within the community. It is important for parish leaders to maintain confidentiality until the *agreed-upon time* to share information.
- Remember that appropriate information sharing needs to be ongoing. It is important not to assume that, since you have put forth information once, people have understood it. Not everyone is at the same "readiness" level, and we need to respect people's need to hear information many times in order to truly process it. Regular and repeated updates help people feel more grounded and secure amidst transition.
- Avoid the tendency to think that because the core team knows what is happening, communication has taken place. Sharing information with each of the audiences listed in section 2 needs to be carefully planned and implemented.
- Communicate important information directly to parishioners, staff, and anyone else personally affected by a situation *before the* media reports it

No matter the audience, specifically target information.

- Determine the most appropriate timing and sequence for sharing information with particular individuals and/or groups.
- Identify the best ways to share information. A few possibilities include:

Letters
Town hall meetings
Question/answer sheets
Individual/small group meetings
Newsletters
Media releases, etc.
Web Site updates
Parish Bulletins

You know your community better than anyone. Draw upon the wisdom and power of people within the parish to help you determine the most effective ways to communicate with different groups. **When you are working as a cluster, be sure the same information goes to all parishes in the cluster at the same time.**

- Be consistent in the information you give to various individuals and groups. Having a single point person to whom people may address their questions is helpful.
- Be aware of individuals and/or groups who may have their own agenda.
- Help people recognize that pushing individual agendas harms the entire community.
- Have a back-up plan for combating rumors and addressing information leaks.

4. Communication Methods

Again, draw upon the wisdom of your own community to help you. Here are a few examples to assist you.

- Speak from the pulpit about the planning process and update parishioners about the progress of the plan.

Include regular bulletin announcements to reinforce your pulpit messages. When more than one parish is involved, use the same announcements in all bulletins, if the information affects both parishes. (See samples which follow)

- Pray in the general intercessions for the mission of the church and for the Holy Spirit's guidance throughout the parish's planning process. (See samples which follow on pgs. 20-21.)
- Make sure all parishioners actually have the recommendation and rationale.
- As you hold parish meetings, routinely draw people's attention to the reality of parishes in transition throughout the diocese and in dioceses all over the country.
- On a weekly basis insert one section of Goals or Criteria in the parish bulletin: Sacramental life; Evangelization, Catechesis and Catholic Schools; Stewardship and Justice; and Effective Administration. Add a question for reflection appropriate to your parish. Use these for all parish meetings, section by section as feasible. (See samples

which follow on p 18-21.)

- If common questions surface regarding your parish's situation, compile a question and answer sheet for inclusion in the bulletin, or for mailing to all parishioners if this will be more helpful. It is important that people continue to feel informed and to know that they have accurate, updated information.
- Provide up-dated information on your parish Web site, if appropriate.
- Send a letter to denominational leaders of your area or gather them together to discuss the planning process affecting your parish. Request their prayers and support during the planning process and for the emerging parish community.

5. Working with the Media

Parishioners, *staff*, and anyone else personally affected by a situation should receive important information directly from you or from another appropriate source *before* the media reports it. Nonetheless, newspapers, radio and TV reporters can play an important role in communicating messages about the parish's planning process. The keys to working with the media include; 1) understanding them, 2) developing a good relationship, 3) delivering a solid message.

Understand the Media

- Know your area reporters and editors and the deadlines they face. The diocese can help you identify them.
- Remember that you are in charge, even if a reporter becomes aggressive.
- If reporters inquire about a situation which parishioners are yet unaware of, remind them of your need to respect the parishioners' right to hear information directly from you. Statements such as "it's an internal matter at this point..." or "no decisions have yet been made..." are appropriate.

Develop a Good Relationship with Reporters

- Generally it is better to work with the media than to be non-responsive. "No comment" can portray you or the parish as being uncooperative.
- Designate one individual as official parish spokesperson and instruct anyone who may receive media inquiries to route questions to the spokesperson. Make sure you return phone calls promptly.
- Ask what information reporters need and when their deadline is. Rather than feeling pressured to respond immediately, indicate you'll get back to them. It is important then to follow-up prior to the deadline.
- Depending upon the circumstance, you may wish to have available names and phone numbers of others to surest for media interviews, so reporters don't randomly approach parishioners or council members. Help those to be interviewed prepare their thoughts.

Deliver a Solid Message

- Don't be afraid to ask reporters what aspect of the issue they want to cover or if they are talking to others. This will help you anticipate questions and prepare for the answers.
- During the interview, state clearly and calmly what you believe to be most important. Find opportunities to address your main points, even if the reporter's questions do not elicit them directly.
- Deliver a quotable "sound bite." Be brief but informative. Use specific examples, analogies, and relevant statistics or attributed quotes.
- Flag your answer: "The most important thing is..." or "It all boils down to..."
- Be honest. Don't feel pressured to respond if you don't know the answer. Replies such as "we haven't worked out the details," "we don't know yet," or "we haven't given thought to that" are reasonable.

It is important to help all involved to recognize the dangers of using media to push one's own agenda. Taking issues to the media that would better be dealt with internally destroys trust and impedes the process of working through difficulties. Trying to use media in personal battles often backfires. Feel free to consult with diocesan communication staff for ideas in dealing with media or regarding other communication issues. We will be happy to assist you.

Conclusion

Implementing a sound communication strategy with your various parish audiences is the best way to assure a successful planning process. By taking time from the outset to explain the issues and offer opportunities for feedback, you will lay the groundwork for building a cohesive faith community.

**DIOCESE OF PEORIA
COMMUNICATION ISSUES CHECK LIST FOR
GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER**

- | | Action | Person(s) Responsible |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Consulted with leaders within the parish to determine the most effective ways to communication with various groups.

Date(s) _____ | Pastor or delegate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Created effective ways to communicate with significant groups within the parish and between parishes.

<i>Staff</i> What: _____ When: _____
<i>Volunteers</i> What: _____ When: _____
<i>Youth</i> What: _____ When: _____
<i>Others</i> What: _____ When: _____ | Pastors or delegates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Created effective ways to communicate with other groups.

<i>Neighboring church leaders and parishes</i>
What: _____ When: _____
<i>Civic community</i> What: _____ When: _____
<i>(Funeral Homes, Hospitals, Nursing facilities, Prison/jail facilities)</i>
<i>Elected officials</i> What: _____ When: _____
<i>Media</i> What: _____ When: _____
<i>Others</i> What: _____ When: _____ | Pastor or delegate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Identified a point person to whom people may address questions as they arise.

Name: _____ Date: _____ | Pastor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Held town hall meetings, giving people the opportunity to express concerns and ask questions.

Moderator(s): _____ Dates _____ | Pastor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Communicated the same information to people of all parishes involved (same bulletin announcements or newsletters, same pulpit announcements, etc.).

Date(s): _____ | Pastor or delegate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Kept information confidential until the agreed-upon time to share it. | Pastor or delegate |

Date(s):

- 8. Repeated important information in multiple settings, understanding that people need to hear things more than once. Pastor or delegate
What: _____ When:
- 9. Provided regular updates to parishioners regarding the ***GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER*** process. Pastor
What: _____ When:
- 10. Established a plan to address information leaks and control rumors. Pastor or delegate
Keeper of the plan:
Date:
- 11. Made efforts to establish a good relationship with local reporters. Pastor or delegate
Who : _____ When:
- 12. Sought help from the diocese regarding Communication when necessary.
When:

Comments:

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PARISH COMMUNICATION SAMPLES

INTRODUCTION

Being part of *Growing in Faith Together* provides many opportunities for good communication with all parishioners and the community as a whole. Some ideas which follow will aid in letting all members of the parish know what *Growing in Faith Together* is and what the parish is doing as part of it.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATERIAL FOR THE PARISH NEWSLETTER

Please adapt all the material that follows to your local circumstances. These are not recipes, but rather ways to save you time, so you do not have to reinvent the wheel to begin your communications campaign! All announcements do not have to be used and the order can be changed depending upon how your parish is participating in *Growing in Faith Together*.

Bulletin Announcements do not take the place of face-to-face meetings such as town hall meetings and other more personal vehicles for communication.

Announcement 1

Growing in Faith Together

Bishop Jenky has asked us to be part of the current cycle of parish planning related to the *Growing in Faith Together*. His expectation is that each parish will find neighboring parishes with whom to plan in order to:

1. Share more resources with each other and with parishes in need;
2. Avoid unneeded duplication of services; and
3. Fill in the gaps where service and ministry have not been available.

The parishes with whom we hope to work include: _____, _____,
_____.

Announcement 2

Growing in Faith Together

The goals of the *Growing in Faith Together* project promoted by Bishop Jenky include:

1. To enhance the vibrancy of parish life in the Diocese of Peoria.
2. To strengthen the presence and ministry of the Church in the city and rural areas of the Diocese.
3. To foster an appreciation for and participation in Sunday Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.
4. To help make Stewardship a Way of Life throughout the Diocese.
5. To promote vocations to ordained and lay ministry.
6. To ensure that all parishioners have opportunities for quality lifelong Christian Formation, including supporting new initiatives for youth and young adults.
7. To strengthen service to those who are marginalized.

8. To build a greater sense of unity among the English speaking and Spanish speaking people within the local Church.
9. To increase collaboration among all entities in the local, national and universal Church.
10. To advocate for peace and justice in the Church and in the world.

As our Core Team begins to organize itself, it will be keeping these goals in mind and alerting you to how well we are doing in meeting the goals.

Announcement 3

Growing in Faith Together

The following people are on the Core Team to do parish planning as part of the ***Growing in Faith Together***: (Name people.) The Core Team attended a training session on _____date to become acquainted with the materials we will be using to assess our parish ministries.

The Core Team will be overseeing the evaluation of parish ministries based on the Criteria for Planning. The Criteria are divided into four categories: Sacramental Life of the Parish; Evangelization, Catechesis and Catholic Schools; Stewardship and Justice; and Effective Administration.

Announcement 4

Growing in Faith Together

The Core Team oversaw the parish evaluation of the Criteria for Sacramental Life of the Parish and found that our strengths included_____, _____, _____, _____, _____. Our hopes for the future include _____, _____, _____. If you have any comment about these, please contact _____ at _____.

Repeat this kind of announcement for each of the other areas (Evangelization, Catechesis and Catholic Schools; Stewardship and Justice; and Effective Administration.)
(Announcement 5-8)

Announcement 9

Growing in Faith Together

The Core Team and Parish Pastoral Council finished our parish evaluation according to the Criteria for Planning and have come to the following conclusions: (Highlight the good things happening and the hopes for the future, or any other pertinent information.)

Announcement 10

Growing in Faith Together

As part of our planning for the future, The Core Team analyzed some of the demographic trends that are part of our parish’s life. We thought you would be interested in the following: (Include what is appropriate.)

Announcement 11

Growing in Faith Together

The Core Team has begun meeting with the cluster(s) parishes to do some joint planning to look at models for working together. The models presented by the Diocesan Planning Commission include merging parishes, where two or more parishes become one; linking parishes, where two or more parishes share a pastor; partnership parishes where two or more parishes share programs and sometimes staff, and a team approach to priestly and lay ministry.

Announcement 12

Growing in Faith Together

The Core Team invites you to a meeting to accomplish two things: 1) to hear about its deliberations on a model of working with other parishes in the future; 2) and to solicit your input. We would appreciate your attendance and participation. The meeting is _____time, place, date_____.

Announcement 13

Growing in Faith Together

The parish Core Team working with the Core Teams in the cluster have submitted a Suggestion to the Planning Commission on how the cluster might work together in the future. We suggested working on Model (designate consolidation, linkage, partnership, team) which for our parish would mean_____. The Planning Commission will consider our work and make a recommendation back to us. At that time we will be asked to respond to their recommendation.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS (THESE MAY BE USED IN ANY ORDER.)

Week One

For the success of *Growing in Faith Together*, that all parishes will faithfully participate under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to look at how they can best build the Reign of God, let us pray to the Lord. Response...

Week Two

That our Core Team will be blessed and strengthened as it participates in the *Growing in Faith Together*, let us pray to the Lord. Response...

Week Three-Nine

That the Holy Spirit may continue to guide our Core Team as it evaluates our ministries of _____ (Sacramental Life, Evangelization, Catechesis, and Catholic Schools, Stewardship and Justice, Effective Administration, etc.) let us pray to the Lord. Response... (Use as appropriate.)

Week Ten

For our Core Team as it looks for ways to suggest good stewardship practices for our parish and cluster, let us pray to the Lord. Response...

Week Eleven

That the Holy Spirit will continue to be with the *Growing in Faith Together* as our parish cluster prepares its suggestion to the Planning Commission, let us pray to the Lord.

Response...

Week Twelve

For all those in the *Growing in Faith Together* who are discerning plans for their future, let us pray to the Lord. Response...

Week Thirteen

That the *Growing in Faith Together* will generate attitudes and actions of sharing across the Diocese and the larger Church, let us pray to the Lord. Response...

Week Fourteen

That the *Growing in Faith Together* will renew parish life across the Diocese of Peoria, we pray to the Lord. Response...

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT LITURGY

Besides the bulletin announcements suggested above, it is a good idea to have members of the Core Team give a brief up-date on the *Growing in Faith Together* at least once a month during the announcement time at liturgy. This will make the work of the Core Team come alive for the parish community.

PLEASE NOTE THE COMMUNICATION CHECK LIST IN SECTION TWO WHERE YOU WILL BE ASKED TO REPORT ON HOW YOUR PARISHIONERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS.

***GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER:
PASTORAL PLANNING FOR THE
DIOCESE OF PEORIA***

REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING AND REALITY OF TRANSITION

1. TRANSITION AND THE REID GROUP

- Thoughts, feelings, images about transition . . .

2. WHAT IS A TRANSITION? (BILL BRIDGES)

A transition involves a process of change from a reality of things that are **ENDING** through an in-between time or **WILDERNESS ZONE** where there is some uncertainty to a **NEW BEGINNING**. Movement through these stages of transition takes time and is facilitated through reflection and action on some key questions/issues.

3. CHANGE AND YOU?

- Recall an experience of change that was/is a struggle and/or a success.
- What helps and hinders your movement through times of change?
- Change Continuum

4. WHY FOCUS ON TIMES OF TRANSITION?

People and organizations move through transitions more easily and effectively when they have **time to process what is ending, deal with hurts or past losses, work toward letting go** of those things that hold them back from a successful transition and **look at opportunities and challenges** for helping individuals and communities better accept the new reality.

- “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”
- A period of transition is a period of crisis -- a time of danger and opportunity.
- From a faith perspective, a transition time is a time of death and resurrection. The Paschal Mystery is the major transition reality for Christians. The Triduum is a movement from Good Friday through Holy Saturday into Easter Sunday.

5. KEY QUESTIONS (GORDY MYERS)

- A. WHAT IS CHANGING AND WHAT IS STAYING THE SAME? (CONTINUITY)
- B. HOW CAN I/WE REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THE PAST? (TRADITIONS & REALITIES)
- C. WHERE AM I/WHERE ARE WE RIGHT NOW? (STRENGTHS AND STRUGGLES)
- D. WHAT ARE THE HURTS AND WHAT CAN BE LET GO OF? (SCARS/LOSSES)
- E. WHERE AM I/WHERE ARE WE HEADING? (HOPES AND DREAMS)

6. ROADBLOCKS TO TRANSITION

- Resistance to Change
- Lack of Leadership
- Lack of Planning
- Lack of Belief and Action

7. WHY PEOPLE RESIST CHANGE? (The Alban Institute)

- The five most common reasons why people resist change are:
 1. A desire not to lose something or someone of value - personal investment.
 2. A misunderstanding of the change and its implications.
 3. A belief that the change does not make sense for me or for us – the “why?” is never answered sufficiently.
 4. A low tolerance for change.
 5. A limited trust in those leading the change.

8. A PICTURE OF A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

