



PLANS OF HOPE

HOUMA-THIBODAUX PARISH PLANNING

DIOCESAN PLANNING PRIORITY NO. 3: OUTREACH PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

CHAPTER 14 RESOURCE A



Assessing parish social ministry in your parish

TO BE USED BY Parish Implementation Teams, Matthew 25, Parish Social Ministry Leaders or Parish Staff

PURPOSE The following resource is meant to serve as a guide in assessing if parishioners growing as missionary disciples in awareness and engagement with people in need?

AREA 1. ANCHORING SOCIAL MINISTRY: **PRAYER AND WORSHIP**

Consider whether our parish sacramental celebrations help us renew our commitment to reconciliation throughout our lives and to rededicate ourselves to Jesus’ message of love and justice, especially for those in need. Now, with that in mind, evaluate how the Gospel call to build peace, work for justice, and care for people who are poor and vulnerable is regularly reflected in parish prayer and worship.

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | SCORE |
|---|-------|
| • Current social issues are part of the Universal Prayers (e.g. for an end to the death penalty.) | _____ |
| • Our parish holds special prayer services around justice and peace issues | _____ |
| • Justice prayer booklets available at church | _____ |
| • Themes of justice and charity (Catholic Social Teaching) are reflected in our music | _____ |
| • Blessings connecting events of the week or season are part of liturgy e.g. for birthdays, anniversaries, Mothers’ and Fathers’ Day, Blessing of the Fleet, Earth Day, etc. | _____ |
| • Objects in liturgy connect to daily life (e.g. cans and household supplies for the food bank drive are brought to the altar during the entrance procession or offering of gifts or baskets of gifts purchased from Catholic Relief Service’s Ethical Trade program are part of the offering). Liturgists draw attention to the significance of the gifts. | _____ |
| • People on the altar, those bringing up gifts, those ushering and giving communion are as diverse as the people of the community | _____ |
| • We participate in ecumenical prayer services (e.g. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity) | _____ |
| • Our parish emphasizes a ministry of hospitality | _____ |
| • Other (write in) | _____ |

AREA 2. SHARING THE MESSAGE: **PREACHING AND FORMATION**

Consider whether our rich heritage of Catholic Social Teaching is integrated into our homilies, religious education program, school, sacramental preparation program, Christian initiation ministry, ongoing religious formation and enrichment programs for adults. With that in mind, evaluate how Catholic Social Teaching is part of our parish preaching and formation programs.

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | SCORE |
|---|-------|
| • Explicit references are made to one of the 7 Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in homilies when appropriate to the readings | _____ |
| • References to current social justice issues are part of homilies | _____ |
| • CST educational handouts are available in church | _____ |
| • RCIA, CCD, Confirmation and Catholic school religious education students have lessons on Catholic Social Teaching during class and/or on retreats (e.g. CRS Rice Bowl Lessons) | _____ |
| • Service hours are required for Confirmation | _____ |
| • Youth Ministry includes events/education about charity and justice | _____ |
| • A hunger banquet, food fast, or another awareness event is held during the year | _____ |
| • Catholic Social Teaching classes/workshops/presentations are held during the year (e.g. Year of Encounter with Pope Francis, Good News People, Communities of Salt and Light) | _____ |
| • The parish has taken the St. Francis/ <i>Laudato Si'</i> Pledge and promotes the Feast of St. Francis Program or another stewardship program from the Catholic Climate Covenant | _____ |
| • Speakers talk about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development at Masses in November and during Lent for Catholic Relief Services prior to the collections | _____ |
| • Other (write in) | _____ |



AREA 3. SUPPORTING THE SALT OF THE EARTH: **FAMILY, WORK, CITIZENSHIP**

Consider whether our parish offers concrete and practical support for sustaining Christian marriages, shaping family life around Gospel values and living our faith at work and in everyday decisions and actions. With that in mind, evaluate how our parish supports our members in practicing Christian values in our everyday lives at home, at work and as citizens.

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

	SCORE
• Parish conducts parenting classes, family date night, pro-life events, voter forums etc.	_____
• Parish Advent or Lenten missions are held in the parish	_____
• Lenten gumbos, parish suppers with a speaker or other similar events are held	_____
• Budgeting classes or referrals to CENTS & Catholic Housing Services classes are offered	_____
• ESL classes, job posting boards, and other employment information is available at church	_____
• The parish hosts AA/NA meetings	_____
• Voter forums, homilies and/or presentations about the U.S. Bishops' <i>Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship Election Guide</i> are given	_____
• Projects to protect and restore our environment are sponsored by our parish	_____
• Catholic Charities' <i>One Church, One Family</i> program is part of our parish life	_____
• Our parish is a member of Bridging the Bayous TimeBank	_____
• Other (write in)	_____

AREA 4. SERVING THE LEAST OF THESE: **OUTREACH AND CHARITY**

Consider whether our parish is serving those in need and how parishioners become aware of opportunities for service and action. With that in mind, evaluate how people who are poor, vulnerable or needy are a part of our Parish Social Ministry Outreach planning and action?

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | |
|--|-------|
| | SCORE |
| • We have a St. Vincent de Paul Society, Knights of Columbus or a Peter Claver Council | _____ |
| • Our parish sponsors a local food bank, food pantry, food drive, or thrift store | _____ |
| • The parish helps with emergency assistance payments for utilities, medicine, rent, gas, etc. | _____ |
| • Handy Helpers, Heaven’s Handymen, or home repairs are parish ministries | _____ |
| • We have a bereavement group or a ministry to families after the death of a family member | _____ |
| • Our parish reaches out to the homebound, hospitalized, those in nursing homes or prison | _____ |
| • We reach out to divorced, widowed, or single people through a parish ministry | _____ |
| • We have Matthew 25 Disaster Preparedness and Response Ministry volunteers and training | _____ |
| • Our parish has outreach programs such as blood drives, Jesse Tree, medical screenings, etc. | _____ |
| • Our parish has a formal support agreement with local shelters or community centers | _____ |
| • Parish facilities are handicapped-accessible | _____ |
| • Other (write in) | _____ |

AREA 5. ADVOCATING FOR JUSTICE: **LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

Consider whether our parish helps parishioners become better informed about public policy issues that impact poor and vulnerable people. With that in mind, evaluate the opportunities our parish provides for parishioners to speak and act effectively in the public arena on behalf of people who are poor and vulnerable. Evaluate whether we bring our Catholic Social Teaching values to debates about local, national, and international policies and priorities.

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | |
|---|-------|
| | SCORE |
| • A Catholic Voice for Justice legislative network is active in our parish | _____ |
| • We invite Catholic Charities staff to speak about A Catholic Voice for Justice at masses | _____ |
| • We conduct an Offering of Letters or postcard campaigns on justice issues | _____ |
| • Our parish participates in Right to Life and/or in the Louisiana or national March for Life | _____ |
| • Other (write in) | _____ |



AREA 6. CREATING COMMUNITY: ORGANIZING FOR JUSTICE

Consider the community organizations that exist in our local community or diocese. With that in mind, evaluate how our parish participates in supporting local, state, or national community organizations working for justice.

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | |
|---|-------|
| | SCORE |
| • We joined Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing (BISCO) & we host meetings | _____ |
| • The Catholic Campaign for Human Development and CRS are each separate collections | _____ |
| • Our parish has an active Parish Social Ministry Outreach Committee | _____ |
| • Our parish is a Bread or Stones Campaign Covenant Congregation | _____ |
| • We organize a Way of the Cross for charity and justice | _____ |
| • Other (write in) | _____ |

AREA 7. BUILDING SOLIDARITY: BEYOND PARISH BOUNDARIES

Consider the ways our parish provides information about the needs of our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and vulnerable, in other lands. Evaluate the opportunities our parish offers us to act in solidarity on international issues.

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | |
|---|-------|
| | SCORE |
| • Parish twins with an overseas community or church and sends donations | _____ |
| • We have active mission outreach and mission trips | _____ |
| • Our parish participates in Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl each Lent | _____ |
| • We host an annual Catholic Relief Services Ethical Trade craft sale | _____ |
| • We have an annual multicultural or international Mass | _____ |
| • We support the Holy Child Association and other Catholic overseas efforts | _____ |
| • Other (write in) | _____ |

AREA 8. INTEGRATION INTO PARISH LIFE

Consider whether we have a Parish Social Ministry Outreach committee that reports regularly to the pastor, council and the parish as a whole. Evaluate the extent to which we have an ongoing action plan to recruit new leaders and volunteers and our parishioners are regularly invited to join in Parish Social Ministry Outreach activities.

SCORE THE ACTIVITIES BELOW USING THIS SCALE:

NONE	POOR		DECENT		EXCELLENT
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | |
|---|-------|
| | SCORE |
| • We make regular reports about Parish Social Ministry Outreach to our full parish using bulletins, announcements, email, website, Facebook and other social media. | _____ |
| • New parish leaders are actively recruited and invited to join Parish Social Ministry Outreach | _____ |
| • Our parish allocates a designated percentage or specific amount of parish funds to both direct service (charitable works) and long-term solutions (social justice activities) | _____ |
| • Other (write in) | _____ |

ASSESSMENT SCORE INTERPRETATION

Parishes should begin by doing something in at least three of the Areas of assessment listed above ranging from 1. Anchoring Social Ministry: Prayer and Worship through 8. Integration into Parish Life. Each year your parish can work to increase the number of these Areas in which Parish Social Ministry Outreach is implemented and each year work to improve your Assessment Score, reflecting the parishes' transition from Maintenance to Missionary Discipleship (see Parish Social Justice Ministry Progression Index in this manual).

