

Table of Contents

AN OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATION 2
PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING COLLABORATION..... 3
PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING LINKED PARISHES 4
PREPARING FOR IMPLEMENTATION..... 6
ANNUAL COHORT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 7
IMPLEMENTATION COHORT VISION AND VALUES STATEMENT..... 8
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 9
ANNUAL COHORT PROGRESS REPORT..... 11

AN OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATION

WHAT ARE COLLABORATIVE PARISHES?

Collaborative parishes have a formal relationship which reflects the substantial sharing of current programs and resources and/or the development of new resources for parish mission and ministry. Collaborative parishes commit to the development of programs, the allocation of material and human resources and/or the creation of new joint activities or services which further the mission of Christ. Some collaborative parishes may share staff or have common in-services for both staff and parish pastoral councils. Collaborative parishes avoid unnecessary duplication of services by working together. Collaborative parishes work together whenever possible to do what a single parish cannot do effectively alone.

The Implementation Commission is expecting parishes to enter into new formal relationships which will make a positive difference in ministry in their given area of the diocese.

The following questions may help you plan to implement the Collaborative Parishes Model.

Stewardship

What resources are we conserving?

How will we be providing needed services and at the same time conserving resources?

Outreach and “In-Reach”

What ministry can we do in collaboration that we cannot do alone?

How will we do these? How critical are they to parish life? How substantial are they?

New Initiatives for Evangelization

What new projects will we take on with our partner parish(es)? Why these?

For whom will these pastoral activities make a difference?

How will these activities bring “glad tidings to the poor?”

PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING COLLABORATION

Parishes enter into collaboration with other parishes when:

- They create joint programs.
- They share staff to enhance the quality of ministry and practice good stewardship of resources.
- They share in-services or retreats for parish pastoral councils, finance councils or parish committees.

Examples of ways parishes can partner include:

- A common catechetical program.
- A shared youth ministry program or adult formation program.
- A joint RCIA program.
- A shared parish outreach program.

The key to successful collaboration between parishes and within cohorts is an attitude of cooperation which results in finding opportunities for sharing resources to enliven and strengthen parish life and enhance the quality of ministry and service to all parish members. When parishes are collaborative—there is a great opportunity to enhance the quality of parish ministry because they can focus more resources on programming and ministry formation.

Collaborative parishes can be models for many of the “best practices” found throughout the country. Often collaborative parishes lead the way in successful use of technology, creative outreach to those in need, new initiatives in evangelization, retreats for adults, family catechetical programs and much more. The interaction created by serious and innovative collaboration can contribute a great deal to creating a more vibrant parish, diocese and ultimately a better world.

Please see the Implementation Guide for the following resources

- This Section Accountability: Annual Cohort Implementation Plan and ultimately Annual Cohort Progress Reports;
- Section Four on Communication Resources;
- Section Five on Prayer Resources;
- Section Six on Mission, Values, Vision, Goals, Objectives, etc.;
- Section Six on Scheduling;
- Section Six on Preparations and Facilitation of Effective Meetings;
- Section Six for the article on “Working with Change.”

PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING LINKED PARISHES

LINKED PARISHES

Linked parishes happen when two or more parishes share a pastor or administrator. Linked parishes have the opportunity to share staff, programs and ministries, especially given that the pastor or administrator is striving to serve two or more separate parishes.

The characteristics of linked parishes include:

- The parishes remain distinct communities of faith and independent canonical entities.
- According to Canon Law, linked parishes must have separate finance councils.
- The parishes are encouraged to move toward a common pastoral council; or each may maintain a separate pastoral council with some common meetings and some common committees.
- Linked parishes work together to share ministries, programs and services.
- Periodic joint staff meetings where cooperative planning happens help the parishes to work together toward achieving the goals of Faith in Our Future.

In Preparing for a New Linkage...

As the parishes prepare for linkage under the pastoral care of one pastor or administrator, the parish implementation teams and staffs need to be sensitive to feelings that may accompany this change. Sharing a pastor can be a difficult adjustment. One parish that may have had a resident priest may not have one now. Parishes need to work to establish a mutual relationship with each other – like a siblings growing together in a family. The pastor must share his time among the communities whether he is in residence there or not, so as to avoid one parish or the other feeling like a “step-child.”

Mass schedules will need to be adjusted so as to accommodate the needs of the members of both parishes and the ability of the priest to serve them well. This usually means that the number of Masses offered will have to be reduced. The Implementation teams at both parishes will assist the pastor in creating a worship schedule that provides parishioners with a selection of Masses and worship locations.

Growing as Linked Parishes

It is important for linked parishes to identify and share common values and a common vision. Section 6 of this Implementation Guide provides resources to determine values, vision, goals, objectives, etc. These should be studied and implemented as part of following the Directives of the Bishop.

Note also the Annual Cohort Implementation Plan and Progress Report templates in this section. Both the Annual Cohort Implementation Plan for the coming year and, in future years, the Cohort Progress Report of the past year will need to be prepared and turned in to the Implementation Commission by May 15 annually. To begin the Implementation process, Cohort Implementation Plans for the first 12 months are due **May 31, 2017**. The first annual progress

report is due May 15, 2018. It is important to use the templates provided to plan collaboratively for the future.

Once parishes are linked, attention needs to be given to conserving resources, investigating the possibility of sharing staff and establishing new or enhancing already existing ministries. Forming common parish councils and some committees not only lightens the work of the leaders, it also has the potential to enliven and strengthen the quality of life in the parishes.

As linked parishes work together in the areas of evangelization and catechetical formation, they often experience an improvement in the quality of their programs. Planning youth ministry, mission trips and other service opportunities as well as formational programs are often very enriching when parishes work together.

Finance councils, while separate for each parish, are encouraged to meet together and share information and concerns about budget, maintenance of buildings and grounds and environmental issues.

Linked parishes are most successful when they:

- Come together for prayer and liturgy where possible;
- Plan and implement their pastoral activities together;
- Support their common pastoral goals;
- Support the pastor/administrator by not having unrealistic expectations;
- Work collaboratively on implementing the Bishop's Directives;
- Jointly support professional staff, such as a DRE and/or Business Administrator;
- Enhance their outreach efforts;
- Mutually schedule events to avoid conflicts.

Please see the Implementation Guide for the following resources:

- This Section Accountability: Annual Cohort Implementation Plan and ultimately Annual Cohort Progress Reports
- Section Three on Mergers
- Section Four on Communication Resources;
- Section Five on Prayer Resources;
- Section Six on Preparations and Facilitation of Effective Meetings;
- Section Six on Scheduling;
- Section Six for the article on "Working with Change"

PREPARING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Rationale and Purpose:

The purpose of the Annual Cohort Implementation Plan is to help parishes move forward and achieve the goals they are seeking to accomplish based on the Bishop's Directives. **A major assumption is that all the directives cannot be accomplished the first year of implementation.** It is assumed that the Directives can be achieved within a 3-5 year period and many will be part of parish life for years to come. These plans and progress reports will be reviewed by the Diocesan Implementation Commission annually and the Cohorts will receive helpful feedback on their reports.

The process to use in implementing Bishop O'Connell's Directives requires the following actions from the Cohort Implementation Team.

1. Develop a Vision and a Values Statement for your Cohort work. These will help you see the big picture and guide your planning. There are suggestions for how to do Vision and Value Statements and samples in Section VI of this Implementation Guide (page 3).
2. Prepare the first twelve month Cohort Implementation Plan by May 31, 2017. This will be the first of annual 12 month plans from July through June. The Plan should cover what will be accomplished in the next twelve months. There are samples of goals and objectives and Implementation Plan action steps in Section VI of this Implementation Guide. (page 7)
3. Prepare the Annual Progress Report due for the first time on May 15, 2018. It will represent what you have been able to accomplish from July 2017 to May, 2018. There are samples of Progress Reports in Section VI of this Implementation Guide. (page 13)
4. Prepare a subsequent Annual Cohort Implementation Plan to present to the Implementation Commission by May 15 of each year, beginning in May 2018. As before, the Plan should cover what will be accomplished in the next twelve months.
5. Prepare Annual Progress Reports and Annual Cohort Implementation Plans each year and submit to the Diocesan Implementation Commission by May 15.

ANNUAL COHORT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**THIS REPORT IS DUE TO THE DIOCESAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION
BY MAY 31, 2017 AND
THEREAFTER ANNUALLY ON MAY 15 BEGINNING IN 2018**

DATE _____

COHORT # _____ **COUNTY** _____

COHORT PARISHES, CITIES/TOWNS: _____

Bishop O'Connell's goals for ***FAITH IN OUR FUTURE*** are the following:

1. **Strengthen and enliven** the parishes of the Diocese as well as Diocesan-sponsored organizations and ministries.
2. Explore **new models of leadership** in parishes and ministries in institutional settings (schools, colleges, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, etc.) in order to address the challenges presented by the anticipated retirement of a large number of clergy and religious over the next ten years.
3. **Improve our stewardship** of personnel, finances, and facilities and other parish and Diocesan resources.
4. Establish **collaborative relationships** among the parishes and ministries of the diocese that will build upon the gospel to re/evangelize the local church, especially those who live on the fringes of the church, as well as those who do not yet know Christ.
5. Provide for pastoral ministry to **Hispanic Catholics**, the fastest growing segment of our Diocesan population, within our parishes and organizations.

Please incorporate the Bishop's Goals into your Implementation Plans in Values, Vision and/or Goals, Objectives or action steps.

IMPLEMENTATION COHORT VISION AND VALUES STATEMENT

Note directions for arriving at Value, Vision, Goals, Objective, and Action Plans for the future are in the Implementation Guide for *Faith in Our Future* Section Six

OPTIONAL COMMON MISSION STATEMENT

**IF YOU WORKED ON A COMMON MISSION STATEMENT FOR YOUR COHORT
PLEASE WRITE IT HERE**

VALUES

**AS A COHORT WE ARE COMMITTED TO OPERATING OUT OF THE
FOLLOWING VALUES OR GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION:**

VISION

**AS A COHORT WE HOLD THE FOLLOWING VISION WHICH WE WOULD LIKE
TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.**

DIOCESE OF TRENTON

FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(First year: July 2017 – June 2018)

DATE _____

COHORT #: _____ COUNTY _____

PARISHES IN THE COHORT: _____

Which Models are you working on? ___ Collaboration ___ Linkage ___ Merger ___ Personal Parish ___

BISHOP O’CONNELL’S MODEL DIRECTIVE: _____

GOAL: _____

ACTION PLAN

Objective(s)	Action Steps	When? How Frequent?	Responsibility	Status *

* On-going; Complete; Begun; No Action

DIOCESE OF TRENTON

FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

MINISTRY COLLABORATION: _____

GOAL: _____

ACTION PLAN

Objective(s)	Action Steps	When? How Frequent?	Responsibility	Status *

* On-going; Complete; Begun; No Action

Duplicate this template for each directive/goal you are working on.

We have worked as a Cohort Implementation Team to develop our Annual Cohort Implementation Plan.

Signatures:

Name

Parish

Date

(Add additional pages as needed)

DIOCESE OF TRENTON

FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

ANNUAL COHORT PROGRESS REPORT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**PLEASE ADAPT THIS TO INCLUDE YOUR MODEL DIRECTIVES AND YOUR
MINISTRY COLLABORATIONS
THIS REPORT IS DUE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION ANNUALLY
ON MAY 15 BEGINNING IN 2018**

DATE _____

COHORT # _____ **COUNTY** _____

COHORT PARISHES, CITIES/TOWNS: _____

Our Cohort Values include the following:

Our Cohort Vision is:
The collaborative effort we are most proud of is:

The place where we struggled the most was:

DIOCESE OF TRENTON

FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

Describe how your work to implement the Bishop’s Directives is making a difference in the Cohort? In the Diocese? In the World?

As we continue to implement the Bishop’s Directives we need the assistance from Diocesan Offices in the following areas:

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR WITH THIS REPORT.

We have worked as a Cohort Implementation Team to evaluate our work and prepare this report.

Signatures:

Name

Parish

Date