

DIOCESE OF TRENTON
FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

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**PARISH COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDELINES
DURING IMPLEMENTATION**

INTRODUCTION

Being part of *Faith in Our Future* provides many opportunities for good communication with all parishioners and the community as a whole. Suggestions which follow will help others to know what *Faith in Our Future* is and what the parish or Cohort is doing as part of it.

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH PARISHIONERS OF THE COHORT:

- Highlight the ways in which your Cohort, by following the Bishop's Directives, is evangelizing and producing future active, committed parish leaders.
- Distribute a joint or collaborative newsletter to all parishioners in the Cohort four times a year.
- Invite all parishioners to attend and participate in events connected with the implementation of the Bishop's Directives.
- Have parish staff members serve as liaisons to key parish or Cohort committees.
- Share information in a consistent place in the parish bulletin.
- Display pictures of collaborative work on the websites of the parishes and in visible locations in all parishes.
- Have students involved in parish activities and ministries.
- Have staff and/or parishioners speak at the announcement time of Mass about significant activities related to implementing the Bishop's Directives.
- Identify parishioners who can provide communication and public relationship services that will be beneficial to the Cohort.
- Have people who have been positively touched by some of the implementation plans write appropriate articles in the bulletin.

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD/ TOWN/OR CIVIC COMMUNITY:

- Establish a method to encourage community and/or business participation in the collaborative activities called for by the Directives, such as sponsoring a meal of celebration at the beginning of a merger or a mission trip for a Cohort group of young people, or a senior outing for parish and community members.
- Include key community leaders on your monthly newsletter distribution list.
- Display Mass times and other appropriate information in local businesses or community centers.
- Create "spirit wear" for a newly merged parish to help with identification of a new name, etc.
- Seek opportunities to share information about your merger, linkage or partnership within your neighborhood or town and with local businesses.
- Provide community businesses with opportunities to advertise or sponsor your activities.
- Share stories about neighborhood/business and community collaboration through your local newspaper. (News Releases and beyond)
- Express interest in establishing/maintaining open lines of communication with neighborhood leaders and community businesses.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BULLETINS ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION OR
MATERIAL FOR THE PARISH NEWSLETTERS, WEBSITES**

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 *Faith in Our Future*.

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
Faith in Our Future

Bishop O'Connell has asked us to implement his Directives which grew out of the *Faith in Our Future* Planning Process. His expectation is that all parishes will work with their Cohort to develop a plan to implement their Model Directives and find ways to collaborate in ministry among the cohort parishes.

Our Cohort includes the following parishes:

Bishop O'Connell has directed us to: (list all Directives for your Cohort)

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Announcement 2
Faith in Our Future

The goals of the *Faith in Our Future* promoted by Bishop O’Connell include:

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.

As our Parish Implementation Team begins its work, as part of the Cohort Implementation Team, to implement the Bishop’s Directives, it will be keeping these goals in mind and alert you to how well it is doing in meeting the goals.

Announcement 3
Faith in Our Future

The following people are on the Parish Implementation Team: (Name people.) As part of the Cohort Implementation Team they attended a training session on _____ (date) to become acquainted with the-process for implementing the Bishop’s decisions for our Cohort and collaborating in ministry.

Our Directives from Bishop O’Connell include the following:
(Cohort’s Ministry Directives)

Announcement 4
Faith in Our Future

The Cohort Implementation Team prioritized its work and has begun to plan for implementation of these directives: list directives

Our hopes for the future include _____, _____, _____.
If you have any comment about these or would like to help us implement these hopes and dreams, please contact _____ at _____.

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[Repeat this kind of announcement for each time a new ministry collaboration is added to the list.]

Announcement 5

Faith in Our Future

Our Cohort Implementation Team sponsored a successful _____ program, which attracted _____ people. The evaluations showed that the participants appreciated _____. We hope to sponsor more of these joint programs and need more volunteers from this parish to do it. Please contact _____ at _____ to get more information.

Announcement 6

Faith in Our Future

As part of our implementation of the Bishop's Directives we are studying some demographic trends that are part of our Cohort's life. We thought you would be interested in the following: (Include what is appropriate.)

Announcement 7

Faith in Our Future

The Cohort Implementation Team has begun to work on Bishop O'Connell's Directives. We are focusing on _____ and hope to be able to _____. We would appreciate any volunteers who can help us _____ over the next several weeks.

Announcement 8

Faith in Our Future

The Cohort Implementation Team invites you to a meeting to accomplish two things: 1) to hear about its deliberations on the best way to implement the Bishop's Directives; 2) and to solicit your input. We would appreciate your attendance and participation. The meeting is _____ time, _____ place, _____ date.

Announcement 9

Faith in Our Future

The Cohort Implementation Team is in the process of preparing to present our plan for Implementation of Bishop O'Connell's Directives to the Diocesan Implementation Commission. Before we do this we would appreciate your feedback about what we are proposing. Please go to the parish website to read the plan and give us any ideas you may have about it. There are three questions at the end of the plan for your feedback. Please answer these by _____.