CHAPTER 1: CHURCH IS NOT EASY

Read through the list of ten mistakes Fr. Michael and Tom Corcoran made at the Church of the Nativity. Which of these could also apply to Good Shepherd Parish and why?

- 2 – Trying to be perfect
  - Open discussion on how things are done from within the groups, lack of communication and understanding on why we do
  - Nice to see that some attention is made to suggestions that are made, great when the priest addresses why things are done the way they are
  - People didn't appreciate or value the work being done on programs available
  - Important to give your input and volunteer in the committees in which you would like to affect change
  - Programs must be welcoming, Catholic liturgy is traditional rather than contemporary
- 3 – Need to have more people involved in leadership, how do we get people to see and understand the importance of volunteering
  - Nothing that attracted people to stay and get involved
- 5 – Trying to please everyone, afraid to stand behind church belief/teachings
  - Parishioners are entrenched in their tradition. Some may resent change
- 7 – Making sure that youth are involved; Cornerstone was a great start and Sunday school programs are extremely positive
  - Using social media to our advantage
  - Competing with sports to get families and young people to come to church
- 8 – We don’t understand how uninterested, involvement, community, previous bad experiences
  - Mistrust in the church due to negative media
CHAPTER 2: PHARISEES AT HEART
What is keeping our church from growing?

- Missing our youth, need to have programs for youth of all ages – birth to university
- “Speak up” our parish – invite!
  - We authentically need to recommend
  - Get lists of families in the community that support the Catholic School Board, send out a mailer/flyer for outreach
  - People? Willing to drop a flyer off in people’s mailboxes
- How do we get our young families to the church
  - Quiet room was missing from plan (nursing mother’s)
  - Family mass
  - How many people not coming because of young children?
- Negative media on Catholics and the Catholic Church
- GSP is growing! Physical size of the building could be a limitation
- Perception of mass - get nothing out of it or have a “What’s in it for me?!” mentality
- Catholic Guilt – I have to go every week, I haven’t been for x but I can’t
- Greeters have been a wonderful positive effect – physical presence is growing us
- Change is difficult – “evangelization” is not a word that’s accepted
- We must be convinced that this is the most important thing to Catholic school = church
CHAPTER 3: LOST PEOPLE IN CHURCH WORLD

Good Shepherd Parish has a mission statement: “Rooted in Faith, Living in Service, Growing Disciples. On a scale of one to ten (ten being excellent), how well are we doing at making disciples? Why?

- 2 – How are we measuring! Is the whole parish invited to participate
- Failing because less people attend mass than 10 years ago but there is more energy now – see more young couples because kids programs, then message can be heard
- 4 – What does “growing disciples” mean? Insider or outside? Getting tired of hearing it, need to go deeper. How do I do that? How do I engage others? Evangelization takes practice *teach how to*
- 7 – evidence of how well we are doing is shown by attendance, doing well, dynamic church, lots of people/engagement
  - get a lot out of mass, but more to do, opportunities are there, established groups – come and fit it vs. come and evolve (discipleship)
- 7/8 – more people involved, very friendly parish
- 8 – see changes, doing a great job, bring others kids which is fun
- 8.5/9 – divorced people feel judged (those now going to Evangelical), no “joy” (very different in Evangelical), no public transportation in this area

SUGGESTIONS
- Spotlight on different ministry each month
- Church bulletin with vision statement right below larger
CHAPTER 3: LOST PEOPLE IN CHURCHWORLD
“Jesus made lost people his priority.” Would you say the same thing about our parish? Why or why not?

**YES**
- GSP makes church welcoming
- Focus on trying to make the weekend matter
- Keep current with the use of technology
- Priest talk with parishioners with café/hallways. Father Gary made him realize he wanted to become catholic by his example, priests make all the difference
- St. Vincent de Paul brings message to the “lost”

**NO**
- Not enough about what GSP does and what all committees do
- How do we reach the people who hunger for God?
- Wish someone calls once registered but just received registration – not as welcoming
- Many of the committees are trying to reach out more (marginalized) vs. lost
- Traditional teachings out of date
- Are we going out? Neighbourhood picnic vs. parish picnic, cards – welcome here, door to door
- Most parishioners don’t think about evangelization or bringing people in
- Discrepancy between St. Gregory’s and St. William’s cultures which made blending difficult

**SUGGESTION**
- Buddy system – new parishioners matched up with regular parishioners
- Participate in community events
How are we going to reach lost people to help them become disciples?

- Personal invitation/even email, Door to door campaign
- Opportunities for relationships through outreach, Set example – Show by our lead! Living your faith in everyday life – being visible
- Advertise you’re happy! Make them want it! Cool to be involved.
- Talk about what happens at Good Shepherd communicate what is good to friends, seeds have been planted in family
- Post flyers for our parish at Food Bank/Atlas Tube
- Target events that involve young adults, Teen Centre – Belle River, Clinics, priests stop by to say hello,
- Random acts of kindness – with love from GSP
- Being visible in the community (i.e. corn fest float) branding, T-Shirts/Shirts
- Inserting ourselves into the high school, reach out for leaders at local schools – volunteer hours, youth service group
- Events in the community – Service at Atlas Tube, Hot chocolate at Atlas Tube, Renting ice time, Neighbourhood picnic, Sports teams, Host social events
- Divorcees/widows support group
- Signage – a message every week
- Showing the humanity of the church – priests Father Danny speaking of his background
- Educate ourselves/spiritual instruction – teach us “how” to evangelize
- We must turn inward to assess our own faith commitment
How do we then help disciples become “Growing disciples”?

- Challenge people in the pews and having parishioners lead by example
- Invite, invite, invite
- Hit the basics occasionally – why are we here
- Create a “family feeling” by sharing what our groups do
- Share a story!/“Moment of the week”
- Reach out to neighbours – talk to the kids that come to our homes
- Volunteering – encourage people we know to come to church
- Help support bringing our kids to church, get the teachers to come to mass
- In the family room
- Bible studies – reconnect to God’s word
- Encourage small group faith sharing – 6 weeks max
- Commitment – all organizations struggle with this – not just the church
- Young people are attached to their phones, we need to ask them what they want from organized religion?
- Music – popular, mix
- Prayer
- Look at people’s talents
- Get to know them and invite them – encourage them
- Small initiatives lead to lasting benefits