

Is your parish ready for Stewardship?

The following considerations will help you determine how prepared your parish is for a successful stewardship effort. Don't worry if you can't answer "Yes" to every question. However, the more "yes" answers you have, the more successful your effort will be. Hopefully, as your parish embraces stewardship, you will be able to answer these questions with a resounding "YES!"

Considerations for spirituality:

- Are opportunities provided for deepening prayer life and reflecting on the life of the Spirit?
- Do parishioners show a willingness to spend time with God through Eucharistic Adoration, weekday Mass, parish missions, personal prayer, etc?
- Is sensitivity shown to how various groups express their faith in distinctive religious devotions and practices?
- Do your spiritual activities reflect the wealth of Catholic heritage and the diverse cultures within your parish?
- Do you enhance the church environment to support the ongoing growth of spiritual life, both as individuals and as a faith community?
- Is the message of the Gospel spoken clearly in your educational programs, liturgical services and in your gatherings as people of faith?
- Are you a witness to your faith in the expression of your daily activities?
- Are there areas of conversion that need to be addressed?
- Do you respond in practice to the needs around you?
- Are all members provided with opportunities to share their gifts and talents in service?

Considerations for liturgy:

- Does your Sunday worship invite the whole community to prayer and action?
- Do you have a parish liturgy committee that represents the diversity of the parish?
- Do you regularly evaluate the liturgical life of your parish?
- Does the preaching relate to the Scriptures of the Sunday and to the lives of the people in the parish?
- Are liturgical ministers trained who represent the diversity of your parish in age, gender, and ethnicity?
- Do you develop liturgical space for celebrating the Eucharist in accord with liturgical guidelines?
- Are formation days utilized?
- Are resources offered by the diocesan liturgical resource office.

Considerations for faith formation:

- Do you provide ongoing faith formation for all Catholics?
- Do you support catechists in their efforts for continual formation and certification?
- Do you offer activities and resources to help adults experience, understand, and live their faith?
- Is life-long adult faith formation a priority?
- Are adults encouraged and opportunities made available for leadership roles in this new era of church ministry?
- Do you provide opportunities to enrich the parents' role as their children's teachers and to show how faith formation benefits children and youth?
- Do you encourage the parents to set an example to their children that learning about God does not end with Confirmation?
- Do you encourage members of your parish to participate in the School for Pastoral Ministry in English or Spanish?

Considerations for leadership:

- Does your parish have a mission that is shared by the pastor, council, staff, and other leaders?
- Do all parish personnel have job descriptions and annual evaluations?
- Is on-going formation of parish leaders promoted by encouraging attendance at workshops and classes on diocesan and national levels?
- Do you offer discernment of gifts workshops so parishioners can clarify their talents and see how they can serve?
- Do you foster dialogue so school personnel and the parish staff, paid and unpaid, can work together collaboratively?

Considerations for hospitality:

- Do you encourage parishioners, as the Body of Christ, to follow the example of Jesus in sharing their love, their welcome, and their giving?
- Does the parish assembly understand that welcoming those who attend liturgies is a ministry for the whole parish, not only a committee?
- Are greeters and leaders trained in cultural sensitivity to reach out to visitors and newcomers?
- Do you have a hospitality ministry that organizes coffee hours after Mass each weekend?
- Do you provide dances and community meals (such as Lenten soup suppers)?
- Do you train home visitors to follow up with newly registered parishioners to welcome them, to explain ministries and activities that they might enjoy, and to invite them to serve in ministries that fit them?
- Do your visitors to the sick bring the love of Christ and of the parish to those who are unable to attend Eucharist?
- Is communication promoted throughout the parish?

Considerations for small Christian communities:

- Do Small Christian Communities meet on a regular basis?
- Does the diocesan office for Small Christian Communities offer help in forming communities in parishes, training leaders, and providing materials?
- Is adult faith formation promoted through small Christian communities which offer shared study, shared experience, and community service?
- Do you have a parish core group to develop and maintain Small Christian communities?
- Do you invite members of Small Christian Communities to explain the value and the blessing that the SCC has been in their journey of faith?
- Are SCC utilized in the effort to welcome the stranger?
- Do you inspire and invite others in the parish to grow spiritually through involvement in a small community?

Considerations for diverse culture and gifts:

- Do you utilize parish census surveys to identify gifts and cultural or ethnic diversities and needs?
- Are activities and workshops planned at the parish or deanery level that are designed to help parishioners discern their gifts and discover ways to use them?
- Do you encourage participation at liturgies and celebrations that reflect cultural diversity?
- Are your liturgy committees sensitive to ethnic and cultural dimensions?
- Do you receive guidance from the ethnic pastoral centers of the diocese to help parishioners and pastoral staff to understand cultural differences and promote ways of creating community among ethnic groups?
- Do your committees and ministries represent the makeup of the parish?
- Does your pastoral council take the lead in developing a community spirit within parishes where several ethnic and language groups exist?

Considerations for stewardship:

- Does your parish encourage everyone to practice good stewardship of all their gifts that they have to share?
- Do you have a parish brochure listing the ministries in which parishioners can become involved?
- Does your parish help people to discern their gifts and talents?
- Is there an annual opportunity for people to commit or re-commit to serve in ministries?
- Are new parishioners invited to become involved in ministries?
- Do you provide a thank you or recognition event for those who give their time?
- Is there on-going stewardship education for all ages?
- Do you encourage parishioners to move toward the goal of giving a tithe?
- Do you inspire parishioners by having the parish tithe outside of itself?
- Does the percentage of people who give to the parish increase on a regular basis?

Considerations for social ministry:

- Are parishioners encouraged to share their gifts and resources to meet the basic needs of those who are hungry, ill, aging, and homeless?
- Are you encouraged to become involved in local issues like housing and health care, or join groups that serve local needs, such as Vincent de Paul?
- Are there coordinated efforts in the parish, the interfaith community, and other networks to bring about social change and respond to injustices on the local or world order?
- Are the values and content of Catholic Social Teaching integrated into the many aspects of parish formation, liturgy, and community life, connecting the work for justice with the Gospel and sacramental life of the Church?
- Do you promote study, conversation, prayer, and action on the political and social issues of our day, including a range of local and global concerns?
- Do you have a Social Ministry Committee that coordinates and develops the various justice and service opportunities in the parish, assesses parish needs and resources and identifies and trains leaders for these ministries?
- Do you draw upon the guidance and resources of the diocesan staff working in Social Justice Resources, Respect Life, Ethnic Pastoral Centers, and Catholic Charities of the East Bay, as well as the resources provided by Catholic Charities USA, California Catholic Conference, and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops?

Considerations for evangelization:

To foster conversion –

- Do you provide opportunities for faith formation using the USCCB pamphlet celebrating the Sacrament of Penance?
- Are opportunities provided to develop formation on Catholic Social thought as an object of reflection for individual and communal examination of conscience?
- Are there opportunities for cross cultural exchanges in order to build a greater awareness and appreciation of difference in the Church?

To foster communion –

- Are diocesan norms implemented on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the United States adaptations?
- Do you encourage families to talk about their faith life together and help them to be comfortable in sharing their faith?
- Do “Returning Catholics” have opportunities to strengthen the sacramental identity of the parish?

To foster solidarity –

- Are parishioners involved in community and civic activities?
- Do you have a Parish Social Ministry Committee?
- Have you Adopted a sister parish locally and/or globally?

If you find your parish is ready for a full stewardship effort, please contact Debra Gunn at dgunn@oakdiocese.org to receive guidance with the next steps in the process.