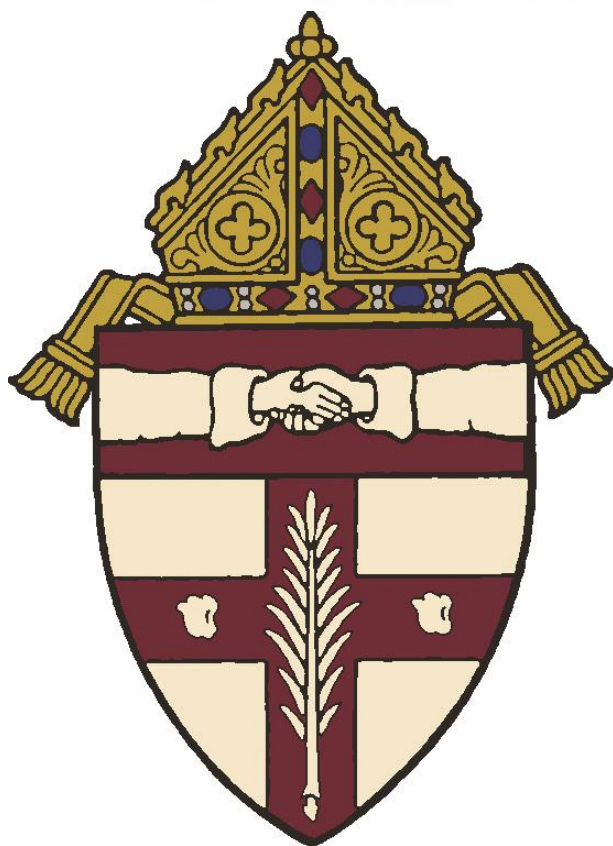


Living as Missionary Disciples

Office of Evangelization & Discipleship
DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO



Parish Evangelization
& Discipleship
Resource Booklet

Table of Contents

Overview

Letter from Bishop Medley	3
Letter from Office of Evangelization and Discipleship	4
Parish Renewal through the Lens of “Living as Missionary Disciples”	5

Encounter

Overview	11
Alpha Initiative	13
Alpha Flyer (English)	15
Alpha Flyer (Spanish)	16

Accompany

Overview	17
Paradigm Shifts	19

Community

Overview	22
Prayer Tools for Shared Prayer in Meetings	24
Parish Staff/Leadership Retreat Day	30
Parish Staff/Team Development Tools	31
Evaluation Tool	32

Send

Overview	36
Profile of a Missionary Disciple	37
Sample Evangelization Plan	38
Save the Date - December 1 Flyer	43



DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

McRaith Catholic Center | Office of the Bishop

Dear Priests and Parish Staff Members for the Diocese of Owensboro,

I want to express my gratitude for your service to the people of our diocese and assure you of my prayers as you live out your vocation as a disciple of Jesus.

As we gather today for our third annual *Living as Missionary Disciples* event, I ask you to continue joining me in prayer for ongoing renewal in all of the 78 parishes of our diocese. The themes of our four-year vision for these gatherings mirror those in the USCCB document titled, *Living as Missionary Disciples*. As you know, the themes are Encounter, Accompany, Community, and Send. I pray that this vision and our desire to embrace it and be fruitful will powerfully renew our parish communities.

Join me in praying that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead and guide our efforts in evangelization and discipleship throughout our diocese, and be assured of my prayers and gratitude for your ministry.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro

Greetings from the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship,

In December 2017, Bishop Medley called the leadership of the parishes across western Kentucky to come together at the Convention Center in Owensboro. At that gathering Bishop Medley announced a four-year process for introducing the New Evangelization into the Diocese of Owensboro, called “Living as Missionary Disciples.” This four-year process is based on the Leadership Resource released by the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the same title. Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, states: “I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in the years to come.” (#1)

This call to the New Evangelization is not actually a new one. Pope St. Paul VI first spoke of a renewed evangelization in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, stating, “She (the Church) exists in order to evangelize (#14).” Pope St. John Paul II is credited with calling it a “New Evangelization” in clarifying that the message was not new but rather the “ardor, methods and expression” needed to be new. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of a renewed evangelization, “finding appropriate means to propose anew the perennial truth of Christ’s Gospel.” Since the Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s, our popes have been calling us to take a new and serious look at evangelization and change the ways that we are being Church. Pope Francis states, “I hope all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are. Mere administration can no long be enough. Throughout the world, let us be permanently in a state of mission.” (#25)

The Office of Evangelization and Discipleship has been learning from leaders in the field of evangelization, sponsored several workshops/retreats, and helped multiple parishes to form Evangelization Committees and/or develop an Evangelization Plan for the parish. Under new leadership, we plan to continue these efforts and expand programming to support all parishes in their efforts to cultivate Missionary Disciples. As we prepare to complete this four-year introductory process, we ask for your input on the needs your parish has and how we can support your parish. If you have any questions, please contact Jeff Andrini at the McRaith Catholic Center or Fr. Larry McBride at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Henderson.

Sincerely,

Jeff Andrini, D.Min., Director of the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship

Fr. Larry McBride, Associate Director of the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship

Office of Evangelization and Discipleship Advisory Council Members:

Jessy Bennett	Martha Hagan
Carol Hulsey	Pat Jones
Amy Payne	Tom Payne

A Process of Parish Renewal

Once we catch the vision of Living as Missionary Disciples, the challenge of renewing our Catholic parish can become a looming mountain with many formidable barriers that can paralyze even the most faithful among us. Admitting this reality up front is actually an excellent place to begin, as it helps us to realize that we cannot cause renewal on our own. It begins by encountering Jesus and following as his disciples, and it depends on the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit! The goal of renewing parish culture needs to flow out of a humility and openness to learn from others. Additionally, it should be undertaken in the context of a team that is willing to pray, dream, and work together.

Current Reality

Assessing the current realities of your parish needs to be a conversation with the Pastoral Council, parish staff and the leadership of your parish. Evaluation and honest conversation around the health and well-being of the parish helps focus our understanding and provides a clearer picture of reality. Is your parish a thriving and dynamic community that is making disciples and inviting others to participate in and make present the reign of God? Where are the areas that need tweaking and where do we need a total transformation in our parish culture to be more effective?

Here is a snapshot of the past nearly 20 years in our diocese, which shows a clear decline in every single one of the following categories:

- Infant baptism: In 2000 – 1,017 baptized; in 2017 – 834 baptized
- Adult baptism: In 2000 – 176 baptized; in 2017 – 57 baptized
- Coming into full communion with the Church: In 2000 – 254 people; in 2017 – 138 people
- First Communions: In 2000 – 995 children; in 2017 – 759 children
- Confirmations: In 2000 – 1,004 youth; in 2017 – 709 youth
- Marriages: In 2000 – 471 couples; in 2017 – 236 couples
- Catholic population: In 2000 – 50,187 people; in 2017 – 44,427 people

The only statistic not in decline is the overall population of all people living in western Kentucky – 778,235 in 2000 to 886,477 in 2017.

It is clear that there are seismic shifts taking place in our Catholic communities and it is time to ask difficult questions and refocus our energies toward renewal. The focus of Living as Missionary Disciples, and our diocesan response to host four annual events to unpack this USCCB document is exactly for the purpose of considering these difficult realities and proposing solutions. But the real question is, “Are we all ready to respond to the crisis at hand?” Consider the words of a former IBM executive Lou Gerstner, “Transformation of an enterprise begins with a sense of crisis or urgency. No institution will go through fundamental change unless it believes it is in deep trouble and needs to do something different to survive.”¹

As a leader in one of the 78 parishes of the Diocese of Owensboro, we commend you for your efforts in seeking to do “something different” to foster greater vibrancy, renewal and to stabilize and reverse the trends of the past 20 years. The diocese wants to be of service to your parish and together, we can

¹ Everyone Leads: How to Revitalize the Catholic Church, by Chris Lowney, pg. 23, published by Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

accomplish great things. It is our hope and prayer that as our parishes learn about Living as Missionary Disciples, we will see positive changes throughout our diocese.

Let us briefly review the four pillars of Living as Missionary Disciples. In doing so, we acknowledge that we have both large and small parishes that are striving to embrace these principles with excellence and can serve as models, as well as parishes that have struggled deeply and do not seem to have the necessary resources. Wherever your parish is along this journey, we invite you to hear the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:20, "... And behold, I am with you always..." May you find strength in these words and joy as you seek to bring renewal to your parish community!

Encounter

The 2017 United States Catholic Bishops' statement, "Living As Missionary Disciples" states, "the New Evangelization is a call for all of us to have a deeper encounter with Christ, best expressed in a simple, confident, informed, and joyous witness to the faith, which attracts others and invites them to wonder what secret is motivating the Christian disciple."² They go on to say, "Missionary discipleship takes place within the context of evangelization and begins with an encounter with Christ."³ This is language that is somewhat foreign to Catholics and more than the language; the experience of a real encounter with Jesus is not as common as one might expect. In fact, according to Pew Research, "Only 48% of Catholics were absolutely certain that the God they believed in was a God with whom they could have a personal relationship."⁴ The language of personal relationship with Jesus is extremely important and the proclamation of the Kerygma is a first step in creating disciples. Other important aspects of "Encounter" include that we become comfortable telling our own stories of faith and that we teach all members of our parish to see they too have a story of faith.

The proclamation of the Good News can come in many forms and we can rejoice that our diocese has a history of some wonderful retreat movements like Cursillo, Koinonia, and Teens Encounter Christ. In addition, small faith programs like Renew and Arise have produced good fruit in many of our parish communities. But the proclamation of a living relationship with Jesus needs to come through loud and clear at all of our parish events. Creating opportunities for encounter and inviting people into a deep personal relationship with Christ needs to become standard fare in all our parishes. But it does not end here; it leads to the importance of accompaniment.

Accompany

All members of our parish need to be encouraged and equipped in the art of accompanying others in faith. "The Church will have to initiate everyone- priests, religious and laity- into the art of accompaniment, which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other."⁵ Here we support our people with an emphasis on helping them grow in their relationship with Christ and the Church. We teach habits of discipleship and provide opportunities to support people in growth and knowledge of their faith. An important aspect of this movement is that we teach people to come alongside someone else, build a relationship with them, and support them in their ongoing growth as a disciple of Jesus. This is the work

² Living As Missionary Disciples, USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, pg. 7, 2017.

³ Ibid, pg.9.

⁴ Forming

⁵ Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis, 169.

of the entire parish and all members, not just a select few. We all need to be comfortable accompanying others on the journey of faith and be willing to be in relationship with others in our parish.

One important way this is accomplished is through the development of small faith communities. As mentioned previously, many parishes of the diocese have participated in small faith communities in the past. Those who have done so understand the value of being in a small group and in fact, some members of parishes in our diocese have been in the same small community for more than 30 years! These small groups provide Christian community in a way that the larger parish is not able. One important way we can accompany others is by welcoming them into a small Christian community. We will explore new ways to foster small groups throughout the parishes in our diocese and encourage your parish to seek out these types of opportunities.

Community

The third movement is the focus of our event today, “Community.” As Church, we are invited to enter into the communion of the Trinity and share in their divine life. Reflecting divine communion is a tall order but it is done in very practical ways. “The community of faith is a place of invitation, welcome, and hospitality, especially for those who are inquiring or returning.”⁶ The health of our parish is the responsibility of the entire community. It is important that there is a culture of prayer, teamwork and fellowship, which forms the foundation of the parish. We need to consider the health and well-being of the parish and take steps to insure that we are focusing on the mission of Jesus and seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The great commission by Jesus to those early disciples is clearly a call to every baptized member of the Church to, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...” We are challenged to rethink and reimagine our Catholic Culture and to use all the varied gifts of the people of God to make present God’s reign today and to strengthen each of our parishes as outposts for living and proclaiming the Gospel. To do this, the faith of our people needs to be enriched by an encounter with Jesus. Once a personal encounter with Jesus has been experienced, this budding faith needs to be supported through accompaniment. This often takes place within a vibrant community of disciples and then all are sent out on mission into their daily lives to proclaim the Gospel through their actions. This is the mission of Jesus and it should be our mission too.

But for far too long, we have been a Church of maintenance. We have been more concerned about taking care of the people within the parish and providing for our own internal needs than living the mission of Jesus and engaging with the wider community.

“Parishes rooted in a paradigm of maintenance possess an inward vision. The community’s survival is the primary driver of budgets, allocations of resources, and activity. Staff members, leaders and key volunteers in maintenance focused parishes spend an inordinate amount of their time keeping the trains running on time- that is, finding volunteers, maintaining processes and programs, and keeping structures alive.”⁷

A summary sheet by Deacon Keith Strohm of the five paradigms that leaders must acknowledge and seek to refocus follows in this resource packet. These five include: 1) Institutional Faith to Intentional Faith, 2)

⁶ Living As Missionary Disciples, USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, pg. 16, 2017.

⁷ ABLAZE: Five Essential Paradigm Shifts for Parish Renewal, Deacon Keith Strohm, pg. 63, The Word Among Us Press, 2019.

Engagement to Encounter, 3) Maintenance to Mission, 4) Programs to People and 5) Avoidance to Accountability. If we are going to renew our parishes, our culture and way of doing things are going to have to radically change as well. It begins with parish leadership! We must embrace and model the call to Living as Missionary Disciples in our own lives and in our parish structures.

Our focus today is on Community. In order to transform our parish structures and live as missionary disciples, we are inviting each parish to invest in communal prayer and faith sharing. This begins as a staff and helps to form a strong team and then we can share it with the wider parish. It is also helpful to use self-awareness and team building tools such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Called and Gifted, IDISC, StrengthFinders, etc. These tools help us grow in our appreciation of our God given gifts and the gifts of others. As we strengthen our relationships and team, then we must develop ways to share the call to Missionary Discipleship with the entire parish. What are the next steps your parish staff/team needs to take to grow together? What are the next steps your staff/team needs to take on this journey of inspiring and equipping your parishioners to Live as Missionary Disciples? And, what do you need from the diocese to foster this renewal?

The greatest treasure of our Catholic faith is the fact that we encounter Jesus every week in the Eucharist. We gather as the People of God to worship and experience the love, mercy and transforming power of a real relationship with Jesus and the gift of receiving his body and blood and having communion with divinity. This is the reality of our coming together as community each week, but our language, our passion, and our very identity as disciples of Jesus Christ needs to be explicit and preached in a manner that clearly connects with our people. We have all we need; we just need a culture change.

Send

The focus of our fourth and final event dedicated to Living as Missionary Disciples will highlight the final movement to “Send out on Mission.” The date is Tuesday, December 1, 2020. The content will challenge all of us to have the same goal that Jesus did when he sent the Holy Spirit upon the early Church: that we are all sent on mission. Pope Francis is exhorting the Church to embrace a vision where each member of the Church understands they have a role to play.

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized.”⁸

This understanding presents an exciting and future-oriented reality for the average Catholic parish today. If we want our members to understand and take up this challenge, we need to be focused on sharing the vision of Living as Missionary Disciples with our parishes. And even more than sharing the vision, we need to help our people experience a personal encounter with Jesus, and the Trinity, and participate in a vibrant community that is alive in Christ, ready to walk with them, and focused on the mission of Jesus.

⁸ Living As Missionary Disciples, USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, pg. 18, 2017.

Next Steps?

As we plan to complete our four-year study of Living as Missionary Disciples, we can rejoice in the fruit this has born in many parishes that have really taken on the challenge to embrace evangelization and have heavily invested to move their efforts forward. However, for other parishes in the diocese, not much has changed on the ground and little has been done to present this vision of evangelization. We rejoice in the progress that has been made in gathering together for these amazing training days with pastors and staff. These events have been well-attended and the feedback has been very good. Although we might like to see more fruit in our parishes, the fruit has been seen so far in successfully introducing the concepts and the vision. Now it is time to create tools and plans to share this message more broadly and to work together to evangelize our parishes.

How can the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship help?

We plan to provide diocesan initiatives such as Alpha 2021 and other large group programs that involve not just your parish staff, but reach out to more of your parishioners and leaders within your community. Regarding Alpha 2021, we encourage all parishes to consider hosting the Alpha course in your parish. The materials are available online at alpha.org and the series can be hosted in a variety of settings. It is not a miracle program, but it does open doors to the language of encounter and help people have an experience of God. It also requires a follow-up plan for when it ends so people will keep engaged and growing. As a diocese, we are going to host Alpha in January through March 2021 and present a joint retreat for all parishes to participate in. The eleven sessions will be held at your parish, and all involved parishes that choose to participate are invited to come together for the retreat, rather than having to provide their own.

Other possible initiatives include providing workshops for parishes on Living as Missionary Disciples and retreat experiences for key leaders. The formation of small Christian communities in parishes is an important tool in the ongoing efforts to engage and grow disciples and we will be considering ways to foster and support these groups. As in the past, the office will visit parishes to aid in creating a plan for evangelization or the development of a specific evangelization committee, if desired.

We are here to support your parish and want to hear from you on what support would be helpful.

What could you be doing as a parish?

If your parish staff and key leadership teams have not intentionally come together to pray and share faith on a regular basis, we encourage you to begin and model this for all parish committees. There is a simple prayer formula provided in this booklet for this purpose, in case you are not sure where to begin. As stated in the U.S. bishops' document, the first dimension in developing a Pastoral Plan for Missionary Discipleship is that "planning for ministry is permeated with prayer." It is so necessary to engage in heartfelt prayer with one another and to be comfortable sharing the ways God is active in our lives as leaders. This models for our communities the need to pray from the heart and to constantly observe where God is active in our daily lives. Expanding prayer to include off-site retreat time with the parish staff and key leadership teams is another excellent way to foster community and allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through your group.

Another important tool is to discuss the health and well-being of the parish. Are we truly a team? What is the spiritual climate of our parish? Consider going through the evaluation process recommended in the book *Divine Renovation*. These key elements of parish life should be discussed and, as they are addressed

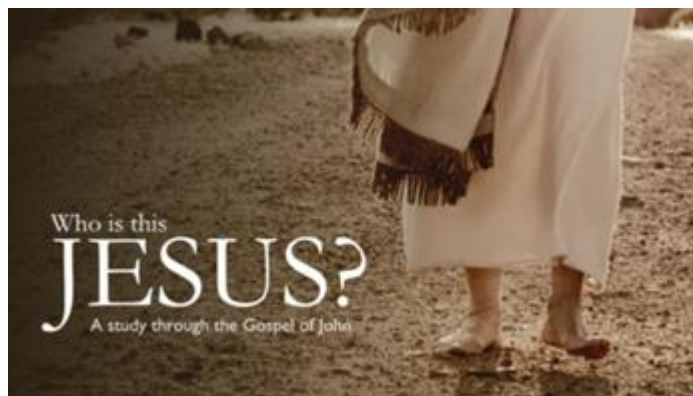
and improved upon, the culture of the parish will become more reflective of Missionary Discipleship. See the evaluation tool provided in the Community section that follows to help foster these important conversations with staff and key leaders in the parish. Additionally, we invite you to dream. As you pray as a staff and key leadership teams, be open to the Holy Spirit moving you to dream big and fearlessly discern and implement the vision of Missionary Discipleship in your parish.

ENCOUNTER

A Deeper Encounter with Christ: Formation for Discipleship

Missionary Discipleship takes place within the context of evangelization and begins with an encounter with Christ. Through the Paschal Mystery, we are invited into a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ and into the communion of the Trinity!

“Come and see” (John 1:46).....Encounter



Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day.

John 1:38-39

Personal Emphasis:

Invited to relationship with Jesus

Introduced to the basic Gospel message

Sharing my story of faith in the larger story of faith

Parish Emphasis:

Financial management courses

Social events

Parenting courses & family ministry

Marriage: Preparation/enrichment

Engagement ministries

Grieving, funeral, divorce, healing ministries and support groups

Baptism classes

Men’s and women’s events

Service projects

Welcome to the parish and hospitality

Possible Diocesan/Parish Programs/Initiatives

Small Faith Sharing Communities:

Alpha (see pages 13-16)

ChristLife (Discover Christ)

Discover (Catholic Christian Outreach)

Amazed & Afraid (Evangelicalcatholic.org)

Prayer and Sacraments:

Personal prayer

Adoration

Invited to Mass

Invitation to Sacrament of Reconciliation

Book Study/Personal Study:

Discovering Christ – Dave Nodar

The Ultimate Relationship Booklet – (Catholic Christian Outreach)

Rediscover Jesus – Matthew Kelly

Hurting in the Church – A Way Forward for Wounded Catholics – Fr. Thomas Berg

Be Healed – Dr. Bob Schuchts

Healing Component:

Healing and Hope Program

“Healing Our Church” (Renew)

Community Impact/Service:

“Make A Difference”

Volunteering

St. Vincent de Paul

Local help agencies

Going on a mission trip

What is Alpha?

Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith, typically run over eleven weeks. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is run all around the globe, and everyone is welcome. It will be offered in English and Spanish.

What to expect

A typical Alpha

Alpha runs in cafés, churches, universities, homes – you name it. No two Alphas look the same, but they generally have three key things in common: food, a talk and good conversation.

First up there's Food

Whether it's a group of friends gathered around a kitchen table, or a quick catch-up over coffee and cake, food has a way of bringing people together. It's no different at Alpha. We start with food, because it's a great way to encourage community and get to know each other.

Then a Talk

The talks are designed to engage and inspire conversation. Generally thirty minutes long, they can be given as a live talk or played as a video. They explore the big issues around faith and unpack the basics of Christianity, addressing questions such as Who is Jesus? And How can we have faith?

Followed by Discussion

Probably the most important part of any Alpha: the chance to share thoughts and ideas on the topic, and simply discuss it in a small group. There's no obligation to say anything. And there's nothing you can't say. It's an opportunity to hear from others and contribute your own perspective in an honest, friendly and open environment.

Alpha follows a structure set over 11 sessions as well as a weekend away. We recommend beginning and ending each Alpha with a party where guests can invite their friends who might be interested in attending the next Alpha.

11 Sessions

- Launch Party: Is There More to Life Than This?
- Week 1: Who is Jesus?
- Week 2: Why Did Jesus Die?
- Week 3: How Can We Have Faith?
- Week 4: Why and How Do I Pray?
- Week 5: Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
- Week 6: How Does God Guide Us?
- Week 7: How Can I Resist Evil?
- Week 8: Why and How Should I Tell Others?
- Week 9: Does God Heal Today?
- Week 10: What About the Church?

Alpha Weekend

- Weekend talk 1: Who is the Holy Spirit?
- Weekend talk 2: What Does the Holy Spirit Do?
- Weekend talk 3: How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Weekend talk 4: How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life?



Your parish is invited...
to join our Diocesan Alpha...
And be transformed!
January-March 2021

Who: All 78 parishes are invited to consider hosting an Alpha Course, individually, as a deanery, or with the larger diocese.

What: Alpha is an opportunity for community, conversation and taking another step in your journey of faith. The target audience is for those not active in a parish or who are questioning their faith, but it is also an excellent tool to help cradle Catholics discover a more personal relationship with Jesus and the Trinity. It is 11 sessions long and each session begins with a meal. Then there is a 25-minute DVD, followed by a small group discussion. The highpoint of the experience is an overnight retreat.

Where: Each of the 11 sessions will be held in your parish or deanery, but the retreat will be for the whole diocese on Feb. 20/21 or 27/28, TBD.

When: The diocese-wide event will be January –March 2021. The orientation will be held July 2020 and 2 leader trainings will be held in September and October 2020.

Why: In our four-year effort to renew our parishes and focus on Living as Missionary Disciples, we need to foster moments of encounter that lead to accompaniment, community and sending out disciples. Join us in this exciting effort!

Cost: The largest expense is for the 11 weekly meals that are provided and then there is a \$6 book per participant. The retreat will be the largest cost and participants will be asked to pay this amount. More details to come...

REGISTER by June 15, 2020 for the Diocese-Wide Alpha!

Contact Information: Jeff Andrini, jeff.andrini@pastoral.org, 270-683-1545



Tu Parroquia esta invita
a participar en nuestro
Alfa Diocesano en Español
Y ser transformados
Enero-Marzo 2021

¿Quién? Todas las 78 parroquias están invitadas a considerar si pueden facilitar un Curso de Alfa, de manera individual como parroquia, como decanato o con el resto de la diócesis.

¿Qué? Alfa es una oportunidad para crear comunidad, conversación y para tomar otro paso en tu camino de fe. El objetivo son aquellos que no están activos en la parroquia o que se encuentran cuestionando su fe. Pero también es una excelente herramienta para facilitar una relacional más personal con Jesús y la Trinidad, para aquellos que han sido católicos toda su vida. Consiste de 11 sesiones y antes de cada sesión se come juntos. Luego se proyecta un DVD de 25 minutos, seguido por un compartir en grupos pequeños. La meta es tener un retiro ya luego hasta de un día para otro y pasar la noche.

¿Dónde? Cada una de las 11 sesiones serian en tu parroquia o decanato, pero el retiro será para toda la diócesis lo más probable entre Feb 20/21 o 27/28 luego se confirmara la fecha.

¿Cuándo? Este evento diocesano se daría entre Enero-Marzo 2021. La orientación será en Julio 2020 y 2 entrenamientos de líderes se darán en Septiembre y Octubre 2020. NOTA: Se dará el entrenamiento en español por un instructor capacitado en Alfa que viene y se proveerán también los recursos necesarios en español. Luego se dará el lugar y fecha exacta.

¿Por qué? Dentro de nuestros 4 años de esfuerzo por la renovación de nuestras parroquias y nuestro enfoque de vivir como Discípulos Misioneros, necesitamos de proveer momentos que llevan al acompañamiento, la comunidad y al envío hacia fuera como discípulos.

¡Acompáñanos en este emocionante esfuerzo!

Costo: Un costo a considerar sería por las 11 comidas semanales que se proveen. Sin embargo, la comunidad Hispana sabe organizarse y las familias juntas entre todos pueden traer algo a compartir. Hay un costo de \$ 6.00 por libro para cada participante. El retiro ya luego sería el costo más significativo y se pedirá cada participante colaborar. Más detalles se darán luego...

REGISTRENSE antes del 15 de Junio, 2020 ¡ANIMENSE! para este ALFA Diocesano

Contactos para información:

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ACCOMPANY

A Deeper Encounter with Christ: Formation for Discipleship

Missionary Discipleship takes place within the context of evangelization and begins with an encounter with Christ. We look to Jesus, the Master who personally formed his apostles and disciples, as the model of evangelization. Jesus formed relationships and accompanied people on the journey of faith. We are called to accompany others.

“Follow me” (Matthew 9:9).....Accompaniment



As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.

Matthew 9:9

Personal Emphasis:

Growing in relationship with Jesus and the Catholic Church

Growing in love with the Word of God through small group accompaniment

Developing the habits of discipleship

Parish Emphasis:

RCIA

Personal/relational evangelization

Kerygmatic preaching

Retreat ministry

Service projects

Catechist/aide support

Possible Diocesan/Parish Programs/Initiatives

Small Faith Sharing Communities:

Alpha (see pages 13-16)

ChristLife

Seeking Christ, Paulist EM

Christ Renews His Parish (CHRP) or Redesigned “Welcome” format by Dynamic Catholic

Prayer and Sacraments:

Participating in Mass

Lectio Divina

Frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Book Study/Personal Study:

Rediscover Jesus – Matthew Kelly

In His Likeness – Dr. Edward Sri

Hungry for God – Dr. Ralph Martin

Lord, Lead me into the Deep – Dr. Michael Fonseca

Various titles by Bishop Robert Barron

Healing Component:

Healing the Whole Person (JP II Healing Center)

The Wounded Body of Christ (Word Among Us)

Community Impact/Service:

As a friend and follower of Jesus

Extended service trips

Personally accompanying others in service

Paradigm shifts that leaders must make:

Nothing shifts until the culture of your parish shifts.

In our desire to accompany people into God's kingdom, we must first strive to meet people where they are at. If our cultures are toxic, we will have no one to accompany. They will not be hanging around wanting anything from us. Instead, we need to create an atmosphere where meaningful encounters with Christ and the People of God lead others to want to participate and enjoy the fruits of what they see in our communities.

“Leaders shape culture consciously or unconsciously, by design or by neglect, through what is rewarded or what is tolerated, and to do anything by design simply means that it is done with intentionality.” – Fr. James Mallon

From:

To:

Institutional Faith

- Leaves little space for personal relationship with God.
- Tends toward the “transactional.”
- Parishioners act more like “consumers.”
- Pastoral leaders do not spend much time in prayer.

Culture of Engagement

- Focuses involvement. Conversion is to community.
- Skips over discernment processes.
- Confuses “activity” with personal relationship & discipleship.

Intentional Faith

- Personal relationship with Christ is at the center of communal life.
- This is the focus of all parish efforts.
- Leadership team seeks the Will of the Lord together in times of prayer.

Culture of Encounter

- Focuses on encounter. Conversion is to Jesus.
- Evaluates all of parish life through the lens of encounter.
- Has a stable group of disciples willing to invest themselves in others.

From:

To:

Focus on Maintenance

- Vision is primarily inward focused, toward the community.
- Majority of the time, energy, and resources of leadership are geared toward “keeping the trains running on time.”
- Strong emphasis on “throughput” (attendance, numbers and resources).

Program Based Models

- See the “right” program as solver of all problems, or tool of engagement.
- Creates a programmatic cycle or “meandering path.”
- Often executes programs with little personal follow-up.
- Parish functions under belief that good programs make disciples.

Leaders Who Avoid

- Avoids difficult conversations because we don’t want to hurt other people’s feelings.
- Won’t press forward on a strategic direction or execute a solid vision because of the perceived difficulties of change.

Focus on Mission

- Focus of leadership is on sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world outside of the parish.
- Every parishioner is called to be a missionary disciple and pathways are created to equip them.
- Attention is on fruitfulness and change rather than attendance and numbers.

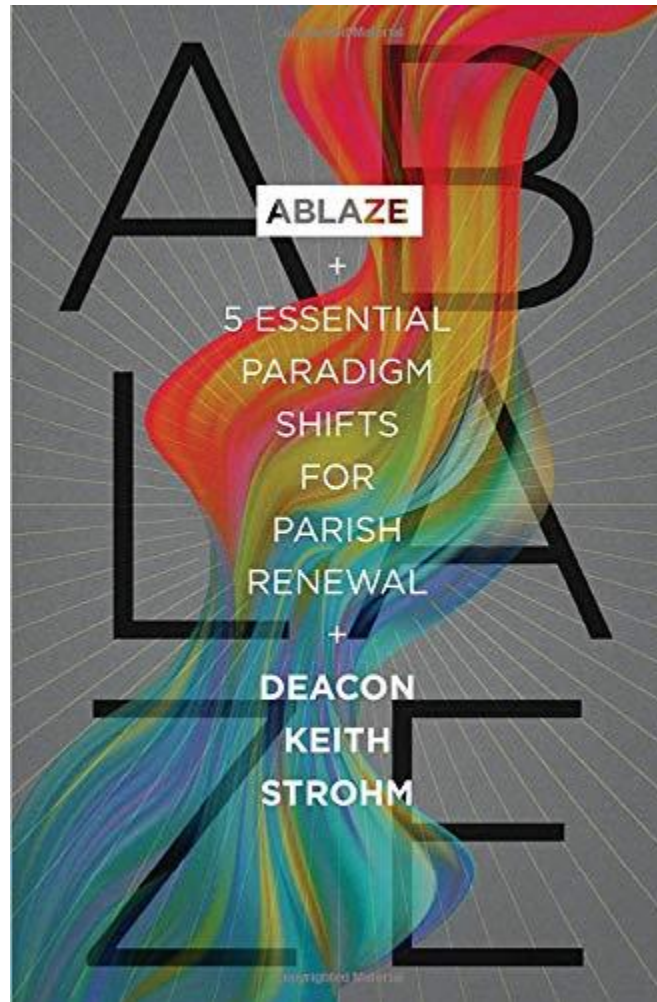
People Based Models

- Empowers and equips and empowers disciples to accompany others into discipleship.
- Combines the right programs with the right people so that this accompaniment bears the greatest fruit.

Leaders Who are Accountable

- Sees the role of leadership as discerning and accountable, concerned with fruit and effectiveness.
- No tolerance for passive-aggressiveness.

“Paradigm shifts that leaders must make” is taken from the book
“Ablaze: 5 Essential Paradigm Shifts for Parish Renewal”
By Deacon Keith Strohm



COMMUNITY

A Deeper Encounter with Christ: Formation for Discipleship

Missionary Discipleship begins with an encounter with Jesus, is grown through accompaniment, and blossoms into a vibrant community of disciples. In our parishes, people find welcome, belonging, a deeper relationship with Jesus through the sacraments and a world-shaping vision that brings engagement. In God, we find everything we need to be fully human and alive!

“Remain in me” (John 15:4).....Community



Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

John 15:4-5

Personal Emphasis:

- Continued growth in love and understanding of the Mass and the sacraments
- Renewed focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Deepening our love for daily prayer
- Growing in a loving relationship with God
- Desire to commit our lives to the mission of Jesus as a parish
- Living your Strengths

Parish Emphasis:

- Continued deepening of faith in small group experiences
- Formation in the interior life
- Service in memory of Jesus and the Church
- Focus on Mass, music, homily, hospitality
- Called & Gifted

Possible Diocesan/Parish Programs/Initiatives

Small Faith Sharing Communities:

Alpha (see pages 13-16)

The Bible and the Mass (Ascension Press)

Oremus (Ascension Press)

Obedience (Catholic Christian Outreach)

The Mass (Word on Fire)

Living the Eucharist (Paulist Evangelization Ministries)

Prayer and Sacraments:

Personal Prayer

Adoration

Inviting others to parish-wide adult growth opportunities

Deeper and frequent Confession

Book Study/Personal Study:

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass – Dr. Edward Sri

Living the Mass – Joe Paprocki

Following Jesus: What the New Testament Teaches Us – Daniel J. Harrington, S.J.

Healing Component:

Focus on Sacrament of Reconciliation

Healing the Whole Person (JPPII Healing Center)

Incorporating Shared Prayer into Our Parish Meetings

Recommendation – If you currently do not take 15-20 minutes of shared prayer and faith sharing at parish staff and council meetings please begin to make this a regular practice and watch for the fruits of the Holy Spirit to be present in your gatherings in new ways. If this is already a regular practice, then you know the immense value it brings. Perhaps you could tweak your efforts with one or more of the following suggestions.

- If you have been sharing prayer around the Gospel, such as in the first option below, consider focusing on the Second Reading. With the epistles you may want to expand the readings by reading verses on either side to set a better context. You may also choose to focus on a specific book of scripture such as the Acts of the Apostles or a specific Gospel used during any given liturgical year.
- Another excellent possibility is to have the members of the group to take turns leading prayer, and then they would prepare the scripture and lead the sharing with their own reflection and questions. They may also choose different forms of prayer, which expands people's experience and understanding.
- Consider a scripture retreat or prayer day in the parish focused on Scripture and Praying with Scripture as a way to expand the use of scripture and prayer. Perhaps this could be in conjunction with the Word of God Sunday at the end of January each year.

The next few pages offer formats to assist you in praying with your teams. The following can be found:

- Upcoming Gospel prayer & reflection
- Lectio Divina Prayer
- Discernment prayer
- Share prayer
- Parish staff/leadership retreat day

Upcoming Gospel Prayer & Reflection

Begin in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Offer a spontaneous prayer or use this example... “Gracious God, we thank you for each person you have called to be present at this meeting. As we gather in the name of your Son, we pray for openness to the wisdom and direction of your Holy Spirit. Speak to us through your Word and through one another as we pray and bless the work of this committee. You know the day that each one of us is coming from, our joys and sorrows, and the concerns of our hearts. As we gather in your name, help us to release our anxieties to you and to trust that you will guide us individually and as a committee. We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

“As we proclaim the Gospel for this coming Sunday, I invite you to listen with your heart and see if a word or phrase grabs you. Afterwards, those who are comfortable will be asked to share their word or phrase and then we will share faith as part of our prayer.”

A reading from the holy Gospel according to _____.

Proclaim the Word clearly and slowly.

End with “The Gospel of the Lord.”

All respond: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Dialogue:

- What word or phrase stuck out to you?
- What did you hear in this reading?
- Does anyone have a story to share that relates to the message we are discussing or is maybe even unrelated but it is on your heart?
- Anyone else have something to add?

Prayer Intentions: Begin by encouraging people to offer a spontaneous prayer for anything that came up in your faith sharing or for the meeting or projects of this group. At the end of each request, say, “We pray to the Lord.” And all can respond, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

Close the time of prayer with an Our Father, Holy Mary or Glory Be.

Lectio Divina Prayer

Choose a passage of scripture that connects with the theme of your meeting and proclaim it through the steps of Lectio Divina or Divine Reading. Each time you proclaim the scripture, articulate each word and read slowly.

The steps are:

- 1) Lectio (reading)
- 2) Meditatio (meditation)
- 3) Oratio (prayer)
- 4) Contemplatio (contemplation)

Begin by inviting people to sit comfortably in their chair, close their eyes, and to recognize their breathing. Invite them to take a deep breath and exhale any anxiety they are carrying in their muscles from the day's activities. Encourage them to take another deep breath and breathe in God's peace and exhale any stress or worry. Rest in God's presence and listen as we proclaim God's Word.

Lectio: Tell people that you will proclaim the passage four times. The first time ask them to listen for a word or phrase that sticks out to them. After proclaiming the Word, allow for 30 seconds of silence and ask each person to share their word or phrase, but no more.

Meditatio: This time proclaim the Word and invite them to again listen for a word or phrase, but ask them to add to their sharing about what that word or phrase is saying to them. It is ok if they change their word or phrase as well. Once everyone shares their word or phrase, open it up for any further discussion or faith sharing.

Oratio: The third time is meant to allow time for shared prayer. Explain that this time you will read the passage and give 30 seconds for private prayer and then we will take a few minutes to voice our prayers to God. It is meant to be a deeper reflection on our work and a time to pray that what we felt the Word was saying would move into our hearts through the Holy Spirit and strengthen us individually and as a community.

Contemplatio: Proclaim the passage one final time and then sit in silence for 2-3 minutes and encourage people to recognize they are resting in God presence and do not need to do anything.

Other ways to expand your prayer & faith sharing efforts

God Sightings Prayer

This is more of a faith sharing question, but taking a minute of quiet at the front end and asking people to reflect on their last week and see where they have experienced God or had a “God sighting” is a way for people to pause and reflect back on their life. This faith sharing can bring up all kinds of wonderful life experiences and also difficult experiences, but we can close by taking all these reflections and thanking God for working in our lives. It may also be an opportunity to pray with people for specific needs.

Discernment Prayer

Discernment is often an important part of many meetings we attend. Certainly we want God to direct us in our decisions, but how often do we pause to invite God’s Spirit to lead us during our meetings? If your team gets stuck in a conversation, pause to say a prayer and take a minute of silence to allow the Spirit to work in the hearts of all present. Then resume the meeting and watch the Holy Spirit work through your conversation. Of course this can seem awkward and silence is not always easy for folks, but it models the importance of giving God room to work in our midst.

Praying For/With Someone

If a team member shares something really difficult in their life, consider stopping right then and there to ask if they would mind if we said a prayer right now for them or the situation. We need to become more comfortable praying for and with people on the spot, instead of just saying, “I’ll pray for you.” Review the Share Prayer tool from the Diocese of Green Bay on the next page for additional encouragement and direction.

SHARE PRAYER

First shared by Julianne Stanz two years ago in our diocese. Great tool from Green Bay Diocese!

WHAT IS SHARE PRAYER?

"Share Prayer" is an easy way to pray with and for someone in a simple and non-threatening manner. It takes some practice but once you have done it a couple of times you will find it to be a comfortable formula that you can use with family, friends, or with someone you have just met.

PRAYER TRANSFORMS LIVES, WE JUST HAVE TO BELIEVE IT AND SHARE IT!

Regardless of who we are praying with, the value of intercessory prayer is that it connects us more deeply to the suffering of the other while at the same time encourages the Lord to take hold of their situation. Praying with someone is to extend the voice of Christ to another which brings healing and peace.

PICTURE THIS SCENARIO:



As you are out and about, you run into a friend that you have not seen in some time. After some conversation you notice that your friend seems to be worried and anxious. You ask them what is going on and they open up to you.

Your friend tells you that their beloved grandmother has had a mild stroke, that their family is fighting about whether she should be placed in a nursing home and as a result, the family is in turmoil. Your friend asks you for some prayers and you promise to remember them in your prayers.

At the end of the conversation you say, "I am sorry. I will pray for you" which is a fairly typical response. In the days and weeks that follow we remember our friend and their intentions in our prayers.

We know that prayer is good but we don't realize that we can do something concrete to bring Jesus into the situation right there and then. What we can do is to "share a prayer" with them.

WHY SHARE PRAYER WITH OTHERS?

Jesus tells us to pray for others. The early witness of the Church tells us to pray. We want to pray, but we don't always feel comfortable praying aloud with another person.

Our friend may or may not be a Christian, they may or may not believe in God or maybe they are seeking a relationship with Christ but do not know where to begin. Regardless, they need prayer and have reached out to you as someone they trust. Instead of praying for that person and their situation later in your day, why not stop and pray for and with them in the moment?

BENEFITS OF SHARE PRAYER:

- The Scriptures are clear - Jesus tells us to pray with others. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray so that they could deepen their love for Christ and for each other.
- It is a witness of the Gospel to the person you pray with and for.
- In a crisis, praying with someone unites us to their suffering and our suffering to Christ's suffering.
- Praying for the living and for the dead is one of the spiritual works of mercy.
- In the words of Pope Francis when we rise from prayer our hearts are "more open and freed of self-absorption".
- If we pray in the moment, we won't forget to pray later.

In general, one would want to do share prayer after talking with someone who is having difficulties. At the end of the conversation, ask the person, "Would it be ok if I pray with you?"

If they say "no," that is ok and just move on.

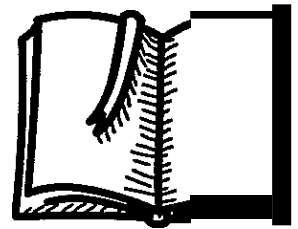
If they say "yes," you may follow this template or improvise as the Holy Spirit moves you.

- You can call on God the following ways: God, Lord, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Heavenly, Loving etc.
- Thank God for the person you are praying with and ask for God's blessing upon them: "Thank you for my friend, your son/daughter of Christ. Please bless him/her and uplift them at this time."
- Then ask God for what the person needs for example: "We ask you to heal Francis' grandmother or "We ask you to help Ann's family to make the right decisions about the nursing home or "We ask you to help Jason who is struggling with debt at this time".
- Gratitude for all that God is doing. "Thank you Lord, Jesus etc for revealing yourself to us" or "Thank you for your blessings on this family".
- Finish the prayer with a doxology: "We ask this through Christ our Lord." OR "We ask this in Jesus' name." OR "Through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever." OR "Glory Be" etc.

BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS:

"Again, [amen] I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19-20).

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful" (James 5:16).



QUOTES FROM THE EARLY CHURCH:

"Pray without ceasing on behalf of everyone" (St. Ignatius, c A.D. 110, Letter to the Ephesians 10).

"Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings, for those in power, for princes, for those that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, so that your fruit may be apparent to everyone and that you may be perfect in Him" (St. Polycarp, A.D. 110-150, Letter to the Philippians 12).

QUOTES FROM POPE FRANCIS:



"One form of prayer moves us particularly to take up the task of evangelization and to seek the good of others: it is the prayer of intercession. Let us peer for a moment into the heart of Saint Paul, to see what his prayer was like. It was full of people: '...I constantly pray with you in every one of my prayers for all of you... because I hold you in my heart' (Phil 1:4, 7)" (Evangelii Gaudium #281).

"This attitude becomes a prayer of gratitude to God for others. 'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you' (Rom 1:8). It is constant thankfulness: 'I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus' (1 Cor 1:4. When evangelizers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open; freed of self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others" (Evangelii Gaudium #282).

"The great men and women of God were great intercessors. Intercession is like 'a leaven in the heart of the Trinity'. It is a way of penetrating the Father's heart and discovering new dimensions which can shed light on concrete situations and change them. We can say that God's heart is touched by our intercession, yet in reality he is always there first. What our intercession achieves is that his power, his love and his faithfulness are shown ever more clearly in the midst of the people" (Evangelii Gaudium #283).

Parish Staff/Leadership Retreat Day

It is extremely important for parish staff members and even parish leadership teams to make time to grow in faith together. Being a team is rooted in the communion of the Trinity and we are invited into this covenant relationship as individuals and as a community. However, it takes work. It is not the heavy lifting work of building something, but rather a more relational work that is rooted in vulnerability, shared leadership and the mission of Jesus. Some folks probably prefer the “heavy lifting” type of work, but as disciples of Jesus, dialogue, transparency and the work of being a team is essential. Providing time away from the office and the distractions of everyday ministry was important for Jesus and it should be important for us.

Here’s a sample retreat schedule and we can help you flesh out the details and possibly even help you with the retreat itself.

9:00 a.m.	Arrival and Hospitality
9:30 a.m.	Naming our humanity – Share where you grew up, how many in your family and what number you are, one thing that was unique or difficult in your childhood.
10:00 a.m.	Naming God’s divinity – Song and reflection – Group prayer
10:30 a.m.	Personal prayer/reflection – Gratitude for God’s work in your life
11:15 a.m.	Sharing our stories of <u>Encounter</u>
12:15 p.m.	Prayer and lunch
1:30 p.m.	Regather – Song and prayer
1:45 p.m.	Prayer ministry for and with one another – <u>Accompany</u>
3:00 p.m.	Social time/break – <u>Community</u>
4:00 p.m.	Regather – Song and contemplative meditation
4:15 p.m.	Group conversation: What do we need to keep doing? What do we need to start doing? What do we need to stop doing? – <u>Community</u>
5:30 p.m.	Dinner/celebration – <u>Send</u>

There are many variations to this schedule, but the point of this retreat is to build relationships with one another. It is meant to be an opportunity to appreciate each other’s humanity and the gift of God’s divinity that we are invited in to be in communion. And the final “Send” element is that we are to go back and work on the group conversation in light of the movement of the Holy Spirit through our prayer and conversation of the day. We have to take this next step of following where the Spirit has led, which will always be to a place of health, personal and communal well-being and growth!

Other tools include taking part in personality assessments, strengths tools or how you perform on a team. Indicators like the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, StrengthFinders, the DISC profile and many others tools are excellent self-awareness and team building tools that can provide you with the help you need to form and grow your team.

Parish Staff/Team Development Tools

The following suggestions are just a beginning of a resource to help you and your parish team to grow in individual self-awareness and to develop a greater understanding of the gifts of others, which improves relationships and synergy. There are many tools and we will keep adding to this list and invite you to share your best practices with us so we can improve this resource. Some of these require outside presenters and others can be done on your own. The first listed below is something 8 members of the Diocesan staff recently completed and we will be using with the entire diocesan staff later in the year.

IDISC- Provides a complete profile of your personality. This includes identifying 1 of 14 personality types and offers strengths/challenges, defining characteristics, and suggestions for working with others. This inventory can be ordered at talentsmart.com. Click on the products and go to the IDISC. The cost is \$19.95 per booklet and each person on your team will need one. The simple instructions walk each person through discovering their type and then the 14 personality types are outlined. This is a great first step in further self-understanding and learning to appreciate the gifts of others and work with those on your team.

StrengthsFinders 2.0 or Living Your Strengths- We get so accustomed to trying to improve our weaknesses and these books provide a fresh new perspective to work on improving your strengths. These positive and engaging resources are filled with ways to enrich the members of your team and get to know what makes them tick. Consider purchase a book for each member on your team and ask them to take the StrengthFinders assessment and report back on their top five strengths. You could read a chapter and come together to discuss it and work through the book as a team. You could ask people to report what they learned about themselves and then research their findings to learn how to work more effectively with them. Go to store.gallup.com and click on the tab titled “For Individuals.” Go down to the “Books” link and see these, and other books for your consideration. The cost is about \$20 per book and it is listed at Amazon for \$17.30.

The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace- This book is available on-line at Christianbook.com for \$11.49 each. It includes an access code to take the Motivating By Appreciation assessment. Then the team can assemble and discuss the findings. Again, reading a section of the book and then gathering to discuss it can be a very effective way to build community and learn about your team.

Myers Briggs Type Indicator or Keirsey Report- This is an excellent way to introduce people to the concept of personality type and both of these indicators offer a letter combination representing 16 personalities. People are amazed at how well these tools identify their strengths and opportunities for growth and they learn so much about themselves and the people they work with. We may offer a MBTI workshop if it is needed and you can find materials and info at Keirsey.com. Cost is \$20-\$30 per person.

Evaluation Tool

Caution: *This conversation, and the leading of the Holy Spirit, will lead to new life and vibrancy in your parish community!*

How to transform the culture of the parish community

The following is just a teaser summary of 110 pages of the book by Fr. James Mallon titled Divine Renovation. Please see the book and study guide for further tools to discuss with your staff and leadership teams.

Values:

- Show me your budget and I will show you your values
- Look at your staffing
 - Evangelization
 - Adult faith formation
 - Youth
 - Young adult
 - Schools/religious education
- For our staff members who have multiple roles (i.e. DRE or Director of Faith Formation) what proportion of their time is allotted to doing which task?
- The New Evangelization is the transformation of the culture – which is a conversion of our values.
- We don't have to change our theology; we have to start living out this rich theology of the Christian life. It means a total conversion of our lived values.
- This is not a quick fix.
- Bottom line: are you willing to let go of your “safe plans” that you come up with and let God plan and dream for your parish?
- We need SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Agreed upon, Realistic and Time-bound.

Ten common values shared by healthy and growing parish communities:

1. Priority of the Weekend – Psalm 118:24

Thoughts: This is the one time of the week that we have the majority of our people (80%). Sunday Eucharist ought to be a “production” in the best sense of the word (not showmanship). Do we, as a parish, provide the WOW effect? Is the WOW effect on the lips of those sent out to glorify God with their lives? Do people want to attend? Do newcomers return? Does our church building serve us well for gathering, celebrating and connecting?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

2. Hospitality – Matthew 25:35

Thoughts: Think about the visitor. Put yourself in the shoes of someone who doesn't yet belong. Does our entire faith community understand its responsibility to be welcoming and hospitable- how hospitality? Are we joyful? If Jesus is in your heart please notify your face! How well do we welcome strangers? How well do we reach out to strangers? Bathrooms? Cry room? Welcome Center for registration/membership? Do our office hours accommodate our parishioners' work and life schedules?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

3. Uplifting Music – Psalm 96:1

Thoughts: Remember, songs move the heart and not just the mind. Are we investing in training our local talent or hiring good musicians? Do our parishioners understand why we sing and that "liturgy" means to work? How do we rate the music ministry of our parish? Does the music ministry of our parish encourage full, active, conscious participation of all the faithful? Does our worship space provide ample room for the music ministry?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

4. Homilies – 1 Corinthians 9:16

Thoughts: This is when a priest has the vast majority of his people; make it count. Do the priests speak to the entire person – mind, heart, conscience and will? Do homilies provide exegesis on Sacred Scripture? It is Good News that is preached? Does one experience joy from the preaching ministry of the parish priest? Do you experience your priests as real and vulnerable while preaching? Recognizing that difficult truths must be spoken out of love for the people, do you feel loved by your priests who are called to preach Truth? Does the preaching ministry of your parish priests lead the community to Jesus? Does preaching lead to action? Does the pastor have a group of people that will give him good and honest feedback? Do homilies build on one another?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

5. Meaningful Community – Acts of the Apostles 4:32

Thoughts: The parish is a "family of families" – Authentic community is a place where we are known and loved. It is a place where we find others to whom we are accountable and who are accountable to us. What do visitors see? What would they conclude? Do we provide opportunities for a real and authentic experience of belonging? (Alpha, Name Tag Sunday, prayer partners, prayer ministry after Mass, connect groups, etc.) Are we a healthy Church where people grow spiritually, serve others, and share financial resources sacrificially?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

6. Clear Expectations – Luke 14:27-28

Thoughts: Do we communicate expectations for membership in the parish? Do we communicate what people should be able to expect, as members, from the parish? Is our Stewardship initiative all that it can

be- Time (Discipleship); Talent (Ministry); Treasure (Sharing of Financial Resources)? Areas of improvement?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

7. Strength Based Ministry – 1 Peter 4:11

Thoughts: Do we assist parishioners with identifying their gifts/talents? Are we people first – not just plugging a hole when it comes to volunteering?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

8. Formation of Small Communities – Luke 6:13

Thoughts: Meaningful community must become a normative part of the life of the Church. Caring for needs is the job of all. We need to bring our people to maturity. In larger parishes, Father can't attend to the needs of every person or family; how are we all involved in ministering to others that Father can't? It is highly suggested that we have connect groups in our parish – midsize is the preference – that would meet, maybe, once per month in each other's home, share a meal, provide a time for prayer, take turns presenting a topic/sharing testimony, and share in some kind of outreach. After RCIA or an encounter with Jesus Christ how do we keep people connected to the community?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

9. Experience of the Holy Spirit – John 14:12

Thoughts: The Holy Spirit is the Mystery of God in us; a life-altering experience of power. We need to remind people that they have the gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit and that Faith in Christ includes a transformative experience of the Holy Spirit. Enthusiasm (en theo = In God) is the literal response to the presence of the Holy Spirit who is God in us and we in God. Does our parish provide experiences of the Holy Spirit?

Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

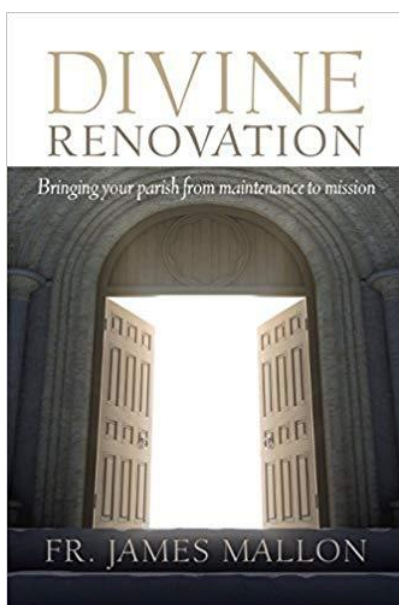
10. Becoming an Inviting Church – John 1:39

Thoughts: Are our people intentionally invitational recognizing that we are all responsible for inviting people to Church, to the Faith? Do we, as a parish, possess a compelling vision of what we can be; do we need a vision statement? Do we equip our parishioners to be evangelizers? Goals/Objectives for reaching goals?

Transforming Parishes

“This necessary change, of course, is one of culture. This cultural change means a deep, deep change. It means changing what we consider to be normative for the Christian life. It means a total conversion of our lived values, not merely the stated ones. Compared to this change, all others, including closing churches, are merely cosmetic.”

--Fr. James Mallon, *Divine Renovation*



SEND

A Deeper Encounter with Christ: Formation for Discipleship

Missionary Discipleship begins with an encounter with Jesus, is grown through accompaniment and blossoms into a vibrant community of disciples. Transformed and divinized as disciples of Jesus Christ, in union with the Father and Spirit, we are sent on mission to continue the ministry of Jesus to the world!

“Go therefore, make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).....**Mission**



“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Matthew 28: 18-20

Personal Emphasis:

Continued growth in a living relationship with the Holy Spirit

Living a deeper identity as a beloved child of God

Commitment to daily prayer and relationship with God and others

Deeper desire to live the mission of Jesus to the wider community

Profile of a Missionary Disciple

- Possesses an established prayer life and is rooted in the disciplines of discipleship.
 - Daily Scripture Reading
 - Daily Prayer
 - Fellowship
 - Sacramental Life
 - Service to the World
 - Sharing Christ (Evangelization) with Others
- Understands the Kerygma and how their own story connects with the Great Story of Salvation.
 - Understands how the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy connect to the Kerygma (the Proclamation of the Good News).
- Has a heart for God's people and looks for opportunities to share the Father's love in Jesus with others.
 - Invests in individuals and strives to help them to become Missionary Disciples of Christ.
 - Breaks open their own relationship with Christ for the sake of others (Witness).
 - Shares the Kerygma with others.
 - Is comfortable inviting others directly to give themselves to Jesus.
- Intentionally cooperates with the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Has discerned and intentionally uses their charisms.
- Takes personal responsibility for the Mission of Christ in the world.

Parish Reflection Questions

1. As we consider our parish, what can we do to make the mission of our parish in forming disciples more explicit?
2. Who are the most readily available, on fire and enthusiastic disciples that could help to encourage other disciples?
3. What existing initiatives or ministries are most important to growing our discipleship efforts?
4. Which ministries need to be relooked at from the perspective of discipleship?
5. What do we need to STOP doing to grow disciples?
6. What do we need to KEEP doing to (but perhaps improve) to grow disciples?
7. What do we need to START doing to grow disciples?
8. How will we know if we are successful in making disciples?

Sample Parish Evangelization Plan

Year One Focus

Priority of the Weekend

Goal 1: By the end of 2020, The Stewardship Committee will devise and execute a plan to simplify the stewardship forms, using the weekend Mass as an opportunity to explain the forms to parishioners.

Goal 2: To use the weekend Mass to increase parishioner engagement by the end of 2020.

Objectives

- The presider will present a welcome and greet your neighbor opportunity at each weekend Mass.
- The Stewardship Committee will devise and execute a plan to increase average family and group participation by end of 2020.
- The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee will designate one weekend per month as nametag Sunday to help parishioners get to know one another.
- The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee will ensure that a reminder to be welcoming and hospitable be placed in the bulletin at least once per month.
- The Education and Formation Committee will host one youth-led weekend Mass per quarter.

Goal 2: By the end of 2020, the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee will develop and execute a successful plan to utilize more “ceremonial”, “respectful” things in the Mass which may include, but is not limited to:

Objectives

- Having altar servers accompany priest with candles when going to read Gospel.
- Having ushers escort all up the aisle during the entrance procession.

Uplifting Music

Goal 1: By the end of 2020, to increase the music director’s leadership and presence at all weekend Masses.

Objectives

- All music will be approved by the music director.
- The Worship & Spiritual Life Committee will develop a music sub-committee.

- The Worship & Spiritual Life Committee will pursue options to make the music area more user friendly.

Homilies

Goal 1: By the end of 2020, the presider will work to develop homilies that build upon one another, leaving parishioners looking to the next week and leading to an action.

Objectives

- The presider will engage the people by coming down into the congregation at appropriate times, at least once monthly.
- By March 1, 2020, Father will shorten the Pastor's message in the bulletin, listing the main points for parishioners to follow that week.
- Father will work with the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee to put together a homily sub-committee by October 31, 2020.

Clear Expectations

Goal 1: To develop and implement a new process for easier, more accessible parishioner registration by the end of 2020.

Objectives

- The Stewardship Committee will develop and implement a process to follow up with all new parishioner registrations.
- The Stewardship Committee will design a corner tear-out in the bulletin that requests membership information.
- The Stewardship Committee will create and print a card that requests membership and display permanently in all the entrances of the Church
- Parish staff will work with the Technology Committee to create a process for registration through the parish website.
- Parish council will develop a listing of parish and parishioner expectations to be provided to all existing and newly registered parishioners.
- Parish staff will devise a workflow that automatically initiates an invitation for independent parishioner registration for all children who turn 18 (or who are no longer a dependent of their parents).

Year Two Focus

Hospitality

Goal 1: By the end of 2021, the parish will develop opportunities to better serve the needs of the elderly

Objectives

- The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee will work to involve the elderly more in the weekend Masses.
- The Outreach Committee will compile a list of those who would like to come to church but who need assistance or cannot drive, matching them to parishioners who can assist them in getting to church.
- The Technology Subcommittee will explore options for making video recordings of Masses to be more inclusive for those who are home-bound or cannot physically make it to church.

Goal 2: To become a more welcoming church for new families and parishioners, to increase participation and ensure retention, by the end of 2021.

Objectives

- The Stewardship Committee will establish a Welcome committee to organize welcome dinners for new parishioners and families and encourage families and individual parishioners to attend.
- The Family and Social Life Committee will create a program to pair new families with existing parishioner families. These sponsor families will:
 - Welcome the new family, be a point of contact and provide support
 - Invite them to various functions, sit with them at Mass, and call to check in with them
- The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee will develop a new process for assigning families to take up gifts, including announcing families, and encouraging new families to participate.
- The Outreach Committee will create and schedule “Homecoming Sundays” to outreach to parishioners who have fallen out of the parish, and inviting new members, and may develop other types of Outreach Masses to specific groups if necessary.

Becoming an Inviting Church

Goal 1: By the end of 2021, the church will foster more opportunities for visitor interaction and creating a welcoming environment.

Objectives

- The Building and Grounds Committee will designate a couple of spaces with visitor parking/welcome signs.
- The Stewardship Committee will provide a welcome booth with outreach sources at public events, i.e. the picnic.

- The Education and Formation Committee will work to increase the social media presence, post information about events and our faith across multiple platforms to reach more individuals.
- The Hospitality Sub-Committee will create a hospitality presence at the door of the church. There will be a designated person with an identifying hospitality/greeter nametag, who will greet everyone, offer visitors information, and have them sign in if applicable.
- The Hospitality Sub-Committee will explore the options for outreach to visitors including thank you cards, Christmas cards, etc.

Year Three Focus

Experience of the Holy Spirit

Goal 1: By the end of 2022 the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee and the Education and Formation Committee will create an environment which helps parishioners foster a greater personal relationship with the Holy Spirit by providing a variety of opportunities for this growth to 100% of the Parish members.

Objectives

- The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee will host Kerygma, mini-retreats, and other opportunities for conversion, offering parishioners “small-bites” to increase participation.
- The Education and Formation Committee will provide opportunities for parishioners to share their conversion stories of encounters with the Holy Spirit, through social media, etc.
- The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee will provide opportunities for parishioners to share their conversion stories of encounters with the Holy Spirit, through speaking engagements before Mass.
- The Education and Formation Committee will distribute resources to parishioners after weekend Masses to provide additional learning opportunities about the Holy Spirit.

Strength Based Ministry

Goal 1: By the end of year 2022 the Education Formation Committee will educate our parishioners on what gifts, talents and charisms they possess and help them to explore their personal strengths.

Objectives

- The Education and Formation Committee will offer workshops to help parishioners identify their gifts and ensure they are maximizing their stewardship.
- The Education and Formation Committee will work with the Diocese to bring in the Gifted and Called Workshop, applying for the Disciples Response Grant if needed.

- The Stewardship Committee will coordinate Ministry Highlights scheduled after assigned weekend Masses, with members of each area of ministry on hand to discuss the ministry.

Year Four Focus

Meaningful Small Community

Goal 1: By the end of year 2023 the Family and Social Life committee will organize the parish into small groups (20 individuals) that will meet to share meals, pray together, share in faith, and be supportive of one another to be measured by the completion of group assignments.

Goal 2: By the end of the year 2023 the Outreach committee will organize and implement Alpha.

Formation of Small Communities

Goal 1: By the end of the year 2023 the Education Formation Committee will identify what small groups already exist in our parish and improve and develop them to expand and grow new small groups to be measured by the documentation of these groups and their roles in our parish.

Objectives

- The Education and Formation Committee will create small communities based off of already like groups i.e. engaged couples, newly baptized, expectant parents.
- The Education and Formation Committee will empower sponsors of RCIA and Confirmation to continue to foster their relationships and keep them involved.
- The Education and Formation Committee will pursue youth and young adult small group opportunities
- The Finance Committee will pursue a full time position for Director of Stewardship.

Special thanks to Joe Bland and St. Mary of the Woods Parish for the permission to share this plan as an example of excellent planning and goal setting focused on creating a dynamic parish culture.

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