

# PARISH WORSHIP COMMISSION GUIDELINES

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

“The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s supper.” (CSL #10)

Since liturgy, then, is truly the “work of the people,” good liturgy should bear fidelity to the rich heritage of the rites of the Church as well as meet the cultural needs of the people.

To accomplish that end, each parish should develop and maintain a Parish Worship Commission to encourage the “full, active and conscious participation of the assembly.” (CSL #14, 42)

## **II. MEMBERSHIP / STRUCTURE**

The Commission should be a reflection of the community it leads and serves. Its members, therefore, should be representative of the general parish population, be registered parishioners and active in the sacramental life of the community. Since the cooperation of the presider is essential to any good liturgical celebration, the pastor should sit on this commission. In addition, the Commission should include the parish liturgist, Music Director, a representative from each of the liturgical ministries, the Director of Religious Education, the Director of Christian Initiation, or a member of the Catechumenal team. A liaison from the Pastoral Council, the art and environment chair person, and several at-large members (including youth) complete the Commission. From all these persons a chairperson should be elected. A secretary should also

be elected or appointed or perhaps commission members will each take a turn recording discussions and consensus.

Initially, the pastor may wish to appoint parish members based on their experience, qualifications and compatible personalities. Later, the usual process of nomination or application, review, and election or selection-by-lots may occur. Terms should not exceed three years with provision made for the orderly expiration of terms in varied years.

### **III. FORMATION AND TRAINING**

The spiritual and liturgical formation of the commission should be thorough and ongoing. They should be familiar with the scope and sequence of the Liturgical Year, the order of the Mass, the format of the Lectionary and the Sacramentary, and have a working knowledge of the liturgical documents. They should be familiar with the various rites of the church, especially the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

The parish should provide funding for regular formation and training. This might include regional or diocesan workshops, conventions, books, and periodicals.

### **IV. DEFINITION OF DUTIES**

A Parish Worship Commission:

- assesses the needs of the worshiping assembly and provides for ongoing evaluation to see that those needs are being met
- advises the pastor
- provides direction for those who prepare liturgies.
- provides for the liturgical education of all parishioners
- promotes the development of competent liturgical ministers

With the pastor it:

- implements diocesan policy
- sets goals for the progress of the liturgical life of the parish

As an entity of the parish pastoral council, it:

- maintains constant communication with other parish commissions

## **V. THE COMMISSION MEETINGS**

The Commission should meet monthly, although some liturgical seasons may require more frequent meetings. Prior to each meeting, a core committee consisting of the pastor, liturgist, music director, and chairperson, should communicate to set the agenda for the parish worship commission.

Prayer should always be an integral part of every meeting. Each meeting's agenda should include ongoing study and formation, a method of evaluating prior celebrations, discussion and future planning. The core committee should be open to the suggestions of the commission as well as individual parishioners (Canon 212 §2).

## **VI. RESOURCES**

There are countless resources available which could be of help to a Parish Worship Commission in carrying out their task of promoting the “full, conscious and active participation” of the worshipping community. Many of these resources may be found listed in the Parish Liturgy Bibliography in the Diocesan Parish Liturgy Manual.

Parish Worship Commissions are also strongly encouraged to spend ample time in evaluating its parish's Sunday liturgies. There is no perfect liturgical celebration. Evaluating liturgy can be a very educational exercise and can help a Parish Worship Commission prioritize needs and improve their Sunday worship. An Assessment Tool follows which may be used for this purpose.