

## **Developing Objectives - Creative sparks!**

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Parish Pastoral Councils often need some fresh ideas to help spark creativity when developing Objectives for their plans. Below are some creative ideas gathered from all sorts of parishes that may spark a creative objective to help your PPC meet their goals. They are arranged according to the seven “Essential Elements” of parish life, but many of these ideas can spark an objective for a different element.

Also consider contacting the diocesan offices corresponding to a parish goal. Diocesan representatives have a broad range of experiences in their area of specialty. A list of contacts is included.

### **Creative ideas -WORD**

- Form faith sharing groups based on the next Sunday’s gospel, with the group giving the priest points to incorporate into that Sunday’s homily.  
(works great with teens)
- Offer evenings for the parents of children receiving sacraments. They can be catechetical in nature or purely social. Just get them together!
  - If you cannot bring parents together, give them “homework” to help give them the tools they need to discuss the faith with their children.
- Place a question box in the back of the Church for any faith related questions and respond monthly with bulletin inserts.
- Use the bulletin to explain parts of the Mass, answer questions on why the priest does or says a certain thing or describe the Sunday that is being celebrated (Ordinary time, feasts...)
- Organize regular meetings of all of the various catechetical ministries of the parish to coordinate and collaborate where possible and just get to know each other better.
- Offer marriage enrichment programs to newlyweds or those in need of marriage support.
- Offer Bible study sessions / faith sharing.
- Start a book club or movie nights with spiritual / religious themes.
- Have all of the various catechetical ministries of the parish meet together to coordinate and collaborate where possible.

### **Creative ideas- WORSHIP**

- Form faith sharing groups based on the Sunday’s gospel, with the group giving the priest points to incorporate into that Sunday’s homily (works great with teens)
- Hold week night faith sharing / praise sessions.
- Gather lectors, EM of HC’s and ministers of hospitality for prayer / reflection / faith sharing during Advent, Lent and Easter seasons.
- Sponsor workshops for lectors in order to improve proclamation skills (great as a cluster activity)

- Revisit traditional Catholic devotions which may have been discarded in recent years. Consider including some catechesis as to its meaning and history.
- Change the keys of songs that are very high or very low to make them easier for parishioners to sing.
- Consider large print worship aids for those in need.
- Form a committee to examine vibrant children's Liturgy of the Word and research available resources to help in the planning of Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- Periodically, invite individuals, PPC's or other groups to assess the quality of Sunday liturgies and homilies.

### **Creative ideas - COMMUNITY**

- Have "one to one" conversations with parishioners to identify what would make people feel more welcomed.
- Designate someone to serve as the parish historian to document significant events in the life of the community.
- Design a parish website that is user friendly, welcoming and informative. Be sure to update it regularly.
- Examine ways the whole parish can be more "youth friendly"
- Encourage ushers to learn people's names and use them when they enter for Mass.
- Place a large bulletin board in the back of church with name tags of parishioners. They can pick them up on their way in, and leave them on the board for next week.
- Use a book or bulletin board for people to write prayer intentions before or after Mass. Consider a backdrop picture of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem for people to place their intentions.
- Make sure that signs and announcements are provided in each language represented in the community.
- Designate special "Welcoming masses" each month. Invitations could be sent to new parishioners who have registered. Serve refreshments afterwards.
- Create a parish "Welcome Kit" for new parishioners with a contact person who can answer questions.
- Welcome newcomers at the beginning of Sunday liturgies.
- Ensure that the church is handicap accessible and can accommodate people with special needs.
- Hold a Christmas party or summer barbeque for all parish volunteers.
- Create a cookbook with recipe's submitted by parishioners
- Provide transportation to elderly or incapacitated parishioners
- Use the Intercessions to pray for those having birthdays, baptisms, anniversaries or other significant events.
- Form a committee that would meet once a month to make birthday cards to send to all parishioners celebrating that month.
- Form a committee that would be trained to provide support to those who are sick, grieving or those who feel ostracized by the church (divorced, homosexual, etc.)
- Encourage people to spend the first few moments after Mass talking to someone they don't know.

- Recruit people to become umbrella escorts, who would agree to arrive half an hour early on rainy Sundays to escort people from their cars.
- Hold a celebration to honor each ethnic community within the parish. Parishioners can bring food decorations and dress from their home countries.

### **Creative ideas - SERVICE**

- Educate the community on the church's commitment to social justice and the need to focus on the complementary and necessary elements of charity and justice.
- Form a group to gather information on local community organizations that work on social justice issues within the city and neighborhood. Then look for areas of collaboration.
- Create a list, readily accessible for parishioners, of referral services in the area. Include what the service provides, phone numbers and addresses, and costs, (if any). Contact Catholic Charities for services they can offer.
- Invite local Catholic Charities reps to speak on neighborhood needs.
- Seek out ways to share ecumenically with local congregations and participate in inter-religious dialogue in collaboration with local communities.
- Offer classes in "English as a Second Language" or provide information on language classes offered in the area or by the Catholic Migration Office.
- Offer an evening (or several) where simple phrases and greetings are taught in each language represented within the parish.
- Organize family service projects for confirmandi where the entire family participates.

### **Creative ideas - LEADERSHIP**

- Form a committee to examine ways to include lay parishioners in roles within the various ministries of the parish.
- Regularly call forth the gifts and leadership of all parishioners, especially young adults.
- Find ways to welcome diversity in leadership and demonstrate an appreciation for multiculturalism.
- Affirm and celebrate parish leaders and volunteers regularly.
- Send parish leaders to initial training for their ministry and ongoing formation periodically.
- Provide full-time pastoral leaders with a clear description of their role and a job description.
- Ensure effective communication among staff on a regularly scheduled basis through staff meetings to ensure the sharing of timely and accurate information and promote cooperation and collaboration on the part of every member of the staff.
- Schedule days of prayer for all parish staff members.
- Ensure all parish leaders and volunteers are in compliance with "Virtus" and have received training.
- Assess parish staff members on a periodic basis.

- Seek out ways to collaborate with local parishes or the cluster.
- Collaborate with local colleges to hold College Prep nights for high school students and their parents or resume writing workshops for parishioners.
- Invite a facilitator to work with the parish staff in developing their goals and objectives.

### **Creative ideas - STEWARDSHIP**

- Create a group to examine methods of gift discernment
- Include themes of Stewardship regularly in the liturgy through witness talks of parishioners and in the homilies.
- Ensure parish communication (bulletins, newsletters, website, parish ministry fair etc.) provides stewardship education, announce opportunities to participate in ministry and provide information on tithing.
- Create a ministry guide that is updated annually and distributed/made available to all parishioners.
- Encourage prayer focused on asking for the grace to live as good stewards (prayer cards, prayer and parish meetings, at homes, reciting stewardship prayer at Mass)
- Appreciate and thank volunteers who share time and talent inside *and* outside the parish.
- Create a Stewardship Commission to assess and plan stewardship educational opportunities and outreach.
- Bring financial gifts forward during offertory
- Promote planned giving regularly
- Publish an Annual Report for the parish
- Thank financial contributors regularly

### **Creative ideas / best practices - EVANGELIZATION**

- Create “Get to Know You” gatherings for parishioners to interact with parish leaders and pastor.
- Organize and sponsor a series on “parent skills” for entire community.
- Start a men’s book club with topics of interest specifically for men in the community.
- Provide informational sessions on new immigrants groups coming into the neighborhood; their customs, traditions and religious practices.

## **Diocesan Contacts (as of June 2007)**

### **Vicariate for Evangelization and Pastoral Life**

Faith Formation: (718) 229-8001

Dr. Phil Franco, Director, Faith Formation, x 580  
Adolescent Faith Formation- Marilyn Santos x 584  
Adult Faith Formation- Richard Pipchinski x582  
Catholic School Curriculum, Nancy Azzaro – x587  
Marriage Ministry, Ana Puente- x543  
RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) – Sr. Alice Michael - x583  
Respect Life Education, x585

Liturgical Commission, Rev. Frank Tumino, Director x 610

Fr. Vito Buonanno x611  
Music Ministry - Charles Mallia, x614

Pastoral Institute, Sr. Angela Gannon, Director, x 350

Pastoral Planning

Bob Choiniere, Director x737  
Ellen Rhatigan, Associate Director x739

Safe Environment (“Virtus”, “Child Lures”...)

Sr. Pat Hudson - 281- 9672

Sts. Peter and Paul Spirituality Center,

Deacon Rich Gilligan, x312

Vicariate Representative – Queens – Ted Musco x 556

Vicariate Representative- Brooklyn – Patrick Turner (718) 965-7300 x 1311

Vicariate Representative – Ed Gaine

### **Office of Stewardship and Development**

Director: Thomas Flood (718) 965-7300 x1608

Marion Albaugh - x1604