

Building a Team

A resource to assist in the implementation of:

Bishop John F. Doerfler's Pastoral letter

Transforming Fire: A New Pentecost to form Spirit-Filled Evangelizers

The mission of evangelization is the responsibility of all the baptized. Therefore, Bishop John **highly recommends** that pastors gather a leadership team to assist with the development and implementation of the parish's evangelization plan to transform the parish. The selection process necessitates prayerful reflection on individuals' gifts as well as the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The parish team may or may not include all the parish staff.

Below are some considerations for recruiting team members:

Qualities of Team Members

- Comfortable with faith sharing
- A person of prayer
- Engaged in the life of the parish
- Love of the Church, and fully embraces Church teaching
- Good sense of all aspects of the parish
- Sensible
- A missionary spirit
- A variety of gifts
 - Visionary
 - Strategic thinker
 - Task-oriented with a proven record of getting things done well
 - Works well with people

How Many People Should be on the Leadership Team?

The number of team members should be somewhere between three and eight. Why? Fewer than three doesn't provide the input and diversity of opinion needed. It also puts too much responsibility on two members who may already be engaged in other areas of parish ministry.

More than eight team members makes it harder to establish trust, given that trust requires team members to get to know one another extremely well. Too many team members makes it harder to schedule meetings and events. Finally, and most importantly, having more than seven or eight team members makes it difficult to engage in effective discussion and decision-making during meetings.

How Can a Pastor Be a Member?

In forming a leadership team, it is important that the pastor's role of head and shepherd of the parish is respected, while at the same time fostering open dialogue of all members of the team. **It is essential** that the leadership team build a relationship of trust.

Who Should Be on the Leadership Team?

Members of the team should be people who are responsible for various ministries in the parish and who have the attitude and skills to contribute to the overall success of the parish, not just their areas of responsibility.

It's important to remember that a parish leadership team may or may not be the same as the pastoral council. The team may not necessarily consist of the parish office staff; the people who do bookkeeping, reception and other administrative functions. Parish team members will need to fulfill the role of a group of leaders on whom the pastor can rely to help with the implementation of strategic and operational decisions.

Though each team will be a little different, members of many parish leadership teams will often be comprised of: a Faith Formation Coordinator, a Youth Ministry Coordinator, a School Principal, and key volunteers in leadership throughout the parish. Every parish is different, however, members of the leadership team will need to have the right attitude and skill set.

Caution: Here are a few common mistakes some pastors make when establishing a leadership team:

1. Trying to be too inclusive and putting too many people on the team.
2. Not wanting to hurt someone's feelings and putting them on the team when they really shouldn't be on it.
3. Allowing a difficult person on the team because of their functional role alone.
4. Putting people on the team who are not committed to excellence and needed change.
5. Selecting difficult people in the hopes that they can win over other difficult people.
6. Keeping people on the team who have been in the parish for a long time simply to satisfy long-term parishioners.
7. Failing to make it clear to team members that they will be held to high standards.
8. Allowing team members to present themselves to the parish as power brokers rather than servants.

Leadership Team Formation

Once the leadership team is gathered, the internal work will begin. It is important for pastors to remember that this is not a committee, it is a team. On-going formation is necessary to become a cohesive, effective team.

Listed below are suggestions for formation. Also available is a resource *General Meeting Guidelines-First Meetings*. It offers a sample plan for the first seven leadership team meetings.

First and foremost, become a team rooted in faith and mission; pray together!

- Study *Transforming Fire*, Bishop John's pastoral letter on evangelization
 - Full Document
 - Summary
 - Study Guide
- Read *The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni
- Read and discuss books and articles, listen to talks, watch DVD's that increase your understanding of Catholic evangelization. Suggested are *Forming Intentional Disciples*, *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples*, and *Fruitful Discipleship* by Sherry Weddell. See diocesan website for examples in October 2017.
- Each team member begins to develop a one minute witness talk that shares their encounter with Jesus and understanding of his love. Practice delivering this statement with each other.
- Gifts/Personality Analysis
 - There are many of these available:
 - Myers/Briggs
 - Gallup Strengths Finder
 - Keirseley Temperament Sorter

Leadership Team Planning Process

May be concurrent with your formation process

- Assess the Parish Community
 - Become aware of the demographics of the parish
 - Learn about parish organizations and committees and how they already evangelize
 - Assess the effectiveness of existing evangelization efforts in programs, offerings, and activities of the parish
 - Consider under-represented populations in your parish that are not being ministered to

- Complete the Parish Evangelization Plan
 - Including one concrete objective in each of the following areas:
 - Fostering a Personal Encounter with Jesus and a Life of Prayer
 - Formation of a Welcoming Parish Community
 - Formation of Disciples in the Faith
 - Formation of Disciples for Mission

- Form the Parish Community (Implement Parish Plan)
 - Meet with organizations and committees:
 - Explain evangelization as the mission of the Church
 - Explain Parish Evangelization Plan and their role in the implementation
 - Develop homilies on evangelization
 - Hold a Parish meeting for the parishioners and explain evangelization
 - Speak to parishioners to get their input on the strengths and challenges of the parish
 - Sponsor Holy Hours and retreat evenings reflecting on evangelization
 - Provide Adult Formation Sessions and insert articles in the bulletin on evangelization
 - Include evangelization in the Sunday Universal Prayers