

Developmental Initiatives

Participants will design, implement and reflect on six developmental initiatives over a period of 18 to 20 months in a diocesan program and 12 - 16 months in the national program. Trainers and facilitators will provide substantial support and guidance in helping participants carry out parish initiatives to foster health and spiritual and emotional maturity.

Developmental initiatives have three primary functions

1. To build momentum in jumpstarting the parish toward increased health
2. So the parish ends up with people who more deeply understand how to helpfully intervene in parishes—what needs to be considered in making interventions, what a parish exists for, how their own emotional intelligence and spiritual practices impacts the whole, and so on.
3. To better understand the dynamics, patterns and culture of the parish through an action-learning process (or action-research). Based on the idea that we best learn about our organizations by trying to change something, observing what happens, and reflecting on that.

These are action-based initiatives. They are not traditional “research” projects, nor are they focused on the production of a paper or report, although use of a structured format for design and reflection is required. The projects will be in the program’s core areas of emotional and social intelligence, spiritual practice, and change theory and methods.

Three aspects of our work on developmental initiatives are:

- 1) There will be choices to make. You will need to identify initiatives that will be effective in your parish now. You will have a broad range of possible initiatives from which to select. The action planning process includes a series of “considerations” that will help you decide on whether one fits the parish now.
- 2) There will be guidance about the developmental initiatives. This comes in two forms. First, there will be a list of initiatives you may select from. These are proven interventions leading to increased parish health and faithfulness. Second, as you design, implement and reflect on the work you’ll be assisted by trainers and facilitators.
- 3) The developmental initiatives are both about having some success in the short term and learning how to make effective interventions, a skill that will serve you in the long-term. We’ll help you assess the readiness of your parish for a particular project, prepare an action plan, and learn from the experience whether you see it as successful or not.

Our assumption is that parish development is a long-term process involving many interventions over the years. It’s a continuous process because the parish and the world keep changing. To become, and to stay, healthy, the parish needs its leaders to give regular attention to the three areas of spiritual practice, emotional and social intelligence, and change theory and methods.

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There are now more than enough developmental initiatives available for any parish to select six and make significant headway. They will be revised over time based on the experience of participants and trainers. When revised the updated version will be posted. From time to time a new initiative may be added.

Participants will be helped to figure out whether an intervention fits their parish at this time.

The initiatives are categorized by levels. Participants will need to do at least four interventions that are systemic in nature — work likely to impact the whole parish over a long period of time. These projects will typically call for an intervention with a tangible benefit in the short term while putting in place a long-term process that will shape the parish over time.

Access to the Developmental Initiatives: A link to all the projects will be provided to participants registered in a Shaping the Parish program (and those who have completed the program).

Samples

[*Eucharistic Competence*](#) To establish/maintain a critical mass of people in each congregation of the parish proficient in their participation in the Holy Eucharist

[*Serving One Another*](#) The long-term intention of this project is to create a climate in the parish of quality service to one another. That service needs to be grounded in behavioral norms around being: timely, thorough, and respectful.

[*Listening Processes*](#) Increase the parish's processes and structures for listening. The immediate goal is to put into place several listening processes within the next three months. And set in motion the longer-term goal. The longer-term goal is establish a parish culture given to respectful and thoughtful listening to God, the larger church, and one another.

Schedules for reports and implementation

Permissions

Copyrighted material: Please note these are all copyrighted material.

Registered and active participants in a Shaping the Parish program have permission to use the initiatives. That permission continues after they have successfully completed the program.

Participants in CDIs or CDI spin-off programs, e.g., the College for Congregational Development, and the Cooperative College for Congregational Development, have permission to use the initiatives under the following conditions:

- They contact Shaping the Parish asking permission in advance
- Pay a fee of \$75 for access to all the PDFs of the initiatives.
- Pay a fee of \$250/developmental initiative (the \$75 fee is taken off the first \$250
- Engage in an e-mail/phone consultation with us to explore ways to best fit the initiative to their situation. That work is covered under the \$250 fee. The consultation is for up to one hour of time (on the phone, doing e-mail, preparing for either) all done within two months of the request to use the initiative.

Those not in one of the above programs may contact us about permission to use projects. In such cases the cost will be higher and the amount of consultation time provided more.