

Shaping the Parish & Your Parish Development Team

Coming to the program as part of a parish team is strongly encouraged. The effectiveness of your work in the parish is enhanced by working together to improve parish life and ministry. Learning is increased as you explore theory, methods and applications together.

If it's not possible to come with a team you can compensate to some degree by recruiting a back-in-the-parish team. Select people you trust and can work well with. The team can do the readings and help plan and implement the developmental initiatives.

Most people coming to the national program will be attending on their own, without others from the parish. Those attending a diocesan program may be participating with others from the parish but want to include others in the parish that can't be at the weekend sessions.

Establishing a team back in the parish that will work with you in between sessions can significantly enhance the impact of your efforts. Recruit 2 or 3 members who will do the readings along with you and help in the implementation of the developmental initiatives.

The parish team would have two categories of participants. One would be those attending the workshop sessions. The other would be those who cannot participate in the sessions but will do all the readings and work on the developmental initiatives for the 16 months of the effort.

We can arrange for all members of the team to take the MBTI and FIRO B instruments that are completed by all program participants. A charge would be made for those not participating in the program sessions. It would cover the cost of the instruments and staff time in interpreting them for the team.

See below for ideas on setting up your team. You might also want to adapt one of the job descriptions further below to fit both your parish and the Shaping the Parish program.

Setting up your parish team

1. Have everyone carefully the web site so they understand the program.
www.shapingtheparish.com

Note: If you discover any differences between what's on the pages of the site and what is in the down-loadable PDF -- assume that what's on the site is correct. Please contact us and ask if you are uncertain.

2. We are assuming that the parish will find a way to do parallel track efforts. The

parish needs to continue attending to its normal, routine, important and urgent business—the Eucharist celebrated, building repairs made, the sick cared for and so on.

At the same time the parish needs to be able to work on developmental, non-urgent matters. The team related to the program will be an important element that allows the parish to do the needed developmental work. Of course doing both is essential for health in any organization. But as you know it's easy to not ever get to the developmental work. Part of this program is about helping a parish develop/improve the habit of doing both.

3. What will the team call itself?

Parish Development Team, Shaping the Parish Team? While the team needs to keep the vestry and congregation in the loop the assumption is that the team has the authority to take the initiative around developmental matters. This is an extension of the rector's oversight role and authority in the parish. Obviously this calls for political wisdom. Too much going to the vestry and congregation and you'll get dragged down; not consulting others when it's called for will create tensions that also drag the efforts down.

4. Engage in two contracting sessions

One -- between those attending Shaping the Parish and others on your parish development team.

How do you want to work together? How often will you meet? Start with a schedule for a short period of time, see if that's enough. It's a very intensive year you have before you -- it's a lot of work. Will the team share in all of that or part of it?

The two primary activities the whole team might engage in are: 1) doing the readings along with those participating and 2) helping to design and implement the six developmental initiatives.

It's possible that people not coming to the program sessions may press for things that don't fit the program. That can create tensions. Talk about it.

Agree on a way for people to drop from the team if for any reason they find they can't keep up with the work.

Two – With the vestry.

How will the vestry stay in the loop? How can the vestry focus its energies on the urgent and important business of the parish while the team gives focus to the developmental work?

This session might also include hearing the vestry's initial thoughts on initiatives.

We suggest narrowing it down to 8 - 10 from the list. It gives you a starting place. There is a possible team process for doing that on this web site.

5. Developmental Initiatives

You'll find downloadable PDFs in the lower half of this page.

<http://www.shapingtheparish.com/participants-only>

Additional information.

<http://www.shapingtheparish.com/interventions-projects/>

6. Instrumentation: MBTI & FIRO B

Those coming to the program will complete the MBTI and FIRO B before beginning. It isn't part of the program but if your parish team wanted to all take the instruments we can do that

Possible Job Description

*This is a possible job description for a parish development team. It draws on the material in *Conformed to Christ: Structures and Standards in Parish Development (Revised 2004)*, On CD from Ascension Press by R.A Gallagher; S. Benhase; M.A. Mann; A.B.Mann; P. Broadhead*

A team appointed by the Rector/vicar (and confirmed by the Vestry) that works with the Rector/vicar to provide oversight and leadership for parish development efforts. The Team is to enable and guide the parish in its revitalization as a local expression of the Body of Christ. It is accountable to the Rector.

Training

1. All members of the team will receive initial training that provides a common base of language, frameworks, and knowledge. This may be a mix of a mini-workshop done by those attending shaping the Parish and of reading *Fill All Things: The Dynamics of Spirituality in the Parish Church*, Robert A. Gallagher 2008, Ascension Press and *In Your Holy Spirit: Shaping the Parish Through Spiritual Practice*, Robert A. Gallagher 2011, Ascension Press. Also, have a copy of *Interventions: Methods and Processes for Building Healthier Parishes, Vol. I and II*. Michelle Heyne & Robert Gallagher, Ascension Press. [Be familiar with the material in Vol. I on Intervention Considerations (also on the program web site).
2. As an outcome of the initial training all members of the team should have the following minimal skills and knowledge:
 - a. Use of Shape of Parish model and the Renewal-Apostolate Cycle, parish size issues and dynamics,
 - b. Understand the process of change information in Chapter 7 of *In Your Holy Spirit: Shaping the Parish Through Spiritual Practice*
 - c. Use of team assessment tools so the parish development team is

- able to self assess its own functioning.
3. New members of the team will receive training that allows them to learn the same basic language, frameworks and knowledge as current members.
 4. All members agree to read most of the items on the Shaping the Parish reading list over the coming year.
 5. All members of the Team will be assisted in establishing a Rule of Life if they do not presently have one.

Duties

1. Complete the training as noted above.
2. Assist in the implementation of the developmental initiatives.
3. To engage in problem solving around particular concerns and possibilities related to parish development. As appropriate, the Vestry and/or other lay leaders are involved in the problem solving.
4. Accept the leadership of the parishioners attending the Shaping the Parish workshop sessions.
5. The Rector/vicar will chair the team. Members serve at the Rector's/vicar's invitation. The Team is directly accountable to the Rector/Vicar who reports to the Vestry on its work at least yearly.

Qualifications

1. Personal maturity - can listen, make decisions, resolve own concerns directly, follow through, accept criticism, work under authority, and accept responsibility for leadership.
2. Spiritual maturity - Stable pattern of prayer, study, action; growing in faith, courage, and compassion.
3. Investment - in the future of the parish.
4. Collaborator - able to work well with other leaders
5. Discerning - able to perceive more subtle or complex issues; able to see the connection between spiritual and organizational issues.