

Vocations Committee

Mission of a Parish Vocation Committee

The Second Vatican Council recommended all parish communities to further vocation awareness in their parishes. We cannot create a "vocation;" only God can do that. But a few hard-working parishioners through well planned programs can make the whole community more "vocation conscious."

Organization

The Parish Vocation Committee will be more effective in its work in the parish *if it has written goals and objectives, agreed-upon assignments among members, and a written calendar of events.* The Pastor of the parish should be acquainted with and approve the plans of the committee. It is also recommended that the Parish Vocation Committee work under the framework of the Parish Council, since such arrangement helps with the coordination of all parish-wide efforts. It is important that priests and religious act as motivators for the committee and be available as knowledgeable resources.

Eight to twelve members have been suggested as the most effective size of the committee. It is valuable to have a wide variety of parishioners, priests, lay and religious teachers, married couples, senior citizens and youth, to insure that the plan touches all members of the parish family. A chairperson should be chosen from among the membership to assume responsibility for leadership by chairing meetings and assigning responsibilities.

A permanent file should be kept on all committee activities. This should include all minutes of meetings, correspondence, and written notices regarding the vocation work. Reports each quarter of the activities should be sent to the Pastor, the Parish Council, and the Diocesan Office of Vocations.

As well as assisting in making the parish members more vocation conscious, the Committee must remember to pray for vocations and increased understanding of all vocations. Committee prayer should be a part of all meetings.

Procedure for Developing a Parish Vocations Committee

Introduction

As Catholics, in the past we have been spoiled by the number of men and women who have chosen to heed the call to a religious



vocation. This trend has diminished. Members of the Church today must recognize this reality and create an awareness of the importance of encouraging God's people to serve as priests, sisters, brothers, and deacons, even as laity in full-time Church ministry.

Like Samuel, some of the people in our family and parish may have a call from God, but are unable to hear or understand what our Lord is asking us to do. Let us pray and encourage each individual to hear this call.

How to Start a Parish Vocations Committee

It is important that there be a full understanding of the need, purpose, and responsibilities of the Parish Vocations Committee.

- A. **Need:** To provide an atmosphere in the parish in which all eligible people may carefully consider priesthood or religious life as a possible calling for themselves.
- B. **Purpose:** To assume responsibility of creating this climate of vocation awareness in the parish.

C. Responsibilities of Committee Members

1. Individual Responsibilities of Committee Members

- a. To **pray** daily for increased vocations;
- b. To become aware of the various ministries of the Catholic Church, particularly the priesthood and religious life;
- c. To offer **support and encouragement** to priests and religious within the parish;
- d. To **provide example** through personal Christian family life as a means of encouraging vocations.
- e. To accept and carry out assigned tasks and to report on the progress of assigned work. Tasks could include working with other parish committees, such as:

Parish Council	Scouting Organizations
Liturgy Committee	Women's Guild
Parish Elementary School	Parent Teacher Organization
Parish CCD	Christian Family Movement
Altar and Rosary Society	Renewal Groups
Catholic Daughters	Marriage Encounter Groups
Knights of Columbus	Study Groups
Holy Name Society	Lay Eucharistic Ministers

2. Committee Activities

- a. To **encourage parishioners to pray** for, learn about, support, and recruit vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
- b. To **provide opportunities** to develop vocation awareness through various parish structures already in existence.
- c. Sponsor a vocation discernment night for the parish youth; invite young people to have dinner with the parish priest to discuss vocations.
- d. Sponsor programs like To the Highways and Byways, Take the Journey, discernment retreats, and others through the Diocesan Vocation Office.
- e. Encourage the Parish to **pray for Vocations**.
- f. Sponsor a parent night to discuss vocations and invite the diocesan Vocation team.
- g. Hold a week long parish vocation camp in the parish for young people similar to a vacation bible school.
- h. **Invite** individual men and women to consider the priesthood and religious life.
- i. Encourage the pastor to preach on vocations; celebrate World Day of Prayer for Vocations and Vocations Awareness Week.
- j. Get involved in the Diocesan Vocations Events, Vocation Retreats, and other activities.
- k. Work with the Youth Minister, DRE, and School to have special programs on Vocations.
- l. Collaborate with the local Serra Club, Holy Name Society and Knights of Columbus on Vocation Outreach.
- m. Regularly check the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Vocations Website for current events. www.becomeapriest.org