

Six Areas of Ministry Check List

Diocese of Davenport, Iowa

The Diocese of Davenport uses the following six areas of ministry to describe, evaluate and measure the effectiveness of parish life. One way to measure the life of a parish is to ask whether the parish is involved with the Suggested Activities in each of the six areas listed below.

A viable parish must have active ministries in all six of these areas. A parish that is missing one of these areas is not a viable parish. It is missing something vital to the very definition of parish life. In some cases, the activities below may be generated through collaboration with other parishes.

We offer the following list of Suggested Activities as a guide toward evaluating the vitality and viability of your parish.

Ministry of Church Life

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Plan a variety of parish social events to enhance the bonds of parish community.
- Encourage and develop small faith communities within the parish.
- Find ways to welcome new members of the parish into the life of the community.
- Organize a parish ministry fair to recruit parishioners into various ministries.
- Send parish leaders to programs or conferences on stewardship, such as diocesan Stewardship Day.
- Conduct surveys or focus groups to obtain views of parishioners on various aspects of parish life.
- Develop programs that reach out to those who are not attending church or who feel abandoned by the Church.
- Provide assistance in conducting a parish census.
- Create opportunities to expand all areas of ministry to more freely involve the diversity of the parish, reaching out in a particular way to any marginalized groups.
- Prepare various means of communication for parishioners: welcoming booklets and video, newsletters, website, social media, annual report on parish activities, parish membership directory, and parish book of available ministries.
- Coordinate with other ministry areas joint religious services, inter-faith study groups and other common programs to address social justice needs in the community with other churches and synagogues in the area.

Ministry of Faith Formation (Board of Education)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Comprehensive adult catechetical opportunities which meet the real needs and concerns of adults.
- A coherent, well integrated catechetical plan for children, youth, young adults and seniors which provides opportunities for them to grow in faith and to build the Kingdom of God in the world.
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry initiatives are in accord with the “Renewing the Vision of Youth Ministry”, (1997, USCCB) and “Sons and Daughters of the Light”, 1996, USCCB).
- Acquire adequate funds, resources, staff and space to implement the catechetical and ministerial plan.
- Guidance and formation opportunities provided to parents in understanding their role in the ongoing formation of Christian values with their children.
- Catechesis is provided for persons with special needs.
- Provide opportunities so that all catechists and ministers are skilled in effective methodologies and knowledgeable in the foundational aspects of Vatican II theology, scripture and liturgy in light of the *Joy of the Gospel*.
- If there is a school, that the academic program is strong and there is continuous improvement displayed.
- Ensure cooperative planning between school administration and parish staff for ongoing development of sacramental preparation. All sacramental prep is done in the parish.
- Children, youth and adults are made aware of the various options for professional Church ministry especially in priesthood, religious life, and lay ministry.
- Recruitment and training of new members (new catechists and ministers).

Ministry of Family Life

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Programs, resources and events that:

- Strengthen family relationships: intentional family development, family mission activities and outreach in the community (including the parish, deanery and diocesan church), identification of healthy family traits, intergenerational opportunities, and building communication skills within families.
- Focus on: parenting, grand-parenting, single parenting, step-parenting, foster parenting, parenting children/youth with special needs.
- Promote faith development and spirituality: preparation for sacraments, family-centered catechesis, family retreats, and family rituals.
- Prepare for and enrich marriages: sponsor couple marriage preparation, natural family planning, marriage encounter, marriage enrichment (*Partners on the Journey*), anniversary blessings, interreligious marriage support, and inter-faith marriages.
- Help families experiencing loss: bereavement, widowed support, *Elizabeth* ministry (stillbirth, infant death, miscarriage, infertility), Befriender ministry (pastoral care), divorce support, custody mediation, post-abortion healing (*Project Rachel*), etc.
- Address the needs of single adults and senior adults.
- Advocate for families: review public policies and study current research of societal trends reflected in families.

Ministry of Finance and Administration

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Maintain an accurate profile of the parish, especially in the areas of population, economy, changing neighborhoods, industrial growth or decline.
- Maintain an accurate census of membership.
- Educate the parish about financial priorities and needs.
- Stimulate greater financial responsibility by the members of the parish.
- Coordinate the Annual Diocesan Appeal.
- Oversee collection and disbursement of funds according to the budget.
- Review financial reports.
- Maintain an inventory and assessment of all parish equipment, furnishings and buildings. Prepare a schedule for their replacement or renewal.
- Establish clear lines of responsibility for maintenance and renovations.
- Provide for financing through the use of weekly envelopes, investments, special events and planned giving.
- Review parish insurance coverage periodically and update.

Ministry of Liturgy

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Provide formation opportunities that address the identity and role of the liturgical assembly, and help all take a more fully conscious and active part in worship, including opportunities for formation in the liturgy through reflection on the rites celebrated (mystagogy).
- Invite parishioners to specific liturgical ministries, and form them for those ministries.
- Provide structured evaluation and feedback regarding the church's liturgical life, including presiding and preaching.
- Assist in the preparation of parish liturgies: Eucharist on Sundays and weekdays, the celebration of other Sacraments, funerals, and the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Fully implement the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.
- Prepare devotional services and foster the devotional life of the community; provide resources for prayer groups and small Christian communities.
- Nourish the faith of parishioners by offering retreats, days of recollection, devotions and other programs of spiritual enrichment.
- Assist in evangelization and outreach, especially to those unchurched or alienated from the Catholic Church.
- Make sure that the liturgical life of the parish is integrated with other aspects of parish life, and is reflective of the parish's diversity. In particular, offer opportunities to connect liturgy and justice, worship and service.

Ministry of Social Action

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Establish an inventory of community needs by meeting with schools, other churches, civic leaders, town councils, and service agencies.
- Establish an inventory of existing ministries, both within and external to the parish. Include parishioners who, independent of the parish, volunteer time with organizations working to improve the common good.
- Maintain a regular contact with Diocesan Social Action and Catholic Charities personnel, state and national Catholic organizations such as the Iowa Catholic Conference and Catholic Charities USA so that the parish is aware of and can participate in training, seminars, conferences and group actions on issues.
- Select proponents for the Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Campaign for Human Development operations collections from which the diocese retains 25% of the proceeds to support local programs and distributes that to parishes and organizations in the Diocese in the form of grants. The same or other persons could be the parish point of contact for the St. Vincent Home Corporation grants for local projects and issues.
- Work with organizations through which parishioners can receive organizing training.
- Consider establishing a volunteer coordinator who will be knowledgeable of the opportunities for service within the parish and the community and assist parishioners in connecting with those organizations/individuals with volunteer needs.
- Provide structured evaluation and feedback.
- Work with Faith Formation to assure that an understanding of living the gospel and the need for both feet of social action are integral parts of the formation of youth and adults. Support the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, helping to assure that those entering the Church have an appreciation of the way Catholic Christians live their faith in action.

For support and assistance with any ministry area
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