



ARCHDIOCESE  
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# PARISH COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES *Manual*

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**INTRODUCTION TO COMMISSION/COMMITTEE MINISTRY** ..... 1

**FORMATION FOR COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES** ..... 2

**THE ROLE OF COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES IN THE PARISH** ..... 4

**PASTORAL COUNCIL COMMISSION/COMMITTEE GUIDELINES** ..... 6

**FINANCE COUNCIL COMMITTEE GUIDELINES** ..... 10

**EFFECTIVE COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES** ..... 12

**PASTORAL COUNCIL COMMISSION/COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS** ..... 18

**EVANGELIZATION AND FORMATION** ..... 18

    Evangelization ..... 21

    Religious Education ..... 23

    Youth Ministry ..... 24

    Young Adult Ministry ..... 26

    Adult and Family Ministry ..... 27

    Vocations ..... 29

**SCHOOL ADVISORY** ..... 31

**WORSHIP/LITURGY** ..... 33

**HUMAN CONCERNS** ..... 35

**STEWARDSHIP** ..... 37

    Welcoming ..... 39

    Communications ..... 40

    Parish Life ..... 41

    Time and Talent ..... 42

**FINANCE COUNCIL COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS** ..... 43

**BUDGET** ..... 43

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS** ..... 44

**PERSONNEL** ..... 45

**PARISH CEMETERY** ..... 46

**TECHNOLOGY** ..... 47

## INTRODUCTION TO COMMISSION/COMMITTEE MINISTRY

*“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who provides all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”  
(1Corinthians 12:4-7)*

This reading succinctly captures what commission and committee ministry is all about. Within a community there are a variety of gifts and talents. Every gift is needed to carry out the mission of Jesus. Each gift comes from God. Every one of us is called to follow Jesus. Each of us responds to the call by **sharing our gifts** for the sake of building up the Church.

Commissions and committees are the **task groups of councils**. Pastoral Council commissions correspond to the four areas of Church mission – to teach, to sanctify, to serve, and to unify. Each commission may have committees, sub-committees or ministry teams to carry out some specific area of this ministry, such as youth ministry, liturgical environment, respect life or welcoming. Finance Council committees assist with the administration of the temporal goods of the parish. These committees may assist with the budget, personnel, buildings and grounds or the parish cemetery.

The first section of the manual allows each parish to provide print **formation and training** for all commission and committee members. Video training is also available for commission and committee members. At minimum, members should view the overview video and the one specifically for commissions and committees.

The second section of the manual consists of **descriptions of each commission and committee**. From both sections, parishes are able to develop individualized packets of materials for each member of every commission or committee within the parish organization. This can be accomplished by selecting some key pieces of information, like the “Role of Commissions/Committees,” “Guidelines” and/or “Effective Commissions/Committees” along with the commission or committee description.

Commission and committee members should also be aware that an important part of their ongoing formation is to **become familiar with the specific area of ministry** in which they serve. This means not only becoming knowledgeable about the parish or cluster efforts but learning about new theories and approaches which are emerging in the diocese and around the country. Staff are especially helpful in connecting other members with websites to explore or articles to read.

Commissions and committees are encouraged to **contact the appropriate diocesan office** periodically to become aware of new trends in an area of mission or to invite a director to meet with them. Offices are familiar with best practices around the diocese and can put parishes or clusters in touch with valuable people resources.

## FORMATION FOR COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES

“Those who serve on a commission or committee should be familiar with some key information and terms which will add to the member’s skillset. Members should be aware of the following: the **connection of Jesus to the mission of the Church**, the **parish as people, mission and structure**, and **common parish terms**.

The activity of a parish should be **centered on continuing the mission and ministry of Jesus**. As a community of believers, we continue to do what Jesus did. This mission was entrusted to his apostles and disciples and has been handed on to all believers throughout the centuries. We are a people on a mission and with a mission. For this reason, committee members should look to the scriptures for guidance and inspiration about the mission as well as church documents.

The USCCB (**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**) developed a document titled The Parish – A People, A Mission, A Structure in 1981. Those three ways of viewing parish which are still relevant today can provide important insights for those involved in parish ministry.

In Canon or Church Law, parishes are referred to as “persons.” Just as the Church is viewed as the people of God so the **parish is first and foremost understood as people**. When the word “church” is used the most common image the word generates is “building.” Parishes are about buildings, bulletins, programs and events but the real focus is about the people who are inside the buildings for whom the bulletins, programs and events are intended. A parish is most a parish when the people gather on Sunday to share in the Eucharist. As Jesus taught us, “people” means everyone should be welcome. It also means that every ministry in the parish should reflect a care and concern for all of God’s people.

Neither the Church nor a parish is just for the “saved.” A parish is all about carrying out a mission – **the mission of Jesus and the Church**. All disciples of Jesus have work to do. From the earliest days of the Church, the mission has been understood as teaching, sanctifying, serving, and unifying. These are the four basic areas of mission into which the commissions or committees of the pastoral council are organized. They are organized in this way in order to help parishes more effectively carry out the whole mission. Every area of mission is involved with teaching, sanctifying, serving, and unifying. Organizing the mission into the areas allows a commission or committee to focus on one area and to develop a certain expertise. Parishes need to carry out the mission in its fullness and strive to be as effective as possible in their efforts.

A parish is a **structure or organization**. Organizational theory tells us that whenever two or more people gather together, they begin to follow observable characteristics. The leadership and organizational structure of the church can be traced back to Jesus and the early church. There is a strong inclination to maintain traditional ways of doing things in the church. At the same time, the church is described as “*semper reformanda*” or “always in the state of change.” Just as the parish is focused on carrying out the mission more effectively, there is attention to improving the organization so that the organization can more effectively support the mission activity.

## SOME COMMON CHURCH TERMS YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW:

**Diocesan Bishop** - a diocesan bishop is chosen and appointed by the Pope to shepherd a particular diocese by teaching, sanctifying and governing the people entrusted to his care.

**Auxiliary bishop** - when the pastoral needs of the diocese require it, one or more auxiliary Bishops may be appointed by the Pope at the request of the diocesan Bishop to assist in the pastoral care of the people of the diocese.

**Diocese** - understanding that the whole Church is called the People of God, a diocese is a portion of that People of God entrusted to the diocesan bishop to be nurtured by him.

**Deanery** - the diocesan bishop may choose to organize the diocese into geographical sections called deaneries. He appoints a priest to serve as dean of each region, supporting the ministry being done there and promoting and coordinating common pastoral activities.

**Parish** - A parish is a community of Christ's faithful established within a diocese, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.

**Parish Boundaries** - each parish, unless it is established to serve a particular culture or language, is provided with geographical boundaries. The parish is responsible to serve all the people within the boundaries, including all Catholics. Most parishes attract people from beyond these boundaries, too.

**Pastor** - The parish priest is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him. He exercises the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan Bishop so that for this community he may carry out the offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of Christ's faithful. Pastors are usually appointed for a six-year term, renewable once.

**Parish Director** - in the event that the bishop does not have a priest available to serve as pastor, he may appoint a deacon or lay person to be entrusted with the pastoral care of the parish.

**Parish Corporation** - in the State of Wisconsin, parishes are legally incorporated. Corporate business of the parish is conducted through a board of directors: President - Archbishop; Vice- President - pastor; lay trustee secretary and lay trustee treasurer; and member - a Vicar General.

**Proxy** - some administrative acts of the parish corporation require the consent of all five corporate directors. In these cases, the pastor sends a description of the project to the bishop and asks for his and the vicar general's proxy votes to approve the project.

**Finance Council** - in each parish there is to be a finance council to help the pastor in the administration of the property and finances of the parish.

**Pastoral Council** - parish members, selected from among the parishioners, form the pastoral council to give their help to the pastor in planning and fostering pastoral action.

**Commissions** - parishes which have specific ministry groups under each area of mission use this term to designate the four or five (if there is a School Advisory group) areas of mission in the parish.

**Committees** - this term can be used for the standing committees or for groups which serve under the standing committee. Many parishes prefer this term to a sub-committee.

**Ministry Teams** - this term can be used for groups which serve under a standing committee. Commissions or committees like worship and human concerns may prefer this term to others.

## THE ROLE OF COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES IN THE PARISH

Commissions and committees of the council are essentially **task groups**. They are action-oriented groups and play an important role in both the ministry as well as the parish. The role of commissions and committees can be described in these ways:

1. **Assisting with the organization of the ministry** – providing ministry requires complex skills. Committees may be asked to help with recruitment, contacting families to register for programs, consulting on the selection of resource materials or any other needed tasks so that a program or ministry runs smoothly.
2. **Providing continuity for the ministry** – most parish committees recognize that staff who serve a parish for long periods of time are the exception. Committees need to be aware of how programs function in order to bridge any transitions in staff leadership.
3. **Helping to develop and grow the ministry** – the commonly heard parish chant of “we’ve always done it that way” should not be sung by any committee. As good as any program or ministry may be, it needs to develop and grow. Any program or ministry that is not getting better is usually getting worse.

Committees periodically question what they should be doing to support a ministry which is essentially administered by a pastoral staff member. They may say, “we’re really not needed because we pay a staff member to do this stuff” or “the committee does nothing but listen to what is happening.” In both cases, these responses indicate a heavy focus on annual or tactical planning. A committee needs to be aware and involved with annual preparations and progress of the ministry. However, they have a key role to play in the strategic planning for the ministry. **Who is looking out for the future of the ministry if not the committee?**

In canon or church law, the bishop of a diocese works with a diocesan-wide pastoral council to address issues and needs within the diocese. The council follows these steps which also provide a **“how to” for committees**:

1. **Study** – before initiating a new ministry or considering some significant changes, take the time to conduct a study. Explore as many options as possible. Committees should make certain they are practitioners of “due diligence.” A comprehensive study may require individuals or task groups to work outside of the meeting and report back to the committee. Committees should establish a timeline so that it is clear when each phase will be completed and a proposal can be submitted.
2. **Ponder** – gather the results of the study then think and discuss the possibilities. Committees should be willing to consult with important groups before making a recommendation.
3. **Propose** – the initiation of new programs or significant changes to existing programs should be proposed to the pastoral council. A recommendation by a DRE to drop texts in favor of developing local materials needs to be discussed by the council because a parish should have concern about the content and method of faith formation. The parish sponsorship of a new outreach program should be recommended to the council.

## Formation for Commissions/Committees

Committees operate as a subset of the overall parish organization. Pastoral councils need to **follow good organizational practices** for the overall parish and so should every committee. The committee operates under these practices and applies them to the specific area of ministry for which it is responsible. These are the key organizational practices which committees should follow:

1. **Evaluation** – committees need to know how the program or ministry is performing and what participants like and want to see changed. Enrollments and registrations are starting points for evaluation. Surveys, interviews, evaluation forms can be effective approaches. Most staff members are inclined to view their work in a most positive light. Committees need to work with objective data in order to help programs and ministries develop and grow.
2. **Innovation** – committees need to be aware of new ideas, new approaches, and new ways of functioning. Why? Not only is that the way our world and our culture operates but our Christian faith is all about conversion or change of heart. In order to meet people “where they are,” we must look at innovative approaches and not be afraid to use them.
3. **Adaptation** – wouldn’t it be nice if everything turned out exactly as it was planned. Committees need to be prepared to make adaptations. What happens if the DRE becomes ill for the next six months? Being adaptive means not only addressing the immediate issue but looking at long-term solutions as well. Committees should always be on the lookout for opportunities to make programs better.
4. **Graduation** – this is an often misunderstood word frequently meaning “completion of some course of study or activity.” Within an organization, “graduation” means the development of and succession of leadership. Committees need to be concerned about developing leadership in the ministry as well as on the committee. Most organizations are as effective as their leaders. Who are the parish’s future catechists? Who is being groomed to organize the parish’s monthly participation in the meal program? Committees need to be talent scouts.



## PASTORAL COUNCIL COMMISSION/COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

### COMMISSION GUIDELINES

(FROM THE PASTORAL COUNCIL NORMS, PP. 7-10)

- 11.1** **The Council has four or five standing commissions** to assist with the implementation and coordination of pastoral activity in the parish. Councils may choose between the titles of “Commission” or “Committee” for these groups. The standing commissions are:
- a. Worship.** This commission nourishes and gives direction to the liturgical and communal prayer life of the community. The members collaborate with the pastor and staff in this area of mission on liturgy preparation, the training and formation of the various liturgical ministers, and the formation of the assembly about the sacraments and liturgy. The commission may have committees, such as environment, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, greeters, lectors, etc.
  - b. Formation.** This commission promotes and develops opportunities for lifelong faith formation aimed at personal conversion and growth in faith. The members collaborate with the pastor and staff in this area of mission on all programs of evangelization and catechesis. The commission may have committees, such as evangelization, child ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, adult and family ministry, and vocations.
  - c. Human Concerns.** This commission discerns and responds to the needs of persons in the parish, the wider community and the world by identifying resources to meet their needs and enlisting the active cooperation of parishioners. The members collaborate with the pastor, staff, and other organizations and agencies in service, advocacy, justice education, and empowerment of people. The commission may have committees, such as pro-life, meal program, and food pantry.
  - d. Stewardship.** This commission educates and promotes the giftedness of all parishioners and the responsibility of disciples to steward all resources. The members collaborate with pastor and staff to develop strategies and practices which invite all parishioners and the parish organization itself to share time, talent, and treasure. The commission may have committees, such as new member welcome, volunteer opportunities, and communications.
  - e. School Advisory.** If the parish has a school, there should be a separate commission or the role can be fulfilled by providing for representation on a collaborative Catholic school body. The commission promotes and develops Catholic elementary and secondary education. The members collaborate with the pastor and staff in policy development, budget, strategic planning, and public relations. The commission may have committees.



- 12.1 Purpose.** Each standing commission implements the parish priorities and goals in its specific area of mission and responsibility. Commissions are the task groups of the Pastoral Council. Together with the pastor and the pastoral staff, they strive to build a community of disciples who seek communion in the Church and the world.
- 12.2 Range of Responsibility.** All commissions and committees work in collaboration with the Pastoral Council. The pastor appoints staff members in specific areas of ministry to work with particular commissions and committees. These staff members are hired and supervised by the pastor and are responsible for areas of ministry as specified in a job description. The initiation of a new area of programming or major changes to an existing program should be proposed to the Pastoral Council for consideration. In most instances, commissions are consulted in their areas of mission and responsibility following the principle of subsidiarity, which means that issues are addressed at the most appropriate level in the parish commission structure.
- 12.3 Functions.** The basic functions of each Pastoral Council standing commission are to:
- a. Identify the needs of the parish within the areas of mission and responsibility.
  - b. Prioritize the needs and recommend ways to respond to the Council.
  - c. Plan for the development of activity in the area of ministry by formulating goals, objectives, timelines and determining who will be responsible for implementation.
  - d. Study new program developments or strategies and assess their potential for use in the parish.
  - e. Submit proposals for new programs or significant changes to programs to the Council.
  - f. Assist the Council in the study of particular issues as requested.
  - g. Promote the activities and programs of the Commission and communicate to the parish leadership and parishioners.
  - h. Follow Archdiocesan guidelines in the area of mission, consult with Archdiocesan offices, and use the resources available through the offices and agencies.
  - i. Provide opportunities for the ongoing formation of members.
  - j. Develop a budget for the area of ministry.
  - k. Conduct ongoing evaluation of existing activities and programs.

**12.4 Membership.** The number of commission members can range from 7 to 12 members. In addition, the pastor can appoint one or more staff members as *ex officio* members of a Commission. It is optional for a staff member to be appointed to each committee.

- a. All commission members must be baptized, practicing Catholics and registered members of the parish, at least 18 years of age.
- b. Members serve one year terms. An annual membership list shall be submitted at the start of each commission year to the Council secretary.
- c. Any committee member may resign by filing a written resignation with the commission chairperson.
- d. At any regular meeting, a member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the commission. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without a good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a committee member. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting.
- e. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the commission chairperson after consultation with the commission members. The Council secretary shall be notified of the changes to the membership list.
- f. Members are to be adequately prepared for membership on the commission by being provided with the opportunities for spiritual growth, appropriate theological formation, and the skills and practical information required for the area of mission.

**12.5 Each commission shall have a chairperson, a vice-chair or chair-elect, and a secretary.** Officers are selected annually by and from the commission. *Ex officio* members of the commission are ineligible to serve as officers.

- a. **The chairperson** moderates the meetings of the commission by:
  - 1) Being aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the commission and represents these to the members, the Council, and the parish community.
  - 2) Facilitating the planning and scheduling efforts of the commission.
  - 3) Preparing the meeting agenda based on agenda planning at the end of the previous meeting and distributing the agenda at least 3 days prior to the meeting.
  - 4) Providing for ongoing formation for commission members.
  - 5) Facilitating the meetings by promoting collaboration and arriving at decisions through consensus.
  - 6) Monitoring the implementation of all committee decisions or recommendations.
  - 7) Coordinating the commission's participation in the budget process and the monitoring of financial reports on the budget for the area of mission.
  - 8) Overseeing the recruitment and orientation of new commission members.
  - 9) Assisting the next chairperson to understand the commission's task and responsibilities. Transferring all commission materials to the new chairperson.
  - 10) Performing duties consistent with the office as the Council or commission may direct.

**b. The vice-chairperson or chairperson-elect** serves the commission by:

- 1) Conducting the meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
- 2) Becoming the chairperson in the case of vacancy and, as chairperson-elect, becoming chairperson with the completion of the chair's term.
- 3) Performing duties consistent as assigned by the chairperson or the commission.

**c. The secretary** serves the commission by:

- 1) Recording a summary of report of each meeting and submitting it to the Council, commission members, and committees.
- 2) Taking attendance at meetings and noting absences in the summary or report.
- 3) Maintaining the list of all commission members and their terms and reporting any changes to the Council secretary.
- 4) Performing duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or commission may direct.

**12.6 Meetings.** Regular commission meetings are held at such time, place and date as either the Council designates or the commission determines. Each meeting consists of prayer, staff person's remarks, ongoing items, new items, and committee reports.

**a. Special meetings may be called** by the chairperson, Council chairperson, pastor or a quorum of the commission to address a single, urgent matter. Notice of such a meeting is given to all committee members within a reasonable time prior to the meeting. No business other than that stated may be conducted at the meeting.

**b. The date, time and location of commission meetings shall be published in the bulletin or website and parishioners are welcome to attend as observers.** Parishioners may submit items to the commission or chairperson for consideration on the agenda. The commission chairperson may allow observers to participate in a discussion on such subjects and under such rules as the commission may determine.

**12.7 Manner of Decision-Making.** The commission's manner of decision-making is communal discernment, which includes gathering of information, prayerful reflection and dialogue which leads to consensus.

## FINANCE COUNCIL COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

### COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

(FROM THE FINANCE COUNCIL NORMS, PP. 2 – 6)

- 10.2** **The Council will require specific committees** to assist with their responsibilities. Committees such as budget, personnel, buildings and grounds, and parish cemetery should be formed from parishioners with expertise in the appropriate areas and appointed by the pastor. The Director of Administrative Services/Business Manager is usually appointed ex officio to the committees. These committees should follow the Council norms for membership, chairperson and meetings with the exception that they may meet fewer than six times per year. These committees should submit regular reports to the Council as requested.

### MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1** **The Committee shall be comprised of not less than 5 nor more than 7 members**, all of whom must be baptized, practicing Catholics, registered members of the parish, participants in the parish worship life, especially Mass and the sacraments, and at least 18 years of age. Members are selected because of their familiarity with financial matters and financial expertise (in the case of certain committees because of their expertise in buildings and grounds, personnel or cemeteries).

### OFFICER

- 5.2** **A chairperson shall be selected** from among and by the committee members present at the first meeting after July 1. The office is for a one-year term and may not be held for more than three consecutive terms.
- 5.3** **The chairperson moderates the meetings** of the committee by:
- a. Knowing the tasks and responsibilities of the committee.
  - b. Preparing the meeting agendas in consultation with the Director of Administrative Services/Business Manager and submitting the agenda to committee members at least 3 days before the meeting.
  - c. Facilitating committee meetings by helping the members work together, participate fully in discussions, and make decisions through consensus.
  - d. Maintaining an official list of committee members.
  - e. Recording notes from the committee meeting and making them available to the members and as a report to the Council.
  - f. Performing duties consistent with the office as the committee may direct.

## MEETINGS

- 6.1 **Committee meetings shall be held on a regular basis.** In those cases where parishes are clustered, committees may meet on the same evening and at the same time.
- 6.2 **The committee meetings are not open to the public** but the chairperson may invite staff or a resource person to attend a portion of a meeting and serve as a resource to the committee on a particular issue.
- 6.3 **Special meetings may be called** by the chairperson or a quorum. A quorum consists of a majority of members.
- 6.4 **The agenda shall be developed in advance of the meeting** by the staff member designated by the pastor and the chairperson. The agenda should include prayer, status report(s), and other pertinent items.

## RESIGNATIONS AND VACANCIES

- 7.1 **Any member of the committee may resign** by filing a written resignation with the (staff member designated by the) pastor and the chairperson.
- 7.3 **A vacancy shall be filled with a new appointee** by the chairperson after consultation with the committee members.

## MANNER OF OPERATION

- 8.1 **The committee's manner of decision-making shall be communal discernment,** which includes prayerful reflection, gathering of information, dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The usual method of reaching conclusions shall be consensus.

## EFFECTIVE COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES

*V. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.*

*R. And kindle in them the fire of your love.*

*V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.*

*R. And you will renew the face of the earth.*

*Let us pray.*

*Lord, may everything we do begin with your inspiration  
And continue with your help,  
So that all our prayers and works may begin in you  
And by you be happily ended.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(Prayers to Begin Meetings, Book of Blessings)

Unlike business or civic groups, when parish committees meet, they **gather as members of a faith community focused on the mission of Jesus**. Each committee is dedicated to a particular area of mission or a specific ministry for which they have responsibility. The manner with which they go about their task serves as an example of unity in Christ. Every meeting becomes an opportunity to proclaim the Word, to worship, to heal and serve, to build and strengthen community.

## COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

1. **A well-prepared agenda** – the agenda is clear about who will present, what past and current items will be discussed and what action considered and the reports to be reviewed.

**Who:** The committee officers and assigned pastoral staff member

**What:** Plan the agenda for review and preparation by the committee members

**When:** Preferably 2 weeks to 10 days prior to the meeting date

2. **Agenda and meeting materials are sent in advance of the meeting** – the agenda and any accompanying materials should be sent in advance to all the members.

**Who:** The secretary

**What:** Prepare the agenda for distribution

**When:** At least one week before the meeting

3. **All members are prepared for the meeting** – each member should read the agenda, previous meeting notes, and any other materials prior to the meeting

**Who:** All committee members

**What:** Prepare for the meeting by reading the materials for the meeting

**When:** Prior to the meeting

4. **Prayer sets the tone and helps the group focus on the mission of Jesus and the Church**

**Who:** Prayer leader

**What:** Prepares and leads the prayer at the meeting. If the prayer involves a scripture reading, faith sharing can also be part of the prayer experience

**When:** Meetings usually begin and end with a prayer but prayer can be shared before a decision is reached on an important item

5. **Discussions are conducted in a respectful, inclusive and prayerful manner**

**Who:** All committee members

**What:** As individuals and a group, the entire committee needs to create an environment in which there can be honest, concise and open conversation

**When:** At the time items on the agenda are open to discussion

6. **Decisions are made by consensus**

**Who:** Chairperson

**What:** Facilitates the discussion to a resolution upon which all members agree

**When:** The time for discussion has been concluded and the chair summarizes the comments which are similar and those which are diverse

7. **Members follow up on agreed-upon actions**

**Who:** Any member who is assigned or has agreed to complete a task

**What:** Complete a specific task of reporting or gathering information

**When:** Between the current meeting and the next scheduled meeting

## BEING AN EFFECTIVE COMMISSION/COMMITTEE MEMBER

### PREPARING FOR THE MEETINGS

1. Submit any agenda items to the chair at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
2. Read the minutes of the previous meeting, the agenda, and any additional materials which the agenda committee has included for discussion or information at the meeting.
3. Bring all materials needed, including your personal calendar.
4. Plan to arrive on-time for the meeting. If you are unable to attend, inform the chair before the meeting.

### PREPARING FOR THE MEETINGS

- ✓ Honor your **commitment** to the group
- ✓ Take **interest** in other members of the committee
- ✓ Study the **area of mission and ministry** to which you have committed
- ✓ Volunteer to **assist** with committee tasks as your availability allows
- ✓ Keep your discussion comments **brief, on topic**, and without tangents or sidebars
- ✓ Listen to others in the group with **respect** and without judgment
- ✓ Share **responses** but do not dominate the discussion
- ✓ Seek **consensus and results**
- ✓ Ask for **clarification** when a comment is unclear or could be misunderstood
- ✓ Protect the **rights of others** to have opinions and feelings shared
- ✓ Encourage **silent members** to speak
- ✓ Avoid **communication that disrupts** the group – sarcasm, diversions, side conversations
- ✓ Make your **own notes** on the agenda



## AFTER THE MEETING AND BETWEEN MEETINGS

1. Complete any assignments
2. Know that a report of the committee action will be submitted to the Commission and Council
3. Be prepared for the notes and agenda for the next meeting to be distributed

## LEADING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

The **committee chairperson facilitates the meeting** by following the agenda, encouraging participation and discussion, adhering to a timeline, and guiding the committee to resolve the action items. The work of the chairperson begins well before the committee meets.

### BEFORE THE MEETING

1. Read the minutes of the previous meeting and work with appropriate parish staff member and officers of the committee to **prepare the agenda**. Timelines should be estimated for each agenda item. Items should be prioritized according to importance. The agenda should be distributed 7 – 10 days prior to the meeting.
2. **Bring all materials**, including a personal calendar, to the meeting.
3. **Arrive ahead of time** to ensure that the meeting room is open and set up.
4. Complete the **meeting room checklist**:
  - ✓ The room has enough seating to comfortably accommodate the participants
  - ✓ There is adequate lighting and ventilation
  - ✓ The room is free of distractions and interruptions, such as telephones, loud noises, bouncing balls, etc.
  - ✓ The chairs are comfortable enough for the length of the meeting
  - ✓ All necessary materials are available or prepared, such as projector, handouts, newsprint, etc.
  - ✓ Refreshments are available as appropriate and customary

### BEST MEETING PRACTICES

- Begin the meeting **on time**. Meetings should not exceed a two-hour time limit.
- Lead the **introductions** of members and/or guests.
- **Overview the meeting** briefly so that all members are clear about agenda items and proposed actions.
- **Follow the agenda** as published or as revised.
- If there are **latecomers**, briefly acknowledge them as they arrive and indicate the current agenda item.
- Manage the **time for each agenda item**. The agenda should be set up so that less important items are last on the agenda and can be carried over to the next meeting.
- **Conclude the meeting** when the agenda is completed or when the two-hour time limit has been reached. Agenda items can be carried over to the next meeting. Meetings may exceed the time limit only with the approval of the members and with an agreement upon specified amount of time – 10 minutes, 15 minutes, etc.

## FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS

Below are some suggestions and examples for ways to promote discussion and effective decision-making.

### ASK QUESTIONS

- What are the committee's thoughts about this item?
- How do you feel about this issue?
- How would you answer John's question?
- How does the committee want to proceed on this matter?

### ASK FOR A SUMMARY

- Lots of good ideas have been suggested in the last few minutes. Can someone summarize the major points before we go on?
- Can someone summarize what we have agreed upon so far?

### ASK FOR EXAMPLES

- Can you give us an example of what this would look like?
- Can you tell us about other parishes that already do this?

### TEST FOR CONSENSUS

- Does it seem to you that we have reached agreement on certain points?
- Could we test our agreement on this issue with a show of hands?

### SURVEY THE GROUP

- Let's go around the table quickly and ask people to share an initial reaction to the proposal.
- How many of you like this section of the report?

### BE SUPPORTIVE

- Let's give those who disagree an opportunity to explain why they disagree.
- That's a very good point you have raised.

### CHECK FOR BEST OUTCOMES

- Are we asking the right questions?
- Do we need more information about this?
- Is this the most effective way to proceed?
- Have we considered all the possibilities?

### CONFRONT DIFFERENCES

- Could you explain to the group why you are so opposed to this?
- What could be changed in the proposal to make it more acceptable?

### LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

- What is the worst case scenario if we move forward (or don't move forward) with this?
- How will this impact our future?

## MANAGING CONFLICT

From time to time, committees will experience tension between members which has the potential to lead to annoyance, disengagement, heated exchanges, angry outbursts, and a member leaving the meeting. Below are some common situations in which conflict can develop and some suggestions for mediation.

### KEEPING THE DISCUSSION ON TOPIC

- Intervene quickly but sensitively if the discussion moves off topic
- Acknowledge the speaker's point and re-connect with the discussion topic
- Suggest that the off-topic issue can be discussed as a possible future agenda item
- Committee members who consistently speak off-topic should meet with the chair in a private setting outside of the meeting time

### NAVIGATING A DISCUSSION ON CONTROVERSIAL OR CONTENTIOUS TOPICS

- Address the potential conflict by clearly identifying the opposing sides or issues
- To the extent possible, keep the discussion rooted in the facts and ask people to state when they are sharing an opinion
- If necessary, suggest a moment of silence or lead a prayer to keep the group focused on its important ministerial task, then resume the discussion

## ENDING THE MEETING

1. End on time or negotiate for additional time with the committee members.
2. Summarize the results of the meeting:
  - What was accomplished
  - What has moved closer to being accomplished
  - What action needs to be taken before the next meeting
  - What communication is needed regarding the meeting results
3. Request possible agenda items for the next meeting
4. Thank all for their work and commitment to the parish
5. Close the meeting with prayer



## PASTORAL COUNCIL COMMISSION/COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

### EVANGELIZATION AND FORMATION

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of the evangelization and formation standing commission is **to support ministries and programs which evangelize and catechize** as a part of the mission of the Church. Evangelization and formation is a lifelong process aimed at personal conversion, growth in faith, and transformation of society. This commission collaborates and consults with members of the pastoral staff on the design, implementation, and evaluation of all the formation programs in the parish. These programs can include: evangelization efforts, sacramental preparation, child ministry, Catholic school ministry, youth and young adult ministry, adult and family ministry.

Because the mission of formation in discipleship is so extensive, the commission **may form committees or ministry teams** to work directly with specific ministries. The commission's role is to monitor, evaluate, and collaborate with any committees or teams to minister more effectively. Any committees or ministry teams should report their activity regularly to the Commission. Commissions should meet with these groups periodically to discuss the current state of the ministerial activity and to exchange new ideas for growth.

#### MEMBERSHIP

##### COMMISSION ALL-INCLUSIVE MODEL

This model is based on the commission which is either **directly involved with all areas of formation ministry or oversees the efforts of all the specific areas of ministry**. Members serve on the commission and may have a liaison role with a committee or ministry team. The commission reports to the pastoral council on its own activity as well as the activity of committees and ministry teams. A membership formula may need to be designed so that all formation programs, catechists, parents and participants are represented by the commission. Members are drawn from these various groups through self-nomination or invitation.

##### COMMISSION OF COMMITTEES MODEL

This model is based on the commission which is comprised of **representatives from the various formation ministry committees and ministry teams**. A representational formula can be determined and the selection of representatives is the responsibility of each committee or ministry team. The commission reports to the pastoral council on its own activity as well as the activity of committees and ministry teams. Parishioners interested in this area of mission would be encouraged and invited to participate in one of the committees or ministry teams.

## EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Pastor or Parish Director

Pastoral Council liaison

Parish formation Administrator(s) –

If there are multiple staff members for formation ministries, all can serve on the Commission or one may be selected to serve as the representative of the entire area of mission.

## MEMBERS

Parishioners with an interest or expertise in Catholic education, faith formation, and evangelization

Catechists

Parents

Adult participants in programs

## AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The faith formation commission is responsible for these key functions:

1. **Consult on the design and development of programs** for evangelization and faith formation with education and formation administrators.
2. **Identify parish needs and respond to diocesan initiatives** regarding faith formation.
3. Participate in the budget process as requested by the Finance Council and monitor the financial report for faith formation ministries during the year.
4. **Assist in the annual evaluations of the programs** to affirm their effectiveness and to identify any necessary changes.
5. **Report and/or meet with the Pastoral Council** to review faith formation ministries, advises the Council on faith formation, and consults on innovations or adaptations to programs.
6. **Assist with the identification, formation and training** for volunteers and leadership in the formation ministries.
7. **Aid in the promotion, communication and recruitment efforts** for any programs in this area of mission.
8. **Assist the pastor with the development of pastoral staff job descriptions** in this area and serve, as requested, on a search or interview committee/team for vacant staff positions.

## POSSIBLE COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES/MINISTRY TEAMS

A faith formation commission may have **a number of specific areas of ministry** which meet separately but report to the commission. Each committee or ministry works directly with an area of ministry or a specific program. Commissions should consult with the Pastoral Council prior to the organization of new committees or ministry teams.

Committees which are described in this manual are:

- Evangelization
- Religious Education
- Youth Ministry
- Young Adult Ministry
- Adult and Family Ministry
- Vocations

Parishes **may develop new committees**. Please submit any proposals for a new committee not outlined in this manual to the Office for Planning and Councils to review. New committee information can be easily added to the manuals and made available for other parishes to use.



## EVANGELIZATION

### ROLE

The evangelization committee assists the parish to effectively respond to the challenge, **“Go and Make Disciples.”** Evangelization is what we are called to do as disciples and as a Church. Every area of the mission of the Church involves evangelization. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops locates evangelization within the mission of catechesis. Every formation program should be directed to making disciples and providing opportunities for participants to deepen their relationship with Jesus.

Evangelization must be understood in its three dimensions: **internal, external and personal.** Evangelization involves proclaiming the Gospel to the already-existing community of disciples or the internal. It further involves reaching out to those who have not heard or taken to heart the message of the Gospel or the external. Finally, every person needs to embrace the Good News and live a life of ongoing conversion which is the personal.

The evangelization committee may have **a tendency to become involved with everything in the parish.** It is important, therefore, that the responsibilities of the committee are clearly identified so that the mission to evangelize is prominent in the life of the community as well as practical for the committee.

The evangelization committee **follows the guidelines in the Norms for Pastoral Councils.** A meeting report should be submitted to the Formation Commission for review. The Commission may request to meet with the committee on occasion and will rely on the committee to monitor the programs and activities in this ministry as well as attend to any issues which arise.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### EX OFFICIO

Staff member with responsibility for evangelization

#### MEMBERS

Parish members with an interest or expertise in evangelization

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The evangelization committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Study and reflect on the Church's documents and practice** regarding Catholic evangelization, particularly "Go and Make Disciples," a plan and strategy for evangelization in the United States.
2. **Raise awareness and encourage integration of evangelization** in all catechetical and formational as well as liturgical, human concerns, and stewardship activities within the parish.
3. **Assist the RCIA process with the ongoing evangelization period** by inviting inquirers and candidates for reception to participate in discernment sessions and by conducting the sessions.
4. **Provide and conduct opportunities for retreats, small groups and formation sessions** which help adult parishioners to understand and deepen their discipleship commitment.
5. **Develop ways to reach out** to alienated, hurting, and inactive Catholics as well as those in the neighborhood community with no church affiliation.
6. **Foster an appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity** within the parish and community. If needed, the committee should train members of cultural groups to assist with and develop evangelization activity for the respective cultural group.
7. **Develop an understanding with other Christian denominations and religious groups in the area** regarding the intent of the parish's evangelization efforts.
8. **Report all activity to the Christian Formation Commission** through a regular report.
9. **Participate in the budget process** by reviewing and monitoring the annual budget and assisting with the preparation of the program budget for the following year.





## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### ROLE

The religious education committee **supports parents in their role as the primary educators of their children** by providing age-appropriate faith formation sessions and activities which develop an understanding and practice of discipleship. The committee works closely with the Director of Religious Education to identify suitable materials and resources for use with this age group and their parents.

The committee **follows the guidelines in the Norms for Pastoral Councils**. A meeting report should be submitted to the Evangelization and Formation Commission for review. The Commission may request to meet with the committee on occasion and will rely on the committee to monitor the programs and activities in this ministry as well as attend to any issues which arise.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### EX OFFICIO

Staff member with the responsibility for religious education of children and families

#### MEMBERS

Parents with students in the program  
Catechists who teach in the program  
Parish members with an interest or expertise in religious education.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The religious education committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Participate in the development of strategies and programs** for the religious education of children, including an age-specific curriculum and sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist which is consistent with Archdiocesan policies and guidelines.
2. **Monitor and evaluate the programs and activities.**
3. **Assist in the development of long-range parish and collaborative plans** for children of nursery, preschool, and elementary age as well as the involvement of their parents.
4. **Coordinate and cooperate with the parish school** especially in the areas of sacramental catechesis and celebration.
5. **Communicate and promote religious education programs and activities** to the parish and civic communities.
6. **Develop strategies for the recruitment, training and recognition of catechists.**
7. **Review and monitor the religious education budget** in conjunction with the Director of Religious Education and participate in the budget process with the Formation Commission.
8. **Participate in the interview process for a new Director of Religious Education** as requested.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

### ROLE

The youth ministry committee **supports and assists the parish youth ministry** by providing age-appropriate faith formation sessions and activities which further deepen the commitment to and living the lifestyle of a disciple. The committee works closely with a Director of Youth Ministry to identify suitable materials, resources, and experiences for use with this age group and their parents.

The committee **follows the guidelines in the Norms for Pastoral Councils**. A meeting report should be submitted to the Evangelization and Formation Commission for review. The Commission may request to meet with the committee on occasion and will rely on the committee to monitor the programs and activities in this ministry as well as attend to any issues which arise.

Members of the committee should **understand a vision for youth ministry**.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### COMMITTEE ALL-INCLUSIVE MODEL

This model describes the committee which **involves youth, parents and their leaders at a common meeting** to plan, implement and monitor youth ministry in the parish. This model is particularly effective in smaller parishes or in situations where the staff member responsible for youth ministry has additional ministerial responsibilities. A membership formula should be determined for the committee.

#### MEMBERS

- Director of Youth Ministry
- Youth ministry team adult leaders
- Parent representative
- Youth representatives
- Parish members with an interest or expertise in youth ministry

#### MINISTRY TEAM AND YOUTH COUNCIL MODEL

This model describes a **separate ministry team** which is comprised of leaders and parents along with a **separate youth council** made up of youth representatives and some adult leaders. This model can be used in large parish or cluster settings and allows for more youth to be involved in the planning and have less responsibility with the implementation. The youth council becomes a consultative group for the youth ministry team as it plans and conducts programs and activities for youth. Membership formulas should be determined for both groups.

## MEMBERS

Ministry Team – Youth Minister, ministry team members, parents, parishioners with interest or expertise in youth ministry

Youth Council – Youth Minister, key ministry team members, youth reps from various grade levels

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The youth ministry committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Assess the needs of youth and conduct programs and activities** which address the needs.
2. **Determine how all components of youth ministry** can be active in the parish.
3. Ensure **that the seven themes of comprehensive youth ministry** are present in parish programs: developmentally appropriate, family friendly, intergenerational, multicultural, community-wide collaboration, leadership, flexible, and adaptable programming.
4. **Assist in the development of long-range plans** for youth ministry.
5. **Consult with the staff member responsible for youth ministry** in the coordination of youth ministry programs.
6. **Encourage and enable youth to participate** in all areas of parish life – finding ways for youth to become involved with parish committees, organizations, and structures.
7. **Promote better understanding and support for youth ministry** through publicity, promotion, and advocacy.
8. **Participate in the search and selection process** for a new youth minister as requested.



## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

### ROLE

The young adult ministry committee **serves as a link between the young adult community (identified as 18 to 40-year-olds) and the parish community.** The committee advocates for the needs of young adults and works with a parish staff member to plan and implement activities and events for the young adult community.

For many young adults, **the first community with which the young adult Catholic often connects is the parish.** It is at the parish where they were baptized, where they stop when they are in town or where they hope to marry. Care for young adults requires that parishes be a home where they are personally touched on their faith journey. Care of young adults requires a certain openness and flexibility as a result of the life cycle events – marriages, birth of children, death of parents or grandparents or, in some cases, spouses. There must be awareness on the part of the community of the life patterns, transience and mobility of young adults.

This committee should report to the Evangelization and Formation Commission.

### MEMBERSHIP

A **staff member should be selected** to work with this committee because of familiarity with resources and the ministerial area of young adult ministry.

A committee can be assembled which **represents the makeup of the population** according to segments (18-23, 24-30, 31-40) and/or lifestyles (students, married with or without children, single). Consideration should also be given to how the committee will serve various cultures within in the community and how cultural representatives can be included.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The young adult ministry committee is responsible for these **tasks:**

1. **Assess the needs of young adults and develop programs and activities** which address the needs.
2. **Identify and strengthen connection points of the parish with young adults** such as marriage preparation, baptismal preparation, RCIA, marriage support, etc.
3. **Advocate for the needs of young adults** in the parish.
4. **Foster meaningful involvement in parish life** through prayer/worship, formation, service, and social activities.
5. **Develop resources for young adults** with needs in the area of campus ministry, military duty, grief support, separation or divorce, fallen away Catholics, etc.
6. **Investigate available resources for young adults** in order to implement and collaborate when possible.
7. **Advise, assist, and communicate with staff member** in the coordination of programs and activities.
8. **Encourage and invite young adults to become leaders** in young adult ministry and the parish.
9. **Assist in the development of long-range plans** for young adult ministry.
10. **Prepare and monitor program and activity budgets.**

## ADULT AND FAMILY MINISTRY

### ROLE

The adult and family ministry committee **enriches the lives of parish families and adults through formation, prayer and social activities**. The scope of this committee can include adult formation, parenting skills, ministry to engaged and married couples, separated/divorced ministry, widows and widowers, deaf and hard of hearing, those with special needs and their parents, and campus ministry. Young adult ministry may also be part of this committee. This committee may assist with the coordination and promotion of various adult formation efforts.

According to Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States, USCCB (1999), adult faith formation ministry **must engage the particular needs and interests of the adults in each local community**. To be faithful and effective it will offer, over time, a comprehensive and systematic presentation and exploration of the core elements of Catholic faith and practice – a complete initiation into a Catholic way of life. It will do so in a way that is accessible to adults and relates to their life experiences, helping them to form a Christian conscience and to live their lives in the world as faithful disciples of Jesus.

This committee should report to the Evangelization and Formation Commission.

### Three goals of adult faith formation

1. **Invite and enable ongoing conversion to Jesus in Holiness** – in response to God’s call to holiness, our faith and life as adult disciples are grounded in developing a *personal relationship with Jesus*.
2. **Promote and support active membership in the Christian community** – as adult believers, we learn and live our faith *as active members of the Church*.
3. **Call and prepare adults to act as disciples in mission to the world** – the Church and its adult faithful have **a mission in and to the world**: to share the message of Christ to renew and to transform the social and temporal order.

### MEMBERSHIP

A **staff member should be selected** to work with this committee because of familiarity with adult faith formation resources and methods as well as an academic background in the Catholic faith tradition.

Committee members can be assembled from those with **expertise in adult faith formation or a background in the Catholic faith tradition**.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The adult and family ministry committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Assess and determine periodically the needs of adult parishioners** within the scope of the committee's description.
2. **Make recommendations for future plans and programs** based on the needs of parishioners.
3. **Foster involvement in the parish through prayer/worship, education, and social activities.**
4. **Investigate available resources and communicate** these to the parish.
5. **Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with parishes and academic institutions.**
6. **Enable adults and families to collaborate in this ministry** and to encourage them to minister to others.
7. **Involve people in “like-to-like” formation** – couples helping couples, families helping families, singles helping singles, etc.
8. **Extend programs to people beyond the parish boundaries.**



## VOCATIONS

### ROLE

The vocation committee or team shares in a threefold mission: **awareness, education, and invitation**. Committee members should think of themselves as catalysts and coordinators, working to help integrate vocations into the missions of other committees and the parish at large. The primary purpose of the committee is to get everyone connected with the parish to view himself or herself as an “inviter.” Anyone can invite a person to consider the call to priesthood, the permanent diaconate, religious life or other Church leadership.

Vocation committees or teams **receive support from the Vocation Office** in the following ways:

- A quarterly newsletter helps educate about project ideas, available resources and upcoming events.
- An annual workshop brings together members from across the Archdiocese. Each year, the workshop has a unique focus.
- Ask questions or seek advice from the Vocations Office and Director as well as arrange for local or district visits by the Vocation Director.

This committee also has an important role in **promoting and participating in diocesan and national efforts**. Events such as National Vocation Awareness Week and World Day of Prayer for Vocations are times when local, diocesan and national efforts can be combined.

### MEMBERSHIP

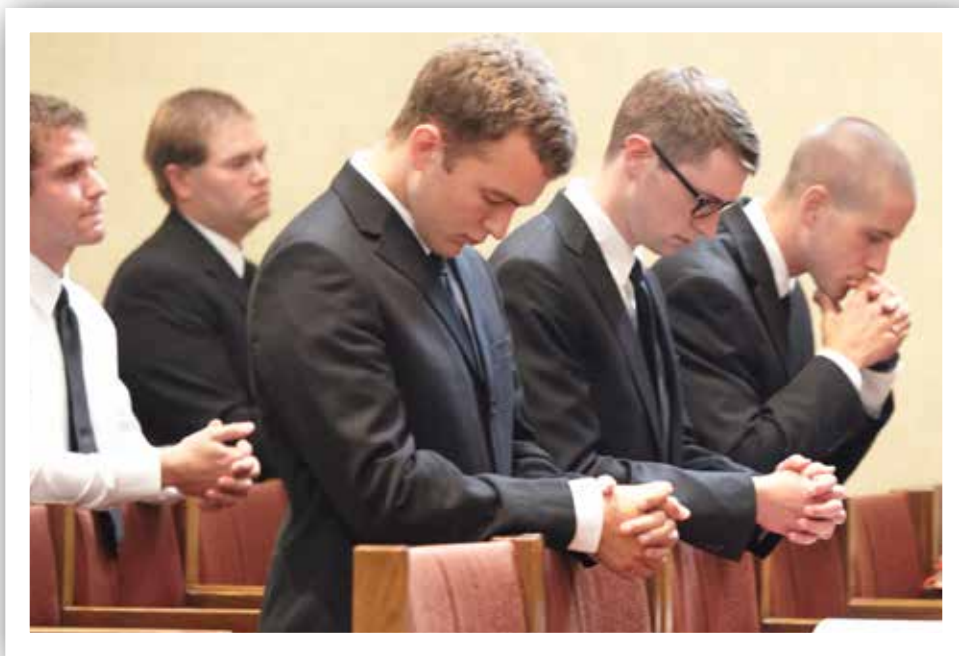
A **staff member should be selected** to work with this committee because of familiarity and interest in vocations ministry.

On a national level, the Bishops’ Committee on Vocations has recommended that vocation committees or teams include parishioners, priests, teachers, married couples, senior citizens, and youth so that the **committee reflects the diversity of the parish community**.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vocations committee or team is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Build a “vocations climate”** in which people feel free to explore the possibility of priesthood, the diaconate, religious life or ecclesial lay ministry.
2. **Develop an awareness of ministries within the Catholic Church** so that members are visible, a first-line resource for parishioners who may be thinking about a church vocation.
3. **Identify target groups** who can and should be involved in encouraging vocations: parish school teachers, religious education program catechists, parish staff, parish committees, coaches, parents, etc.
4. **Determine the current outlook of target groups** with regard to vocation awareness, education, and invitation as well as how that outlook corresponds to the vision of the committee for each target group.
5. **Work with each target group to provide vocation information** and other ways of supporting vocational invitation.
6. **Collaborate with the Vocations Office** in terms of general mission and specific initiatives.
7. **Pray for and encourage current Church leadership** as well as seminarians, deacons in formation, candidates for religious life, and lay ecclesial ministry students.
8. **Keep the pastoral council informed about activities and activities.**





## SCHOOL ADVISORY

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the school advisory standing commission is **to serve as an advisory body to the school principal or administrator**. The commission assists with policy development, identification and expression of the educational goals and objectives, budget planning, marketing and public relations.

If the school is **separately incorporated**, the commission operates under its own constitution and bylaws. The commission should report to the pastoral council.

If the school is **consolidated with one or more parishes or operates as a regional school**, each participating parish should have representation on a school commission. At least one parish representative should serve as a member on the parish formation commission in order to keep that body and the pastoral council current with the school's activity.

The activity of the school may require the commission **to form committees or ministry teams** to work directly with certain activities. The commission's role is to monitor, evaluate and collaborate with these committees or teams in order to advance the school more effectively. Commissions should meet with these group periodically to discuss their activity and to exchange new ideas.

### MEMBERSHIP

There are *ex officio* members of the commission who serve by virtue of their office. Additional members are elected or discerned to serve on the commission. The parish **can determine a membership formula** for this commission in order to represent the various constituencies of the school.

#### Ex Officio Members

Pastor or Parish Director  
Principal  
Pastoral Council Liaison

#### Members

Teachers  
Parents  
Parishioners with an interest or expertise in Catholic education

## AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The school advisory commission is responsible for these **key functions**:

1. **Promote and monitor the implementation of policies** consistent with the approved policies and directives of the archdiocesan Office for Schools.
2. **Assist with the development and definition of local policies** that govern the operation of the parish school.
3. **Assist in the development of long-range plans** for the school and actively seek opportunities for collaboration with other schools.
4. **Participate in the evaluation** of the school and its programs. Foster continued growth and development of excellence in education and effectiveness as an organizational entity. Engage in an annual evaluation of the school commission's activity and attainment of established goals.
5. **Review and evaluate the school budget** in conjunction with the principal and the parish finance council. Make any extraordinary budget recommendations to the parish finance council.
6. **Develop a salary scale for employees** of the school in conformity with archdiocesan policy and parish personnel practice. The pastor and principal are responsible to interview, employ, supervise, renew and terminate employees. The commission has no responsibility in personnel matters.
7. **Communicate and promote school programs** to the parish and local community.
8. **Assure the involvement and compliance** of the school with all state and federal mandates and programs applicable to religious and independent schools.
9. As requested, **assist the pastor with the development of the principal's job description** and serve on a search or interview committee/team for a new principal.

## POSSIBLE COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES/MINISTRY TEAMS

A school advisory commission **may have a number of committees** which meet separately but report to the commission. Each committee works directly with some area of ministry or activity which is directly connected to the school. Commissions should consult with the Pastoral Council prior to the organization of any new committee.

Possible committees of the school advisory commission are:

- Marketing
- Development
- Athletics
- Home & School
- School Fundraisers

None of the above committees are described in this manual. Any one of these or any new committees can be easily added to the manual for use by other parishes. Please submit any proposals for new committees to the Office for Planning and Councils to review.

## WORSHIP

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the worship standing commission is **to support the liturgical ministries and to assist with the preparation for the liturgical and prayer life** of the parish community. This commission collaborates and consults with members of the pastoral staff in regard to the formation and training of ministers for the Eucharist and other sacraments as well as preparing sacred environments and liturgical resources.

Because the mission of worship is complex, the commission **may form committees or ministry teams** to work directly with specific liturgical ministries. The commission's role is to monitor, assess, and collaborate with any committees or teams to minister more effectively. It is understood that specific worship ministries function more as a grouping of parishioners who participate in a particular ministry, such as choir, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, greeters, and so on than as a meeting of people gathered around a table. Committees or ministry teams should report their activity regularly to the Commission.

### MEMBERSHIP

There are *ex officio* members of the commission who serve by virtue of their office. Additional members are selected to serve on the commission. The parish may **require some formation and/or experience** of members in the areas of sacramental theology and liturgy.

#### Ex Officio Members

Pastor or Parish Director  
Director of Worship/Liturgical Music  
Pastoral Council Liaison

#### Members

Liturgical ministers  
Parishioners with an interest or expertise  
in worship and liturgy



## AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The worship commission is responsible for these **key functions**:

1. **Prepare for worship** by planning for liturgical seasons and feasts which reflect the diversity of the congregation.
2. **Educate and form for liturgy** by informing and forming the commission and the entire parish about liturgical guidelines and practice.
3. **Provide various forms of prayer** by offering seasonal, cultural, and spirituality-related prayer experiences as applicable to and supported by parishioner groups.
4. **Recruit, prepare, and organize the liturgical ministers** to serve at the various liturgies and prayer experiences in the parish.
5. **Ensure that the worship space is cared for, maintained, furnished and decorated with genuine and quality elements** by monitoring the space, providing seasonal liturgical environments, and recommending updates and improvements as needed.
6. **Serve as a resource for liturgical music** by ensuring that the selection and performance of music follows universal norms, is appropriate and allows for the full participation of the assembly, and incorporates cultural elements.
7. **Assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of worship activity** by conducting regular evaluation involving parishioners.
8. **Review and evaluate the worship budget** in conjunction with the Director of Worship and the Finance Council.
9. **Implement universal and Archdiocesan Church liturgical guidelines and practices** by ensuring that the commission is familiar with the guidelines and practices and that parish practice is consistent with liturgical documents.

## POSSIBLE COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES/MINISTRY TEAMS

A worship commission **may have a number of committees or ministry teams** which meet separately but report to the commission.

Possible ministry teams of the worship commission are:

- Choir(s)
- Environment
- Liturgy Preparation
- Readers/Lectors
- Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist
- Greeters

None of the above ministry teams are described in this manual. Any one of these or any new committees can be easily added to the manual for use by other parishes. Please submit any proposals for new committees to the Office for Planning and Councils to review

## HUMAN CONCERNS

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the human concerns standing commission is **to discern the needs of people in the parish and wider community – especially the poor – and identify resources to meet those needs** while enlisting the active support and participation of parish members. This commission helps to fulfill the justice dimensions of scripture and our Catholic social teaching tradition while acknowledging that every Christian is called to service and to work for justice. The focus of the commission is on the fourfold task of Catholic social ministry: direct service, justice education, advocacy and empowerment.

- Direct Service – assist the parish in performing works of charity and in relating to organizations that provide direct service to people in need
- Justice Education – raise awareness among parishioners about social justice issues and Catholic social teaching
- Advocacy – form partnerships with organizations that serve as advocates for the poor, the vulnerable, and the unborn that work for changes in public policy and societal structures so as to aid the poor, the vulnerable, and the unborn.
- Empowerment – develop practices and support organizations which encourage people in need to take action themselves

The mission of human concerns usually requires the commission to **organize into committees or ministry teams in order to address specific activities and projects**. The commission's role is to monitor, evaluate, and collaborate with these groups so that they minister more effectively. These committees or ministry teams should report their activity regularly to the commission. Commissions should meet with these groups periodically to discuss the current state of the ministerial activity and to exchange new ideas for more effective ministry.

### MEMBERSHIP

There are ex officio members of the commission who serve by virtue of their office. Additional members are selected to serve on the commission. The parish **can determine a membership formula** for the commission in order to represent the tasks of Catholic social ministry. The parish can also require some formation and/or experience of members in order to serve.

#### Ex Officio Members

Pastor or Parish Director  
Staff Member with responsibilities for human concerns ministries  
Pastoral Council Liaison

#### Members

Parishioners involved in a human concerns activity or project  
Parishioners with an interest or expertise in human concerns ministry

## AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The human concerns commission is responsible for these key functions:

1. **Assess the level of basic human needs within the parish and the wider community** by studying the demographics of the parish area and surveying the needs.
2. **Identify resources** to meet needs by learning about existing Church agencies and community groups and providing referral information.
3. **Develop services and programs** by involving others in the ministry to help people in need and to work for justice.
4. **Develop a parish-wide consciousness of Catholic social teaching** by educating and forming people about right to life and human dignity issues.
5. **Coordinate and support the activity of committees and ministry teams** which are directly involved in particular projects and ministries.
6. **Promote and organize twinning and sharing relationships** with international or national parishes as well as parishes within the diocese.
7. **Review and evaluate the commission budget** in conjunction with the parish finance council.

## POSSIBLE COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES/MINISTRY TEAMS

A human concerns commission **will likely have a number of committees or ministry teams** which work directly with particular projects or ministries. All human concerns projects and ministries should be coordinated by the commission. Commissions should consult with the Pastoral Council prior to the organization of any new committee or ministry team.

Possible committees of the human concerns commission are:

- St. Vincent De Paul Society
- Respect Life
- Sister Parish
- Meal Program
- Food Pantry

None of the above committees are described in this manual. Any one or any new committees can be easily added to the manual for use by other parishes. Please submit any proposals for new committees to the Office for Planning and Councils to review.

## STEWARDSHIP

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the stewardship standing commission is **to support efforts which build and strengthen a community of discipleship and evangelization** as a part of the mission of the Church. Pope John Paul II described this community as “a family of families.” Another way to describe the parish community is as “a community of communities.” Both descriptions reflect the reality that a parish community is about developing a sense of belonging, building relationships, and connecting people with one another. This involves personal contact and invitation. Ministries in this area of mission can include: welcoming and engaging new members, establishing ways of communicating to and with parishioners, conducting opportunities for parishioners to socialize and celebrate, and sharing time, talent and treasure as a response to discipleship.

Because the mission of stewardship is so extensive, the commission **may form committees or ministry teams** to work directly with specific ministries. The commission’s role is to monitor, evaluate, and collaborate with any committees or teams to minister more effectively. Any committees or teams should report their activity regularly to the commission. Commissions should meet with these groups periodically to discuss the current state of the ministerial activity and to exchange ideas for growth.

Commissions should become familiar with the **Parish Stewardship Manual**, Archdiocese of Milwaukee which is available on the Archdiocesan website. This resource is invaluable for all facets of community building and stewardship.

### MEMBERSHIP

There are *ex officio* members of the commission who serve by virtue of their office. Additional members are selected to serve on the commission. The parish **can determine a membership formula** for this commission in order to include the various ministries provided in this mission area.

#### Ex Officio Members

- Pastor or Parish Director
- Staff member with responsibilities for stewardship
- Pastoral Council Liaison

#### Members

- Parishioners involved in some area of stewardship activity
- Parishioners with an interest or expertise in stewardship activity

## AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The stewardship commission is responsible for these **key functions**:

1. **Understands and promotes stewardship** as the disciple's response as well as the theology of building a community of discipleship and evangelization.
2. **Coordinate stewardship education** for all age groups in the parish.
3. **Develop effective print and media communications** to keep parishioners informed and engaged in the parish community and the life of the Church.
4. **Conduct a program or process which welcomes new parishioners** with the intention of developing a sense of belonging, providing materials to inform and invite into parish life, and encouraging active participation in parish activities and ministries.
5. **Present a program or process for parishioners to assess their gifts and talents** so that these may be shared with the parish and wider community.
6. **Organize a procedure for connecting people's time and talent with parish ministries and activities** ensuring that there is follow through and update.
7. **Coordinate social events** which are designed to build relationships and strengthen the community.
8. **Conduct an annual stewardship pledge process** so that parishioners have an opportunity to re-commit their treasure to the building up of the kingdom of God.
9. **Participate in regular evaluation of all aspects of stewardship** activity and ministry.
10. **Review and evaluate the stewardship budget** in conjunction with the finance council.

## POSSIBLE COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES/MINISTRY TEAMS

A stewardship commission **may have a number of committees** which meet separately but report to the commission. Each committee works directly with some area of ministry or activity which is directly connected to building community. Commissions should consult with the Pastoral Council prior to the organization of any new committee.

Committees which are described in this manual:

- Welcoming
- Communications
- Parish Life
- Time and Talent

Parishes may also develop new committees. Please submit any proposals for a new committee not outlined in this manual to the Office for Planning and Councils to review. New committee information can be easily added to the manuals and made available for other parishes to use.



## WELCOMING

### ROLE

The welcoming committee **welcomes and orients new parishioners** to the parish in order to build a strong sense of community and belonging as well as to form new parishioners in the practice of stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. Parishioners who are warmly welcomed into a parish community are much more likely to become involved, share their gifts and talents, and recognize their responsibility to contribute financially to the Church's mission.

The committee **follows the guidelines in the Norms for Pastoral Councils**. A meeting report should be submitted to the Formation Commission for review. The Commission may request to meet with the committee on occasion and will rely on the committee to monitor the programs and activities in this ministry as well as attend to any issues which may arise.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### Ex Officio Members

Staff member with the responsibility for welcoming and orienting new parishioners

#### Members

Parish members with an interest and/or talent in hospitality  
Parishioners who have joined the parish recently, are able to identify with other new parishioners, and suggest improvements to the process

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The welcoming committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Develop and regularly update** a registration, welcome, and orientation process for new parishioners.
2. **Assemble a welcoming packet** or brochure which is distributed at the time of registration or as part of a welcome visit.
3. **Design a welcome letter** that is sent to the home of the new member and signed by the pastor.
4. **Design and coordinate a welcoming event** for new members such as, a pot luck supper, donuts and coffee after Masses, pizza with the pastor or a variety of other possibilities.
5. **Transition the newly-welcomed** into the care of the time and talent committee or continue with the responsibilities of that committee.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### ROLE

The communications committee **publicizes and promotes the parish ministerial activity** through various means in order to inform and invite parishioners to participate. The committee works closely with a staff member who is responsible for this area and others who may directly work with communication vehicles such as, the bulletin, website, email blasts, parish newsletter, and facebook page. Every ministry in the parish will rely on this committee to help provide information about their activities and to publicize their events.

The committee **follows the committee guidelines in the Norms for Pastoral Councils**. A meeting report should be submitted to the stewardship commission for review. The commission may request to meet with the committee on occasion and will rely on the committee to monitor the activity in this ministry area as well as attend to any issues which arise.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### Ex Officio

Staff member with the responsibility for communications

#### Members

Parish members with an interest or expertise in communications

### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The communications committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Build community through sharing information** with parish members and the larger community.
2. **Formulate strategies, processes, and guidelines** to ensure that parish information reaches parishioners.
3. **Assist with the development and maintenance** of parish communication vehicles, particularly the bulletin and website.
4. **Assist with the promotion of extraordinary events** within and outside of the parish.
5. **Evaluate existing communication efforts**, brainstorm new ideas, and seek to develop more effective means of communication as new strategies and technologies emerge.

## PARISH LIFE

### ROLE

The parish life committee **plans, promotes, facilitates and coordinates activities that bring parishioners together** for mutual support, celebration of special parish and life events. These events help build a sense of community among the members. Christian community life is expansive enough to include everyone.

This committee primarily **focuses on social activities**. There are a wide-range of activities which this committee can coordinate: funeral receptions, luncheons, parish feastday, parish anniversary, holiday bazaar, parish picnic, fish fries, heritage pot luck supper, festivals, fiestas, etc.

### MEMBERSHIP

A staff member should be **selected to work with this committee** who is familiar with planning and conducting social events.

Members should be selected who have an **interest or expertise in hospitality, party planning, and culinary arts**. The committee will likely need to develop an extensive volunteer list of people who are willing to assist with various events.

### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The parish life committee is responsible for the following **tasks**:

1. **Develop a vision of parish social gatherings** that promotes unity in diversity.
2. **Plan, promote, facilitate and coordinate activities that bring members together** for mutual support, activities or celebrations to build a sense of belonging.
3. **Identify and train groups** which will assist with particular activities.
4. **Collaborate with other committees and groups** in the planning, promotion, and coordination of social events.
5. **Develop budgets for activities** and submit to finance council for approval.



## TIME AND TALENT

### ROLE

The time and talent committee **conducts activities and processes which invite people to be Christian stewards of their God-given gifts of time and talent.** The committee works closely with a staff member responsible for this area. Every ministry in the parish will look to this committee to help identify potential volunteers. The committee complements and enriches the discernment and recruitment efforts of other parish offices and ministries.

The committee focuses on **invitation, discernment of gifts, and identification of willingness to volunteer.** The committee works to build and strengthen a climate of participation and involvement but is not responsible for the formation or training of people in particular ministries.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### Ex Officio

Staff member with responsibility for identifying and developing volunteers for parish ministries.

#### Members

Parish members with an interest in helping parishioners identify and use their gifts and talents.

### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The time and talent committee is responsible for these **tasks:**

1. **Develop an annual commitment process**, preferably in the spring, for parishioners to consider and participate in various ministries and volunteer activities conducted by the parish.
2. **Explore the potential of using discernment tools**, such as StrengthFinder or Called and Gifted, to assist parishioners in the identification of their gifts and how they may be used in the community.
3. **Collaborate with offices and commissions/committees** to maintain current lists of volunteers and areas where volunteers are needed.
4. **Design a followup process for new parishioners** which invites them to a discernment of gifts session as well as orients them to the principle of stewardship of time, talent, and treasure.
5. **Determine a contact system** so that parishioners who volunteer for a ministry or activity are contacted in a timely fashion.

## FINANCE COUNCIL COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

### BUDGET

#### ROLE

The budget committee is involved with **the preparation and development of a parish budget draft** for approval by the Finance Council. The committee works with the various commissions and committees of both councils to balance the projected revenues and expenses of the parish during the next fiscal year. The pastoral council participates in the budget process.

The committee **follows a timeline and completes its work by a deadline** established by the Finance Council. The frequency of meetings is determined by the committee. Once the draft is submitted, the budget committee's task is complete until the next fiscal year.

#### MEMBERSHIP

A **staff member** with responsibility for developing the budget

A **finance council member**

Representatives from **key areas of mission and ministry**

Parish members with **expertise in budgeting and finance**

#### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The budget committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Determine a timeline** for the submission of a budget draft to the finance council.
2. **Communicate any necessary guidelines or parameters** for the upcoming fiscal year which have been determined by the finance council based on projected revenues.
3. **Invite all offices and commissions/committees** to prepare and submit preliminary operating budgets.
4. **Provide past budget histories and current year-to-date performance** to the appropriate offices and ministries.
5. **Work to reach a balanced budget** with offices, commissions/committees, and the participation of the pastoral council.

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

### ROLE

The building and grounds committee is concerned with the **state and condition of parish facilities and property**, their maintenance and upkeep. The committee prioritizes and presents needs as part of the budget process and identifies any situations which require immediate action to the finance council.

The committee plays an important role in the development and monitoring of a **master site plan**. The plan allows the parish to maximize the use of property and facilities, establish a timeline for the updating of mechanical and electrical systems, and anticipate any building or renovation projects. The master site plan is best developed in conjunction with an architect.

### MEMBERSHIP

The **parish director of maintenance and the director of administrative services** should be selected to serve on this committee.

Other members from the parish should be selected because of their **knowledge and expertise in the areas of architecture, construction, landscaping, cleaning, and maintenance skills**.

### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The building and grounds committee is responsible for the following **tasks**:

1. **Inspect all parish properties on a regular basis and recommend priorities** for needed repairs, remodeling, and new construction.
2. **Develop, review and update a master site plan** for the parish property and facilities which reflects current and future needs.
3. **Assist in the development of specifications for projects** and participate in the review of bids as requested.
4. **Make recommendations to the finance council** regarding projects and contractors.
5. **Assemble a list of capable parishioners willing to volunteer** for spring and fall cleanups or other parish maintenance projects.
6. **Recommend the purchases of equipment, supplies and maintenance services.**
7. **Monitor the cleanliness of parish property and facilities.**
8. **Be familiar with safety and insurance standards related to the parish**, make certain the parish complies with these standards, and review the annual safety inspection conducted by the parish's insurance company in order to respond to any concerns.
9. **Evaluate parish needs to conserve energy and operate more efficiently** and make recommendations.
10. **Prepare guidelines for the use of and cleanup of parish facilities** by parish groups or rental or leasing entities.

# Finance Council Committee Description

## PERSONNEL

### ROLE

The personnel committee **makes recommendations to the finance council regarding the adoption of a parish personnel handbook.** The actual hiring, supervision, evaluation or termination of employees are the proper roles of the pastor, administrator or person delegated. In addition, this committee can provide important professional and legal expertise in regard to personnel policy, benefit packages, conflict resolution and mediation, hiring and firing and all areas of human resource management.

The committee **meets several times a year to review the handbook, to train other parish personnel supervisors, and to monitor the state of personnel practice** in the parish. The committee may also convene at the request of the pastor or administrator to consult regarding a personnel matter.

### MEMBERSHIP

The **pastor or administrator should attend** these meetings.

Other members from the parish should be **selected with expertise in law, human resources and personnel management.**

### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The personnel committee is responsible for the following **tasks:**

1. **Develop, maintain, and update a parish personnel handbook**, grounded in Catholic social teaching and faithful to diocesan and USCCB guidelines, for councils review and approval by the finance council.
2. **Assist with the development and review of job descriptions** for all parish positions.
3. **Assist with the development of a performance review system** for use with exempt and non-exempt employees.
4. **Provide an annual training for supervisors in the performance review system** in order to establish consistent patterns of position affirmation and improvement.
5. **Develop, maintain, and update a hiring and interview process** for parish supervisors to follow when seeking new employees which ensures equal opportunity and promotes affirmative action.
6. **Develop an orientation procedure for new employees**, make it available to supervisors, and monitor its use and effectiveness.
7. **Review the parish record keeping for personnel matters and benefit use** and make any necessary recommendations for improvement.

## PARISH CEMETERY

### ROLE

The parish cemetery committee is responsible for **making recommendations to the finance council regarding the care and practice of the parish cemetery**. In some situations, this committee may be responsible for more than one cemetery. In those cases, the committee should seek to develop common or uniform practices at all the cemeteries.

The committee should **implement and follow the Parish Cemetery Guidelines** which have been reviewed by the Priests' Council, parishes with cemeteries, and approved by the Archbishop. These guidelines will assist the committee and those who work directly with cemetery operations in every aspect of operating a cemetery. Additional resources are available from the diocesan cemeteries office.

It is important to note that **most parish cemeteries are part of the overall parish ministry**. Even though the cemetery may function with a certain sense of autonomy, all financial and ministerial activity is under the supervision and direction of the pastor or administrator. The cemetery operation is subject to all the financial controls and practices of the parish.

Any questions **regarding legal matters** should be referred to the Chancery Office.

### MEMBERSHIP

The **pastor or a delegate** should attend the parish cemetery meetings.

Other members from the parish should be **selected because of their knowledge of cemetery operations or interest in the parish cemetery**.

### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The parish cemetery committee is responsible for the following **tasks**:

1. **Assist with the operation and care** of the parish cemetery.
2. **Establish procedures and practices for the sale and recording of lots, funding for perpetual care, grave markers and decorations, and cemetery visitation** for review by the councils and approval by the finance council.
3. **Monitor the financial controls, budget, and practices of the cemetery** to ensure that diocesan guidelines and state law are followed.
4. **Keep current with cemetery trends and developments** in order to make certain that the cemetery is a vital ministry within the parish community.
5. **Participate in formational opportunities** regarding cemeteries which are offered by the diocese.



## TECHNOLOGY

### ROLE

Information and communication technology is essential for parish employees to work efficiently and for the parish to keep in contact with its parishioners. A technology committee which functions under the Finance Council will **provide the expert guidance** for the parish to develop replacement and upgrade plans as well as incorporate and integrate new technologies into parish usage. The scope of the committee can cover a number of technology areas, including computers, copiers/printers, phone, bulletin, video, sound and security systems as well as technology education in a school.

The committee **follows the guidelines in the Norms for Finance Councils**. A meeting report should be submitted to the Finance Council for review. The Finance Council may request to meet with the committee on occasion and will rely on the committee to assess the state of the technology systems and to recommend any budgetary expenditures as part of an ongoing plan.

### MEMBERSHIP

The committee will work optimally with **5 to 7 members**. Three to five members should be selected from the parish and/or school and two to three members from the staff. Members should have some technology skills and knowledge as well as an understanding of the Church's mission in order to ensure that the use of technology will help the parish achieve its broader mission and goals.

In the selection of members, **knowledge about how to use the technology is preferable** to how the technology works but both are needed on the committee. Younger parishioners tend to be more tech savvy and should be invited to participate in this committee.

### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The technology committee is responsible for these **tasks**:

1. **Develop and regularly update a technology plan**, providing the research, writing, and editing of the plan for approval by the Finance Council for the ongoing evolution, upgrading, and replacement of systems.
2. **Establish technology use directives and procedures for shared equipment** to insure that the technology is made available for use and properly maintained.
3. **Propose and prioritize technology projects** as needed and as part of the plan.
4. **Monitor the progress of technology projects** in conjunction with the designated staff person.
5. **Conduct an annual survey of commissions and committees** to update the status of the technology plan, to assess current technology use, and to determine any changes or needs.