

Seven Simple Steps
to make parishes

Simply Shine



Archdiocese of Philadelphia: Secretariat of Evangelization
Office for the Formation of the Laity
"Assisting parishes to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ"

Mission Statement



The parish mission is the unique and particular way in which a parish places its gifts at the service of the local and the universal Church. (pg. 15, *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council*)

Consider:

You are interviewed by your Catholic paper and asked to give one sentence that explains why your parish exists. Your sentence is . . .

Forming a Mission Statement:

- Identity: “We the parish community of . . .”
- Purpose: “Our mission is to . . .”
- Function: “We are committed to . . .”
- Future: “We seek to become . . .”

Ways to Display the Parish Mission Statement:

- Full mission statement . . .
- Three-words that summarize the mission statement . . .

Tag Line:

A tag line is a simple sentence that concisely expresses your mission statement. Examples:

- Olive Garden Restaurant: “*When you're here, you're family.*”
- Secretariat for Evangelization (Philadelphia): “*Assisting parishes to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ*”

Other Considerations:

Pray the mission statement:

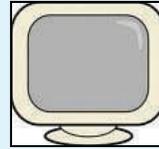
- Center parish retreat on mission statement
- Reflect on key words at parish meetings
- Incorporate in prayers of the faithful
- End parish gatherings with: “*Dear Lord as a Parish, let us* (use words from mission statement). . .”

Develop goals around the mission statement:

- Catholic school
- Religious Education
- Pastoral Councils
- Other Committees



Website



Nearly two-thirds of the adults who use the Internet in the United States have used it for faith-related matters. (Pew Research July, 2009)

Consider:

Larry is a young adult and an inactive Catholic. He is sensing a desire to revisit the Catholic faith. Surfing the net, he comes upon your parish website. What would be helpful for him to see immediately?

What Makes a Website “Good”?

Current, inviting, helpful, easy to navigate, virtual meeting place, promotes discussion, informative, interactive, has message board, Mass times, directions, shows uniqueness of your parish, Christ-centered, word “Catholic” is visible, twitter and facebook links, question of the week, Scripture readings and reflections, indicates church and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities (see pg. 7 for signs).

Two Excellent Resources:

1. *The Good News Web Designers Association (Tools for making a better website)*
<http://gnwda.org/index.html>
2. *Building a Better Church Website:*
<http://www.sundaysoftware.com/image/web/> (click on “Building a Better Church Website” under title “Sunday Software”)

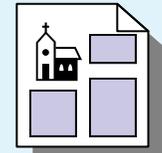
Other Considerations:

Home page is “prime” real estate, therefore:

- put button that says “*make us your home page*”
- display weather forecast and time
- have a Google Search Box
- include a message board
- request email addresses
- schedules, sermons, bulletins, committee reports, social activities
- offer opportunities to blog
- have a changing photo gallery
- give daily Scripture quote daily
- provide a link to relevant Internet sites for all ages



Bulletin



After this letter has been read to you see that it is also read in the church. (Colossians 4:16)

Consider:

If all that was left of my parish was the Sunday bulletin, what would some future researcher deduce from it?

Cover:

What sense does the cover create? What is the dominant image, and what does that image say about the parish? Is the cover always the same? Does the print color change? Is our mission statement visible? Are their symbols for people with disabilities (wheelchair, hearing aids, see pg. 7)?

Inside the Bulletin:

What news “jumps off” of the page? What is not said? Are all items “created equal”? Is it always the same layout? Does it have too many fonts, boxes? Is the font size for “older eyes”? As a newcomer would I understand all of the language (ex. “The RCIA will meet in Marian Hall”. What is RCIA and where is Marian hall?) Does it address adult faith formation, justice, community?

Sample Bulletin:

St. Francis of Assisi, Wichita, Kansas. <http://www.stfranciswichita.com/home.asp>

Other Considerations:

Distribution of bulletin

Do all of the parishioners get a bulletin?

- church-goers
- shut-in
- college students
- seekers on the web site
- visitors at church
- nursing home residents
- hospital patients
- new residents
- *Community Living Arrangements for persons with disabilities (CLA's)*



Environment



The one who welcomes you, welcomes me, and the one who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. (Mt. 10:40)

Consider:

Close your eyes. Imagine yourself driving to your parish, parking the car, getting out of the car and walking to the Church building. Name 3 things that make you feel welcomed as you approach and enter the church.

Entrance onto Property:

Parking lot well lit? Grounds well kept? Flowers? Banners?

Gathering Space:

- *Inviting:* Well lit? Comfortable temperature? Organized? Plants? Places to sit down? Guest book?
- *Informative:* Information table? Bulletin Boards with parish events? Printed “tour” of Church? Suggestion box?
- *Spiritual:* Prayer request book? Pamphlet/CD/book rack? Liturgical symbols?

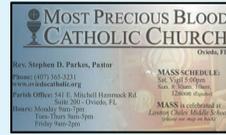
Other Considerations:

Be sensitive to people with disabilities:

- large-print worship aids
- assisted listening devices
- signing at Mass and meetings
- wheelchair access, ramp
- accessible bathrooms, water fountains
- Braille songsheets
- working and balanced sound system
- access symbols when advertising see (pg. 7)
- events offer transportation
- access symbols clearly visible (see pg. 7)



Printed Materials



But the word of God continued to increase and spread. (Acts 12:24)

Consider:

When going through my junk mail, what makes me stop and read something?

Types of Informational Materials:

Newsletters, Church “business” cards, bulletin, pew cards, letters, flyers

Content:

Concise, readable, neat, spacious, active verbs, names, personal quotes, testimonials, colorful, clear message, white space, people, readable font, non-Church language, Christ centered, parish logo, website address, phone number, address, simple map

Excellent Resource:

The Non-Designer's Design Book, Third Edition. Robin Williams
(Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice)

Other Considerations:

- *Creative ways to “advertise” the parish:* pizza boxes, water bottles, supermarket carts, balloons, road signs, movies, tee shirts, key chains, magnets, pencils, pens, Frisbees, shirt with parish logo
- *Paper:*
Adequate weight paper, various colors

Worth repeating:

Put web address and tag line on everything!



Directional Signs



“Think of a sign as part of the face of the parish. It’s not the whole of what we show, but it is a prominent part.” (*Creating the Evangelizing Parish*, pg. 147)

Consider:

Have you ever been lost? How did you find your way?

Approaching the Parish:

Parish Sign: clearly visible? Current? Readable from the car? Inspirational?

On Church Property:

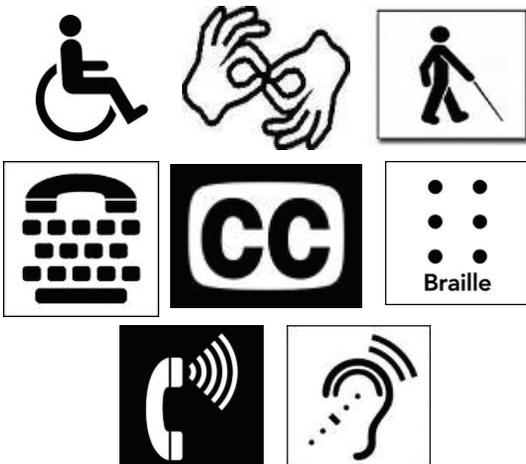
Building Signs: Buildings clearly marked: Rectory, Parish Office, Convent, Chapel, Adoration Chapel, Food Pantry, School? If parish has specific colors, use them. The best colors for signs are black on School Bus yellow. Large, clear, well lit?

Inside Buildings:

Room Signs: Rooms marked? Bathrooms? Auditorium? Meeting rooms?

Other Considerations:

Symbols for people with disabilities:



Living Signs



You are a letter from Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Cor. 3:3)

Consider: How can I be a living sign in my . . .

<p style="text-align: center;">Parish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome new faces• Reach out to those alone• Be kind in parking lot• Be sensitive to people with disabilities	<p style="text-align: center;">Workplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer prayers and support• Share Christian beliefs• Respect others' beliefs
<p style="text-align: center;">Neighborhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome new residents• Support ecumenical gatherings• Display symbols of the faith	<p style="text-align: center;">In the "World"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help those less fortunate with time, talent, money• Respond to situations with the "heart of Christ"• Learn all aspects of a social issue

Last Thought:

A test of a parish's maturity will be not only how much is happening at or through the parish, but how much is happening off the parish grounds and in the everyday world of lay people.

(Creating the Evangelizing Parish, pg. 75.)

My thoughts...