

# Completing the *Parish Self-Study* Questionnaire

## *STEP ONE: Preparation for the Parish Self-Study Meeting*

### **The pastor:**

- Acquaints himself with the *Parish Self-Study* instrument
- Leads the Parish Self-Study meeting
- Maintains a personal physical presence during the entire *Parish Self-Study* process (leading the total group or moving from group to group during small group discussions)
- Establishes a Parish Leadership Team (8 – 10) composed of the following leaders:
  - Pastor
  - Parochial Vicar
  - Deacon
  - Two parish deanery representatives to the Deanery Council
  - Parish Pastoral Council
  - Parish Finance Council
  - Stewardship Committee

**NOTE: These persons form the Parish Leadership Team, serve as Focus Area Group Leaders during the first meeting (Parish Self-Study), and represent the combined wisdom of their Focus Area Groups in completing the Parish Leadership Report.**

- Invites other members of the parish to provide input
  - Introduces the Prayer of Discernment
  - Reads the “Letter to Parishioners” introducing the *Parish Self-Study* and requests parishioner involvement
  - Inserts bulletin announcement introducing the *Parish Self-Study* and requesting parishioner involvement
  - Establishes a means for parishioners to volunteer to serve on one of the Focus Area Groups
- Assigns three the Parish Leadership Team members to each of the Sacramental, Strategic, and Sustainable Focus Areas. These individuals will serve as the facilitator, secretary, and/or timekeeper for one of the Focus Area Groups
- Assigns parish volunteers to one of the Focus Area Groups
- Establishes the date, time and site for a three-hour session of all Focus Area Groups to complete the *Parish Self-Study*. (See *Parish Self-Study Meeting Agenda*, p. 4)
- Ensures that the parish staff prepares the *Parish Self-Study* forms for distribution prior to the group meeting
  - Reviews the pre-inserted data from Parish *Status Animarum* to parish forms

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- Insert additional **objective** information, e.g., “List names and positions of volunteer or paid professional staff members...”
- NOTE: Leave BLANK items that require thoughtful, **subjective** responses, e.g., “Yes, No,” “How does...,” “Describe...,” “List...,” “Please explain...”

## The Pastor or his appointee:

- **Holds a pre-meeting session**  (30-minute session before the Parish Self-Study Meeting) to provide directions to Focus Area Group leaders
  - Distributes a copy of the *Parish Self-Study* instrument with directions to each Focus Area Group leader for their individual preparation
  - Reviews the PowerPoint presentation and the *Parish Self-Study Meeting Agenda*
  - Ensures Focus Area Group leaders are assigned to a role (group leader, secretary, or timekeeper) for their assigned focus group (Sacramental, Strategic, Sustainable)
  - Role Responsibility:
    - Group leader - reads questions; encourages/listens to all input; leads group toward consensus on subjective questions; moves group quickly
    - Secretary – documents responses (on computer or chart paper; ensures accurate description of the group’s responses
    - Timekeeper –encourages and ensures that the group to moves forward when necessary following agenda timing

## **Suggested preparation for the meeting**

- One large room with areas for the three Focus Area Groups OR one large room for introductory activities and three smaller rooms for breakout sessions of the Focus Area Groups
- Folders with Focus Area Group assignments
  - The Parish Self-Study Meeting Agenda
  - Copy of the assigned Focus Area form
- Computers/internet or chart paper /pens for each Focus Area
- Projector
- Refreshments, nametags, sign-in sheet
- Uses portion of the PowerPoint presentation

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## *STEP TWO The Parish Self-Study Meeting*

### **The Pastor**

- Introduces the *Parish Self-Study* Meeting (see agenda)
- Reviews the meaning of “Church”
- Uses portions of the PowerPoint presentation, as appropriate

### **Each Focus Area Group under the direction of their facilitator:**

- Responds to the questions on their Focus Area form
  - Reviews parish data
  - Responds to the subjective questions
  - Reaches consensus on each **subjective** item
- Completes their **Preliminary Input for Parish Recommendations**  
(See *SAMPLE – Preliminary Input for Parish Recommendations*, page 5)

### **Conclusion**

- Secures signature of all participants
- Thanks participants
- Reminds them that their input will form the basis of the *Parish Leadership Report* which will be submitted to the diocese and deanery

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## The Parish Self-Study Meeting SUGGESTED AGENDA

1. Introduction (20 minutes) - Pastor
  - Welcome and Purpose of Meeting
  - A Prayer of Discernment
  - Description of “Church” – Pastor
  - Housekeeping (restrooms, breaks, hospitality, etc.)
  - Purpose of the Pastoral Planning Process (Frequently Asked Questions)
  - Overall Diocesan Pastoral and Strategic Planning Timeline (PowerPoint)
  - Parish Self-Study Timeline (PowerPoint)
2. Focus Area Group Work (75 minutes)
  - Break group into the three Focus Area Groups
    - Sacramental – Proclamation
    - Strategic – Sanctification
    - Sustainable – Charity
  - Complete **Parish Self-Study -- Responses to Questions**
3. Break (10 minutes)
4. Focus Area Group Work (70 minutes)
  - **Complete Parish Self-Study --Preliminary Input into the Parish Recommendations**
5. Conclusion (5 minutes)
  - Each Focus Area Facilitator reports recommendations to full group
  - Thanks
  - The Next Steps (The completed report goes to the Parish Leadership Team for follow-up and development of the **Parish Leadership Report.**)

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## Preliminary Input for Parish Recommendations

After reflecting on the definition above and reviewing our responses to Section Three of this *Parish Self-Study*, please describe the Sustainable nature of your parish.

### In terms of the Sustainability of our parish, our major findings are:

- *All three councils/committees are established, but members are unsure of their roles and how they interact.*
- *This might be a good time to update/revise the parish mission, goals, and objectives so all three committees go in the same direction.*
- *Offertory has remained stable for the past three years and does not meet 75%.*
- *Parish is very dependent upon “extraordinary income (bingo)” and has only one small endowment.*
- *New ministries to meet changing parishioner needs are difficult to fund.*

### From this, we conclude:

- *Leadership organizations need to focus on meeting the parish mission, goals, and objectives. Activities should not conflict or overlap.*
- *Parish should address offertory increase (through stewardship?) and other sustainable means of funding ministries.*
- *Our facilities are updated and in good condition.*
- *Our parish plan should address needs of changing parishioner base.*

### In view of these conclusions, we recommend:

1. *Develop an organizational chart to define roles, responsibilities and interaction between/among the Finance Council, Parish Council, and Stewardship Committee to meet the parish mission.*
2. *Increase donations (offertory, endowments, and special funds) while reducing dependence on bingo.*
3. *Address additional funding needed to meet increasing needs of changing demographics.*