

COMMUNITIES OF SALT AND LIGHT

Building a Parish-Based Social Ministry



ROLE OF THE COORDINATING TEAM

- Facilitates and organizes opportunities for **all** parishioners to engage in social mission. Understands that they should “organize” the work, not “do” the work.
- Understands and promotes the full vision of parish social ministry (all components) and makes sure that each component comes to life in the parish.
- Realizes the importance of effective planning and relentless recruiting.
- Maintains communication and coordination between pastor, parish council, parish staff, other parish ministries, and the parish at large.

*“These committees ... best serve parishes by facilitating and enabling the participation of the parish community, rather than simply doing the work on behalf of the parish.”
Communities of Salt and Light*



QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN A TEAM LEADER

1. Team members are leaders ... assisting **all** parishioners to live out their baptismal call.
2. Team members know how to listen.
3. Team members are good planners.
4. Team members collaborate with other parish organizations and community groups.
5. Team members are communicators.
6. Team members are welcoming and relational.
7. Team members value diversity.
8. Team members are practical.
9. Team members are enthusiastic and energetic.
10. Team members are people of faith.

(Adapted from Tom Ulrich, *Parish Social Ministry: Strategies for Success*)



DREAM!

If we had a fully functioning social ministry effort in the parish, what would it look like?

- * Would provide direct human service in order to alleviate immediate pain, need, or crises.
- * Would organize and collaborate with others to change the conditions that cause suffering.
- * Would identify, train, and develop parish leaders.
- * Would ensure that social ministry efforts remain rooted in Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.
- * Would establish a good communication system that keeps the entire parish connected.
- * Would offer a world vision that extends beyond parish, social, economic, or racial boundaries.
- * Would integrate the social mission of the church into all areas of parish life.
- * Most importantly, would lead to personal “metanoia” or conversion – the realization that we are **all** called to actively participate in bringing about the reign of God!



(Adapted from Tom Ulrich, *Parish Social Ministry: Strategies for Success*)

COMPLETE A PARISH ANALYSIS

A parish analysis identifies the needs and resources of the parish and helps determine how well social ministry is currently being integrated into parish life and activity.

1. What are the key issues/concerns/needs in the parish?
2. What organizations/ministries currently exist in the parish and what do they do?
3. What are the main concerns/issues of the pastor, staff, pastoral council? Are they supportive of parish social ministry?
4. Is the social mission of the Church regularly integrated into parish worship (i.e., social justice teaching/activities in bulletin/newsletter, announced at Mass and enthusiastically supported, regularly included in the General Intercessions and homilies, reflected in music and environment)?
5. Are materials from Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities, and Campaign for Human Development distributed and discussed on a regular basis?
6. Are **all** members of the parish invited to join social ministry on a continuing basis?



PARISH ANALYSIS (cont'd)

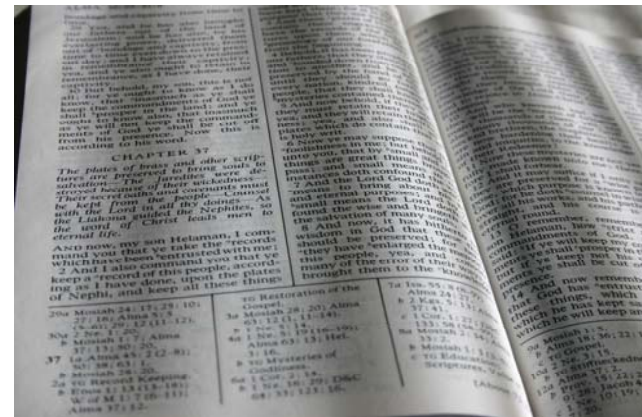
7. What local groups do we currently work with on local issues?
8. Are parishioners knowledgeable of Catholic Social Teaching and the Church's social tradition?
9. Are skills-building/leadership development provided for people engaged in social ministry?
10. Is Catholic Social Teaching and opportunities for service provided in all parish formation or educational ministries?
11. Are there opportunities to explore the deeper social, political, and institutional causes of social injustice and engage parishioners in advocacy?
12. Is there a regular communication system in place that informs the entire parish about the parish social ministry activities?
- 13.. Are all parishioners recruited as leaders and/or involved in decision-making?
14. Based on the above assessment, name 3 key strengths of the your parish social ministry.
15. Based on the above, name 3 areas of weakness.
16. Name 3 things your parish could do to better integrate social ministry into the life of the parish and engage more parishioners.



HELP TEAM MEMBERS UNDERSTAND PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Why are we doing what we're doing? Even though the temptation is to rush into planning, it is wise to Spend time helping team members understand:

- 1) The theological/Scriptural roots of social ministry
- 2) The principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- 3) Papal/Synodal/Episcopal documents
- 4) The components of Parish Social Ministry



Catholic Charities of Idaho can help you in this effort.

DEVELOP A MISSION STATEMENT

Your Coordinating Team understands the larger vision of parish social ministry and has completed a parish assessment. You have an idea of what needs to be done and why. Now you need to capture the essence of your discussion. A mission statement will help clarify your purpose:

1. Communicates the essence of the Social Ministry Committee to the parish community and to those it serves.
2. States:
 - * Who we are
 - * What we do
 - * Why we do it
 - * What we stand for
3. Is clear and brief – a couple of sentences.
4. Describes the big picture.



SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT



The mission of the St. Matthew Parish Social Ministry Committee is to integrate the message of the Gospel and the social teaching of our Church into the life of our parish. We do this by:

- Providing educational opportunities on the social ministry dimension of our faith.
- Informing parishioners of opportunities to help others and engaging them in works of charity.
- Raising awareness of issues that are unjust and engaging parishioners in advocacy efforts to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person.
- Developing an understanding that our parish is the world and engaging the parish in opportunities for global solidarity.
- Collaborating with other groups and people of good will to identify community problems and develop effective solutions to those problems in order to promote the common good.

Our ministry is rooted in prayer and guided by Sacred Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Prayer and Worship Team

- Works with those responsible for parish worship, pointing out opportunities to connect Catholic social teaching and mission to Sunday liturgy, prayer services, sacramental celebrations, etc.
- Works with those responsible for youth liturgies (i.e., school Masses, Life Teen Masses, etc.) to highlight the connection between what we believe (faith) and how we are called to live (action).
- Works with those responsible for parish worship to mark feast days and other events that highlight the social mission of the Church (CCHD/CRS collection, Martin Luther King Day, Human Rights Day, special anniversaries, events)



It is essential that these activities be carried out in a way that is respectful of the expertise and areas of responsibility of staff and those whose job is to plan parish worship experiences.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Direct Service/Outreach Team

- Organizes and provides opportunities for **all** parishioners to become involved in direct service activities to people in need.
- Identifies and assesses local needs and available resources.
- Works closely with existing parish and community organizations providing service to those in need (i.e., St. Vincent De Paul, Food Banks, Catholic Charities, local homeless shelters, etc.). Promotes better organization and communication.
- Educates parishioners about local needs and encourages parishioners to engage in outreach and advocacy efforts that change the conditions that create poverty and suffering.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Advocacy Team

- Promotes “faithful citizenship” and creates opportunities for parishioners to bring their Christian values to bear on local, national, and international policies and priorities that impact human life and dignity.
- Provides information to parishioners about other local, national, and international advocacy groups.
- Keeps parishioners informed on major public issues, especially those affecting the poor and vulnerable, as well as church teaching on public policy issues.
- Works with elected officials to ensure just social policy which promotes/protects human life and dignity.
- Supports and encourages parish participation in the Social Action Network of Catholic Charities of Idaho.



ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Family, Work, Citizenship Team

- Looks for opportunities to help parishioners become better aware of ways they can live their faith in everyday life (i.e., organize workshops on socially responsible investing, provide parenting classes or family-focused social ministry activities)
- Supports parents and promotes family values/healthy families.
- Works with the pastor and liturgy committee to promote an understanding that we live out in our everyday lives what we celebrate when we come to the Eucharistic table.
- Provides information on “faithful citizenship” and civic responsibility.
- Explores ways to support and affirm parishioners in their vocations. Helps parishioners see how they can practice faith values on the job, at home and in their communities.



ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Global Solidarity Team

- Organizes opportunities for parishioners to respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers in our own country and around the world.
- Works with all segments of parish life (i.e., religious education, schools, RCIA, worship, etc.) to create opportunities to raise global awareness.
- Educates parishioners on global issues, needs, and avenues of action.
- Promotes the work of Catholic Relief Services and other groups committed to global solidarity.



ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Community Organizing Team

- Encourages parishioners to become involved in community organizing projects that empower community members to improve their neighborhoods and their lives.
- Educates parishioners about root causes of poverty/social justice issues utilizing materials from Catholic Charities USA and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.
- Promotes and provides information to parishioners about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development collection so that they see it not as a burden, but as a valuable opportunity to support self-help efforts in low-income communities.
- Works with other churches and local groups to identify and solve community problems.



ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Formation/Education Team

- Ensures that the social mission of the Church and Catholic Social Teaching are known by parishioners and integrated into all parish education and formation efforts.
- Works with the School Principal, DRE, and Youth Minister to provide in-service opportunities on the Catholic social mission for catechists, teachers, parents, volunteers.
- Works with educational personnel to create opportunities for youth/adults to engage in parish outreach and advocacy efforts.
- Promotes JustFaith and Journey to Justice (CCHD) as effective tools for ongoing faith formation.



It is essential the Formation/Education Team work with the parish staff responsible for these areas to develop a plan that not only ensures that the Catholic social mission is explicitly taught, but also respects the expertise and areas of responsibility of the parish's education leaders.

RECRUIT ADDITIONAL TEAM MEMBERS

Relentless inviting/recruiting is crucial to successful parish social ministry. How?

- Enlist support from the pastor and parish council
- Witness talk from “the pulpit” from Coordinating Team member
- Bulletin announcement/insert ...article in the parish newsletter or the parish website
- Pre or post liturgical opportunities – wear a pin with the committee name and “ASK ME ...”
- Focused homily
- Parish Ministry Fair
- Be honest and specific about what you are asking people to do, and don't be apologetic!
- Go beyond the usual suspects ... those who already do everything!
- Offer people opportunities that match their interests, skills and available time ... then let them decide!
- Most successful recruiting technique is the **personal invitation!**



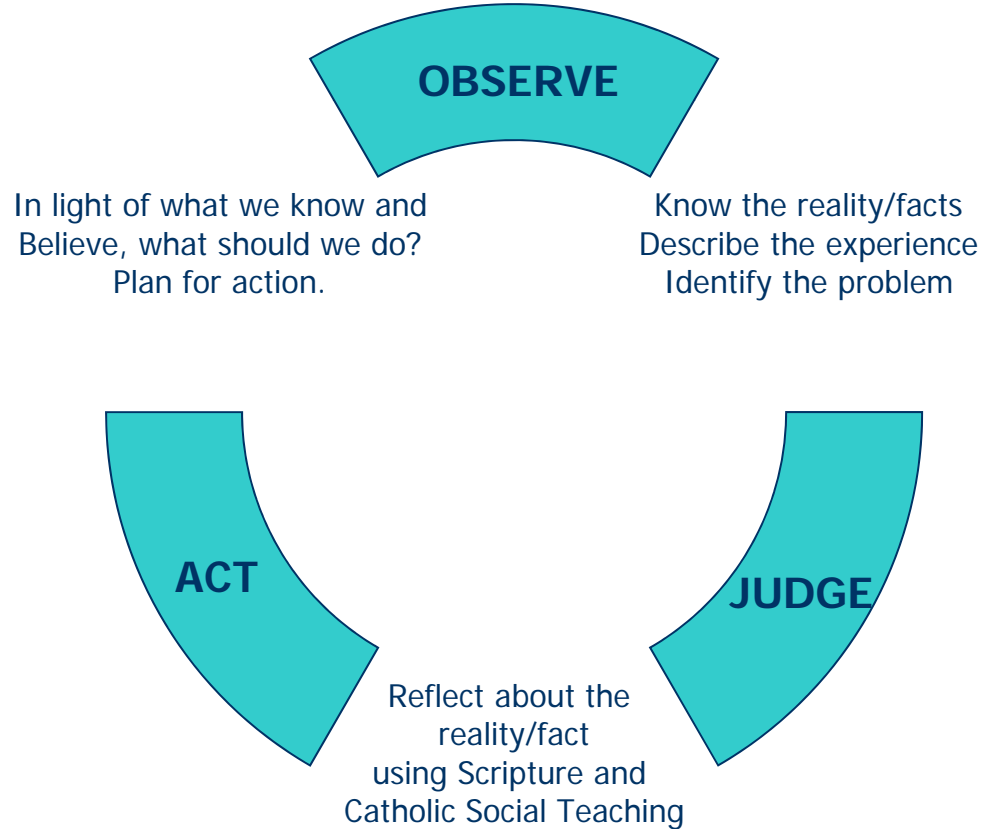
STRATEGIC PLANNING

Discern 2-3 projects the Social Ministry Team will organize over the next year. Spend time in prayer and then ask yourselves:

- * What is the project and why is it needed?
(utilize the skills of social analysis)
- * Is this project consistent with our mission?
- * Is the project realistic? Start with projects that will be successful (need some early wins!)
- * What specific, concrete steps are needed?
- * Who has responsibility for each step?
- * What is our time-line?
- * How will we get parishioners involved?
- * How will we communicate with the pastor, parish council, and parish at large?
- * Can we collaborate with any other parish or community groups?
- * What resources do we need ... money, space, supplies, etc.?
- * "The paralysis of analysis" – anything that is decided **must** be carried out!
- * **Make sure everything is centered in prayer!**



BECOME SKILLED IN SOCIAL ANALYSIS



EVALUATE AND CELEBRATE

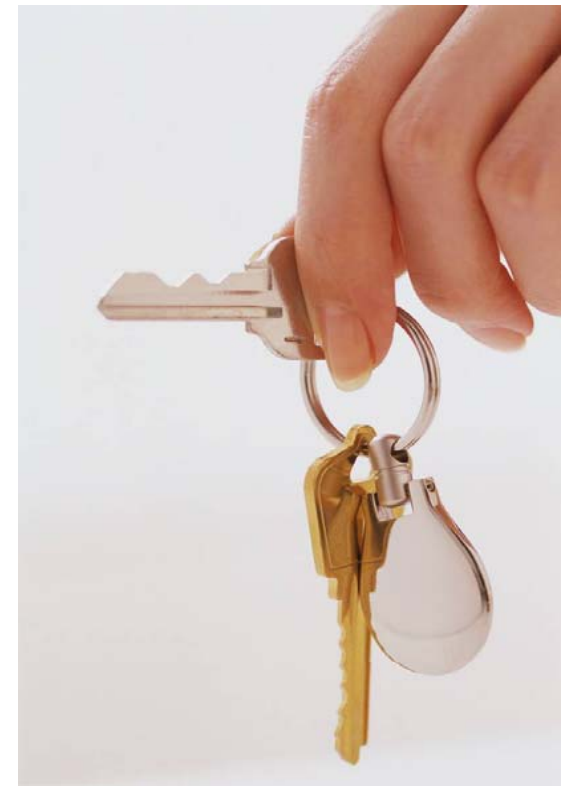
EVALUATE: What was accomplished and why?
 What was not accomplished and why?
 What changes/adjustments need to be made and why?

CELEBRATE
**"Come, you who are blessed by my Father
to inherit the kingdom prepared for you
from the foundation of the world!"**
Mt 25:34

KEYS TO SUCCESS

1. The parish social ministry effort is linked to faith development.
2. It is evident that what is being done is bringing about a more just, loving world.
3. Provides leaders with opportunities to explore the deeper social, political, and institutional causes of problems/issues being addressed.
4. It is organized and addresses the full social mission.
5. There is a focus on recruiting leaders in an ongoing and systematic way.
6. Values diversity and seeks to involve all parishioners.
7. Parish social ministry is known, integrated into, and supported by the entire parish community.
8. Seeks to involve the people experiencing the problem in attempting to solve or ease the problem.
9. Is transformative ... leading people from head knowledge of faith to faith-filled action on behalf of the Gospel.
10. Everything is centered in prayer and is celebrated!

(Adapted from Tom Ulrich, *Parish Social Ministry: Strategies for Success*)



WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY LOOK LIKE?



- ECCLESIAIALLY:**
- * embraced by the total parish – religious, laity, staff
 - * integrated into ALL parish life and ministries
 - * fosters open dialogue and communication with all ministries
- SOCIALLY:**
- * creates relational understanding of all involved – not “us/them”
 - * involves long-term action addressing root causes of injustice
 - * raises awareness of global injustice
 - * supports collaboration with other organizations
- SPIRITUALLY:**
- * enhances gifts of the Holy Spirit & strengthens relationship with God
 - * encourages people’s confidence and ability for right action – the power of one/many to combat injustice/despair
 - * enhances understanding/living out of Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching principles
 - * builds the kingdom of God NOW

WHY IS PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY IMPORTANT?

*“Effective social ministry helps the parish
not only do more,
but be more,
more of a reflection of the gospel.
more of a worshipping and evangelizing people,
more of a faithful community.”*

Communities of Salt and Light

