



How to Start a New Parish Ministry

1) Make sure the ministry meets the true need.

Before you start a ministry, ask yourself if it meets a true need in your parish and surrounding community.

- Is it a real or imagined need?
- Is the need broad or simply being overly emphasized by a few local people?
- Is it a need that our parish can meet?
- Is the need already being met somewhere else? If yes, can we collaborate with that group?
- Is there something we need to stop in order to start a new ministry?
- Could the ministry be unintentionally harming those whom we are trying to help?
- Is this a need that first must be met within our own parish before we meet the needs of those in the surrounding community?

2) Align the new ministry with your overall parish mission.

It can be more time consuming and costly if ministries are not aligned with the overall parish mission.

Here are some reasons why:

- It can create silos. When ministries are not communicating and supporting each other, the silo mentality develops, which can lead to...
 - o Ministries competing over dollars, volunteers and communication. If a ministry feels they are not being heard, hurt feelings can develop which can cause long term damage within parishes.
 - o Individual ministries will create individual systems that do not always align with the parish mission. Basically, you do not want a parish ministry to go "rogue".

3) Recruit leaders and develop a team.

It is important to have both Leaders and Doers on your team.

- Identify people who have a gift for leadership, not just a passion for people.
- Develop job descriptions for the different roles of the team members. This is important, so people know what they are being asked to do and there is no unnecessary overlap.
- The ministry needs Organizers, the people who are idealistic, inspirational and excited about the ministry. Organizers are the ones who envision the ministry, develop the plan for the ministry and recruit others to get involved with the ministry, but Organizers rarely get things done on their own.
- Organizers need Doers. These are the individuals who are not looking to create new ideas, but they are very good at executing them. They are the implementers. They are the ones who can take the big dream and break it down into steps.

4) **Build a ministry action plan.**

Having an action plan helps prevent wasted time and energy.

- Establish a VISION on how the ministry aligns with the needs of the parish and the community.
- Establish GOALS for the ministry.
- Identify who the Organizers and Doers are and their roles within the ministry.
- Identify how the ministry can collaborate with other ministries within the parish.
- Identify how the ministry will be integrated into the life of the parish.
- How will the work of the ministry be communicated to the priest, parish staff, parish school, parish council, and the parish in general?
- Develop an event timeline and then develop events to help execute the mission of the ministry.

5) **Establish how the ministry will be supported financially.**

- Establish a budget.
- Determine if there are funds that can be allocated from the parish to help support this new ministry.
- Assume that answer is no. Then, the next step is to invite the parish to become involved financially. Think creatively!

6) **Create a Communication Plan!**

Without a communication plan, your ministry will never get off the ground.

- “When it comes to communication, you probably can’t overdo it. Just when you think you’ve reached the saturation point, your message is just starting to sink in. When you’re sick and tired of saying the same thing and long past ready to change the subject, people are just starting to notice.” (source: *Church Fuel*)
- Use every avenue within the parish to communicate your new ministry AND how people can get involved.
- IMPORTANT - When you are communicating your plan to your pastor, parish staff, or parish council make sure you know what you are talking about. Provide them with information, statistics, pictures, show videos, help them understand the importance. Make sure you can show how the ministry meets the true needs of the parish and community. Just because you are passionate about a new ministry doesn’t mean they see the need for it too.

7) **Evaluate and Improve.**

Sometimes in the excitement of seeing the ministry take flight within the parish, we forget to step back and periodically evaluate how we are doing.

- It is good to evaluate every six months whether the goals and mission of the ministry are being met.
- After each event, gathering your team back together within two weeks to evaluate how the event went.
- Have your team answer the following questions;
 - o What has worked?
 - o What has not worked?
 - o Does our ministry and ministry events reach the people we want it to reach?
 - o What can we do differently so that we are more effective?
 - o Are we open to feedback?

(Adapted from resource by Church Fuel)

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