#10

Parish Vocation Ministry

Tools for Vocations

Parish-level. By the people. For the Church. Parish vocation ministries are the bedrock of vocations-related efforts within local churches around the nation.

SPARK

Serra Promotion and Resource Kit

Summary

Parish vocations ministries most commonly take the form of parish vocations committees.

Driven by the laity and working in concert with pastors, parish vocations committees can become powerful engines of vocations-related outreach at the parish level. As a single, cohesive unit, a parish vocation committee's general aim is to work and pray toward cultivating vocations to the priesthood, deaconate, and religious life.

Many resources can be found on the formation, structure, and activities of parish vocation committees. Best practices from dioceses around America hold that there are a number of critical steps to be taken in the proper formation of these groups. Among those steps are organization, communication, and planning. Also of special importance in the formation—and maintenance—of a vocations committee is strong leadership from parish members.

What's more, parishes that have their own schools afford opportunities for synergy. Parish vocation committees can work with the schools via special activities. These could include such things as a traveling crucifix program—wherein students in each class pray for vocations and their own personal calls to holiness (e.g., in a religious vocation or marriage in the Church)—or seminarian/religious visits to classrooms, or even field trips to seminaries and/ or religious communities. The program can also be modified for religious education classes.

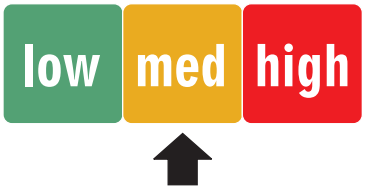
Program Outline

- Parish vocations committees are common parish-level vocations ministries
- Driven by laity, who work in concert with their pastors
- General aim…
    - cultivating vocations to the priesthood/deaconate/religious life via work and prayer
- Best practices dictate that there are several critical steps to take in creating such a committee
    - Among these steps are communication, organization, planning
- Strong leadership from parish members is very important to both the formation and maintenance of parish vocations committees

Time of Year

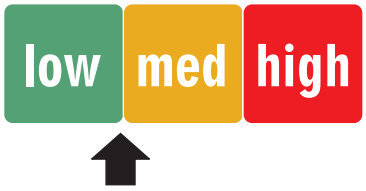
Any Time

Lead Time



Effort

Cost*



Serrans / Volunteers

- Planning, organizing, establishing vocation committee
- Underwriting committee operations
- Staffing events supported by committee

Program History, Development, and Additional Resources

Making families more actively vocations-conscious has been an aim of the Church since the Second Vatican Council in the middle 1960s.

Many parishes have gone the route of starting their own vocations ministries in response to the magisterium. These ministries most commonly take the form of parish vocations committees.

Such committees work and pray for vocations to the diocesan priesthood and the deaconate, and to religious orders—even though they may not directly work with religious orders. Typical functions of parish vocations committees include, but are not limited to: 1) educate the parish with pertinent information on vocations; 2) pray for vocations; 3) support the needs of seminarians; 4) come up with names of parishioners who could be good candidates for the priesthood, deaconate, or religious life; and 5) collaborate with other parish committees (e.g., faith formation) in areas such as providing speakers for meetings.

Resources for guidance in the formation, structure, and activities of parish vocations committees abound; many dioceses around the country have developed their own guidelines concerning the topic. Best practices hold that there are a number of critical steps to be taken in the proper formation of vocation committees; among those steps are organization, communication, and planning.

One doesn't have to look far to see strong evidence of the efficacy of these grassroots, parish-based groups. For example, one of the largest dioceses in the Southeast, the Diocese of St. Petersburg (FL), has stated that "…one of the most effective ways for parishes to foster vocations is through a parish vocations committee."

Additional Resources

Web page of Serra US' Five Star Program—**an easy way to start parish ministries** with clear, concise directions on how to carry out essential activities:
https://serraus.org/programs/five-star/

Extensively detailed website connected to author Rhonda Gruenewald—who wrote the prominent vocation ministry book Hundredfold: **A Guide to Parish Vocation Ministry**; it contains many resources on how to start and continue a parish vocation ministry effort; this book is recommended by leaders within the parish vocations committee sphere; the book is **also available in Spanish** under the title Sembrando Semillas (available via the second website listed below):
https://www.vocationministry.com/
https://www.vianneyvocations.com/product/sembrando-semillas/

Link to a PDF from the website of the Archdiocese of St. Louis—with a **detailed guide to starting a parish vocations committe**e in accordance with archdiocesan guidelines:
http://archstl.org/files/field-file/Parish%20Vocation%20Committee%20Guidelines.pdf

Easy-to-follow guide (in PDF form) to vocations committee creation – from the website of the Diocese of Albany (NY):
http://www.albanyvocations.org/PDF/DVCBooklet.pdf

Page from the Diocese of Sacramento (CA) regarding how best to carry out **three major vocations committee tasks** (launching a prayer campaign, creating parish awareness of vocations, and inviting people to consider vocations):
http://www.diocese-sacramento.org/vocations/vocations_campaign.html

Page from the Diocese of Sioux City (IA) listing "**100 Proven Parish Vocations Committee Projects**":
http://thinkingofpriesthood.org/support-vocations/100-ideas

Continued...

Additional Resources

Webpage of the vocations committee ministry of St. Paul's Church (Valparaiso, IN):
http://saintpaulvalpo.org/vocations-committee-ministry/

Extensive resources can be found on this webpage of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (OH) which is dedicated to parish **vocations committees and their advancement**:
http://www.cincinnativocations.org/additional-resources/parish-vocation-committees/

PDF of a parish vocation committee guide as written by the Archdiocese of Detroit (MI):
http://detroitpriest.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/IV-Parish-Vocation-Committee-Guide.pdf

Vocations committee page from the website of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church (Omaha, NE):
http://www.stelizabethann.org/GetInvolved/VocationsCommittee.aspx

Article from the webpage of the Office of Vocations of the Archdiocese of Boston (MA) **emphasizing the important role that parishioners** play in fostering vocations:
https://vocationsboston.org/vocations-everybodys-business

Page from the vocations website of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. which describes a special group dedicated to praying for vocations (a group which was founded by the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.):
http://www.dcpriest.org/promote/mother-teresa-vocation-society/what-is-the-mtvs

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Tools for Vocations

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Serra Vocations Tools, visit us at
SerraSpark.org
Or write us at
Spark@serraus.org
Phone 312-201-6549