

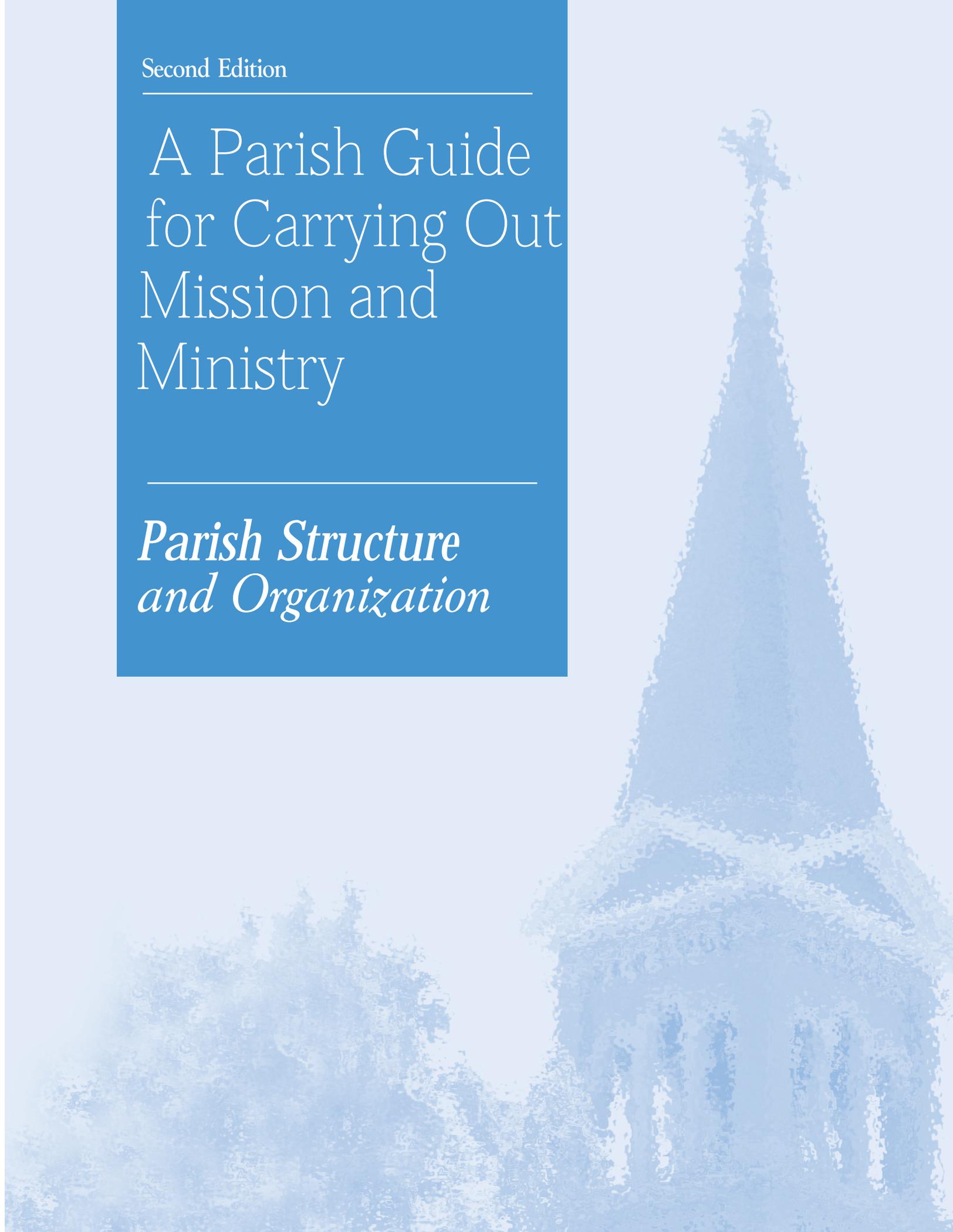
Second Edition

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# A Parish Guide for Carrying Out Mission and Ministry

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*Parish Structure  
and Organization*



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# **A Parish Guide for Carrying Out Mission and Ministry**

**Parish Structure and Organization**



**Second Edition  
January 1999  
Archdiocese  
of Indianapolis**

*The Church in  
Central and Southern  
Indiana*

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**Members of the Governance Task Force, which developed the principles upon which this guide is based, committed themselves to the following core values:**

- Collaborative leadership and shared responsibility
- Simplicity and pastoral effectiveness
- Clarity of terms, roles, and responsibilities
- Consistency and unity while allowing for diversity that respects local customs
- Recognition of the common good of the whole Church
- Conformity to Church law and civil law
- Coordination and integration of all forms of lifelong formation and education that recognizes the distinctive needs, challenges, and opportunities of Catholic schools
- Subsidiarity



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# Preface

## Purpose of This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help parish leaders think about the way their parishes are organized to carry out their mission and ministries as faith communities.

This guide describes the basic concepts of parish organization and provides examples of ways parishes can organize themselves. No one parish organizational scheme fits all situations or circumstances, so the models we describe reflect basic principles of parish organization that have been adapted to the diverse needs of parishes in different regions of our archdiocese.

This guide assumes that a parish focuses itself around mission and ministry. This is best determined through comprehensive pastoral planning. Subsequently, decision-making structures are designed to support the ongoing implementation of that pastoral plan. Ongoing review of structures is necessary.

So, this isn't a book full of hard-and-fast rules; instead, this is a guidebook (or road map with many "alternate routes") that has been designed to help your parish find the path that's best for its unique situation.

We hope you'll find this guide helpful, and we welcome your comments about ways in which we may improve future editions. If you have suggestions, please write or call:

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# Pilot Parish Process

Recognizing the need to prepare for change, we took a closer look at how parishes in our archdiocese operate. We talked with pastors, lay leaders, and others to find out what worked well and what didn't. We examined the effects the changing face of the Church may have on its ability to accomplish its mission. We tried to determine what resources were available within our parishes that weren't being used to their fullest.

We realized that we were faced with an opportunity that was both challenging and exciting. Change is never an easy thing, but reorganizing a parish to make it more responsive to people's needs might allow it to better carry out its mission and ministries and, at the same time, make better use of its resources. In this way, a new approach to parish organization might help us do a better job of spiritual renewal, evangelization, and stewardship.

We approached several parishes in diverse settings (large, small, suburban, rural, center city, etc.) and shared our findings with them. We asked if they would consider taking a closer look at the way they were organized (the formal term for this is parish governance), and then help us develop new models for parish organization that we could share with other parishes. We asked them to be both examples and instruments of change.

Each of these parishes went through the steps we'll describe in this guide and reorganized their parishes from the ground up. We helped each parish explain its plans for renewal to all concerned and guided them as their new parish organizations were implemented. As each parish proceeded, we used its findings and experiences to refine the models.

The new models worked even better than we had hoped! The parishes were excited at what was happening. More parishioners were becoming involved, more were reporting a greater sense of family spirit within the parish, councils and committees were meeting less often and accomplishing more, and relationships between board members and parish staff were improving every week.

In this guide, we'll help you understand what might be accomplished by taking a new look at your parish, its councils and boards, and the role parishioners play. We aren't going to give you magic solutions or confusing, theoretical approaches. Frankly, the process involved is hard work — but very satisfying work.

What you'll read here is based in reality. These are practical, real-world approaches that will help your parish achieve its mission and better serve the needs of our Church.

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# Models for Parish Organization

First of all, we need to be clear that no one is mandating that your parish change the way it is organized. Nor is anyone demanding that you adopt one of the new models of parish organization as your own.

The decision to evaluate and, possibly, change the way your parish is organized is entirely up to you. If the parish is “running smoothly” and is effectively organized to meet present and future challenges, there’s no need to change.

But most people realize that, periodically, the way their parish is organized needs to be adapted to changing times and circumstances. For instance, a parish that is experiencing rapid growth or a decline in population or a change in its demographic profile needs to seriously examine if its structure is positioned to respond to these changes responsibly. That’s why we conducted the pilot program referred to earlier. It’s also why we produced this guide.

The model parish organizations discussed here are just that: examples representing approaches to parish organization that other parishes in our archdiocese have taken. We’re including them here because they have proven to be successful and because they have helped those parishes function more effectively and solve particular problems within the parish. No two parishes are identical, so it follows that their organization and procedures won’t be identical, either. But, of course, there are many similarities between parishes that can help them share experiences and learn from one another.

We hope you’ll use these model parish organizations as guides. They’re flexible and can be tailored to fit your parish’s unique needs and circumstances. But most important: they’ve worked for others—and building on their proven success can save you time and effort.

These models are based on the following core values:

- *collaborative leadership and shared responsibility*
- *clarity of terms, roles and responsibilities*
- *consistency and unity while allowing for diversity that respects local customs*
- *recognition of the common good of the whole church*
- *conformity to church law and civil law*
- *coordination and integration of all forms of lifelong formation and education that recognizes the distinctive needs, challenges, and opportunities of Catholic schools*
- *subsidiarity*

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# How Do We Organize Parishes?

Before we begin to examine concepts of and structures for parish organization, it helps to define some of the terms we'll use. It's important, because a proper and complete understanding of the concepts we'll discuss requires a common understanding of the meaning of these terms.

***What is a parish?*** A parish is a community of faith that exists to minister to the spiritual and temporal needs of its members. In church law, a parish is an integral part a diocese, a "local church." This means that a parish does not exist for its own sake, but is part of a larger community of faith—the diocese and the universal Church. A parish is formally established when it has 1) definite boundaries that have been determined by the local bishop and 2) sufficient means of support for the personnel and facilities necessary to carry out the parish's mission and ministries.

***Pastor*** is the title given to an ordained priest who has been delegated by the local bishop to be responsible for the sacramental ministry, preaching, and pastoral care of a parish. Although the pastor participates in the ministry of the bishop, who has primary responsibility for the pastoral care of people in his diocese, each local pastor has rights and responsibilities assigned to him by canon law for the good of the parish.

***Parish Life Coordinator*** is the title used in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for a lay person or religious who has been appointed by the archbishop to provide for the pastoral needs of a parish.

Various other titles are also used to identify persons who have been appointed by the pastor or parish life coordinator to carry out general parish responsibilities or specialized ministries. These may include:

<b><i>Administrator</i></b>	<b><i>Director of Religious Education</i></b>
<b><i>Associate Pastor</i></b>	<b><i>Principal</i></b>
<b><i>Pastoral Associate</i></b>	<b><i>Music Minister</i></b>
<b><i>Business Manager</i></b>	<b><i>Youth Minister</i></b>
<b><i>and others as appropriate.</i></b>	

***Consultative bodies*** are those groups of parishioners who advise and assist the pastor or parish life coordinator in the sacramental and pastoral ministry of the parish. They are called consultative bodies because their primary role is to provide recommendations in the areas of policy and procedures, general advice and counsel, and specific suggestions on parish issues and concerns. There are three types of these bodies (although some parishes use different names to represent the same type):

***The Pastoral Council*** is a consultative body that advises and assists the pastor or parish life coordinator in the areas of planning, policymaking, and overall coordination of parish activities.

***Commissions*** are subgroups of the pastoral council responsible for recommending guidelines, developing goals, and coordinating activities in a specific area of ministry.

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**Committees** are subgroups of commissions responsible for carrying out specific action plans to implement the goals and objectives of the parish for their specific areas of ministry. Smaller parishes may not need to form committees. In these cases, the commissions themselves carry out the specific action plans. (See p. 9 for more details about commissions and committees.)

**Finance Council.** The establishment of a parish finance council is mandated by canon law. The council assists the pastor or parish life coordinator in the administration of the temporal goods of the parish. Its actions are governed by universal Church law and by norms issued by the local bishop. A finance council must be closely linked with the workings of the pastoral council.

**Governance** is a word often used to describe how groups organize themselves. When used in reference to parishes, governance refers to the overall operation of a parish. It includes everything from how a parish is organized to how pastoral authority is exercised (how decisions are made). Governance also describes what pastoral councils and boards of education do, how their members are selected, and their formal (and informal) relationships with the pastor or parish life coordinator and parish staff.

**Mission** describes the call that every parish has to be (and become) a vital community of faith. A parish's mission is its guiding force—inviting and challenging its members to renew themselves in spirit; to reach out to others in faith, hope, and love; and to be good stewards of all God's gifts. A parish's mission also reflects the larger, evangelizing mission of the local Church (archdiocese) and the Church universal.

**Parish organizational structure** describes the way a particular parish is organized to carry out its mission and ministries. Sometimes depicted (or drawn) in a manner that's similar to a corporate chart of organization, the parish organization structure defines the working relationships and lines of organization between the pastor, staff, consultative bodies, and the parish community as a whole.

## **Consultative Bodies**

### **Qualifications of members**

Many parishes develop a written set of qualifications to be used in selecting members of their consultative bodies. Here is a typical example of the qualifications of council, commission, and committee members:

- be baptized and confirmed Catholics (commission chairs and at-large council members)
- be registered in the parish and active participants in parish activities, including worship

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- have a basic understanding of the teaching and practice of the Catholic church and a commitment to Christian values
  - possess the talents and skills needed to carry out the work of the council, commission, or committee
  - be willing to learn new ideas and skills

## Differences between parishes and other kinds of organizations

Many people who serve on parish consultative bodies have previous experience in managing a company or they have served on a committee or board of another nonprofit organization. While this kind of board or committee experience may be extremely helpful to the parish, it is important to note from the outset that a parish is organized very differently from a private company or a secular nonprofit organization. There are two key differences:

***Canon law and the pastor.*** The Catholic church is governed by canon law, which clearly defines the role of the pastor. He is the spiritual and temporal leader of the parish and, as such, is the final authority for all matters within his parish. The pastor is directly responsible to the local bishop, and his rights and responsibilities as pastor (including those circumstances in which he is required to consult with appropriate consultative bodies) are clearly prescribed in canon law.

Pastoral councils and other bodies within a parish do not function as “governing boards” but are consultative groups established to help the pastor serve the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish community. According to church law, consultative bodies can make policy recommendations to the pastor; they can assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the parish; and they can serve as influential leaders in every aspect of parish life and ministry. **But consultative bodies do not have final authority over the pastor or the parish community.** This crucial distinction between parish structures and governing bodies is not made in order to diminish the increasingly important role of consultative bodies in the parish, but to make sure that roles, responsibilities, and expectations are clear and consistent from the very beginning.

***Council and commission members represent the parish as a whole.*** In many organizations (especially government), individuals are elected or appointed to boards or commissions to represent a specific constituency or to advocate for a particular area of interest. Ordinarily, the members of pastoral councils, commissions, or committees should not see themselves as representing any individual group or special interest. They should be viewed as “generalists” who represent the needs and interests of the parish community as a whole. While there are legitimate differences (and a healthy diversity of backgrounds and interests) in every parish community, all members of the parish are called to unity and solidarity in the name of Jesus. Instead of speaking on behalf of specific groups or particular interests, members of parish consultative bodies are called to be representatives of the parish as a whole, working to assist the pastor or parish life coordinator in achieving the parish’s mission and serving as a channel of communication between the pastor or parish life coordinator, parishioners, and other consultative bodies.

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# It All Begins with Community

As Catholics, we share a common set of beliefs, traditions, and values. Central to our Catholic faith is the belief that we are united as one church, the People of God, who are bonded through a common faith, a common baptism, and a common worship. We are a *communio*, a community. This communion of persons is actually the Body of Christ, the universal church carrying out Christ's mission in all regions of the world. As members of the same Body, we are expected to render mutual service in the measure of the different gifts bestowed on each of us. For most Catholics, this ministry of service is exercised in a parish community through the mutual sharing of its members' time, talent, and treasure.

Individual parishes carry out the broader mission of the local church (the archdiocese) in the context of a particular community of faith (the parish). Parish leaders (pastor, parish life coordinator, parish staff, and the members of pastoral councils, commissions, and committees) are united in serving both the mission of the parish and the larger missions of both the archdiocesan church and the universal church. Although our church's mission is enduring and unchangeable, the way we organize our parish communities can (and should) adjust to changing conditions and needs.

In the pages that follow, we'll focus on the specific roles and responsibilities of consultative bodies within the parish and on their relationships with the pastor, parish staff members, and other consultative bodies. By applying talents and dedication to specific elements of parish life and spirituality, all who exercise leadership and service in the parish contribute to a common goal: the success of the mission and ministries of the parish and the larger church.

## The parish

A parish can be defined as a faith community serving church members who reside in a particular area of the archdiocese. The parish is responsible for all aspects of its parishioners' spiritual lives, especially for the ministries of spiritual renewal, evangelization, and stewardship that will extend and enhance the mission of the church into the 21st century.

## Pastor or parish life coordinator

Responsibility for the pastoral care of parishioners is entrusted to the pastor of a parish by the archbishop. In accordance with the law of the church, the pastor is the final authority for all spiritual and temporal matters within the parish. In larger parishes, the pastor may be assisted in his work by an associate pastor (a priest) or a pastoral associate (religious or lay person) and by the members of the parish staff. If it is not possible to assign a pastor, the archbishop may appoint a parish life coordinator (religious or lay person) to assume responsibility for the pastoral care of parishioners. The parish life coordinator works with a priest moderator and with a sacramental minister who is an ordained priest. The

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priest moderator serves as a mentor and guide for the parish life coordinator and supervises and advises the parish life coordinator on matters of parish administration and parish life. The sacramental minister assists with the celebration of the sacraments but has no other pastoral or administrative duties.

## **Pastoral staff**

The pastoral staff, e.g., pastoral associate, pastoral minister, director of religious education, school principal, youth minister, music director, business manager, et al., are hired and supervised by the pastor or parish life coordinator. Pastoral staffs carry out the daily administration of programs and services that are essential to the life and mission of the local parish. Staff members are assigned to work with an appropriate commission. They are ex-officio non-voting members of their designated commission. This ensures that all groups—volunteer and paid—are united in the mission of the parish, its vision, and its priorities.

## **Relationships between consultative bodies and parish staff members**

Consultative bodies (councils, commissions, and committees) should develop cooperative rather than adversarial working relationships with members of the parish staff, key volunteers, and members of other commissions and committees. Parishioners who serve on consultative bodies should remember that these are not governing bodies responsible for “supervising” the pastor, parish life coordinator, or parish staff. At the same time, pastors, parish life coordinators and parish teams should regularly seek the advice (and the active participation) of council, commission, and committee members.

## **Pastoral council**

The pastoral council is a consultative body that assists the pastor or parish life coordinator in planning and overall decision-making in all areas of parish life. Although it is not a governing board, the pastoral council participates in policy-making and coordination of parish activities, and deliberates on matters of importance to the parish. The overall focus of council decisions is on the common good of the parish. See Appendix J for examples.

## **Commissions**

Because of the amount and scope of its responsibility, and to broaden its activities and encourage the use of the gifts and talents of other parishioners, the pastoral council establishes *commissions*. Each of these commissions assists the council in planning, policy development and coordination of activities within a specific area of the parish’s ministry. For example, commissions might be established for spiritual life, faith formation, family life, and social concerns, stewardship, youth, evangelization, and the parish school (where appropriate).

Commissions help the parish develop and care for the human, physical, and financial resources that are necessary to carry out its mission and ministries,

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e.g. planning and monitoring the budget, volunteer recruitment and overall pastoral planning. In addition, commissions assist the pastor or parish life coordinator in selecting staff and volunteers in various areas of parish ministry and in participating in performance reviews as appropriate. **However, final responsibility for the selection, supervision, and retention of parish staff and volunteers rests with the pastor or the parish life coordinator.**

Depending upon the size of the parish, commissions may be composed of from 5 to 15 at-large members and pastoral staff representatives. At-large members may be elected or appointed, while staff representatives are chosen by the pastor. Members of the commission elect a chair, who serves as a member of the pastoral council (*ex officio*).

The number and names of commissions will vary, depending on the size of the parish and the scope of its mission. A large parish may have up to six commissions. Smaller-to-medium-sized parishes normally have four to six commissions. However, it is recommended that all parishes have commissions responsible for spiritual life, faith formation, stewardship, family life/social concerns (or parish life and Christian service), and the parish school (where appropriate).

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis remains strongly committed to its tradition of the coordination and integration of all forms of lifelong formation and education. However, because school governance and administration is becoming increasingly complex and time-consuming, parishes are advised to establish separate commissions for their schools and their other faith formation programs. Even though these two commissions will be separate, for purposes of effective and efficient school administration, the members should work closely together to maintain a unified parish approach to total Catholic education. It is recommended that school and faith formation commissions schedule joint meetings periodically to discuss issues of common interest, such as, overall vision of lifelong formation, sacramental preparation, and catechist formation and training.

## **Committees**

To help the commissions develop and carry out action plans for implementing goals, parishes may establish standing and ad hoc committees. A standing committee is one with an ongoing or established purpose; an ad hoc committee is a temporary body responsible for a particular task. For example, a parish's spiritual life commission might establish a standing committee for liturgy, along with a special ad hoc committee to plan for a parish anniversary.

The executive committee of the parish pastoral council consists of the officers (chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary) and the pastor/parish life coordinator. The purpose of this group is to form the agenda for the council meetings in consultation with the commission chairs.

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## Description of Commissions

### Spiritual Life Commission

This commission is responsible for helping the pastor and pastoral council provide the parish and parishioners with individual and communal opportunities for spiritual growth. Among its specific responsibilities are:

- enabling, promoting, and supporting the parish's continued growth as a faith community
- assessing the effectiveness of all present programs and organizations in deepening the spirituality of the parish community
- general oversight and evaluating the liturgical life of the parish community
- specifying the liturgical needs of the parish and making appropriate recommendations to the pastoral council
- participating in planning and preparing parish liturgies
- promoting fidelity to church norms and implementing archdiocesan policies with respect to sacramental rites
- providing opportunities for the spiritual growth of parish groups such as the pastoral council and other committees and organizations
- encouraging prayer and reflection groups in the parish
- coordinating parish retreats and renewal programs
- promoting, supporting, and aiding implementation of evangelization programs, ecumenical activities, and vocation-awareness programs within the parish

Committees typically associated with this commission are worship/liturgy, evangelization, ecumenism, and vocations. Other standing committees may be established by the pastor or pastoral council as appropriate, but care should be taken not to create more committees than are necessary to carry out the work of the Spiritual Life Commission.

### Stewardship Commission

This commission is responsible for the teaching and practice of good stewardship among the parish's members. Among its specific responsibilities are:

- beginning or continuing the stewardship education process that integrates the theology of stewardship into the life of the parish year-round
- evaluating the management of parish resources of time, talent, and treasure
- coordinating the efforts of the parish staff, the parish as a whole, and the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development in the annual renewal of stewardship commitment
- coordinating communications/public relations
- coordinating parish planning
- being responsible for the parish buildings and grounds

In each parish there needs to be a finance council/committee to assist the pastor in the administration of the temporal goods of the parish. Its guidelines and norms are developed by the archdiocese (canon 537). The finance council/committee is a member of the stewardship commission in order to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to stewardship, i.e., the responsible use and care of time, talent, and treasure.

Committees typically associated with this commission are communications,

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stewardship education, endowment, and planned giving. (Detailed information about this commission can be found in *A Disciple's Way*, the archdiocesan stewardship education manual.)

### **Family Life and Social Concerns Commission**

This commission is responsible for promoting family life and social justice within the parish and civic community. Among its responsibilities are:

- developing a parish information-action program based on the Gospel social teachings of the church
- identifying social issues and human needs in the parish and civic community and developing broad Christian service action plans to aid in meeting those needs
- providing family life programs; informing parishioners of archdiocesan family life and marriage programs and policies and aiding in their implementation
- providing formation opportunities for parish youth; informing youth of and involving them in archdiocesan youth programs
- planning and coordinating parish social activities

Committees typically associated with this commission are pro-life, marriage, singles, youth, bereavement, divorced and separated, seniors, and social.

### **School Commission**

This commission is responsible for overseeing the operation of the parish school (where appropriate). Among its specific responsibilities are:

- setting school policy
- developing goals
- assisting in providing for the development needs of the school
- planning budgeting and finances
- developing facilities management guidelines in conjunction with the parish
- coordinating public relations and marketing

Committees typically associated with this commission are development, planning, and facilities.

### **Faith Formation Commission**

This commission is responsible for the ongoing faith formation programs of the parish (beyond school matters, where appropriate). Among its specific responsibilities are:

- establishing goals and objectives to meet the spiritual and religious educational needs of children, adolescents, adults, and persons with special needs

Committees typically associated with this commission are initiation, adult catechetical team, religious education, and evangelization.

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## Relationship between consultative bodies

Commissions and committees should work together for the good of the parish. They should relate to one another through the pastoral council and the work of the pastor or parish life coordinator and the pastoral staff. Effective communication among various leadership groups can be strengthened by:

- written committee reports *briefly* summarized at pastoral council meetings
- committee matters needing the council's decision appearing on the council's agenda
- council members serving on a committee

## Choosing and recruiting members

Members of pastoral councils are chosen through a formal process that includes specified procedures for recruitment, nomination, and selection. This process may vary according to each parish and may include election, discernment, or other approaches (details of these processes appear in Appendix D).

Appointments to the pastoral council and its commissions or committees are made by the pastor or parish life coordinator in consultation with other members of the council, commission, or committee and with other members of the parish (as appropriate). Appointments should be made in light of agreed-upon selection criteria that reflect both the diversity of the parish (age, gender, race, geography, point of view, etc.) and the skills and talents needed to carry out the work. As noted above, individuals who are appointed to consultative bodies in the parish are expected to represent the parish community as a whole rather than specific groups or particular interests within the parish.

Some pastors and parish life coordinators reserve the right to appoint two or three persons annually, but most prefer to hold a parish election or discernment process first and then follow this with a letter of appointment.

Special note: Some commissions (i.e., school, faith formation) will hold formal parish wide elections/discernment processes. Other commissions (i.e., spiritual life, parish life) will simply recruit members.

## Assessing your current structure

The first step in creating a new structure or improving your parish's present structure is to do an honest assessment. In this process, the pastor or parish life coordinator, pastoral council members, parish staff, and others gather to discuss the current parish organization, its strengths, and its weaknesses. A form for group assessments appears in Appendix C.

The assessment process can be challenging and lengthy, and it should not be rushed. If possible, the participants should meet in a location away from the parish. Some parishes have found that a retreat offers the ideal climate in which to conduct assessments.

The assessment process doesn't end when a new parish organization has been designed and implemented. Parish pastoral councils should reassess the structure annually to ensure that it provides the most effective means for accomplishing the parish's mission.

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# Importance of Pastoral Planning

One of the most important responsibilities of a pastoral council and its commissions is pastoral planning. A carefully formulated pastoral plan will unite the council, commissions, and committees in a shared vision for the future of the parish. Additionally, priorities for the parish and the community it serves are mutually agreed upon and supported by everyone. A good plan is focused on and driven by the parish's mission.

*Without a parish plan, a parish will risk isolationism and disunity between and among the council, commissions, and committees.* In addition, a parish's human, material, and financial resources may not realize their full potential and/or be used in the most effective way. Some resources may suffer neglect simply because the parish has failed to plan responsibly for their care (for example, parish facilities, growth in spiritual life, etc.). Simply put, the process of pastoral planning is a form of stewardship—taking care of what God has given us.

Two definitions of planning are appropriate to discuss here:

- 1. Parish pastoral planning is a structured involvement of believing persons in developing and maintaining the connection between what they believe and what they do in determining their future as church. (Harms)**

Pastoral planning articulates a future direction in these ministerial areas:

- Spiritual Life
- Faith Formation
- Stewardship
- Parish Life
- Christian Outreach
- Catholic Schools

- 2. Strategic planning is the art and science of anticipating and managing change for the purpose of building tangible and sensible strategies to ensure the future of the church in a particular area or region. (adapted from Eskridge)**

The steps of pastoral planning are standard:

- ***Affirm*** the parish mission and values
- ***Assess*** the current situation (survey, interviews, instruments, data collection)
- ***Analyze*** the current situation (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)
- ***Formulate*** goals and objectives
- ***Test*** the plan with the parish community
- ***Accept*** the plan and begin implementation
- ***Monitor, Evaluate, and Update*** the plan

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Parishes that engage in pastoral planning are usually hoping for one or more of these things to happen:

- to become more faithful and effective in ministry and mission
- to grow as a community of faith that knows, shares, and cares in Christian love
- to develop a ministry more fully shared by the community—to draw out, to share, and to value the resources and gifts of all
- to come to believe that most people experience and grow in their faith within the parish setting
- to experience dynamic growth, manage change, and/or increase effectiveness in key areas

If your parish wants to begin pastoral planning, the archdiocese can assist you with resources and facilitators. Call Wanda Clayton executive assistant for Parish Planning and Organizational Development, at 317-236-7325 or 800-382-9836, ext. 7325.

## **Educational Planning**

In past years, pastoral planning and educational planning have been separate. In the future, processes need to be closely coordinated in order to insure that the parish community is united around a common vision, mission and subsequent priorities. The educational plans from the school commission and the faith formation commission will be viewed as “satellite plans” connecting directly to the educational goals and objectives of the pastoral plan.

All Catholic schools in the archdiocese are accredited by the State of Indiana under the Performance-Based Accreditation process (PBA). A major requirement of this process is an extensive “school improvement plan” that must be re-written on a five-year cycle. The complex nature of Catholic school operations today also require focused strategic planning for institutional advancement that extends beyond the level of detail needed for this ministry in the overall pastoral plan.

Faith formation, especially spiritual growth and curricular objectives, also need to be addressed in detail. Therefore, the educational planning process will address state requirements, institutional advancement and faith formation without requiring duplication of effort and will connect directly to the pastoral planning process.

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# How to Determine the Need to Change Parish Structure

## Assessment Phase

Step 1 Assess the effectiveness of your current parish structures (see Appendix C for an instrument that will help us complete this step).

Step 2 Discuss the readiness of the parish to take on a change in structures.

Determine the pros and cons of changing at this time.

Do not change structures if:

- you anticipate a change in pastoral leadership in the next year
- you are currently engaged in another major parish project, such as a capital campaign, a building program, or a major renovation of facilities
- you determine that some groups in the parish are adamantly opposed to change

**Note:** It is highly recommended that pastoral council elections be postponed for a year in order to provide consistency and stability as the change in structures takes place.

## Planning Phase

Step 3 If you decide to move ahead, identify the commissions that you want to establish.

Step 4 Articulate specifications for the parish pastoral council and the commissions. Use the worksheet in Appendix G.

- purpose statement
- membership size, criteria, method of choosing
- meeting frequency
- decision-making process to be used
- collaboration and cooperation among groups

**Note:** This task should be completed by the appropriate group in order to build ownership and commitment to the final product. For example, board of education members who wish to sit on the school commission should develop school commission specifications.

Step 5 Review and approve the council and commission specifications and develop a constitution and appropriate bylaws (see Appendix E).

## Training and Orientation

Step 6 Provide orientation/in-service to all leadership groups on the changes in the new structure and the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the council, commissions, and committees.

## Implementation

Step 7 Begin implementation and, in particular, the need to begin pastoral planning. Also communicate the change in structure to the parish community.

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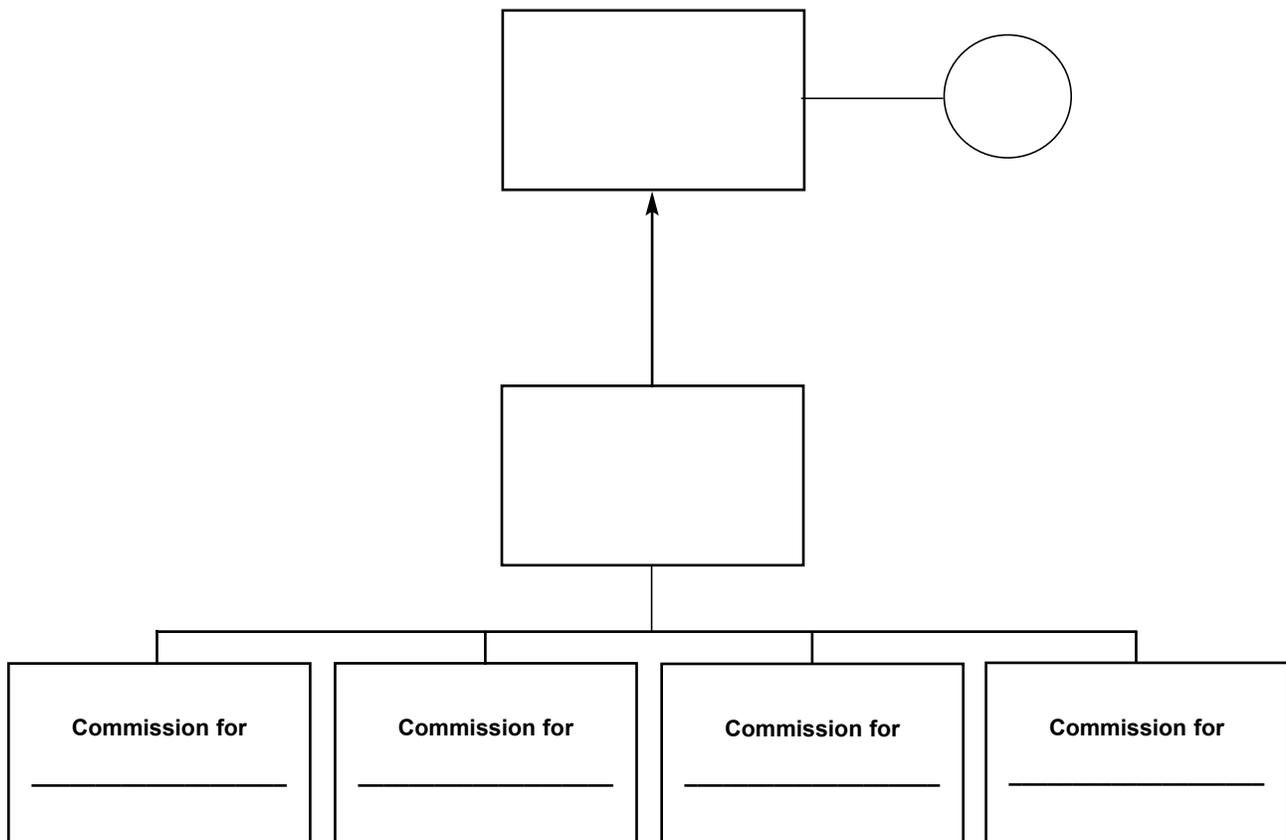
# Appendix A

## Chart of Organization

We've furnished this blank chart of organization for your parish's use in developing your own chart of organization.

Often, the best way to go about this challenging task is simply to start filling in the blanks (we suggest you use pencil). Once you've completed your first draft, review it.

Several charts of organizations for actual parishes appear in Appendix B.



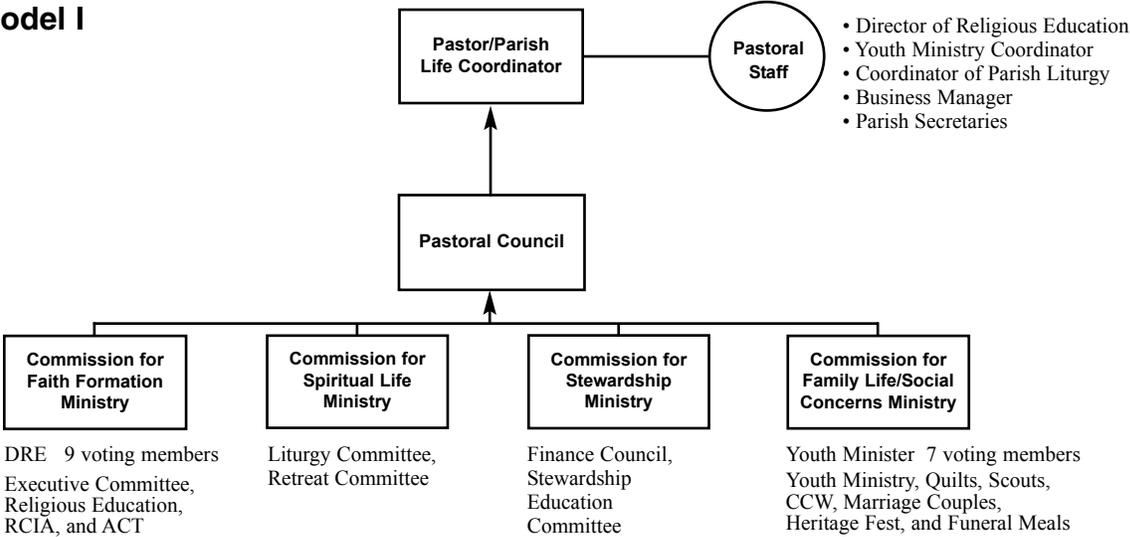
# Appendix B

## Successful Approaches Used by Other Parishes

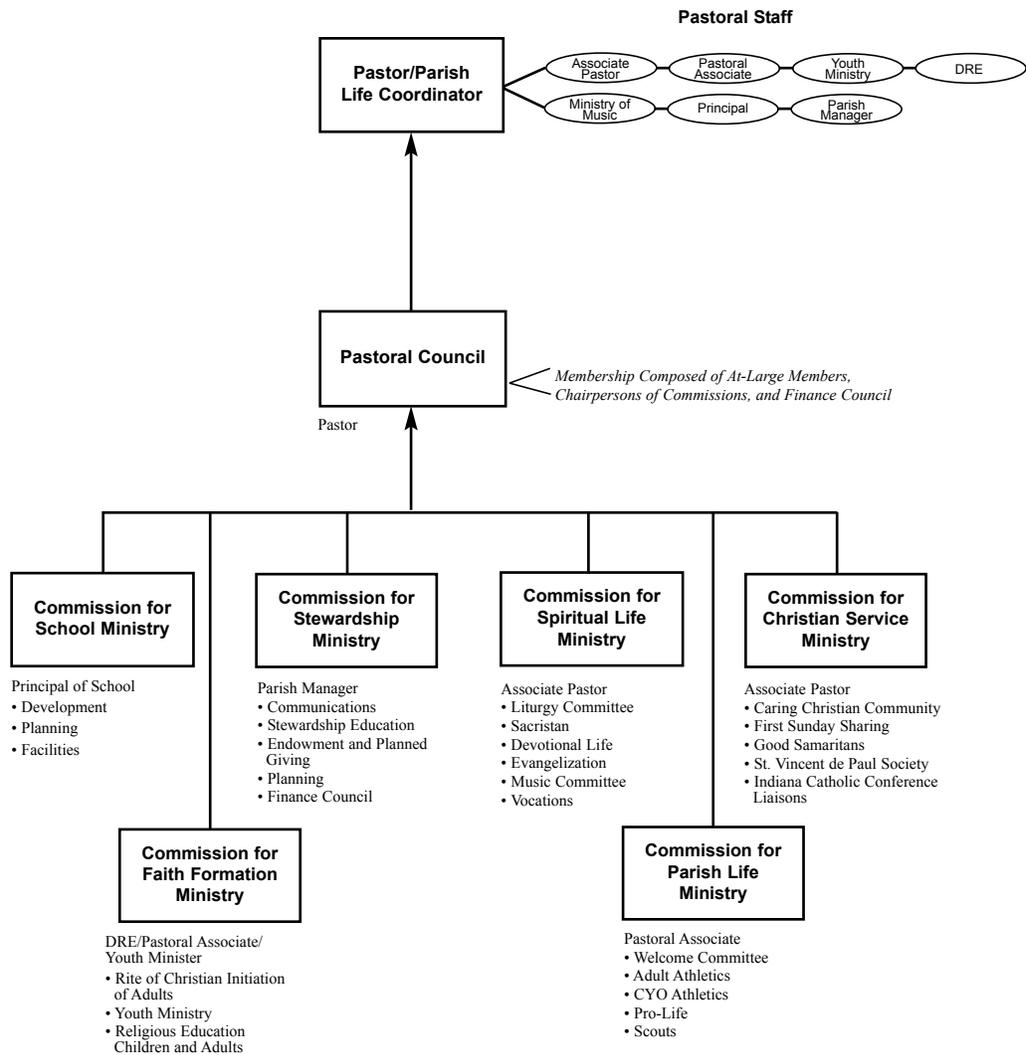
Before we developed this guide, we worked with several parishes in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, helping them assess their current structures and develop new structures that better positioned them to meet the future needs of the parish.

The charts of organization they developed and are now using follow. We've included a few of these charts as references to help you develop your parish's own chart of organization. As you review them, it's important to note that no two parishes are exactly alike, and none of these sample charts will probably work perfectly for your parish. However, you may find them to be excellent starting points for your own work and may be able to borrow elements from some of them.

### Model I



## Model II



# Appendix C

## Assessment of Current Organization

This form will help you review the current organization of your parish to identify strengths to build upon and areas which may need additional effort.

To get the most out of the form, complete it as a group. It's important that all participants answer honestly, because an assessment completed in any other way will be inaccurate.

### Statements:

STRONGLY  
AGREE    MILDLY  
AGREE    UNDECIDED  
OR UNSURE    MILDLY  
DISAGREE    STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

- |   |       |       |       |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Our parish has a mission statement describing the reason our parish exists and whom it serves, along with the Gospel values, beliefs, and traditions that guide us.                | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Our parish consistently uses the mission statement to drive its decision-making.   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Our parish has a pastoral plan describing priorities over the next five years in the following areas:  |       |       |       |       |       |
| • Spiritual Life  | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| • Christian Service   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| • Faith Formation   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| • Parish School   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| • Stewardship   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| • Family Life and Parish Life   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| • Other.  | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Organizations and committees within our parish understand those priorities and contribute to their advancement.  | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Parishioners understand those priorities and have an opportunity to provide input.   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. There is good communication between the pastoral council, staff, pastor, and parishioners.   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Our parish uses a variety of communication approaches (bulletin inserts, pulpit announcements, written articles, letters, telephone trees, etc.).                                  | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Pastoral council meetings focus more on achieving parish priorities and less on day-to-day operations (i.e., maintenance repairs, personnel issues, line item expenditures, etc.). | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 9. The pastoral council and school commission (or board of education) share an understanding of parish priorities.  | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

	STRONGLY AGREE	MILDLY AGREE	UNDECIDED OR UNSURE	MILDLY DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
10. Our parishioners and parish leaders understand the concept of stewardship.	___	___	___	___	___
11. Our parishioners and parish leaders embrace the concept of stewardship	___	___	___	___	___
12. Our parishioners have many opportunities to use their gifts and talents in parish life and ministries.	___	___	___	___	___
13. New parishioners are promptly welcomed to and involved in our parish.	___	___	___	___	___
14. When a new pastor or parish life coordinator arrives, time is spent understanding his or her leadership style, his or her expectations of groups, and his or her vision for our parish.	___	___	___	___	___
15. The pastor or parish life coordinator is seen as the spiritual leader of the parish.	___	___	___	___	___
16. During times of emergency or crisis, there is good communication between groups and individuals.	___	___	___	___	___
17. The members of our parish’s council, commissions, and committees understand that they are members of a consultative body and not a governing board.	___	___	___	___	___
18. The pastoral council members understand that they do not hire, supervise, or dismiss parish staff.	___	___	___	___	___
19. The school commission (or board of education) members understand that they do not hire, supervise, or dismiss religious education and/or school administrators, catechists, and/or teachers.	___	___	___	___	___
20. The pastoral council and the pastor or parish life coordinator explore opportunities for collaboration with other neighboring parishes.	___	___	___	___	___
21. The pastoral council recognizes the socioeconomic and cultural diversity that exists in the parish, and the parish priorities reflect this.	___	___	___	___	___
22. Overall, there is a healthy spirit that contributes to a strong community of faith.	___	___	___	___	___
23. There is a strong sense that everyone has an opportunity to be involved and that the parish is not run by a “select group” of parishioners.	___	___	___	___	___
24. When the pastoral council makes decisions, good follow-through and action generally occurs.	___	___	___	___	___
25. All parish organizations and committees have written purpose statements and charges that outline duties and responsibilities.	___	___	___	___	___
26. The parish has an organization chart that clearly presents the decision-making and communication channels.	___	___	___	___	___

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# Appendix D

## A Process for the Discernment of New Members and/or Officers

(Adapted from *Today's Parish* article, "The Right Way to Elect Officer.")

Requirements:

- A facilitator who explains and guides the process without any vested interest who is not eligible for membership and does not participate in the process
  - Logistics:
    - chairs for each person
    - a small table
    - newsprint or a blackboard
    - two small boxes
    - many quarter sheets of paper of TWO different colors
    - pencils
    - wastebasket

The Process:

A. After the opening prayer and opportunity for sharing, have the group sit in one large circle with only the small table in the center. Allow 2-3 minutes for each person to reflect silently on the the questions listed below. Then have each person participating in the election respond to one or more of these questions:

- What do you like most about this parish?
- What are the two biggest problems facing this parish?
- What is the pastoral council's next most important decision?

There is no discussion at this time and no interruptions until each person has responded.

Repeat the process by having each person respond to the following:

- The gifts/talents most needed by the council are:
- The gifts/talents that I can bring to the council are:

B. Then, give each person one green and two gold quarter sheets of paper.

C. Have someone read an appropriate scripture passage, e.g., John 15:14-21 about the promise of the Spirit or Ephesians 4:3-13 about the gifts present in the community.

- 
- D. The facilitator then asks each person to pray silently for guidance about two questions:
- Are you personally willing to serve the parish?
  - Who are the two best persons in the group to serve on the council?
- Allow several minutes of silence for personal prayer, and then sing an appropriate hymn.
- E. Ask each person to write the following on the green sheet:
- If the person is personally willing to serve on the council, he or she writes his/her name on the single green sheet.
  - If the person is not willing, the sheet is left blank or the person writes “unwilling” on the green sheet.
- F. Ask each person to write the names of the two best people on the gold sheets (one name on each sheet).
- G. Each person in silence places their sheets in separate boxes (one for each color sheet) on the small table in the center.
- H. The facilitator silently goes through the green (commitment) sheets. If a person is willing, the green sheet with his/her names is placed on the table. If a person is unwilling, the sheet is discarded. This leaves the papers with names of all willing persons on the table.
- I. The facilitator then goes through the gold (nomination) sheets and matches the name on the gold sheet with the green sheets already on the table. Once a gold sheet has been placed on top of a matching green sheet, successive gold sheets with the same name are discarded. This is the time to nominate-not count. Any gold sheets containing a name which is not on a green sheet on the table is discarded since that person was not willing to serve. The names remaining on the table (those who are both willing and nominated) then become the nominees.
- J. The facilitator writes the names of the nominees on a sheet of newsprint or on a blackboard for all to see. Each person sitting in the circle is then given one more sheet of paper.
- K. Each person writes the name of the nominee that person feels is best able to fill the slot. Everyone is silent then puts their ballots in the box on the table.
- L. The facilitator counts the sheets in silence, announces the names of the person with the highest number of votes, discards the ballot sheets and writes the name on another piece of newsprint.
- M. If there are other vacancies, each person is once again given one green sheet and two gold sheets and the process is repeated.
- N. After all vacancies are filled, an appropriate scripture passage is read, a prayer is offered by one or more in the group and the process concludes with a hymn.

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# Appendix E

## Sample Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules

The constitution should embody the governing principles and rules of the parish pastoral council. Bylaws within the constitution should reflect the unique circumstances of the parish, allowing freedom for structural and procedural innovations. Standing rules allow the council to act on matters other than those described in the constitution and bylaws. Every council member should be given a copy of the constitution, bylaws, and standing rules.

The major parts of a constitution are:

- Preamble: states the philosophy and rationale for the council
- Name: states the official name of the council
- Purpose and Functions: clarifies the specific purpose and functions of the council
- Membership: states categories of and qualifications for membership to the council
- Nominations and Elections: indicates rules for nominations, elections, terms of office, reasons for removal of a member, and provisions for filling vacancies
- Officers: specifies officers, their duties, and terms of office
- Committees: names and describes functions of committees, relationships of committees to the council and to each other, and the method of determining committee membership and leadership
- Meetings: fixes dates of regular meetings, methods for calling special meetings, and procedures used in meetings
- Decisions: states method of decision-making
- Amendments: provides a method for amending the constitution.

The following model constitution, bylaws, and standing rules provide examples of how a parish pastoral council might write these documents:

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# Appendix E<sub>1</sub>

## Sample Constitution for Parish Pastoral Council

\_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church  
Parish Pastoral Council

### CONSTITUTION

#### Article I: Purpose and Function

*Section 1:* The Parish Pastoral Council shall be the instrument through which a representative body of the People of God, that is \_\_\_\_\_ Parish, in a relationship of shared responsibility with the Pastor, enables the parish to experience itself as a community of faith called to proclaim the Good News of God's Kingdom present among us.

*Section 2:* The \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Pastoral Council strives to fulfill its purpose by:

- prayerfully discerning the needs of the parish community
- serving as a vehicle for constructive dialogue with the parish community
- serving as a consultative body to the Pastor
- collaborating with the Pastor to formulate policies concerning parish and pastoral matters consistent with faith and morals, civil and church law, and Archdiocesan policy
- identifying and calling forth the gifts and talents of the members of the parish community
- developing and maintaining a mission statement which embraces the total life and mission of the parish
- establishing clear and concise goals and objectives based on the parish mission statement and the emerging needs of the parish community
- cooperating with and effectively implementing Archdiocesan policies and directives
- coordinating, encouraging, and promoting every apostolic activity within the parish through which the parish community discharges its common responsibility to make the Gospel message known

#### Article II: Membership

*Section 1:* The \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Pastoral Council shall consist of \_\_\_\_\_ voting members.

*Section 2:* Every person who is a Catholic, eighteen (18) years or older, and a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Parish is eligible to serve as a member of the Council.

*Section 3:* The Pastor, [appropriate staff, i.e., Pastoral Associate, and School Principal] are ex officio, nonvoting members of the Parish Pastoral Council.

*Section 4:* The Chairpersons of the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ commissions are ex officio, voting members of the Parish Pastoral Council.

*Section 5:* \_\_\_\_\_ other members of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be elected by the parishioners of \_\_\_\_\_ Parish.

---

**Article III: Elections and Terms of Office**

- Section 1:* Parish Pastoral Council elections will be held annually in the spring.
- Section 2:* The term of office of all elected members to the Parish Pastoral Council shall be three years. No member may be elected to more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- Section 3:* Any term of office that cannot be completed by a Council member shall be filled by the person who, in the last previous election, had received the greatest number of votes following those of the elected members. This person shall complete the unexpired term of the member.

**Article IV: Officers**

- Section 1:* At the first meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Council following the general election, the members of the Council shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary from their own membership. These officers, together with the Pastor, shall constitute the Executive Committee. The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary shall serve a one-year term.
- Section 2:* The Chairperson shall have the following duties:
  - to call and chair all meetings of the Council
  - to oversee all activities of the Council
  - to convene the Executive Committee in order to prepare Council meeting agendas and when special assistance or decisions are required on parish business.
- Section 3:* The Vice-Chairperson shall have the following duties:
  - to chair meetings in the absence of the Chairperson
  - to assist the Chairperson in overseeing Council’s activities
  - to succeed the Chairperson in case of resignation or disqualification.
- Section 4:* The Secretary shall have the following duties:
  - to maintain written records of minutes of all Council meetings
  - to maintain an attendance record of all Council members
  - to maintain a current record of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all Council members
  - to distribute prior to Council meetings the agenda of the forthcoming meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting.

**Article V: Areas of Ministry**

- Section 1:* The \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Council is assisted in its duties by parish commissions which are categorized within \_\_\_\_\_ areas of ministry:
  - Commission for \_\_\_\_\_
  - Commission for \_\_\_\_\_
  - Commission for \_\_\_\_\_
  - Commission for \_\_\_\_\_
  - Commission for \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Section 2:* In each Commission, standing committees are established to assist in accomplishing the objectives for each ministry area.
- Section 3:* Each Commission shall develop its own bylaws that complement the \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Council as well as Archdiocesan directives.

- 
- Section 4:* A brief summary report is to be submitted to the Council regularly on the status of goals, objectives, and activities of the Commission and its committees.
- Section 5:* Special ad hoc committees may be established from time to time by agreement of Council membership to meet specific objectives. Such ad hoc committees may be established as defined by the Council.
- Section 6:* The Pastor, [appropriate staff, i.e., Pastoral Associate, Principal, and/or Director of Music] may be members of a particular commission but they are not to be the representative on the Pastoral Council.

**Article VI: Meetings**

- Section 1:* Regular meetings of the \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Council shall be held at least four (4) times each year.
- Section 2:* Other meetings of the Council may be called by the Chairperson or Pastor upon written or verbal notice being given to all members of the Council at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the date of the meeting.
- Section 3:* Council meetings shall be open to all members of \_\_\_\_\_ Parish.
- Section 4:* Proposals by any parishioner may be submitted to the Council by presenting the proposal, in writing, to the Executive Committee at least two (2) weeks in advance of the regular Council meeting. Disposition of the proposal follows the normal procedure for new business for the Council.

**Article VII: Decision-Making**

- Section 1:* The decision-making process of the \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Council shall be by [consensus vote].
- Section 2:* All decisions and actions of the \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Council must be ratified by the Pastor.
- The Pastor’s ratification will automatically be presumed upon his knowledge of said decisions or actions unless otherwise indicated to the Council within thirty (30) days
  - A record of the Pastor’s ratification must be inserted in the minutes
  - Withholding ratification would involve the following:
    1. Faith or morals
    2. General Church Law
    3. Archdiocesan Policy as established by the Archbishop and the duly recognized Commissions/Councils with which he consults.
    4. The pastoral and administrative needs of the parishioners.
    5. The general good order of the parish
  - Upon explaining his reasons, the Pastor will recommend that the decision be reconsidered.

**Article VIII: Nominations and Election**

- Section 1:* Two months (2) prior to Council elections, the Council Chairperson, in consultation with the Pastor and the other Council members, appoints a Nomination Committee.
- Section 2:* The Nomination Committee will present the names of persons nominated to the Parish Pastoral Council in accord with a process and procedure approved by the Council and ratified by the Pastor.

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*Section 3:* Newly-elected Council members shall assume their duties at the regular June meeting.

**Article IX: Amendments and Revisions**

*Section 1:* This Constitution may be amended and/or revised at any regular or special meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral Council.

*Section 2:* Amendments and revisions must be presented in writing to all members of the Council at least ten (10) days prior to any meeting. Any amendment or revision submitted to the Council shall be discussed at the meeting at which it is presented but not formally accepted until the next regular meeting.

# Appendix E<sub>2</sub>

## Sample Bylaws and Standing Rules for Spiritual Life Commission

\_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church  
*Spiritual Life Commission*

### BYLAWS

**Article I: Name**

The name of this body shall be the Spiritual Life Commission of the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the Spiritual Life Commission.

**Article II: Purpose and Function**

*Section 1:* The purpose of the Spiritual Life Commission is to provide individual and communal opportunities for spiritual growth for the parish community.

*Section 2:* The Commission shall be responsible to the Pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council for achieving parish goals and objectives related to Spiritual Life, for ensuring the implementation of Archdiocesan liturgical principles and guidelines; and for assisting in the promotion and implementation of parish evangelization and ecumenical efforts.

*Section 3:* The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission decisions to the parish community.

---

**Article III: Membership**

*Section 1:* The Pastor, [appropriate staff, i.e., Pastoral Associate, and Director of Music] shall be ex-officio, nonvoting members of the Commission.

*Section 2:* \_\_\_\_\_ persons appointed by the Pastor shall be voting members of the Commission.

**Article IV: Officers**

*Section 1:* The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, [optional Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary]. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Commission.

*Section 2:* Officers of the Commission shall be elected to a one-year (1) term. No officer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

*Section 3:* The duties of the Commission officers shall be as follows:

- Chairperson—shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all Parish Pastoral Council meetings
- Vice-Chairperson—shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second, or speak to a motion
- Secretary—shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of meetings, for forwarding the minutes to each Commission member, for notifying each Commission member about the agenda for the next Commission meeting, for all correspondence, and for providing necessary communications to the Archdiocese and other parish commissions

*Section 4:* The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, [optional Vice-Chairperson, Secretary], \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda. Note: This section not needed if only a chairperson (Article 4, Section 1).

**Article V: Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held monthly.

**Article VI: Quorum**

A simple majority of the voting members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

**Article VII: Bylaw Amendments**

The bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Commission and formal ratification by the Pastor.

---

## Spiritual Life Commission

### STANDING RULES

#### **Article I: Members**

- Section 1:* Each member of the Commission shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age who is registered in \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church.
- Section 2:* Members of the Commission should have a strong commitment to promote the liturgical principles of Vatican II.
- Section 3:* Members are required to attend and participate at all scheduled meetings.
- Section 4:* Vacancies shall be filled by the Commission and pastor for the remainder of the term vacated.

#### **Article II: Voting Rights**

- Section 1:* Each member that is elected to the Commission shall have a right to a vote.

#### **Article III: Appointment of the Members of the Spiritual Life Commission**

- Section 1:* The Commission shall establish an appointment schedule that will provide for the appointment of approximately one-third (1/3) of the members of the Commission each year.
- Section 2:* The appointment of the members of the Commission shall take place during the spring of each year.

#### **Article IV: Officers**

- Section 1:* Election of the Commission Officers shall be held at the July meeting each year.
- Section 2:* A formal installation shall be held at an appropriate time after election of officers.

#### **Article V: Executive Committee**

- Section 1:* Members of the Executive Committee shall be the elected officers of the Commission, [appropriate staff, i.e., the Pastoral Associate, and the Director of Music].

#### **Article VI: Standing Committees**

- Section 1:* Standing Committees of the Commission are Liturgy, Ecumenical, and Marriage Preparation.
- Section 2:* Special Committees shall be established by the action and approval of the

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Commission.

**Article VII Meetings**

*Section 1:* Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the bylaws.

*Section 2:* All meetings shall be open to the parish.

**Article VIII: Order of Business**

*Section 1:* The order of business shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Members shall receive the meeting agenda prior to the meeting.

**Article IX: Decision-Making**

*Section 1:* Decision-making process of the Commission shall be by [consensus, vote].

**Article X: Amending Standing Rules**

*Section 1:* The standing rules of the Spiritual Life Commission may be amended by a majority vote of the Commission and ratification of the pastor.

**Sample Bylaws and Standing Rules for School Commission**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Catholic Church**  
**School Commission**

**BYLAWS**

**Article I: Name**

The name of this body shall be the School Commission of the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

**Article II: Purpose and Function**

*Section 1:* The pastor and the parish pastoral council establish the Commission as the policy-making and planning body for \_\_\_\_\_ School. Commission policy and decisions shall be binding throughout the school upon written ratification by the Pastor.

*Section 2:* The Commission shall be responsible to the Pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council for the following:

- participating in the performance review of the Principal on how he/she has administered Commission policy and met the goals set by the Commission using the prescribed performance appraisal process from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Performance review is initiated by the pastor

- developing the annual operating budget for the School in conjunction with the Finance Council of \_\_\_\_\_
- achieving, through the Principal, archdiocesan and parish goals for Catholic school education
- reporting on the status of the school in the parish
- directing the implementation of archdiocesan and deanery educational policy in the school program

*Section 3:* The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission policy and decisions to the parish community.

***Article III: Membership***

*Section 1:* The pastor shall be an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Commission.

*Section 2:* \_\_\_\_\_ persons appointed by the pastor shall be voting members of the Commission. The principal of the school shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission, but shall have no voting rights on the Commission and shall not be counted for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present.

*Section 3:* Members shall serve a three-year (3) term. No member may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Membership terms begin on July 1 and end June 30.

***Article IV: Officers***

*Section 1:* The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Commission.

*Section 2:* Officers of the Commission shall be elected to a one-year (1) term. No officer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

*Section 3:* The duties of the Commission officers shall be as follows:

- Chairperson—shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all Parish Pastoral Council meetings
- Vice-Chairperson—shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second, or speak to a motion
- Secretary—shall be responsible for the following: maintaining accurate minutes of meetings, forwarding the minutes to each Commission member, maintaining all correspondence and providing necessary communications to archdiocesan and deanery boards and commissions

*Section 4:* The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Principal. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda

*Section 5:* The Principal of the School shall be the Administrative Officer of the Commission and shall be responsible to the Commission for implementation of Commission policy.

---

**Article V: Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held \_\_\_\_\_. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, the Principal, or the Pastor and shall be called by the Chairperson upon written request of one-third (1/3) of the Commission members. Written notice must be postmarked at least five (5) days prior to special meetings.

**Article VI: Quorum**

A simple majority of the voting members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

**Article VII: Bylaw Amendments**

The bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Commission and formal ratification by the Pastor. Commission members must receive written notice about by-law amendments two months before the vote to amend.

\_\_\_\_\_ **School Commission**

**STANDING RULES**

**Article I: Members**

*Section 1:* Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing Catholic of at least eighteen (18) years of age who is registered in \_\_\_\_\_.

*Section 2:* Members of the Commission should have a strong commitment to the mission of \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic School.

*Section 3:* Members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings and to participate in committee work. A member who has more than three (3) unexcused absences from Commission meetings may be asked to resign by the Chairperson and the Pastor.

*Section 4:* Vacancies shall be filled by the Commission for the remainder of the term vacated.

**Article II: Voting Rights**

*Section 1:* Each member that is appointed to the Commission shall have a right to a vote.

*Section 2:* The Principal is an ex-officio member of the Commission and does not vote.

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**Article III: Appointment of the Members of the School Commission**

*Section 1:* The Commission shall establish an appointment schedule that will provide for the appointment of approximately one-third (1/3) of the members of the Commission each year.

*Section 2:* The appointment of the members of the Commission shall take place during the month of May in each year.

**Article IV: Officers**

*Section 1:* Election of the Commission officers shall be held at the July meeting each year.

*Section 2:* A formal installation shall be held at an appropriate time after election of officers.

**Article V: Executive Committee**

*Section 1:* Members of the Executive Committee shall be the elected officers of the Commission and the Administrative Officer (Principal).

*Section 2:* The Executive Committee shall meet at least two (2) weeks prior to the regular Commission meeting to prepare the Commission agenda. The agenda and written committee reports will be available to Commission members at least one (1) week prior to the regularly scheduled Commission meeting. The Administrative Officer shall be responsible for sending written notice of Commission meetings.

**Article VI: Standing Committees**

*Section 1:* Standing Committees of the Commission are \_\_\_\_\_.

*Section 2:* Special Committees shall be established by the action and approval of the Commission.

**Article VII Meetings**

*Section 1:* Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the by-laws.

*Section 2:* All meetings shall be open meetings unless designated as being Executive Sessions. In order for the Commission to go into an Executive Session, a motion for Executive Session must be made by a member, seconded and approved by the Commission.

*Section 3:* Non-members wishing to address the Commission shall be limited to those whose petitions have been approved for the agenda in advance of the meeting. Petitions must be addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission and approved at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting.

**Article VIII: Order of Business**

*Section 1:* The order of business shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

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**Article IX: Parliamentary Authority**

**Section 1:** Robert's Rules of Order (latest copyright) shall be the parliamentary authority. The Chairperson shall appoint a parliamentarian.

**Article X: Amending Standings Rules**

**Section 1:** The standing rules of the School Commission may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commission and ratification of the pastor. Commission members must receive written notice about amendments one (1) month before the vote to amend.

**Sample Bylaws and Standing Rules for  
Faith Formation Commission**

\_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church  
*Faith Formation Commission*

**BYLAWS**

**Article I: Name**

The name of this body shall be the Faith Formation Commission of the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

**Article II: Purpose and Function**

**Section 1:** The Commission shall be responsible to the Pastor and \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Pastoral Council for providing opportunities for lifelong faith formation for all members of the parish community by:

- participating in the performance review of the *(administrator)* on how he/she has administered Commission policy and met the goals set by the Commission using the prescribed performance appraisal process from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The process is initiated by the pastor
- developing the annual operating budget for the formation program in conjunction with the Finance Council of \_\_\_\_\_
- achieving through the \_\_\_\_\_, archdiocesan and parish goals for ongoing faith formation
- reporting on the status of the faith formation program in the parish
- directing the implementation of archdiocesan policy in the faith formation program

**Section 2:** The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission policy and decisions to the parish community.

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**Article III: Membership**

*Section 1:* The pastor shall be an ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission.

*Section 2:* \_(number)\_ appointed by the pastor shall be voting members of the Commission.

**Article IV: Officers**

*Section 1:* The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Commission.

*Section 2:* Officers of the Commission shall be elected to a one-year (1) term. No officer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

*Section 3:* The duties of the Commission officers shall be as follows:

- Chairperson—shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all Parish Pastoral Council meetings
- Vice-Chairperson—shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second, or speak to a motion
- Secretary—shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of meetings, for forwarding the minutes to each Commission member, for notifying each Commission member about the agenda for the next Commission meeting, for all correspondence and for providing necessary communications to archdiocesan and other parish commissions

*Section 4:* The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda.

**Article V: Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held monthly. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, the \_\_\_\_\_, or the Pastor and shall be called by the Chairperson upon written request of one-third (1/3) of the Commission members. Written notice must be postmarked at least five (5) days prior to special meetings.

**Article VI: Quorum**

A simple majority of the voting members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

**Article VII: Bylaw Amendments**

The bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Commission and formal ratification by the Pastor.

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## Faith Formation Commission

### *STANDING RULES*

#### ***Article I: Members***

*Section 1:* Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing Catholic of at least eighteen (18) years of age who is registered in \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church.

*Section 2:* Members of the Commission should have a strong commitment to the mission of life-long faith formation.

*Section 3:* Members are required to attend and participate at all scheduled meetings.

*Section 4:* Vacancies shall be filled by the Commission for the remainder of the term vacated.

#### ***Article II: Voting Rights***

*Section 1:* Each member that is elected [appointed] to the Commission shall have a right to a vote.

*Section 2:* The *(administrator)* is an ex-officio member of the Commission and does not vote.

#### ***Article III: Appointment of the Members of the Faith Formation Commission***

*Section 1:* The Commission shall establish an appointment schedule that will provide for the appointment of approximately one-third (1/3) of the members of the Commission each year.

*Section 2:* The appointment of the members of the Commission shall take place during the month of May in each year.

#### ***Article IV: Officers***

*Section 1:* Election of the Commission Officers shall be held at the July meeting each year.

*Section 2:* A formal installation shall be held at an appropriate time after election of officers.

#### ***Article V: Executive Committee***

*Section 1:* Members of the Executive Committee shall be the elected officers of the Commission and the \_\_\_\_\_.

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**Article VI: Standing Committees**

*Section 1:* Standing Committees of the Commission are the [Adult Catechetical Team (A.C.T.), Religious Education, and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)].

*Section 2:* Special Committees shall be established by the action and approval of the Commission.

**Article VII Meetings**

*Section 1:* Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the by-laws.

*Section 2:* All meetings shall be open to the public.

**Article VIII: Order of Business**

*Section 1:* The order of business shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Members shall receive the agenda prior to the meeting.

**Article IX: Parliamentary Authority [or Decision-making Method]**

*Section 1:* Robert's Rules of Order (latest copyright) shall be the parliamentary authority. The Chairperson shall appoint a parliamentarian. *or* [Decisions shall be made by consensus.]

**Article X: Amending Standing Rules**

*Section 1:* The standing rules of the Faith Formation Commission may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commission and ratification of the pastor. Commission members must receive written notice about amendments one (1) month before the vote to amend.

**Sample Bylaws and Standing Rules for Stewardship Commission**

\_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church  
*Stewardship Commission*

**BYLAWS**

**Article I: Name**

The name of this body shall be the Stewardship Commission of the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

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**Article II: Purpose and Function**

*Section 1:* The purpose of the Stewardship Commission is to promote and implement a comprehensive program of stewardship that responsibly cares for the human, material, and financial resources of the parish.

*Section 2:* The Commission shall be responsible to the pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council for achieving parish goals and objectives in the area of Stewardship.

*Section 3:* The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission policy and decisions to the parish community.

**Article III: Membership**

*Section 1:* The pastor and \_\_\_\_\_ shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission.

*Section 2:* \_\_\_\_\_ appointed by the pastor shall be voting members of the Commission.

**Article IV: Officers**

*Section 1:* The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Commission.

*Section 2:* Officers of the Commission shall be elected to a one-year (1) term. No officer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

*Section 3:* The duties of the Commission officers shall be as follows:

- Chairperson—shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all Parish Pastoral Council meetings
- Vice-Chairperson—shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second, or speak to a motion
- Secretary—shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of meetings, for forwarding the minutes to each Commission member, for notifying each Commission member about the agenda for the next Commission meeting, for all correspondence and for providing necessary communications to archdiocesan and other parish commissions

*Section 4:* The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and the \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda.

**Article V: Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held monthly. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, the Pastoral Associate, or the Pastor and shall be called by the Chairperson upon written request of one-third (1/3) of the Commission members. Written notice must be postmarked at least five (5) days prior to special meetings.

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**Article VI: Quorum**

A simple majority of the voting members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

**Article VII: Bylaw Amendments**

The bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Commission and formal ratification by the Pastor.

**Faith Formation Commission**

**STANDING RULES**

**Article I: Members**

*Section 1:* Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing Catholic of at least eighteen (18) years of age who is registered in \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church.

*Section 2:* Members of the Commission should have a strong commitment to and/or understanding of the biblical concept of stewardship.

*Section 3:* Members are required to attend and participate at all scheduled meetings.

*Section 4:* Vacancies shall be filled by the Commission for the remainder of the term vacated.

**Article II: Voting Rights**

*Section 1:* Each member that is elected to the Commission shall have a right to a vote.

**Article III: Appointment of the Members of the Stewardship Commission**

*Section 1:* The Commission shall establish an appointment schedule that will provide for the appointment of approximately one-third (1/3) of the members of the Commission each year.

*Section 2:* The appointment of the members of the Commission shall take place during the spring of each year.

**Article IV: Officers**

*Section 1:* Election of the Commission Officers shall be held at the July meeting each year.

*Section 2:* A formal installation shall be held at an appropriate time after election of officers.

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**Article V: Standing Committees**

*Section 1:* Standing Committees of the Commission are the [Communication, Planning, Buildings and Grounds, Development and Stewardship Education].

*Section 2:* Special Committees shall be established by the action and approval of the Commission.

**Article VI Meetings**

*Section 1:* Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the by-laws.

*Section 2:* All meetings shall be open to the public.

**Article VII: Order of Business**

*Section 1:* The order of business shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Members shall receive the agenda prior to the meeting.

**Article VIII: Decision-Making**

*Section 1:* Decision-making process of the Commission shall be by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Article IX: Amending Standings Rules**

*Section 1:* The standing rules of the Stewardship Commission may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commission and ratification of the pastor. Commission members must receive written notice about amendments one (1) month before the vote to amend.

**Sample Bylaws and Standing Rules for  
Family Life and Social Concerns Commission**

\_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church  
*Family Life and Social Concerns Commission*

**BYLAWS**

**Article I: Name**

The name of this body shall be the Family Life and Social Concerns Commission of the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

**Article II: Purpose and Function**

*Section 1:* The purpose of the Commission is to inform and involve the parish community in service to one another and to the larger local and global community.

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*Section 2:* The Commission shall be responsible to the pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council for achieving parish goals for Family Life and Social Concerns.

*Section 3:* The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission policy and decisions to the parish community.

**Article III: Membership**

*Section 1:* The pastor and \_\_\_\_\_ shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission.

*Section 2:* \_\_\_\_\_ persons appointed by the pastor shall be voting members of the Commission.

**Article IV: Officers**

*Section 1:* The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Commission.

*Section 2:* Officers of the Commission shall be elected to a one-year (1) term. No officer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

*Section 3:* The duties of the Commission officers shall be as follows:

- Chairperson—shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all Parish Pastoral Council meetings
- Vice-Chairperson—shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second, or speak to a motion
- Secretary—shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of meetings, for forwarding the minutes to each Commission member, for notifying each Commission member about the agenda for the next Commission meeting, for all correspondence and for providing necessary communications to archdiocesan and other parish commissions

*Section 4:* The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the parish. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda.

**Article V: Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held monthly. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, the \_\_\_\_\_, or the Pastor and shall be called by the Chairperson upon written request of one-third (1/3) of the Commission members. Written notice must be postmarked at least five (5) days prior to special meetings.

**Article VI: Quorum**

A simple majority of the voting members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

---

**Article VII: Bylaw Amendments**

The bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Commission and formal ratification by the Pastor.

**Family Life and Social Concerns Commission**

**STANDING RULES**

**Article I: Members**

*Section 1:* Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing Catholic of at least eighteen (18) years of age who is registered in \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church.

*Section 2:* Members of the Commission should have a strong commitment to social justice, youth ministry, family life, and/or parish social programs.

*Section 3:* Members are required to attend and participate at all scheduled meetings.

*Section 4:* Vacancies shall be filled by the Commission for the remainder of the term vacated.

**Article II: Voting Rights**

*Section 1:* Each member that is elected to the Commission shall have a right to a vote.

**Article III: Appointment of the Members of the Family Life/Social Concerns Commission**

*Section 1:* The Commission shall establish an appointment schedule that will provide for the appointment of approximately one-third (1/3) of the members of the Commission each year.

*Section 2:* The appointment of the members of the Commission shall take place during the spring of each year.

**Article IV: Officers**

*Section 1:* Election of the Commission Officers shall be held at the July meeting each year.

*Section 2:* A formal installation shall be held at an appropriate time after election of officers.

**Article V: Executive Committee**

*Section 1:* Members of the Executive Committee shall be the elected officers of the Commission and the Pastoral Associate.

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**Article VI: Standing Committees**

*Section 1:* Standing Committees of the Commission are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Section 2:* Special Committees shall be established by the action and approval of the Commission.

**Article VII: Meetings**

*Section 1:* Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the by-laws.

*Section 2:* All meetings shall be open to the public.

**Article VIII: Order of Business**

*Section 1:* The order of business shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Members shall receive the agenda prior to the meeting.

**Article IX: Decision-Making**

*Section 1:* Decision-making process of the Commission shall be by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Article X: Amending Standings Rules**

*Section 1:* The standing rules of the Family Life and Social Concerns Commission may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commission and ratification of the pastor. Commission members must receive written notice about amendments one (1) month before the vote to amend.

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# Appendix F

## Sample Appointment Letter for Pastor's or Parish Life Coordinator's Use

June 15, 199X

Dear Mrs. Smith:

I'm pleased to welcome you as a member of the St. Richard Pastoral Council.

As a council member, you will help me plan for the future of our parish and ensure that we are effectively serving its spiritual needs. While council members are not elected representatives in the same sense as government officials, I hope you'll act as a liaison between the council and our parishioners. You can share their concerns with the council and help to convey the council's recommendations and plans to them.

As you know, the pastoral council is a consultative body, and I use input from members as I make decisions about the parish. In turn, the council looks to its own committees and commissions in making its own recommendations. In this way, we all work together to serve our common mission.

I appreciate your agreeing to serve the faith community of St. Richard and look forward to working with you on the council.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Sister Margaret Mary Smith, O.S.U.  
Parish Life Coordinator

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# Appendix G

## Worksheet for Forming a Commission

**Commission:** \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of the Commission:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pastoral Staff Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Meetings:

• Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

• Method for agenda formation (who will form the agenda and when):

\_\_\_\_\_

• How recommendations will be placed on council agenda: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

• Decision-making method (parliamentary procedure or consensus): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Standing Committees: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Collaboration with Other Commissions/Groups: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Types of Recommendations that Require Approval by Pastor and/or Council:

• Submitted to Pastoral Council: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

• Sent directly to Pastor for approval: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Appendix H

## **\*Consensus**

Consensus, the agreement of all members, is both a process and an outcome of group interaction which is widely assumed to be one of the highest goals. It is so highly desired because it is thought to result in better decisions and more participant satisfaction, as well as greater group unity and member commitment.

Although deemed universally important, this technique has its disadvantages: it is time-consuming and often difficult to achieve in practice. When one speaks of consensus, in fact, one really means an agreement on the major elements of a decision, not the many specifics.

The major drawback of seeking consensus is that it tends to consume a lot of time. For important policy issues central to the group's work, time spent seeking consensus may be a sound investment. On minor issues, consensus may consume more time than appropriate, and when there are emergencies the group may have to act so quickly that seeking consensus is not possible. A second potential weakness of consensus is that it can result in uninspired decisions because they have been so watered down by the compromises necessary to secure agreement.

## **\*\*Process to Seek Consensus**

- 1) Each major proposal for decision should be submitted in writing to the parish pastoral council at least one (1) week before the meeting at which it will be discussed. Background reading material, data and other information needs to accompany the written proposal.
- 2) The proper attitude in the consensus process requires a desire to arrive at a common conclusion. The group must consent to the process prior to beginning decision-making in a consensus model.
- 3) Members should be prepared to state their position and state reasons for their position regarding the proposal. Members should accept responsibility for listening to each other so that all members are heard. Active listening techniques are essential to the process.
- 4) Differences over ideas, methods, solutions should be seen as helping rather than hindering the process of reaching consensus. Consensus then becomes a group effort rather than an individual effort.
- 5) Open and honest communication is needed in developing consensus. Members should not "agree" (assume the position of compromise) with proposals simply to avoid conflict.
- 6) The group leader (chairperson) guides the group to a conclusion by checking for consensus at each point of decision. The ability of the leader to lead and unify the group is a dominant factor in achieving consensus.
- 7) In the case of a stalemate, do not assume that some people must win and others must lose. Rather, look for the most acceptable alternative for the whole group.
- 8) The end result should be a decision that everyone in the group can "live with" and completely support.

*\*Source: "We've Got to Start Meeting Like This!"*

*\*\*Source: 1993 Center for Pastoral Life and Ministry*

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# Appendix I

## Options for Meeting Formats

### Option #1

Parish Pastoral Council meets every month on a designated day/week of the month, i.e., fourth Tuesday of the month.

Commissions meet every month on a designated day/week of the month—at least two weeks prior to the Council, i.e., first Tuesday of the month.

Recommendations from the Commission are placed on the Council’s agenda one week in advance of the Council’s meeting, i.e., third Tuesday of the month.

*Example:*

- First Tuesday                      Commissions meet
- By Second Tuesday              Commission chair submits recommendations or discussion items on Council agenda
- Third Tuesday                      Council Agenda prepared/distributed to members
- Fourth Tuesday                    Council meets

### Option #2

Parish Pastoral Council meets every *other* month throughout the year.

Commissions meet every *other month not designated* for Council Meetings.

*Example:*

<i>Council Meeting Months:</i>	<i>Commission Meeting Months:</i>
September	August
November	October
January	December
March	February
May	April
July	June

Commission chair submits recommendations or discussion items to Council at least two (2) weeks prior to Council meeting.

### Option #3

Parish establishes a *Parish Meeting Day* a month.

*Example:*

Commissions meet in the morning. Parish Pastoral Council meets in the afternoon. Brown bag, pitch-in lunches are provided as well as child care (by youth). Entire groups close day with Saturday anticipated Mass. Family members join in.

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# Appendix J

## Parish Decision-Making Paths

*Examples:*

### Commission and Issue

### Impact

*Spiritual Life:*

Suspending all non-liturgical parish activities and meetings during Holy Week

Impacts common good—requires Pastoral Council acceptance

*Stewardship:*

Recommendation to purchase adjacent property for expansion of parish facilities

Impacts common good—requires Pastoral Council acceptance and consultation with parishioners

*Parish Life:*

Recommendation to replace annual parish festival (long standing event) with a dinner dance

Impacts common good—requires Pastoral Council acceptance

*School:*

Policy recommendation that provides teachers with two (2) days annually for spiritual development

Impacts only the ministry—sent to Pastor/PLC for review and approval

*Faith Formation:*

Recommendation that parish initiate a Scripture Study program

Impacts only the ministry—sent to Pastor/PLC for review and approval

*Christian Service:*

Recommendation that parish form a partnership with a center city parish for outreach ministry

Impacts common good—requires Pastoral Council acceptance and consultation with parishioners

# Appendix K

## Parish Staff and Structure: Who Does What?

	Council	Finance Council	Commission	Committee	Pastor	Staff
<b>PLANNING</b>						
Establishes overall future vision and priorities for parish.	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Carries out goals and priorities specific for its ministry.		✓	X	✓		X
Carries out specific action steps as assigned.		X		X		✓
Monitors overall plan for progress and performance.	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Determines financial resources available to support goals.		X	✓		✓	✓
<b>STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS</b>						
Hires and supervises parish staff.					X	
Coordinates process to recruit and train members for council and commissions.	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>						
Coordinates parish wide calendar.	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Conducts parish assemblies as needed to communicate and/or consult on parish decisions/plans.	X		✓		X	
<b>ANNUAL BUDGETING</b>						
Initiates annual budget process.	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Formulates budget for specific ministries, i.e., school, RE, youth ministry, liturgy, etc.			X			X
<b>ON-GOING PLANNING</b>						
Identifies emerging needs, issues, challenges for parish.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Updates pastoral plan with new annual objectives/action steps.	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Writes and publishes Annual Accountability Report to parish on success of pastoral plan and future priorities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓

X = Responsible ✓ = Involved

---

# Appendix L

## Suggested Quarterly Standard Agenda Items for the Parish Council, Finance Council, and Commissions

### Pastor/Parish Council

Quarter 1: July 1 - Sept. 30

*July/August*

- Conduct orientation of new members
- Develop with Stewardship Commission a “parish annual report”
- Develop parish calendar of key activities and events
- Approve final budget for year
- Develop critical success factors for monitoring strategic plan
- Develop calendar of council meetings, inservice, retreat
- Conduct first quarter meeting
- Elect officers for council

*September*

- Conduct a parish assembly with pastor to present and discuss the parish annual report

Quarter 2: Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

*October/November*

- Conduct second quarter council meeting
- Review and discuss first quarter planning report based on the critical success factors
- Receive budget report from Finance Council

Quarter 3: Jan. 1 - March 31

*January/February*

- Organize and conduct annual planning retreat for the purpose of updating the strategic plan  
Note: Retreat could replace regular third quarter meeting
- Review and discuss second quarter planning report based on the critical success factors
- Receive budget report from Finance Council
- Participate in performance review of parish staff as initiated by pastor

Quarter 4: April 1 - June 30

*April*

- Conduct fourth quarter meeting
- Organize parish wide elections for Parish Council and Commissions (election and/or discernment)
- Approve planning objectives and action plans for new year and assign to appropriate groups
- Approve parish budget for new year
- Review and discuss third quarter planning report based on the critical success factors

*May*

- Conduct parish wide elections and/or discernment process
- Write and send appointment letters to newly elected council and commission members

### Finance Council

Quarter 1: July 1 - Sept. 30

*July/August*

- Firm up parish budget and distribute to council and commissions
- Review and communicate budget process for upcoming year to commissions/council

Quarter 2: Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

*October/November*

- Develop assumptions and guidelines for budgeting process
- Initiate budget process for new year
- Monitor performance of first quarter of budget and report to Council

Quarter 3: Jan. 1 - March 31

*January/February*

- Develop first draft of budget based on input from Commissions and planning retreat
- Monitor performance of second quarter of budget and report to Council

Quarter 4: April 1 - June 30

*March*

- Submit new parish budget to Council for review and approval
- Monitor performance of third quarter of budget and report to Council
- Evaluate budgeting process with Council and Commissions

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## Stewardship Commission

Quarter 1: July 1 - Sept. 30

*September*

- Send first quarter review report forms to all commissions for completion (Planning Comm.)
- Write and publish a parish annual report for previous year

Quarter 2: Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

*October*

- Receive reports from all commissions and develop aggregate report of first quarter of plan. Submit to Council
- Conduct Stewardship Program
- Coordinate Ministry Fair (if applicable) with Commissions

*December*

- Send forms to complete second quarter planning report

Quarter 3: Jan. 1 - March 31

*January/February*

- Prepare second quarter planning report and submit to Council
- Send forms to commission for third quarter planning report
- Participate in annual planning retreat

*March*

- Prepare final planning objectives and action steps for new year

Quarter 4: April 1 - June 30

*April*

- Prepare third quarter review report and submit to Council

*June*

- Send fourth quarter reports to Commissions for final report
- Prepare final planning report for the year

## All Commissions

Quarter 1: July 1 - Sept. 30

*July/August*

- Complete fourth quarter planning report and submit to planning committee
- Conduct orientation for new commission members
- Review and refine planning objectives and action steps and assign to appropriate committees
- Recruit volunteers to staff committees
- Train committee members
- Elect Commission Chair
- Establish calendar of meeting dates and times

*September*

- Complete first quarter review report and submit to planning committee

Quarter 2: Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

*October/November*

- Organize booth for annual Ministry Fair
- Continue work on planning objectives and action steps
- Prepare first draft of commission budget and submit to Finance Council

Quarter 3: Jan. 1 - March 31

*January/February*

- Complete second quarter report forms and submit to planning committee
- Participate in annual planning retreat
- Participate in performance review of parish staff as initiated by pastor

Quarter 4: April 1 - June 30

*April*

- Complete third quarter report forms and submit to planning committee

*June*

- Receive results of election or discernment and plan for orientation of new members

# Appendix M

## Suggested Parish Council or Commission Agenda Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Presenter	Group Response	Time	Pre-Meeting Preparation
<i>Prayer &amp; Faith Sharing</i>			15 minutes	
<b><i>Routine Matters:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll Call</li> <li>• Approval of Minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary</li> <li>• Chair</li> </ul>	Approval/ Corrections	1 minute 5 minutes	Review Minutes in Packet
<b><i>Action Items:</i></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>				
<b><i>Commission Reports:</i></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School</li> <li>2. Faith Formation</li> <li>3. Stewardship</li> <li>4. Spiritual Life</li> <li>5. Christian Service</li> <li>6. Parish Life</li> </ol>	Commission Chairs		5 minutes each	• Review written reports in packet; come with questions as necessary
<b><i>What do we need to communicate from this meeting and how?</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To Parishioners?</li> <li>• To Commissions?</li> </ul>				

# Appendix N

## Suggested Strategic Planning Form

Strategic Plan					
Quarter Review _____ Strategic Objectives – Aggregate Report					
Quarter # _____					
Goal #	Objective(s)	Action Step(s)	Committee or Person Responsible	Status	Comments

Code for STATUS: On Schedule = OS Behind Schedule = BS Changed = C Dropped = D Completed = COM

Quarter #1 = July 1 to Sept. 30  
 Quarter #3 = Jan. 1 to March 31

Quarter #2 = Oct. 1 to Dec. 31  
 Quarter #4 = April 1 to June 30