

Developing Leadership

The following process is intended as a guide to developing leadership. There are three parts of a leadership system: 1) inviting people into leadership, 2) preparing and training leaders for their ministry, and 3) supporting and nurturing leaders.

Part 1. Inviting People into Leadership

Step 1. Identify the leaders you need.

Once you have finalized your family/intergenerational learning program, it is time to identify and then invite the leaders needed to implement the programs. Using the *Leadership Tasks Listing* workshop, describe all of the tasks involved in a particular program. Be specific. Once you have listed the tasks necessary, group these tasks into a series of leadership positions. It is better to identify several leadership positions with fewer tasks than to identify one or two positions with a large number of tasks. An individual leader may choose to take on more than one position. It is easier to recruit several leaders for smaller jobs than to find one person to take on a large job.

Step 2. Develop job descriptions for each leadership position.

Before searching for leaders, anticipate the important questions that leaders will ask. How much time will this really take? What if I need help? What else will be expected? Is their training available? Are there extra meetings?

Using your list of leadership jobs from Step 1, create short, but complete job descriptions for each leadership position. These descriptions will serve as the basis for recruiting, training, supporting, and evaluating your leaders. Use the *Leadership Role Description* worksheet to answer each of the key questions leaders will be asking. The worksheet includes the following key elements:

- *The Program or Strategy.* Identify the program in which the leader will be involved. Include the title for this leadership role, if there is one.
- *The Leadership Tasks.* List the tasks to be performed. Describe what you hope will be accomplished. Use clear, simple language. (Use the information from the *Leadership Tasks Listing* worksheet.)
- *Abilities Needed.* Identify the abilities needed by the person who will be doing this leadership role. Identify simple, direct, minimum abilities. Try not to overwhelm people, yet be honest about the abilities that are needed.
- *The Length of Commitment and Time Involved.* Some positions are one-time events, while others are seasonal or ongoing. Be specific in identifying the length of commitment. Include time directly involved in the program as well as in preparation and meetings.
- *Training Provided.* Identify the training or preparation that will be provided.
- *Benefits.* People need to know that their time and effort will make a difference and be worthwhile. Identify the benefits of this position for the leader? It is very important to describe how the leader will grow and benefit from his or her involvement in a leadership role.

Step 3. Search for persons with leadership potential.

Recruitment involves sharing leadership needs with the entire community. Recruitment of leaders is best understood as an invitation to an opportunity. It is an educational process as well as a recruitment process. There are a variety of ways to present leadership needs to the community: parish newsletter and/or bulletin; brochures; displays and posters; presentations to groups; and a time-and-talent survey. Avoid “pleading” or “begging” for volunteer leaders as a strategy. Begging does not attract the best people to leadership. Oftentimes you get “stuck” with a leader who may later need to be dismissed. Develop an approach that spells out what is required. This process will usually self-select the right people.

Remember to look twelve months a year for persons who should be considered for leadership positions. Since many programs do not begin at the same time, there is a need for leaders throughout the year. Because most parishes have both immediate and long-range needs for leaders, it is important to see the recruitment effort as a continuing process. Also, since potential leaders are always surfacing, you should be continually searching out and developing a list of potential leaders.

Here are several suggestions finding leaders:

- ✓ Focus on personal invitations. Get to know the parishioners’ gifts and personally invite.
- ✓ Personal invitation with a clear description of expectations and assurance that they would receive the necessary support for success. Then do exactly what you told people you would do. This builds credibility and makes future recruiting easier
- ✓ Utilize current leaders to invite new leaders.
- ✓ Distribute tee-shirts to current and potential leaders.
- ✓ Invite those who are attending programs and expressing their positive response to become involved as a leader.
- ✓ Invite different parish groups/ministries to take responsibility for aspects of the program (e.g., meal, paying for the participant materials, leading prayer, etc.)
- ✓ Build mutually beneficial collaborations throughout the year: involve the choir once or twice in leading the music, the social justice leaders in a program on justice, liturgical ministers in opening and closing prayer, etc.
- ✓ Conduct a parish-wide time and talent survey, including specific jobs for new programs, and then follow-up with an invitation to an orientation or a come-and-see, etc.
- ✓ Invite people to begin with a smaller leadership job and gradually work them into a leadership position.
- ✓ Include an invitation to leadership on the registration form for a program.
- ✓ Include an invitation to leadership on the evaluation form for a program.
- ✓ Place “want-ads” in the parish bulletin.
- ✓ Place volunteer commitment cards on each table at a program or in the handout packet.
- ✓ Parish-wide mailing with a response sheet promoting all of the leadership positions.
- ✓ Conduct a leaders retreat program annually and invite new leaders to participate.
- ✓ Sponsor an informational dinner for potential parish leaders. Provide an information packet on the programming, presentations (visual), and invite them into leadership roles. Develop a “want ad” placemat to describe ways they can be involved as a leader.

Step 4. Develop a database of potential leaders.

Organize the information from your searching and surveying into a permanent, up-to-date database of potential leaders. You may even want to recruit several leaders whose leadership position involves keeping accurate records for your volunteer leadership system.

Step 5. Secure needed leaders.

The next task is matching leadership jobs with the talents of individuals. First, examine the list of positions that need to be filled. Then study each person carefully, in light of his or her interests, abilities, limitations, and potential. Match people with potential leadership position(s) that they could fill. Some people will appear in several places; some will appear only once. Each person is now matched with a leadership position(s) where his or her skills and interests can enrich and expand the ministry. Now choose one or more prospects for each position, ranking them if desired.

Step 6. Meet with each prospective leader.

Meet personally or in a group with all prospective program leaders. Review the variety of leadership positions and the interests of the prospective leader. Be sure to have a listing of all the leadership positions available. Determine which jobs are right for the prospective leader and guide the leader in selecting a leadership position. Share information about the leadership positions with the prospective leader: responsibilities, time commitment, required training, meetings, and other details about the job. Only after someone has been interviewed should he or she be confirmed as a leader.

Part 2. Preparing and Training Leaders

Volunteer leaders need to receive specialized training and resources so that they can adequately perform their ministry. Preparing and training leaders is guided by several key insights about adult learning:

1. Training needs to be *applicable* for the job. We customize the training around the particular job and the required knowledge and skills. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to training leaders. The scope and the depth of training are related to the requirements of the volunteer leadership position. This approach focuses the leader on what he or she *needs* to learn.
2. Training needs to be *experiential* (“hands-on”), so that leaders develop both the knowledge and the practical skills for their ministry.
3. Training needs to be *on-the-job*. The best context for training is the actual work the leader is doing. Learning and performing/leading are intertwined. In this sense training is *invisible*. It is embedded in the work processes of a project, such as planning meetings, individual preparation, teaching sessions, and evaluation meetings. Training is woven into every aspect of the project.
4. Training needs to be *just-in-time* so that there is immediacy of application. This provides a way for the leader to see progress, immediate results, and some rewards for the time they put into training.
5. Training needs to use a *variety of learning approaches* – independent learning, apprenticeship learning, group and institutional learning.

Step 1. Develop a training plan.

It is essential that training is focused on the particular knowledge and skills required for the leadership position. Begin by determining whether the job requires training. Not every leadership position needs formal training. Oftentimes a meeting, phone call, or printed material will provide the necessary information. For example, the set-up and clean-up crew for family/intergenerational learning may only need floor plans with room arrangements and the times for set-up and clean-up. On the other hand, facilitators/catechists will need training for

each new family/intergenerational learning program. Review all of the leadership positions and determine what type of training and resources is necessary.

For leadership position requiring training use the job description to determine the topics or content for training. Then develop a training plan for each training topic using one or more of the following learning approaches:

- *Independent Learning*: Independent learning provides maximum flexibility for the learner – when to learn, how to learn, where to learn, etc. Independent learning formats include guided reading, online learning, video-assisted and video-based learning, and audio learning.
- *Apprenticeship Learning*: Apprenticeship learning provides an experiential, hands-on mentoring relationship between a veteran leader and a new leader. Through on-the-job training and one-on-one instruction the new leader can practice new skills and become comfortable with the program responsibilities before taking full responsibility.
- *Group Learning*: Group learning provides a format to address the in-common learning needs of a group of leaders through one learning experience. Group learning formats include courses, workshops, action projects, clinics, conferences, demonstrations, exhibits, trips and tours. Online learning and video learning programs can be used in a group setting.
- *Institutional Learning*: Institutional learning takes advantage of existing training programs to address the learning needs of leaders – individually or as a group. Institutional learning includes courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences sponsored by the diocese, community agencies, other congregations, and local colleges and universities.

Part 3. Supporting Leaders

To keep effective leaders motivated and active, you need to develop a plan for supporting them. Supervision and support may be the two most overlooked elements in a leader development system. A plan for support is essential for the successful operation of a leadership system. The time invested in supporting leaders reaps immense benefits.

Step 1. Authorize leaders to begin service.

Leaders need a formal way to begin their ministry. You can authorize the beginning of their service through a formal worship service. For example, Catechist Sunday has become a formal time at Sunday worship to authorize the ministry of the catechists. This formal commissioning serves to authorize leaders for their ministry. In a public way these leaders are recognized by the community and blessed.

Step 2. Provide the information and resources that leaders need.

Provide leaders with the resources, information, and tools they need to accomplish their task. Many parishes provide a library or learning resource center for leaders with print, audio, and video resources for their ministry, as well as their spiritual growth.

Step 3. Gather information and evaluate the work of leaders.

Gather information about the performance of leaders through observation, consultation, group discussion, instruments, or other means. On this basis weigh the leader's actual performance

against the goals of the program and the criteria of the job description. Regular meetings through the year provide an opportunity to review with volunteer leaders the effectiveness of their planning and implementation of their ministries.

Step 4. Express and celebrate the support of the church.

It is essential to express gratitude, appreciation, and support for all leaders. Too often we take our leaders for granted, and then wonder why they do not return. Supporting leaders is a year-round task. We celebrate this support in formal ways at Mass, special recognition ceremonies, parties, and/or dinners; as well as through informal ways, such as thank you notes. We recognize those who have given five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years of service. We express appreciation to each leader at the conclusion of his or her service.

There are many ways to express and celebrate the support of the church. Here are several formal and informal strategies:

1. Acknowledge verbally leaders' hard work and accomplishments before the parish.
2. Print a list of leaders in the parish bulletin and newsletter.
3. Send birthday and special occasion cards to leaders.
4. Hold a recognition dinner. Award leaders with certificates, honors, momentos.
Invite spouses and family members to attend.
5. Provide child care for leaders who will need it during their times of service.
6. Send personal notes of appreciation.
7. When a leader handles a difficult situation well, praise them. Ask them to share with other leaders how they dealt with the matter.
8. Provide an annual retreat for leaders.
9. Pray with them frequently.
10. Develop an occasional article about leaders' work for the local or diocesan newspapers.
11. Celebrate together through social events and parties.
12. Pay all fees for them to attend workshops, seminars, courses, etc.
13. Develop a monthly and annual recognition, such as Leader of the Month.
14. Plan an annual family picnic for all ministry leaders.

Training Resources for Facilitators/Catechists

Echoes of Faith. (Video-assisted resource). National Conference of Catechetical Leadership. Allen, TX: Resources for Christian Living, 1998.

- *Echoes of Faith: Theology Set* (5 videos: Prayer and Spirituality, Liturgy and Sacraments, Catholic Morality, Introduction to the Scriptures, I Believe/We Believe)
- *Echoes of Faith: Catechetical Set* (3 videos)
- *Echoes of Faith: Methodology Set* (5 videos, Grades 1-8)

Into the Fields. New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2006.

Into the Fields is rooted in Scripture, liturgy, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It's based on both the *General Directory for Catechesis* and the *National Directory for Catechesis*. Each volume of this three-year program blends spiritual formation with theological content, and both of those with theory, practice, and suggestions for age-appropriate activities. The three volumes are:

1. Basic Catechetical Skills and Attitudes
2. Styles of Teaching and Learning
3. Teaching Specific Catholic Topics

Leadership Tasks Listing

Program: _____

Leadership Tasks

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Leadership Positions

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Leadership Role Description

1. **Program** _____
Position _____
2. **Responsibilities: Leader Tasks to be Performed (see Leader Tasks worksheet):**
 1. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 6. _____
 3. _____ 7. _____
 4. _____ 8. _____
3. **Qualifications: Abilities Needed (skills, attitudes, understandings):**
 1. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 6. _____
 3. _____ 7. _____
 4. _____ 8. _____
4. **Length of Commitment**
Length of Service (times/dates): _____
When Ministry is Performed: _____
5. **Preparation/Training Provided (what, how, where, when):**

6. **Responsible To** _____
7. **Benefits of the Position**
To the leader: _____

To the community: _____

Completed by _____ Date _____

Last Reviewed ____/____/____

Leader Profile and Interest Finder

Name _____

Address _____

Day phone: _____ Evening: _____ E-mail _____

Which age group are you a member of: 14-18 18-30 31-55 56-70 71+

Occupation _____

Marital Status: Single Married Separated Divorced Widowed

Ages of children (if applicable): _____

Availability (mark all that apply)

- Monday evening
- Tuesday evening
- Wednesday evening
- Thursday evening
- Friday evening
- Saturday morning
- Saturday afternoon
- Saturday evening
- Sunday morning
- Sunday afternoon
- Sunday evening

Leader Involvement Interests

- I would like to be part of the leadership team responsible for overall coordination of lifelong faith formation.
- I would like to help with planning learning programs.
- I would like to help with conducting the learning programs. (Please complete the interest finder on the next page.)
- I would like to help with support and/or office tasks, e.g., mailings, facility set-up, telephone calls. (Please complete the interest finder on the next page.)

Areas of Interest (Please mark all that apply)

Identify several skills, talents, and training you bring to church ministry leadership positions.

Interest Finder

Our parish faith formation program needs your gifts and talents. You can select from a wide variety of leadership positions based on your interests and availability. Please review the list and indicate as many of the leadership positions that interest to you. We will contact you very soon about your choices.

Meal Preparation

- Develop menus and purchase food
- Prepare, serve, and clean-up meals for programs

Room Set-Up

- Set up meeting rooms for programs and clean up after programs

Hospitality

- Welcome and register participants for programs
- Provide childcare at programs

Learning Group Facilitators

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with young children | <input type="checkbox"/> working with teens in grades 9-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with parents and children | <input type="checkbox"/> working with young adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with children | <input type="checkbox"/> working with adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with teens in grades 6-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> assist with activities |

Music and Prayer

- Help prepare prayer services for programs
- Lead music at programs
- Play music—instrument: _____
- Sing as part of a choir or group
- Work on drama presentations
- Liturgical dance

Graphic Arts

- Create artwork, posters, etc., for programs
- Work on a newsletter
- Provide decorations for special events
- Take photos of events

Administration, Promotion, and Correspondence

- Write articles for the parish newsletter or bulletin, local and diocesan newspapers
- Design promotional materials (advertisements, brochures, etc.)
- Manage database and keep records
- Type and other clerical assistance
- Manage communication: correspondence, email, telephone
- Manage registrations and finances
- Assembling learning materials and home kits for participants

Training Plan for Facilitators/Catechists

Part 1. Independent Learning (4 weeks prior to the learning program)

Create an independent learning packet (see examples) for facilitators/catechists that provides the foundational knowledge they need to understand in order to teach the learning program.

Part 2. Group Learning: Facilitator/Catechist Meeting (2 weeks prior to the learning program, 2-2½ hours)

The Facilitator/Catechist Meeting is opportunity to help leaders prepare for and rehearse the learning program; and develop skills for teaching the learning activities.

Agenda:

1. Distribution of the learning program.
2. Walk-through of the learning program and individual age-appropriate learning activities.
3. Demonstration of learning methods used in the learning program to familiarize leaders with how to conduct the methods
4. Break-out into age-appropriate teaching teams (e.g., families with children, teens, adults) to prepare for teaching the age-appropriate session.

Part 3. Group Learning: Evaluation (At the conclusion of the learning program)

After the learning program concludes, gather the leaders to evaluate the program. The evaluation meeting has two purposes: (1) to identify the strengths of the program (content, methods, flow, etc.) and the areas for improvement; and (2) to guide the catechists in identifying their teaching strengths and areas they need to develop further.

Your Independent Learning Plan

Your Date and Agenda for Meeting

Your Agenda for Evaluation Meeting