Christ Renews His Parish

Summary

12/14/15

WHO AND WHEN:

17 parishes were represented and 140 participants from 2 Dioceses in the Kansas City area were engaged to review the six essential elements listed below in 4 separate 90 minute sessions held on October 10, 13, 24 and 29.

WHAT:

Input and action regarding the following essential elements of the Christ Renews His Parish ministry:

- Continuation
- Invitations
- Evening of Discipleship
- Formation
- Evening of Pentecost
- Beyond Formation

OBJECTIVE:

Identify best practices to simplify the current process to enable successful continuation efforts so the ministry can remain one that is of high vitality and one that feeds other parish ministries. Desire to improve upon the ease of sustaining the ministry to create an opportunity for larger number of individuals to grow closer to Christ. Sharing of the findings with the Dynamic Catholic Institute.
Focus on Continuation

25 Participants representing 13 parishes were encouraged to reflect on the following aspects of Continuation:

1. Role of Parish Priest
2. Role of Parish Staff
3. Structure of the Committee
4. Succession Plan for Committee and other essential ministries – i.e. CSDs, Facilitators, etc.
5. Frequency of Missions to another Parish
6. Invitations that extend to all 4 corners of the Parish

The following were deemed to be the most essential elements of Continuation:

  i. Holy Spirit driven
  ii. Pastors involvement
  iii. Staying true to the manual
  iv. Development of Succession plan for lay leadership

The participants viewed the following to be the greatest challenges to Continuation:

  i. Pastors
  ii. Getting started
  iii. Retaining Focus
  iv. Engagement/Burnout of lay leadership
  v. Budget
  vi. Invitations

The following were deemed as best practices related to Continuation that should be sustained:

  i. Strong Prayer support
  ii. Parish Priest involvement and communication
  iii. Staying true to the manual
  iv. Defined agenda and objectives for Committee
  v. Member rotation on Committee
  vi. Retention of one or two members on Committee for consistency
  vii. Parish Coordinated Invitations effort

The participants viewed the following to be practices related to Continuation that should be avoided:

  i. Minimizing the role of the Holy Spirit
  ii. Parish Priest who is ambivalent
  iii. Changes to process not approved by Committee and Pastor
  iv. Predetermined rotation of CSDs and LDs as members of Committee
  v. Committee dominated by one or the other gender
The following were deemed as aspects of Continuation that we are not doing that we should consider doing to improve:

i. Greater input from Pastor and promotion of the opportunity
ii. Ensuring current team is aware of the support of the continuation committee and CSDs receive necessary support
iii. Enabling access to the manual for all that are involved
iv. Vision, Mission, Objectives clearly communicated
v. Easy access to national or regional templates
vi. Resources for growth beyond formation
Focus on Invitations

24 Participants representing 8 parishes were encouraged to reflect on the following aspects of Invitations:

1. Pastors Role
2. How to best leverage Pastors limited time while maximizing impact
3. Parish Staff participation in the weekends
4. School Staff participation in the weekends
5. System of Outreach to new Parishioners
6. Personal Invitations
7. Parish System
8. Resources and Tools
9. How to recover from perception that “six month commitment is required”

The following were deemed to be the most essential elements of Invitations:

i. Prayer
ii. Christ-focused
iii. Personal relationships
iv. Being hospitable
v. Non-exclusivity
vi. Defined best practices
vii. Open communication

The participants viewed the following to be the greatest challenges to Invitations:

i. Misconceptions
ii. Discovering invitees hesitations
iii. Parish Boundaries
iv. Comfort zone
v. Reaching CEO Catholics (Christmas and Easter Only)

The following were deemed as best practices related to Invitations that should be sustained:

i. Prayer
ii. Pastor endorsement
iii. Awareness
iv. Public testimonies
v. Divide and conquer
vi. Personal relationship
vii. All Parish Events hosted by Christ Renews Alums
viii. Follow-up
ix. Multiple touches
The participants viewed the following to be practices related to Invitations that should be avoided:

i. Lack of parish and team commitment
ii. Impersonal invites
iii. Hounding and pressuring
iv. Single strategy promotion
v. Over-communication to same parishioners
vi. Restricted to Parish boundaries

The following were deemed as aspects of Invitations that we are not doing that we should consider doing to improve:

i. Full commitment by all to the ministry
ii. Obtain full commitment from Pastor
iii. Best practices easily accessible
iv. Relationship building
v. Greater visibility
vi. Utilization of technology
vii. All Parish Events hosted by Christ Renews Alums
viii. Reaching out to all groups and ministries
ix. Strategically going beyond Parish boundaries when appropriate
Focus on Evening of Discipleship

23 Participants representing 9 parishes were encouraged to discuss all aspects of the Evening of Discipleship including but not limited to the following that had previously been deemed as practices to embrace and avoid:

Best Practices

1. Continuation Committee establishes a consistent evening for formation well in advance – i.e. Men on Sundays and Women on Mondays.
2. Inviting and Scheduling the Pastor to participate months in advance.
3. Continuation Committee reserves room for men’s and women’s formation meetings a year in advance.
4. CSDs discerning Facilitators for Evening of Discipleship, HG/FS, Discernment, and Evening of Pentecost well in advance of the Evening of Discipleship.
5. Encourage team to begin formation. Invite them to attend this Sunday or next Sunday. No commitment required.
6. Passing out manuals 2 weeks before Discernment.
7. Message- “The best is yet to come.”

Practices to Avoid

1. Giving the Team the nearly impossible task of selecting a night that works for all members of the team for the next six months.
2. Failing to invite the Pastor or reaching out to attempt to schedule him right before the Evening.
3. CSD scrambles to find a room to host formation meetings that doesn’t conflict with other parish events.
4. Attempting to schedule a History Giving / Faith Sharing Facilitator on short notice.
5. Asking members of team to make a six month commitment prior to first formation meeting.
7. Message- “You owe it to the parish.”

The following were deemed to be the most essential elements of Evening of Discipleship:

i. Holy Spirit driven
ii. Presence of the Pastor
iii. Being prepared
iv. Non-threatening Atmosphere
v. Enable the fire to burn more intensely
vi. Personal testimonies
vii. “Best is yet to come” message

The participants viewed the following to be the greatest challenges to Evening of Discipleship:

i. Removing the presence of the Holy Spirit
ii. Getting all to attend
iii. Parish disregard for best practices
iv. Message control – Perception that six month commitment is required
v. Commitment fears
vi. Personal testimony
The following were deemed as best practices related to Evening of Discipleship that should be sustained:

i. Prayer
ii. Not required to attend
iii. Predetermined location and scheduling
iv. Engaged Parish Priest
v. Trained facilitator
vi. Focus on personal testimony
vii. Host team relatability

The participants viewed the following to be practices related to Evening of Discipleship that should be avoided:

i. Use of guilt
ii. Asking the team to do the impossible – pick a night that works for everyone
iii. Delayed scheduling of the evening
iv. Over-expectations of priests
v. Lack of organization
vi. Rigid atmosphere
vii. Communication pitfalls
viii. Secular distractions
ix. Manual distribution too soon

The following were deemed as aspects of Evening of Discipleship that we are not doing that we should consider doing to improve:

i. Prayer support
ii. Selection /Discernment of E of D facilitator
iii. Better communication
iv. Table leader invites
v. Invitations to past retreatants
vi. Stay true to manual
vii. Quiet reflection
Focus on Formation

23 Participants representing 8 parishes were encouraged to reflect on the following aspects of Formation:

1. Pastoral Engagement
2. Invitations
3. Role of Continuation Committee
4. Role of Team
5. CSDs
6. Evening of Discipleship
7. History Giving / Faith Sharing
8. Evening of Discernment
9. Evening of Pentecost

The following were deemed to be the most essential elements of Formation:

i. Paying it forward
ii. Retaining the Team
iii. Leadership of Parish Priest
iv. Leadership training
v. Adherence to manual
vi. Spiritual growth
vii. Personal testimony
viii. Inclusion

The participants viewed the following to be the greatest challenges to Formation:

i. Evil forces opposing God’s work
ii. Lack of involvement from Pastor
iii. Perception that continuation is an obligation
iv. Time commitment
v. Team bonding
vi. Time constraints
vii. Retention
viii. Personal interpretation
ix. Invitations responsibility
The following were deemed as best practices related to Formation that should be sustained:

i. Holy Spirit driven
ii. Table leader invites to E of D
iii. E of D happening immediate after the weekends
iv. Predetermined meeting times for all aspects of formation
v. Adherence to the manual
vi. Personal and defined roles for each team member
vii. History giving/faith sharing
viii. Affirmation
ix. Confidentiality

The participants viewed the following to be practices related to Formation that should be avoided:

i. Dismissing the role of the Holy Spirit
ii. Weak leadership
iii. Allowing the secular to kill the fire
iv. All or nothing perception
v. Information overload
vi. Predetermined ideas about who will be a witness
vii. Inappropriate disclosures
viii. Roles that are not balanced

The following were deemed as aspects of Formation that we are not doing that we should consider doing to improve:

i. Secure greater commitment from Pastor
ii. Invitations Process defined
iii. Providing Easy to follow checklists, scripts, etc.
iv. Adhering to time limits on history giving/faith sharing
v. Providing resources and plan to grow beyond formation
Focus on Evening of Pentecost

21 Participants representing 6 parishes were encouraged to discuss all aspects of the Evening of Pentecost including but not limited to the following that had previously been deemed as practices to embrace and avoid:

**Best Practices**

1. Scheduling the Evening well in advance and including the date on the formation schedule
2. Inviting and Scheduling the Pastor to participate months in advance
3. Utilizing an experienced facilitator
4. Focus on opportunities to strengthen the Pillars of the Faith – Prayer, Scripture, Community and Action
5. Enabling members to have access to opportunity to engage in a small group when the call is felt

**Practices to Avoid**

1. Skipping this evening or scheduling at the last minute.
2. Failing to invite the Pastor or reaching out to schedule him right before the meeting.
3. Asking a CSD or LD to shoulder all of the responsibility for this evening.
4. An environment that feels like a job fair with an expectation that an assignment should be accepted on the spot.
5. Forcing members to engage in a small group.

The following were deemed to be the most essential elements of Evening of Pentecost:

1. Holy Spirit
2. Pastor or Parish Priest represented
3. Invitations
4. Logistical organization
5. Effective communication
6. Facilitators
7. Focus on 4 Pillars of Faith – Prayer, Scripture, Community, Action
8. Personal reflection
9. Personal ministry emphasis

The participants viewed the following to be the greatest challenges to Evening of Pentecost:

1. Removing the Holy Spirit
2. Lack of motivation
3. Communication
4. Attendance
5. Timing of evening
6. Trained facilitators
7. Lack of formal agenda/script
8. Covering all bases
The following were deemed as best practices related to Evening of Pentecost that should be sustained:

i. Prayer
ii. Emphasis on the Holy Spirit
iii. Physical Presence of the Pastor
iv. Timing of event
v. Strong Leadership
vi. Trained facilitators
vii. Coordination with parish staff member to represent other ministries
viii. Focus on 4 Pillars of Faith and areas to grow in each
ix. Non-pressuring and acceptable to try multiple ministries
x. Acceptable to get your house in order and focus on family
xi. Personal testimony
xii. Roadmap to follow post formation

The participants viewed the following to be practices related to Evening of Pentecost that should be avoided:

i. Lack of involvement from Pastor
ii. Force or pressure to do or engage in the next thing
iii. Scheduling too soon after weekend
iv. After-thought mentality
v. Not doing 2 nights
vi. Lack of leadership
vii. Having LD or CSD lead
viii. Ministry “designation”
ix. Rushing through it

The following were deemed as aspects of Evening of Pentecost that we are not doing that we should consider doing to improve:

i. Making EoP greater point of emphasis
ii. It is a wonderful beginning – not an end
iii. Communication well in advance
iv. Ensuring presence of Pastor during the evening
v. Larger pool of trained facilitators
vi. Availability of continually updating ministries list
vii. Interparish sharing
viii. Testimonials and success stories
ix. Sharing up to date resource and calendar of events to access beyond formation
Focus on Beyond Formation

24 participants representing 9 parishes were encouraged to reflect on the following opportunities for spiritual growth post formation:

1. Prayer
2. Scripture or Study
3. Community
4. Action or Service
5. The Called and Gifted Program – Exploration of 24 Carisms
6. Small Groups – Accountability, Support, Bible Sharing

The following were deemed to be the most essential elements of Beyond Formation:

i. Individual spiritual growth
ii. Transformed heart and mind
iii. Access to highly recommended resources
iv. Prayer
v. Bible study
vi. Accountability/small groups
vii. Service Opportunities / Ability to engage now or in the future
viii. Scripture reflection books
ix. Ignatian Spirituality Exercises
x. Continued CRHP opportunities
xi. Lay Director follow-up

The participants viewed the following to be the greatest challenges to Beyond Formation:

i. Lack of prayer
ii. Lack of encouragement/motivation from Pastor
iii. Getting involved and enabling the fire to burn bright
iv. Lack of known resources or where to start
v. Lack of structure or direction related to options outside of CRHP

The following were deemed as best practices related to Beyond Formation that should be sustained:

i. Evening of Pentecost
ii. Bible study
iii. Formation of groups for support and accountability
iv. Continuing communication from parish regarding opportunities to help
v. Continued monthly CRHP meetings
The participants viewed the following to be practices related to Beyond Formation that should be avoided:

i. Minimizing the importance of the topic  
ii. Lack of accountability  
iii. Discouraging continued meetings  
iv. Lack of purpose and support for continued meetings  
v. Assigning duties  
vi. Exclusivity

The following were deemed as aspects of Beyond Formation that we are not doing that we should consider doing to improve:

i. More Prayer  
ii. Emphasize Evening of Pentecost  
iii. Not offering specific resources  
iv. Creation of Leadership Team to assist those who are beyond formation  
v. Turn same CRHP group into accountability or Bible study group  
vi. Alumni events
Other Sessions that have been scheduled for January of 2016 are listed below:

**Continuation**

Another session has been scheduled at the Church of Nativity at 6:30pm on Wednesday, January 13th for all who feel called to engage in this endeavor. To register [www.crhpdst.org](http://www.crhpdst.org) Go to Continuation then Training.

**Evening of Discipleship**

Another session has been scheduled at the Church of Nativity for 6:30pm on Wednesday, January 27th for all who feel called to engage in this endeavor. To register: [www.crhpdst.org](http://www.crhpdst.org) Go to Continuation then Training.

**CSDS**

Another session has been scheduled at the Church of Nativity at 6:30pm on Wednesday, February 3rd for all who feel called to engage in this ministry. To register [www.crhpdst.org](http://www.crhpdst.org) Go to Continuation then Training.

**History Giving / Faith Sharing**

Another session has been scheduled at the Church of Nativity at 6:30pm on Wednesday, February 3rd for all who feel called to engage in this ministry. To register [www.crhpdst.org](http://www.crhpdst.org) Go to Continuation then Training.

**Discernment**

Another session has been scheduled at the Church of Nativity at 6:30pm on Wednesday, January 13th for all who feel called to engage in this ministry. To register [www.crhpdst.org](http://www.crhpdst.org) Go to Continuation then Training.

**Evening of Pentecost**

Another session has been scheduled at the Church of Nativity for 6:30pm on Wednesday, January 27th for all who feel called to engage in this endeavor. To register [www.crhpdst.org](http://www.crhpdst.org) Go to Continuation then Training.