



APPENDIX C

PRE-GATHERING PARISH CULTURE SNAPSHOT TOOL

This tool is designed as a starting place; one that creates a snapshot of some aspects of the culture in your congregation. It might also serve as a starting place for generating new ideas and plans for reshaping your parish’s strategies and plans. It is not intended to be all inclusive nor is it size or geography specific. Check the column that best indicates your level of agreement with the statement. Answer spontaneously and honestly. The value in this tool comes in noting where you are and seeing where you might go. The snapshot you create is intended to help you participate in the Reshaping Parish Culture gathering, is only intended for your use and will not be collected. It’s solely to stimulate your reflections and your sense of what’s possible.

Parish Culture Statements Describing Your Parish	We do this well	We need to do more of this	We do not do this... yet
Parishioners can state or describe our vision and mission statements.			
Our committees, ministry teams, outreach activities, parish council, and corporation work are grounded in prayer and our missional focus			
We use a spiritual gifts tool to discern and use our gifts in ministry.			
Lay leaders are affirmed, celebrated and highly visible in ministry, in worship, and in the broader community.			
We have a volunteer recruitment, training, retention, and deployment process that empowers parishioners for ministry.			
As a congregation, we embrace God’s abundance rather than living out of our own sense of scarcity.			
Stewardship of the talents, time and treasure with which God gifts us is a year-round commitment for our parish.			
Our building space is heavily booked for activities that support our mission.			
We have an intentional welcome process for newcomers, online & in-person			
Activity bags or other appropriate materials are provided for children during church services as a sign that we welcome children and families.			
We minimize specialized language and when we can’t, we explain insider terms in teaching moments aimed at everyone.			
Our website is up to date, relevant and easily navigated by parishioners, newcomers, and those looking to get to know us.			
Effective and transparent communication about our challenges and our accomplishments helps us to take faithful risks in ministry.			
Our trusted leadership team makes decisions about the parish in consultation with the people.			
We have exit conversations with people who leave our church which help shape our ministry.			



GLOSSARY

Activity Bags: small bags containing an array of quiet activities for children to occupy them during the worship service. Bag contents are typically rotated to maintain children's interest and include things like small puzzles, stencil templates, construction paper, crayons, reusable sticker pads, small games, etc.

Exit Conversation: an intentional conversation with a person who has left the parish with the goal of conveying care while exploring the reasons for the departure without trying to change the decision.

Specialized language: almost every group uses particular language and abbreviations that people who belong understand however these terms and short forms are a barrier to people who are new. Ideally, a church will minimize its use of specialized language and where it cannot, will explain the term when it is used (e.g., Eucharist, Triduum, annunciation, BCP, BAS, confirmation, priest, and so on) so that the experience feels accessible to everyone.

Spiritual Gifts tool: a survey intended to create a snapshot of our individual strengths and gifts, and to help us discern the use of those gifts for God's mission of love.

Volunteer Management: an intentional process for how volunteers are recruited, trained, retained, and affirmed that creates a space which allows everyone to live into their baptismal call of service to the mission of Jesus. (includes clear, volunteer job descriptions - the [Job Description Template](#) can be viewed on the Volunteer Management and Screening webpage on our diocesan website.

Volunteer Recruitment/Training/Retention/Affirmation

- **Recruitment** – new volunteers are identified through a spiritual gifts discernment process or by listening to their stories, and they are invited to join a ministry where their gifts and passions can shine.
- **Training** – once recruited, new volunteers are oriented to their new ministry, trained in the work, and mentored as they begin to function in their new role; people feel confident about volunteering because they know they will be trained and supported to do their best.
- **Retention** – long-term volunteers are given feedback about the importance of their work and the ways in which it supports the mission of the faith community; they are consulted about how the work is feeding them and are encouraged and trained to take on more responsibility or a broader scope.
- **Affirmation** – the work of volunteers is noticed and affirmed by other volunteers and church staff, and the faith community regularly celebrates the gifts of time and talents that various people offer.

Welcome Process: an intentional method for identifying newcomers and welcoming them to your parish which typically includes a greeting team, information package, a clergy welcome, and a parish companion (someone who sits with them, shows them how to navigate the service, and introduces them to other parishioners). Often this also includes a visit from the clergy or a welcome team member to get to know the newcomer(s) and their story, and a follow up note after the visit.

Year-round stewardship avoids an annual short-term campaign focused on meeting budget needs and instead focuses on giving back to God and God's mission out of a profound sense of gratitude.