

Planning Ahead for Ministry
Diocesan Research and Planning Office
March 2003

This report was prepared for the October 2002 Fiscal Management Conference. It is duplicated here in its entirety. This page provides the outline of the session while the remaining pages are the handouts that accompanied the presentation.

1. Regarding models of staff, there are many options:
 - A. Paid or volunteer
 - B. Full time or part time
 - C. Organizational models – lines of authority, who reports to whom, etc. N.B. these are not the key issues, i.e. you can work these out. They are the “means” not the “end.” But to what end are they the means?

2. Planning for Staff increases – whether paid or volunteer – only makes sense within the context of parish ministry, and parish ministry only makes sense within the context of some parish plan. This point cannot be overstated. “Unless you know where you are going, any road will take you there.”

3. Parish planning does not need to be difficult but it does need to be intentional. This is true whether the parish has 200 households or 3000 households.

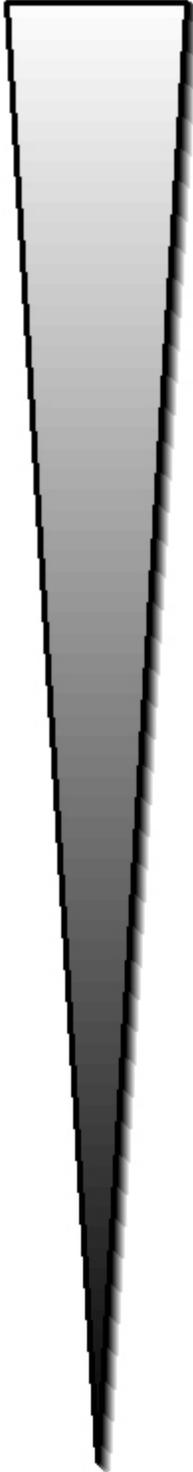
4. The simplified parish plan addresses three questions:
 - A. Where are you now?
 - B. Where are you going?
 - C. How are you going to get there?

5. Details appear in the handout, immediately following.

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FOCUS



1. Vision

A desired condition that does not currently exist, a mental image of the desired state, what "ought to be."

Without a clear vision, there is no direction. Vision is:

- Broad, general
- Expands your horizon
- Conceptual, philosophical
- Unchanging
- A call to service

2. Mission

The call to close the gap between what ought to be and what is, in substantive and meaningful ways. Mission is:

- Specific, detailed
- Narrows your focus
- Strategic
- Change-oriented
- Empowering for service

3. Environmental Scan (Data)

This includes a basic look at the parish and its surroundings, such as:

- Who attends the parish – old, young, rich, poor?
- Why?, i.e. what is important to them? (PCP)
- Who does not attend the parish?
- Why?, i.e. what is important to them?
- What will the area look like in the future?

4. Our Preferred Future

Given our Vision, Mission and Environmental Scan, what should the parish "look like" in the future? This question can only be answered through significant consultation with parishioners.

5. Goals

Goals are brief, clear statements of desired direction or activities in broad, general terms. Goals are:

- Guides to action--stated as a desired outcome, desired condition or result
- General in their direction
- Both challenging and inspiring
- Call for investment and involvement
- Provide long-range time line (3-5 years)
- Tied to mission and goals of universal or diocesan Church
- Can be attained through objectives and strategies

Example: to develop responsible lay leaders in all areas of parish life, who by their example and invitation encourage parishioners to share their gifts.

6. Objectives

Objectives are specific, time-oriented, and realistic statements of what we are going to do, for whom, when we will do it, and how much we are going to do.

Objectives:

- Begin with "to" and are followed by action verbs
- Produce just one result
- Specify for whom or with whom an action is done
- Have specific target dates (less than one year)
- Are quantifiable and measurable
- Are clear and understandable
- Are realistic and attainable – they consider resources
- Link with one or more goals

Example: by May 31, to involve at least 20 parish pastoral council members and parish organization leaders in a day-long workshop on Vatican II theology and leadership skills.

7. Strategies (or Tasks)

Strategies are specific actions in the attaining of an objective; a group of strategies is an "action plan" specifying how an objective will be reached. Strategies:

- Name the individual or group – who does it?
- Identifies what they do
- Specifies how much they are to do
- Identifies for whom, with whom or to whom, and by when
- Are linked to a specific objective
- Tie in sequentially or parallel with other strategies

Example: by Jan. 1 Robert Bernstein will meet with the finance council chair to determine a budget for the workshop and communicate the response to Mary Lee.