

## *Ideas* to Action

Part Two:

-2-

The previous month's Parish Meeting topic, *Growing the Parish*, came from the shared realization by the Facilitation Team and Finance Council that growth is essential for spiritual and financial parish vitality. It must be intentional. Parishioners came up with many creative ideas in this respect. Upon review by the Facilitation Team and the pastor, however, it was clear that the parish lacked a mechanism for turning suggestions into reality in a timely fashion. The parish needed a "bridge to action". Drawing from the Parish *Mission*, the suggestions needed to "*move from isolation into community*". Finding support for an idea is a critical early step for making things happen. The Parish Meeting is the perfect starting point.

Determining viability for a suggestion or an initiative benefits from the experience of those attending a Parish Meeting. People can see and hear the reaction of others when ideas are first proposed in a criticism-free brainstorming environment. The idea is to find support; *not* to have a vote or critique on something. Viability rests on whether an idea will work and if there is enough parishioner support to make something happen. Objectives and details come later. Some ideas just don't make it. The concept needs to "fit" with available resources and legal considerations. The idea's author sketches out the basic concepts using the *Ideas to Reality* form. If the idea is not a "keeper" that proceeds to the planning stage, then the suggestion becomes a "sleeper" that may become viable at a later date. Sometimes an idea's timing is off. Completion of the very simple "*Idea to Reality*" form provides basic information about goals, intended audience and general needs. This keeps the idea, along with its core supporters, on record for actual planning or possible future use.

When a viable suggestion gets adequate support from parishioners themselves plus approval from the pastor, then the idea moves into a planning team (**Interest Group**) phase. At this point, one of the members of the Facilitation Team becomes a guide to the Interest Group. The Facilitation Team member is neither a manager nor a leader of the Interest Group but rather someone who coaches and encourages. The FT member follows a checklist of parish and Diocesan procedures thereby empowering the **Interest Group** to carry out the steps it takes to make an idea become a reality without overburdening limited parish staff. Progress of the Interest Group and contact information will be printed in the bulletin thus enabling others to join later. Blank *Ideas to Reality* forms will be on prominent and accessible display in church.

### *Process of Ideas to Reality*

- 1) parishioner support
- 2) viability of concept
- 3) planning team (**Interest Group**)

After the model above and the document "*Ideas to Reality*" were explained to parishioners, the Facilitation Team reviewed many of the viable concepts raised at the "Grow the Parish" session of the previous month.

## **Concept #1. Reunion Mass:** (scheduled for November 18, 2007)

Using an updated combined parish registry with pre-amalgamation contact information, this group will reach out with personal contacts to invite former parishioners. The liturgy reflects a thanksgiving for the gathering of friends who haven't seen each other for awhile.

**Status:** This is now the **Reunion Mass Interest Group.**

### **Part 1: Outreach to Former Parishioners:**

(contact person: Charlene Witkowicz)

Members: Barb Borgus, Andrea Ehmann, Joaquim Flores, Mary Fran Kolbuc, Kim May, Mike Melfi, Kathy and Gerry Murty, Betsy Romson ...

Facilitation Guide: John Curran (expected closure date 11/25/07)

**Part 2: Liturgical Preparation:** Patricia Woehrlen works with the Liturgy Team to plan this.

## **Concept #2. Transportation Issues.**

There is need to increase the opportunity for persons with transportation limitations to come to Mass and participate in the life of the parish. There is the additional need to transport persons with mobility handicaps safely. Among considerations mentioned were the purchase and safe enclosure for a van as well as flexible and creative options to hire the use of a right-sized vehicle with the appropriate accessibility accommodations *as needed* plus a trained driver. There is a need to research the above as well as the complex insurance issues. As a vital first

step, the entire parish registry is now being review<sup>ed</sup> to assess transportation needs and level of service.

Status: this is now the **Transportation Services Interest Group**:

Members: David Jones, John Seebach, Kathy Tanchick

Facil. Team Guide: John Curran

More members needed.

**Concept #3. Shawl Ministry** Contact person: Sandra Chamberlain

- Supporters: Charlene Lepel, Lynn Fender, Doris Meadows & Judy Abbott

Status: **Hold** until after Christmas. Sandra coordinates the operation of the "*Wrap & Run*" outreach and fundraising ministry now in its **20th year** and involving as many as **120 workers** over the Christmas Season !!!

More members welcomed.

**Concept #4. "Care Cards"**: This concept is a resurrection of a former parish ministry. It involved sending Birthday, Get Well and Miss You cards to parishioners and service personnel. Make & send.

Carol Olsen is a craftsperson who creates decorative cards. She is interested in sharing her artistic skills with others to create beautiful cards of remembrance from scratch. This will likely be a once a month activity at her home. There may be some transportation services available.

Status: This is now the **Care Cards Interest Group**. Facil. Team Guide:

Andrea Ehmann

Starts in **January 2008** .

Expressed interest: Angel Cook, Judy Predmore.... (others?)

## **Concept #5. Daytime Outreach to Neighbors**

As proposed last month, the general idea involved an outreach to our neighborhood using parish facilities. Sharing friendship, a smile and a hot cup of cocoa form the basis.

Status: Needs supporters, contact person and *Ideas to Reality* form.

## **Concept #6. Pew Cards**

In many local churches the presence of a simple card in pews offers an opportunity to start communication. People may write questions, ask for help or offer an idea. The pew card may provide basic contact information for the parish office, Mass times and other brief but helpful information. Having cards in the pews makes them accessible to visitors.

Time demands are expected to be limited. Activity starts now.

Status: **Pew Card Interest Group**. Facilitation Guide: Sue Staropoli  
Members: Andrea Ehmann (FT), Terry Mulee

## **Concept #7. A Blessing of the Animals**

Status: Needs supporters and *Idea to Reality* form to get started.

## **Concept #8. Parish Library**

Status: Needs processing through the Buildings / Renovation team initially. Supporters needed. Contact a Facilitation Team member.

