

Engagement

Time, Talent and Treasure

“For where your treasure is, there your heart
will be also”

(Matthew 6:21)

Stewardship is a natural
outgrowth of maintaining
and increasing
engagement in the life
of the Church

Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Engagement

- Engagement Culture
- Process
- Ministries That Engage
- Connecting Parishioners
- Outreach & Evangelism
- Acknowledge & Celebrate

Engagement Culture

Commitment of Parish Priest and Parish Leader

Focus on getting to know parishioners and finding ways for them to contribute that which they will find meaningful

Gallup research demonstrates that congregations with engaged members are spiritually healthier, better able to carry out their missions, and attract new people

Invite Parishioners to participate

Some parishioners volunteer without hesitation and easily become involved in the life and ministries of the parish. Others may be reticent and the parish needs to reach out and invite them

In his book *Growing an Engaged Church*, 2019, Albert L. Winseman defines engagement as how a person feels about the parish

“Engaged members regularly have the opportunity in their congregation to do what they do best because leaders have invested the time needed to discover their members’ greatest talents and gifts, and have put them in roles they can perform with strength.”

Process

Communicate and Connect in Multiple Ways

- Reach out in a personal way
- Greeters who focus on connecting parishioners with the ministries that reflect their interests and talents
- Personal invitation from leaders and other members of various ministries
- Personal phone calls and conversations with clergy and parish leaders (not necessarily parish council)
- Highlight a different ministry in church each month (The ministry can host the coffee hour and have information table to inform parishioners and guests)
- Testimonials in which parishioners talk about their involvement and how their lives have been enriched
- Ministries Table or Bulletin Board at coffee hour with a banner, pamphlets and representatives from different ministries

Process

Contact Info and Follow Up

New Parishioners and Visitors

- Request contact information of new parishioners and visitors
- Thank you for Joining Us Card (Place in pews, kiosk, coffee hour tables)
- Sign-in book (Only request information if the Parish follows up and contacts the new parishioner/visitor)

Follow up with new parishioners and visitors

- Mail Postcard/letter
- Personal phone call/email/text message
- Invitation to event or coffee hour
- During announcements, the Priest can ask visitors to stand, introduce them and invite them to join the church family for coffee hour or other event

Thank You For Joining Us

Sample Card

Thank You For Joining Us!

Date: _____

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail _____

Spouse's phone: _____ E-Mail _____

Children:

Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____

Please check all that apply:

☐ First time visitor

☐ Returning Visitor

☐ Would like to know more about this Parish

☐ New to area

☐ Would like to know more about the Orthodox faith

Guest of: _____

Process

New Parishioners and Visitors

Greeter/Buddy system to connect new parishioners

Church Tours

Schedule church tours and invite parishioners, visitors to learn about the Church

Schedule periodic welcome gatherings

Introduce new parishioners/visitors and describe various engagement opportunities and ministries

Ministries That Engage

Maintain Variety of Ministries and Programs that:

- Engage parishioners in various stages of life and with a variety of interests
- Solicit and welcome ideas for new ministries
- Avoid micromanagement
- Encourage participation of non- (or not-yet-) Orthodox

Examples of Ministries

Spiritual/Educational

- Bible Study/Religious Education
- Discussion group meetings for the newly converted, non-(or-not-yet) Orthodox
- Small in-home gatherings with the Priest for spiritual renewal
- Faith-related recordings or sermons in podcasts, including recording and archiving sermons on website
- Sunday School
- Parents' group for those with pre-school children
- Saturday School for school-aged children
- Family Night
- Small informal gatherings organized by zip code/geographic location
- Brief faith-related material sent to parishioners

Examples of Ministries

Ministries/Programs/Committees

- Altar Boys
- Athletics
- Baking Prosfhora/making koliva
- Decorating Icons/Epitaphios
- Facilities Management and Gardening
- Greeters/Candle Stand/Pangari
- Joy/Hope/GOYA
- Outreach Committee
- Readers: Youth (boys and girls) to lead Epistle Reading, The Creed, Our Father)
- Girls Ministry (6th to 12th grade)
See: Sisters of Faith Ministry: St. John
- Outreach Committee
- Philoptochos Society
- Prison Ministry
- Stewardship Committee
- Technology/Communications

Example: Engagement Oriented Ministry

Greeter Teams

- Create and train seven or eight teams of six to eight individuals as greeters
- Teams to consist of a diverse group of individuals, all ages and backgrounds (including non-(or-not-yet) Orthodox, not just Parish Council members)
- A family can be its own team or join with another family to make a team
- Each team to serve once every seven or eight weeks (Schedule to be created at the beginning of the year)
- Team members to be stationed so they can welcome each person coming to Church
- Team members function as greeters and not as cashiers (Honor system: Parishioners take their own candles and take their own change or pay electronically with a credit card, PayPal, or similar platforms)

Example: Engagement Oriented Ministry

Greeter Teams: Duties

- Welcoming all, ushering, passing trays, assisting during Holy Communion, assisting during Antidoron
- After Antidoron, greet and invite parishioners and visitors to coffee hour
- During coffee hour, continue with introductions/greetings, connecting visitors with parishioners

Connecting Parishioners

- **Small Group Get-togethers:**
 - Consider organizing by zip code for ease of getting together
 - Book Club
 - Movie Club
 - Dinner Club
 - Cooking/Baking Club
 - Men's Group
 - Women's Group
 - Mom's Group
- **Bulletin Board at Church**
 - Provide an opportunity for Parishioners to post various resources/needs:
 - professional development (host events/create resources to fill that need)
 - childcare/babysitting
 - transportation to attend services
 - elderly needs: grocery shopping, housekeeping and related matters

Outreach and Evangelism

Podcasts

- Making homilies and Bible studies accessible to a broader community

Parish Philanthropy (in addition to and in coordination with the Philoptochos philanthropic work), For example:

- Clothes Drive
- Food Drive
- Soup Kitchen
- Women's shelter
- Nursing home

Community Involvement

- Get to know the local community
- Participate in community events
- Connect with organizations, universities
 - For example, connect with a university in town to stay in contact with Hellenic Student Association or Orthodox Christian Fellowship group

Outreach and Evangelism

Outreach

Reach out in a personal way, welcome and embrace all, including those who may not be regular churchgoers, or not affiliated with a church, college students, young adults, LGBTQ community, shut-ins

Acknowledge and Celebrate

Parish-wide acknowledgement and celebration of time/talent/treasure

- Appreciation brunch, luncheon, picnic, dinner dance — complimentary for Stewards
- Post list of Stewards
- Public recognition of Parishioners who give of time and talent