



# THE YEAR OF FAITH

## REACHING OUT TO

### THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Faith grows when you give it away.

*These notes are designed to help you. They have been put together from a number of suggestions and examples of best practice collected from many parishes. They include a number of ideas, many of which may be irrelevant to you and your Parish - but some might be relevant! So they are included here in accordance with the parable of the sower. Choose one or two and do them well.*

#### **BEING SEEN AS CHURCH** (*"No one puts a light under a bucket!" Matthew 5:15*)

Are there sufficient road signs to let passers-by know where the Church is?

Is there a notice board with Mass times outside the Church visible to those who go by?

Is a copy of the newsletter on a noticeboard visible from outside the church or in the porch?

Are sufficient newsletters produced and are these distributed to the Housebound, the local Catholic Schools and other places where people might see them?

Is the newsletter sent and made available on the website for those not at Mass regularly?

Are answerphone messages and e mails followed up quickly and effectively with a view to encouraging people to get closer to Christ and His Church?

Is there a Parish Leaflet with Mass times and contact names etc. available in the porch?

Is there regular communication with parents of children at Catholic schools?

Is the Parish Website regularly updated to include forthcoming events? Does it contain the Mass times and have easy instructions and a map to help people find the church?

Are Parish events, socials, Christmas and Summer fetes, fund raising events, etc publicised to local people via notices, items in the local newspapers or fliers delivered to homes.

Have local estate agents been asked to provide details of Churches to those moving into the area? Is the Catholic Church included?

Is there an ecumenical pamphlet distributed locally, if so, are you featured regularly?

Is the Catholic Church featured in any free local magazines that are issued?

Is there an opportunity to work with other local Christians on Community projects – Fun Days, local Food Bank, night shelters? How do you publicise these to encourage more involvement from within the Parish?

Do you send out cards at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost inviting people to services? Are these delivered personally? Are they given out on the street at appropriate events - Carols, Walk of Witness, etc?

Is the Catholic Church represented at public ecumenical events: Carols, Walk of Witness etc?

Is there an e mail network, website or Facebook page to inform people of Parish events?

#### **BEING WELCOMING** (*"Come and see." John 1:39*)

Is it easy to find the Church door? Is it open for "casual" visitors during the week?

Is the Church welcoming? What is the first impression when people walk into your Church?

Is it obvious which books/service sheets/hymnbooks are needed when visitors come to Mass?

Is there disabled access, a hearing loop? Is the Church warm enough? Can people see and hear? Are they comfortable?

Is there a group to make transport available to those who need it? Does everyone know?

Are there signs to the toilet facilities, baby changing facilities, a disabled accessible toilet?  
Do you have a welcoming team at each Mass? What do they give to new parishioners?  
Are new parishioners made to feel welcome? Are regular events held for new parishioners?  
Is it easy for newcomers to find out how to get involved in the groups in your Parish?  
At Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals there are many people who are not used to Church. Are they made welcome? Is there a team to welcome them?

**BEING FAMILY FRIENDLY** (*"Let the children come to me." Matthew 19:14*)

Are children welcomed at all Masses?  
Is there at least one Mass with a Children's Liturgy?  
Is there a "crying chapel" where parents can participate in the Mass, without feeling embarrassed about disturbing others? Does it have a good selection of clean toys?  
Are breastfeeding mothers accepted at Mass?  
Are boys, girls and adults encouraged to become altar servers?

Are Youth Masses held regularly? Are children and teenagers asked to participate?  
Is there a dedicated youth worker to arrange events for teenagers?  
Are there prayer and liturgy groups for young people and teenagers to fill in the gap years between Holy Communion and Confirmation and for those after Confirmation?  
Are the Holy Communion and Confirmation groups involved in the liturgy during their preparation time?

Are holiday clubs, faith days and events run in the school holidays for children and their parents and grandparents? Are those from other churches and those with no church background invited to come? Are the activities on these purely social, centred on the Christian faith with Bible stories, themed games and competitions, etc, or both?

For the Parents of children at Catholic Schools who do not attend Mass; are they invited to Assembly, meetings after school and Children's services or rehearsals

Is there sufficient liaison with the local Parish School(s) to encourage parents to bring their children to Mass? Are the children sufficiently involved with the readings and music?

**INVOLVING THE BODY OF CHRIST** (*We are one body in Christ. Romans 12:5*)

Do all groups (including cleaning, flower arranging, readers, choir, etc.) regularly ask for (and welcome) new members and helpers?  
Is there a neighbouring Catholic Church that you could work with on social, evangelising, charitable and liturgical activities and events?  
Are all parishioners (not just the clergy) regularly invited to ecumenical "public" events - Carols, Walk of Witness, etc? Do they attend? Do they get involved in organisation?

**SERVING THE BODY OF CHRIST** (*"Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels." Hebrews 13:2*)

Are all groups catered for: the elderly, the housebound, those with young families, lone parents, teenagers, single people, etc? Are they informed about/ involved in parish activities?  
Are there enough people to ensure Communion is taken to all the housebound who wish it?  
Is there an SVP group to visit those in need?  
Are there groups to help with social problems - help with debt, marriage counselling, finding accommodation? Are all parishioners aware of these and asked to help/pray for them?  
Are local Hospitals visited?  
Are local prisons visited?

Do all Parish groups consider how they can be involved in evangelisation and outreach, in particular by working together e.g. the choir organise a carol concert for the elderly one afternoon with the SVP offering lifts and the CWL providing refreshments?

Are Catholic fund-raising groups invited to speak to at events run outside the Church e.g. CAFOD, HCPT, Friends of the Holy Land, etc to speak at events, meetings, dinners, etc?

**SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMMES** (*“To teach in order to lead others to faith is the task of every preacher and of each believer.” St. Thomas Aquinas quoted in the Catechism 904*).

Do you run catechesis for parents who bring their children for Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation? Do you make use of the Catholic Evangelisation Services CaFE videos or similar modern high quality resources for Parents sessions?

Are Christmas/Easter cards sent to all families who have had a Baptism/First Holy Communion/Confirmation in the previous year inviting them to a Mass and a social event?

Is RCIA run every year? Is it well advertised? Do all parishioners know about RCIA and know that part of their Christian duty is to lead others to faith?

Have those adults who receive Communion but not made their Confirmation been told they are welcome on RCIA?

Is there sufficient follow up to ensure new Catholics are supported after Easter?

**LEARNING MORE ABOUT OUR FAITH** (*“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” St. Jerome Catechism 133*).

Does the Parish run programmes to encourage others to learn more and share the Gospel?

For example: Alpha - On the basic Gospel Message and as an evangelisation tool or the CaFE Videos on the Creed, about the Year of Faith, Knowing God Better, and the Saints.

Within the Parish are there small prayer/house groups to meet and support each other?

Do they meet at different times, with different focuses, so all can participate e.g. a group for young mums while the children are at school, a group in the afternoon for the retired, etc?

Does the Parish have regular Retreat days with guest speakers? Do you ensure families are able to come by providing crèche facilities and activities for the children? Are single people invited and made to feel welcome?

Is there a Parish Pilgrimage? Are HCPT, Deanery or Diocesan Pilgrimages well publicised? Are those outside the church invited to come?

When did you last have a Parish Mission? Have you followed up the work of the Mission?

Have you kept in contact with those who came to Mission events but have not come since?

## WHEN RUNNING EVENTS

Be welcoming. Have clear directions to get to the event, with signs if necessary to show the way in. Always look out for those on their own and ensure that someone is available to talk to them and make them welcome.

Try to involve as many people as possible from the congregation, not just the usual suspects. Some people are very wary of talking about their faith but they may be happy to help by baking a cake, serving tea or directing cars into the car park.

Try to find out the strengths in your congregation and try to use those strengths. When setting up a team try to involve people from different backgrounds to maximise the potential to reach all occupations and sections of the community.

The object of inviting those outside the Parish to events is so that they can see the Church as a welcoming attractive community that wants to share their love with others. If the event is purely social or fundraising then see it as perhaps sowing seeds in people's lives that may not come to fruition but it may encourage some whose faith has lapsed to start thinking about their faith again.

## WHEN RUNNING A COURSE

Ensure adequate training for the team. Meet to pray. If having difficulty getting a team together because people are not confident then run the course for a small group of people first. They can then become the team.

Be welcoming. Have clear directions to get to the event, with signs if necessary to show the way in. Always look out for those on their own and ensure that someone is available to talk to them and make them welcome. If possible give everyone a badge so that they know each other's names.

Publicity is very important. Make it attractive and informative. Think about the flyers you respond to, and ask others to comment on your design. Publicise widely, not just in church.

Use e mail, websites, Facebook, Twitter, or even You Tube to publicise events and courses.

**PRAYER SUPPORT** (*"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God." Philippians 4:6*)

Are the activities of the Evangelisation Group and the events they run regularly mentioned in the Bidding Prayers?

Are the Parish Prayer groups, Rosary group, Youth group and the housebound, etc. asked to pray for the work of evangelisation? Are there prayer cards which people can take home?

Is there Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament regularly in the Parish?

Are there Mass intentions for the work of evangelisation?

**BEING SEEN AS CHRISTIANS** (*Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. Matthew 10:32*)

Do you wear a cross, or a crucifix? (A Maker's label)

Do you wear a WWJD wristband? (A management decision making tool)

Do your letters and emails contain a Scripture quote? ("Never tire of doing what is right")

Does your Facebook page say you are a Catholic and have links to other Catholic pages?

Does your CV mention that you are a Catholic?

Does your car have a Christian symbol or sticker?

Does your house have Christian pictures, a crucifix, holy water near the front door?

Do you talk about your faith openly to family, work colleagues, those you meet?

Do you say "God bless you" and "I will pray for you" to people?

When organising Anniversary and Birthday parties and other family occasions do you regularly include a Mass and invite friends and relations to both?

Do you encourage others to do the above?

**SHARING YOUR SUCCESSES** (*The seventy two came back rejoicing. Luke 10:17*)

Do you have any other examples of similar successful activities that could be shared with others? E mail them to [dap@FinancialManagementDevelopment.com](mailto:dap@FinancialManagementDevelopment.com) and we will try to include them.