

Clustering - First Meeting of Cluster Pastoral Planning Committee

Purpose:

introduce the cluster process
provide archdiocesan perspectives
identify first steps for parishes
initiate the *Parish Resource Study*
answer questions

Participants: Episcopal Vicar, Dean, Cluster Pastoral Planning Committee, Staff, Parish Councils, Director of Pastoral Planning

Agenda

1. Welcome, Prayer and Introductions

2. Rationale for Clustering Process

Definition of a cluster
Experience of clustering in the Archdiocese of Dubuque
Reason for clustering now
Vision 2000 commitments - Community Goal 1.2
Availability of priests and religious
Vitality of parish life
Rationale for this grouping of parishes

3. Expectations of the dialogue among parishes

Sharing of parish studies, identifying strengths and limitations
Assessing staffing requirements
Affirming or adjusting the grouping of parishes
Developing of a plan to implement clustering

4. Process

Appoint a chairperson and identify a secretary/communications person
Explain the structure of the committee
Give directions for the *Parish Resource Study*
Review cluster models
Develop a plan for this cluster
Describe the approval process

Next meeting: Date: Place: Time:

Prayer Leader: _____

5. Tasks to be completed by next meeting:

Parish Resource Study completed by each parish council or sub-committee
Pastors and Parish Councils share information regarding cluster process with their own parish, e.g., bulletin inserts and/or meeting
Minutes distributed to CPPC

6. Closing Prayer

Parish Resource Study

Criteria For Parish Vitality



Archdiocese of Dubuque
Vision 2000

PARISH RESOURCE STUDY
Criteria For Parish Vitality

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND LITURGY

THE PARISH IS A WORSHIPING COMMUNITY WHICH EXPRESSES AND DEVELOPS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS.

Criterion #1

The Liturgy, particularly the Eucharist, is the central focus of the faith community and it is celebrated in the spirit and practice of Vatican II.

Y N a) A Director of Liturgy and Music is a part of our parish staff and has appropriate education, ability and experience to enhance liturgical celebrations. This person serves the parish:

Full time.

Part-time.

Paid salary/stipend.

Volunteer.

This person serves the liturgical needs of the parish as part of job responsibilities of another full time position.

Y N b) Liturgy committee is involved in on-going formation and provides formation opportunities for liturgical ministers and the assembly:

Y N A committee regularly meets to do seasonal planning, prepare the liturgy and assess liturgical needs.

Y N There are enough ministers for each of our Masses (lectors, Eucharistic ministers, servers, musicians, ushers, etc.) to avoid duplicate functions at same Mass.

Y N Efforts are made to provide music that reflects the liturgical action and season.

Y N c) Weekday Mass or other liturgical celebrations:

- daily.
- 3-5 times a week.
- times a week.

Y N d) When there is no Mass on the weekdays, we have:

- Liturgy of the Hours Liturgy of the Word.
- Communion Service. No service.

Y N e) The schedule of Sunday Masses is re-evaluated based on attendance numbers and availability of priest.

Y N f) Environment appropriate to the liturgical season is provided in the worship space.

Y N g) We need to renovate our worship space according to the norms of Vatican II.

Y N h) We have an art/environment team to work with the liturgy committee.

Y N i) We have special liturgies with children and use the Lectionary designed for them.

Y N j) Provisions are made to welcome and include persons with special needs. We provide:

- Wheelchair accessibility. Listening devices.
- Large print missalettes. Greeters that assist those who need additional help.

SUMMARY:

| STRENGTHS | LIMITATIONS |
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Criterion #2

Sacraments of the Church are celebrated and made relevant by incorporating the tradition, history and culture of the people gathered.

Y N a) Instruction is provided for children and their parents and other adults in preparation for the reception of the sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Y N b) The Sacrament of Reconciliation is encouraged and appropriate times are made available.
 We have communal penance services during the year.

Y N c) Engaged couples receive meaningful preparation for marriage. We have:

- A sponsor program with married couples in our parish.
- PreCana opportunities.
- Engaged Encounter.

Y N d) The Anointing of the Sick is regularly celebrated communally and individually when requested.

Y N e) Cultural and ethnic traditions are respected and when possible are incorporated within these celebrations.
Examples:

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #3

The parish hears the call to spread the Gospel with an active program of evangelization.

Y N a) We have a coordinator or director to oversee Christian initiation:

- Full time.
- Part-time.
- This person serves the liturgical needs of the parish as part of job responsibilities of another full time position.
- Paid salary/stipend
- Volunteer.

Y N b) Christian Initiation of Adults and Children is organized and functioning as a total parish process. Children of catechetical age are initiated through the catechumenate.

- We have a team for the initiation of adults.
- Number of adults making their profession of faith each year.
- We have a team for the initiation of children of catechetical age.
- Number of children of catechetical age baptized each year.

Y N c) Census-gathering and home visitation is done on a regular basis.

Date of past parish census: _____

Y N d) Hospitality permeates all aspects of parish life.

Y N e) Parish members recognize their role in the work of evangelization and reach out to those who are not actively practicing their Catholic faith.

Examples:

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #4

The parish supports and nurtures the spiritual life of the community.

Y N a) Opportunities for Scripture study/prayer are offered regularly. These sessions are directed by a qualified person.
Examples:

Y N b) Programs for spiritual formation of the community and its members (missions, retreats, etc.) are provided on a parish and/or inter-parish basis.

Y N c) Various forms of devotional prayer are offered throughout the year; parish rosary, Benediction, novenas.

Y N d) Spiritual needs of the sick, homebound and persons with disabilities are addressed.

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Criterion #5

The parish encourages and prays for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life.

Y N a) Vocational education for church ministry is an integral part of the religious education program.

Y N b) Parishioners are regularly provided with information about the qualities needed in professional church ministry (priesthood, diaconate, religious life and professional lay ministry), thus enabling them to encourage qualified candidates to pursue such a vocation.

Y N c) We participate in Archdiocesan vocation programs.

Y N d) Parents are encouraged to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
Examples:

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EDUCATION

THE PARISH PROVIDES A CONTINUING AND COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF CATECHESIS DIRECTED TOWARD THE FORMATION OF BOTH THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF ITS MEMBERS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS; ADULT, FAMILY, YOUNG ADULTS, ADOLESCENTS, CHILDREN, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, EARLY CHILDHOOD CATECHESIS AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Criterion #6

The parish implements a comprehensive plan for the catechesis of the entire faith community.

Y N a) There is a Director of Religious Education:

- Full time.
- Part-time.
- Paid salary/stipend.
- Volunteer.
- This person serves the liturgical needs of the parish as part of job responsibilities of another full time position.
- Shared with another parish.

Y N b) An integrated catechetical plan which is regularly evaluated exists in the following areas; adult, family, young adults, adolescents, children, persons with disabilities, early childhood and Catholic schools.

Y N c) Adequate funds, resources, staff and space are provided to implement the catechetical plan.

Annual budgeted amount _____:

Percent of total budget: _____

Number of students K-12 _____:

Y N d) Parents are supported and assisted in understanding their primary role in the Christian formation of their children. Ongoing communication occurs between catechists and parents.

Examples:

Y N e) Parish programs promoting life-long formation exist.

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #7

Where available, the parish nurtures the faith of the families through Catholic schools - either a parish school, a cooperative interparish school or a regional school.

Y N a) We sponsor our own grade school; grades ____ to ____.

Y N b) We sponsor a grade school with another parish/parishes.

Y N c) The parish provides financial support of the parish or consolidated school. Percentage of parish budget subsidizing school: _____.

Y N d) We offer financial assistance to our students who attend another Catholic grade school. Percent of annual budget: ____.

Y N e) We offer financial assistance to our students attending Catholic High School(s).
Examples:

Y N f) We have educational development and/or endowment program. Explain how this is used:

Y N g) Teacher/staff salaries and compensations are just.

Y N h) There is cooperative planning among school and parish staff for the ongoing faith development of the school staff and sacramental preparation for children in the school.

Y N i) In addition to being certified and competent in their subject/grade level areas, teachers are knowledgeable witnesses to the Gospel and faithful to the teaching of the church.

Y N j) Parents are expected to be involved in the school and the faith formation of their children and particularly in their sacramental preparation.

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Criterion #8

Catechetical leaders in all programs have appropriate preparation as well as practical experience.

Y N a) Catechetical leaders have the education, ability and experience to provide catechist formation and effective administration of the program(s).

Y N b) Catechists are active in parish life and faithful to the teachings of the church.

Y N c) Opportunities for on-going spiritual formation and development of teaching skills of the catechists are provided.

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PARISH COMMUNITY LIFE

THE PARISH HAS A STRONG SENSE OF ITSELF AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH, CALLED BY GOD, UNITED IN CHRIST AND LED BY THE SPIRIT.

Criterion #9

The parish is committed to being a builder of community with functions and activities that involve all ages. The parish works together as a cohesive family.

Y N a) New members are welcomed and provided with information about parish activities and encouraged to become new members.
___we have a parish committee which holds regular meetings and/or home visits to welcome new parishioners.

Y N b) Various forms of communication are used to keep the members informed.
___parish bulletins.
___newsletters.
___posting of parish meeting minutes.

Y N c) A welcoming atmosphere including the use of greeters or Ministers of Hospitality is evident.

Y N d) The gifts and potential of all parishioners are called forth, enabling them to minister to each other.
Examples:

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #10

The parish community fosters pastoral ministry with youth and young adults.

Y N a) We have a Youth Director who is:

- Full time.
- Part-time.
- This person serves the liturgical needs of the parish as part of job responsibilities of another full time position.
- Paid salary/stipend.
- Volunteer.

Y N b) Youth and young adults are actively sought out and included in all aspects of parish life.

Examples:

Y N c) The newly confirmed are welcomed into the parish and provided with information about parish activities.

Examples:

Y N d) Special youth Masses are offered:

- in our parish.
- with other parishes.

Comments:

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Criterion #11

The parish is committed to being a good neighbor through cooperation with other parish communities within the deanery and other civic and ecumenical groups to meet the needs of the larger community.

Y N a) Parish leadership takes an active part in the Deanery Council meetings and is represented in local ecumenical and civic associations.

Y N b) The parish conducts and participates in ecumenical services.
Examples:

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #12

The parish focuses on the human needs of its own members with emphasis on strengthening family life.

Y N a) The parish offers programs that support strong and happy marriages, family life, good Christian parenting, etc.

Y N b) Programs for single persons are offered to:

___ those never married.

___ single parents.

___ divorced or widowed.

Y N c) The parish responds to the needs of families and individuals in crisis.

Examples:

Y N d) Programs which minister to the sick, the bereaved and the homebound are ongoing.

Y N e) We have a parish nurse.

Y N f) We share a parish nurse with another parish.

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SOCIAL CONCERNS

THE PARISH RESPONDS TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THE NEEDS OF THE BROADER WORLD.

Criterion #13

The parish provides for the education and formation of its people in the social teaching and tradition of the Church.

Y N a) We have an active Social Concerns Committee.

Y N b) All catechetical programs integrate social teachings at every level.

Y N c) The parish provides adult enrichment programs and experiential opportunities to raise awareness on issues such as hunger, homelessness, discrimination and people with disabilities, immigration, right to life, and rural issues.

Examples:

Y N d) The parish has outreach programs for unemployed, underemployed.

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #14

The parish encourages the faithful to work for life, justice and social change through legislative advocacy and promotes informed citizenship.

Y N a) Homilies challenge people in the teaching and living of justice and peace.

Y N b) The parish serves as a resource center providing ways to respond to its members who experience emotional and physical abuse, depression, marital separation and divorce, substance abuse, grief and loss and other personal problems.
Examples:

Y N c) Action groups may be organized, such as legislative phone tree, to respond to social injustice.

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #15

The parish focuses on the needs of its own members and the needs of all the poor and oppressed.

Y N a) Committees are established to render services in response to human needs, e.g., food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, or in support of other parishes or agencies which have these services.

Y N b) The parish service programs include outreach such as Rice Bowl, Campaign for Human Development and Rural Life Conference.

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FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

THE PARISH SUSTAINS ITS MISSION AND ON-GOING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A COMMITMENT TO GOOD STEWARDSHIP.

Criterion #16

The parish works toward financial stability to provide resources for all of its programs.

Y N a) The faith community promotes a spirituality of stewardship of time, talent and treasure at all levels.

Examples:

Y N b) An active Finance Committee plans for long term needs, development and review of budgets, and oversees all financial concerns of the parish.

Y N c) Parishioners are well informed of parish finances.

___A Parish Annual Report is published and distributed to all parishioners.

Y N d) The Finance Committee facilitates and communicates with the other parish committees to provide for their fiscal needs.

Y N e) The parish accepts the responsibility of justice, including the matter of a just wage to its employees.

Y N f) We have an active parish stewardship committee.

Y N g) We have a long-range plan to ensure financial stability for the future and to anticipate challenges.

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #17

The parish has facilities useful for its life and programs and has a functioning committee responsible for the proper maintenance of its buildings and property.

Y N a) The committee conducts an annual review of facilities and makes recommendations for capital improvements.

Y N b) When possible the parish shares its facilities with other community groups.

Y N c) There is a long-range plan for maintenance of parish facilities.
Examples of immediate and long range needs:

SUMMARY:

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LEADERSHIP

THE PARISH IDENTIFIES AND EMPOWERS LEADERS WHO ARE KEY IN ORGANIZING, CHALLENGING AND PROMOTING THE VITALITY OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY.

Criterion #18

Parish leadership provides pastoral services dedicated to preaching and living the Gospel message and to identifying and attending to parishioners' needs.

Y N a) Formation programs and training are provided for those participating in parish leadership.

Y N b) Conscious of the priest shortage, the parish leadership develops ways to relieve the priest of some responsibilities and provides the means to function as a faith community without the on-going presence of ordained ministry.
Examples:

Y N c) Planning and evaluation of parish activities is conducted regularly.

SUMMARY:

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Criterion #19

Parish staff, ordained and non-ordained, must be adequate in number for the work of the parish and be properly trained.

Y N a) Staff actively participates in various Archdiocesan and Deanery structures and programs.

Y N b) Records are well maintained and kept current.

Y N c) Parish staff works together collaboratively as a model for a life-giving parish.

Y N d) Parish administrators have appropriate education, ability and experience to promote the vitality of the faith community.

Y N e) We have a parish business manager/bookkeeper:

Full time.

Part-time.

Paid salary/stipend.

Volunteer.

This person serves the liturgical needs of the parish as part of job responsibilities of another full time position.

Y N f) We have a pastoral associate:

Full time.

Part-time.

Paid salary/stipend.

Volunteer.

This person serves the liturgical needs of the parish as part of job responsibilities of another full time position.

SUMMARY:

| STRENGTHS | LIMITATIONS |
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Criterion #20

The parish is served by an effective Parish Council with an active committee structure.

Y N a) The council provides leadership and direction to the committees and promotes collaboration among the committees.

Y N b) We have a parish board of education that meets regularly.

Y N c) We have a parish finance committee that meets regularly.

Y N d) We have a long-range planning committee to assist all parish committees in long-range planning.

Y N e) We have a long range plan which encompasses all areas of parish life.

Y N f) We have a parish endowment/development committee.

SUMMARY:

| STRENGTHS | LIMITATIONS |
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SUMMARY

Name of Parish _____

City _____

Parish Staff Positions:

Full Time: _____

Part Time: _____

Shared Staff: _____

SUMMARY REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR PASTOR AND PARISH REPRESENTATIVES

You will be discussing many of these areas with other parishes at the Cluster Pastoral Planning Committee meeting. Your analysis of your own faith community will help to provide a picture of the total cluster.

Specific Analysis:

Please study the responses you returned in your parish report, *Parish Resource Study*, and consider them in the light of the following questions:

1. Studying the demographics:

- What groupings within our parish are growing/shrinking?
- Is the total population within our parish geographic area increasing or decreasing?
- Is the Catholic population of our parish increasing or decreasing?
- What new groups (racial, ethnic, single, chronically ill or disabled) are becoming part of our parish?
- Have there been significant changes in the housing stock?
- What do we do if this picture changes considerably in another year?

Comments:

2. Studying the ministry services:

- What ministry services are most utilized? Why?
- What services are under-utilized? Why?
- Are there unmet needs in our parish?
- Is there any duplication of services between what our parish provides and what is available in other parishes or in the community?
- What do we do if we are not able to continue services in another year?

Comments:

3. Studying the finances:

- Based on present trends, will our parish be able to meet its expenses in the foreseeable future?
- Are there expenses which could be better managed or eliminated?
- Are there sources of revenue which our parish has overlooked?
- What do we do if the trends are or continue to be negative?

Comments:

4. Studying the physical plant:

- Are our buildings in good condition?
- What maintenance or renovation costs can we anticipate in the next few years?
- Do we need to build or replace in the future?
- What do we do if building or replacing is not worth the cost?
- Which deanery facilities have potential for shared use by more than one parish in the deanery?

Comments:

5. Studying formation in the faith:

- What are we doing in the ministry of religious formation and education?
- What groups in our parish are touched by these efforts?
- Are there other groups who are under served in this respect? Why?
- What do we do if our school or religious education program cannot be maintained in another year or so?

Comments:

6. Studying personnel:

- Does our present mix of ministerial personnel include laity as well as ordained?
- How will we meet our needs as a parish with the possibility of fewer resident pastors and fewer associate priests within the next few years?
- What skills are we identifying and who among our parishioners might take on additional leadership and/or ministry responsibilities?
- Where else can we look to find people to take on these responsibilities?

Comments:

In Summary:

7. What are some:

- areas of strength for us?
- areas where we need strengthening?
- issues we must face as a parish?
- actions we need to consider to ensure that we will have the human and material resources needed for a vital faith community in the year 2000 and beyond?

8. Are we a faith community that makes changes slowly or rapidly? Is our rate of change a strength or a liability to our vitality? (that is, do we tend to move too fast? too slowly?)

9. Do we tend to be self-contained or isolated as a parish, rather than interactive or collaborative?

10. Do we tend to rely on the same people? The same programs? What is our parish doing to develop lay leaders who can assume broader pastoral roles in our parish?

11. What in our parish has given us new life in the past year? What gives us continued energy year after year?

12. Where do we tend to concentrate our time, energy, personnel and funds? Are these the best use of these resources?

13. How can we help the people in our parish understand as we go forward?

Comments:

**You need not return a response to these questions.
Instead, bring your thoughts and ideas for discussion at the CPPC meeting.**

“The parish is not principally
a structure, a territory, a building.

The parish is first of all a community of faithful

...that is the task of the parish today; to be a community.... Make yourselves builders of communities in which,
after the examples of the first community,
the Word lives and acts.”

Pope John Paul II