

Going from Digital to In Person Relationships

Talking Points to Consider:

Consider all the ways your parish can continue to outreach and engage your parishioners, especially those that are most vulnerable. This will most likely take a creative hybrid of outreach efforts. Relationship and accompaniment should guide your decisions as you begin to assess how best to re-engage your parishioners, and lead all people into a deeper relationship with Christ and His Church.

Open Conversation

Begin to have an open conversation with your staff and with your pastoral council/leadership on how to re-engage people with the parish.

Ask Parishoners

Be careful not to make assumptions on what parishioners are missing. Find a way to reach out to your parishioners and families and see what they truly miss the most - community, Eucharist, gathering, etc. Is there a tool that is needed to help with this such as google form, etc for parishioners to fill out?

Leverage Technology

How can you continue to leverage technology to connect professionally with staff and parish councils, ministries, etc.

Facebook ads and other social media can be tools to continue connection with parishioners, beyond the bulletin.

Short and Long Term Planning

Create short and long term plans, you don't have to figure everything out all at once. Start to recognize patterns in your short term plans which will aid with creating long term goals and outreaches. Consider letting go of what has not worked well in the past. Or rather, now that everything is stopped, what will be added back? There are many strategic plan templates online such as this one in Microsoft Office:

<https://templates.office.com/en-us/work-plan-timeline-tm16410240>

Virtual Experience should Correspond with In Person Experience

How a parish is ministering virtually should mirror the actual reality once the doors are open. I.e.; If you mention on your livestream that you are welcoming people back, will they feel welcomed when they come back into the parish? What are some things your parish can do to make people feel welcome when they begin to start coming back into the Church?

Educate your Parishoners

Consider how you will educate your parishioners that Church could look different when they are able to return. Use available resources to keep your parishioners updated on weekly changes so they will know what to expect.

Utilize volunteers to assist with re-engagement.

As restrictions are lifted, consider utilizing lay groups to not over burden staff. I.e.; Can groups such as the Eucharistic Ministers help to distribute communion to those who cannot attend, what other lay groups can be asked to assist with the re-engagement? Be sure to consider all proper insurance and health guidelines when sending groups out.

Continue Live streaming

Live stream opportunities and other virtual meetups do not have to end once we are back to gathering again. Is there a way you could collaborate with another parish to share technology resources?

