

103: So Much More Than Saying Hello Parish Best Practices

Increasing Parish/Parishioner Communication and Engagement

- Use Name Tags at Mass. Our parish does a “Name Tag Weekend” for the entire parish along with coffee and rolls twice a year. Before Mass, blank name tags are distributed to all parishioners to introduce themselves to each other at the expressing peace time of the Mass and carried on at Coffee and Rolls. It has been hugely successful for parishioners in helping them meet and get to know new parishioners, and for new members to become familiar with the entire parish community.
- Use text, email, personal phone calls to communicate to new parishioners or target groups of parishioners.
- Develop and give out a membership packet with a meet and greet opportunity before/after Mass.
- Keep the Website changing and current
- Start a Facebook page and use it to create Events. Use it to recognize participation in parish events, thank volunteers, name a “disciple of the month”, etc.
- Communicate that there is communication (can be part of the welcome packet, included in the bulletin, mentioned in Mass announcements, etc.).
- Put the Homilies on your website. If your pastor is a dynamic homilists, you may draw members or potential members in just to hear the homily. If your pastor says something you want to revisit or really un-pack, you can re-read it and truly reflect on the questions posed more fully. You could even use the published homily for small group discussions. It keeps those who are homebound connected to their parish community.
- Put a little blurb in the parish bulletin with the questions that your Pastor poses in the homily. Most people have a short drive to go home after Mass; the family can talk about the pastor’s points on the way home, or singles can use it as a simple reflection while driving home.
- Use websites, podcasts, books like *Rediscover Jesus* or *Forming Intentional Disciples*, as a tool to develop small group discussions one or two chapters at a time. Sign up for daily reflections from a site like DynamicCatholic.com. Watch the podcasts from BustedHalo.com (especially relevant to youth/young adults).
- Beyond just opening doors as greeters, chat with people, introduce yourself, ask them their name.
- Start a child’s session during Mass (they exit with adult volunteers right before the reading starts) where the kids can get a simple bible study message based on the day’s readings/homily. Can use this time to also teach children simple ways to pray daily and what it means to simply talk to Jesus or think of Jesus as a friend.
- Personally invite parishioners to try new things and get involved in the various ministries, committees, events. Encourage every parishioner to do one thing, even if they just try it once and decide it’s not for them. They might look for some other form of ministry that they are better suited for. The key here is personally invite.
- Put pencils and index/note cards in the pews every so often, and post a question to parishioners during mass (or put the question on the index card in advance). Let people reflect on the question, or make the question an opportunity to ask for prayer, or offer to help in a ministry in some way, ask if there is a talent they have that would steer them towards helping with a certain event. The questions can be geared towards keeping what they wrote down as a reminder, or to be put in the collection basket to be contacted later by someone in the parish.

If you have ideas or best practices that your parish or you’d like to see your parish, please send them to us at pasterv@gbdio.org, and we’ll add them our resources.