

St Agnes Parish Pastoral Council
Summary of Tools for Rebuilding
2/11/2014

Joe: Chapters 1-5

Chapter 1 Don't Just Do Something, Stand There

- We look at how much is going on in our parish but to what end?

Chapter 2 And Then, Focus

- What can I do that no one else can do?
- What can I do that no one else is doing?
Leadership: Focus should be on leading parishioners into ministry and equipping them with the skills and opportunities they need to succeed.
- Focus should be on building the Body of Christ.

Chapter 3 Know Why, What, and How

- Mission: Why we exist- Go and Make Disciples
- Vision: What- unique contribution only our parish can make to the movement of the kingdom
- Strategy: How we accomplish the mission and vision; 1) Focus on the unchurched, 2) provide excellent weekend experience (music, message, something for the kids), 3) adult discipleship through small groups, 4) members who pray daily, volunteer and give.

Chapter 4 Clearly Define Evangelization

- What are we trying to do? How? Who is our Reading Ray?

Chapter 5 Pull Down the Silos

- What are we trying to do and are we all working together toward the same goals?

Jim: Chapters 6-10

Chapter 6 You (Probably) Need More Gratitude and Enthusiasm

- Need to let our gratitude and enthusiasm carry through to parishioners; e.g. very dull priest who is a football fan and suddenly becomes very animated at the end of Mass during football season

Chapter 7 The NFL Is the Enemy of the Church

- Not competing against other churches, competing for free time and disposable income; combat with excellence, not entertainment, which will earn trust of parishioners (e.g. willingness to go along with off-campus Mass), focus on doing a few things well, dedicate the time needed, and celebrate what's working

Chapter 8 Sometimes It's Okay Not to Be Generous

- Don't compromise mission of the parish by letting outside organizations, groups, etc. take over the facilities; e.g. willingness to go along with off-campus Mass)

Chapter 9 Did Anyone Unlock the Front Door?

- Church campus needs to have good curb-appeal and be welcoming; e.g. Does it look open, is it clear where to park, and is it easy to navigate?

Chapter 10 I'm Not Interested in How Much You Love Jesus; Just Clean Your Nursery

- Cleanliness really is next to godliness, and facilities need to support the parish mission – narthex (entrance), bathrooms, pews; e.g. improvements Father Steve made right after he got here

Steve: Chapters 11-15

Chapter 11

- Keeping your parish space clean is critical to attracting and retaining people. Additionally, it's important to keep closets and other areas "decluttered" by making sure old, unused stuff is thrown out.
- * The lower church storage area is well organized and labeled. It will be important for us once the new parish center is up and running to keep it clean and attractive, especially after the investment made.

Chapter 12

- Keep control for mass. Parking attendants, greeters and ushers ensure that people are well directed when coming into church. Families with small children are informed of the side rooms for mass.
- * My experience with parking duty for the mass at the high school is that it made a big difference - set's a great tone even from the parking lot. Maybe it's something we look into for our masses?

Chapters 13, 14, 15:

- Chapters about the "front office" of the church. Understanding productivity of the staff, opening up seating areas (open office), and being smart on spending money on cleaning services (I.e. take out your own trash) are the main points in these chapters.

Marie: Chapters 16-20

Chapter 16 - Stop Advertising Other People's Stuff

- Consider not having a bulletin at all, but if you must have one don't use it to advertise other people's events. If you need advertising on the back to pay for the bulletin that's a little easier to understand. At least there is purpose.

Chapter 17 – Your Website

- Have a good website and update it regularly
- Decide on a goal for your site. Who are you trying to reach.
 - Destination for invitation – Evangelization (I know this to be true of St. Agnes website from couples at baptism group who have decided on our church in part because of how they felt after going to the website.)
 - Destination in Itself- resources Live stream Mass, podcast of Homilies
 - Destination for parishioners – sign up for programs, get information etc.
 - Keep website fun and fresh – involve students (Middle school)

Chapter 18 – Kidszone – Branding your programs – makes programs more attractive and exciting

- Figure out what programs you want to brand
 - “starting point” – new members class
 - Thrive – marriage enrichment
- Use a logo

Chapter 19 –Connect with your community

- Christmas Eve Mass
- Are people aware that we exist?

Chapter 20 – Know who's not Here

- Radical Reorientation toward outwardly focused evangelization beginning with the Pastor and parish staff
- Stop making it all about the people in the pews and start thinking about the people who aren't here.
 - Get to know the people in your community who aren't going to church and find out why Timonium Tim

Paul: Chapters 21-25

Chapter 21.

- Vestments. Decoration and fancy vestments etc do not attract people. Don't focus on these.

Chapter 22.

- Get the regular attendees people involved in ministries and out of the pews. Remind them frequently of the importance of service no matter how simple.

Chapter 23.

- Greet guests. Seems obvious but often overlooked. Critical role. Be genuine and enthusiastic as a greeter.

Chapter 24.

- Invest in a good sound system.
- If people cannot hear the priest or lector, it is a major problem. The Sound system is the single most important investment.

Chapter 25.

- Invest in good music and musicians. Music has a huge impact on the heart, soul and overall mass experience. It is very difficult to find the "right" music mix and musicians and it may involve some uncomfortable changes in music style and personnel. The unchurched folks need to hear something other than old, stale organ music. Requires a lot of prayer and discernment.

Bob: Chapters 26-30

Chapter 26 – Nobody Is Growing In Christ Just Because of Your Pious Procession of One

This chapter is about time consuming rituals that lectors, Eucharistic ministers and even altar servers have that distract from mass and from the message and make unchurched people uncomfortable. When unchurched people come to mass, according to the authors, their number one question is “how long is this going to take?” The answer is it doesn't matter how long it really takes, but rather how long it seems to take. If these people don't know how long it takes, and it looks as if it might take a long time, they are going to get uncomfortable.

Mass is a public presentation, and in order to not be boring it must have texture and flow with pacing that shows it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. To combat against the “boring” factor, review:

- The lectors:
 - Is everything they're doing helping to focus on God's Word, or is it distracting people and drawing attention to them?
 - In watching our lectors, I feel they keep things simple and deliver God's word efficiently
- The Eucharistic ministers:
 - Do they have time-consuming, mostly made up rituals that prevent them from performing their ministry in an efficient manner?

- I don't think we have "made up" rituals, but sometimes people stand there and wait to be told to go to their stations. For the most part, our Eucharistic ministers have been doing this for a long time and know what to do so need to get to it as quickly as possible.
- The altar servers:
 - Are they properly trained to blend into the background and serve, or are they an annoyance and a distraction?
 - Being a former altar boy, I think our altar servers have a mixed performance. Some of them seem attentive and do what they're supposed to while others know what to do but don't pay attention and need to be asked.

The takeaway from this chapter is to not let the rituals distract the unchurched or the regulars and mass will flow and people remember the message.

Chapter 27 – Manage The Transitions

This chapter is about the total experience of coming to mass, from what happens when someone pulls into the parking lot to when they step into the church to what happens during the mass and then when they leave. The authors mention several examples of how one thing can negate another and ruin the experience or cause confusion. For instance, they talked about a Christmas Eve service in which the celebrant gave a moving homily that created a "moment" that touched people deeply, but was followed up by the pastor giving a stern admonishment regarding the importance of the Christmas collection.

The takeaway from this chapter is to understand the impact of what you're telling and asking them to do, and eliminate those transition items that detract from these objectives.

Chapter 28 – Take People On A Journey

This chapter focuses on moving people (both the regular churchgoers and the unchurched) closer to Christ. The churchgoers will understand the journey is through the celebration of the Eucharist. For the non-regulars, the journey may be through the message or even the music. Getting people on the journey requires three steps, which are:

- Invitation: the journey needs a place to start, and it is with the invitation and warm welcome for newcomers and warm welcome back for regulars
- Transportation: people need something to help take them on the journey. Mature disciples will understand it is the celebration of the Eucharist, but for the non-regulars what takes them on the journey to Christ may be the message or the music.
- Destination: Every journey has an ending. Where do you want to take the people? What do you want them to know when they get there? What do you want them to do when they get there? What will be different for them when they get there than before?

The takeaway from this chapter is that all aspects of the mass must be executed well because it could be any one of them that helps people take the journey of getting closer to Christ.

Chapter 29 – Know What Season You’re In

The Church has its liturgical seasons and lectionary cycles, but we must be tuned to the cultural seasons the people live in. Our church and weekend experience need to be in sync with these seasons because they shape where the people in the pews are emotionally and intellectually. The in question seasons are:

- **Back to school:** This is from Labor Day to Thanksgiving. This is the “new year” for many families, when school and other activities start up.
- **Christmas:** This is from the weekend after Thanksgiving through Christmas Eve. Schedules get crazier with the addition of holiday shopping, parties, and family visits but it’s also when more people come to mass.
- **Winter/Early Spring:** This is from the weekend following New Year’s Day to the fifth Sunday in Lent. Kids sports programs are still going strong and a few holidays have been celebrated. This is a good time to sign people up for ministry and small groups as people are more willing to listen, get involved, and try new things.
- **Spring/Late Spring:** This is from Palm Sunday through the weekend before Memorial Day. This is a busy time for people, with Easter and Mother’s Day occurring in this period, plus spring sports for the kids. According to the authors, this is the time for them to sign up volunteers for fall programs.
- **Summer:** This is from Memorial Day weekend to the weekend before Labor Day. During this time frame weekend attendance drops but it is also a time when people shop for a new church. At church, there is a relaxed feeling amongst the attendees. It is also the time for church staff to plan for the “new year” ahead and for capital improvements to the campus to take place.
- The takeaway from this chapter is that we should know our parishioners “cultural seasons” and the weekend homily and music should be reflected in them.

Chapter 30 – Find Your Message; Then Stay On It

The problem – some preachers and church staff have no message or they have a great message and can’t stay on it.

The solution – when shaping and delivering the message (aka the homily), answer these two questions:

- What do you want them to know?
- What do you want them to do?

In addition to the homily, the announcements should support the message.

Dick: Chapters 31-35

31. One Church, One Message

- Growing, healthy churches all have a single message (homily) throughout the weekend aligned around a common mission and vision
- Having one message has affected every area of our parish life – increased giving, expanded ministry, growth in our missions program, greater use of the Sacrament of Penance and increase Mass attendance
- No matter who the celebrant is, the preacher needs be the same person at each Mass
- Preparation is key. Eight hours may not be enough. Research available resources

32. Comfort Outsiders, Challenge Insiders

- Challenge insiders to take the next steps – giving (time and money), growing (in prayer, God's Word and the Eucharist) and volunteering (in ministry)
- Tell outsiders “Relax. None of this applies to you.” They get a free pass. Thank them for showing up in front of the whole congregation
- Jesus challenged the church people but was very loving to the lost.

33. Preach the Announcements

- Not talking about bake sales. Talking about announcements of the Kingdom of God and the invitation to become a disciple
- Preach the necessity of daily quiet time, weekly worship at Mass, the necessity of ministry and missions, the value of giving and tithing, small groups and increased use of Sacrament of Penance. Preach these announcements – but only one of a time.
- Give them specific steps to take on the path to being a disciple. Discipleship involves changed lives.

34. Baptisms Are Opportunities – Take Them

- The opportunity given to us at Baptism is not of instruction or catechesis but it is for celebration
- Of course we have a responsibility to prepare parents but the greater opportunity is to build relationships that can lead to discipleship

- Choose the right instructor. Don't call it a "class".
- Shape the Baptism environment into a more relax, relational and loving experience. Give new parents a chance to share their story

35. When it Comes to Holy Communion, Put Down the Carrot and Stick

- **No strict rules like mandatory Mass attendance**
- Direct your program, your efforts, your comments and your celebration of the sacrament the audience that just might come back and get involved in discipleship
- First Communion is a wonderful opportunity to introduce children into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and, perhaps, reintroduce their parents
- Would you rather be in the religious rule keeping business or the heart changing

Father Ed: Chapters 36-40

Chapter 36:

- Confirmation – This is very applicable to St. Agnes especially the idea of mentors for each candidate

Chapter 37:

- **Confession: Try preaching it and scheduling accessible hours for it. I prefer making it an adult experience not focused on elementary school**

Chapter 38:

- **Anointing the Sick: Try encouraging people to be anointed after Mass prior going to the hospital. One or two weekends for the sacrament at all Masses. Preach on this to remedy misunderstanding about Anointing vs. Last Rites**

Chapter 39:

- I agree

Chapter 40:

- I don't believe that dropping Mass intentions or stopping Mass card is applicable. It's a bit too evangelical for me. The Catholic practice brings people to worship who might not come otherwise and gives a chance to evangelize.

Jenny: Chapters 41-45

Chapter 41: Funerals are Scud Missiles

In addition to weekday masses, how much impact would this affect the organization of the church? Depending on how many Funeral masses a church handle in a year – the question is, should this be an opportunity to create a Ministry?

Chapter 42: Do something for my Kids, you do something for me

Every decision a parent make about money and time, and everything else, is made with their children in mind – so if the community or church does something for the kids, they are doing it for the parents as well.

Chapter 43: After second grade, school isn't cool

Most parishes went out of their way to make the whole experience look and feel like school; desks, blackboards and textbooks. The problem with this is that after second grade, most kids don't really like school. Knowing that kids don't like school and certainly don't want to spend their evening or weekend free time in another school environment, every effort must be seen through for religious programs to look and feel different.

Chapter 44: Treat student like adults

As a church, we can be different and if we are, we will be more attractive to teens. If we have to develop a successful Student Ministry, we need to treat them as adults, honor their unique personalities and recognize and promote their talents

Chapter 45: Fundraisers create sideways energy

Fundraisers always create sideways energy that casts parishioners in the role of consumers and put the focus on raising cash rather than growing discipleship. Fundraising gain momentum, the church gains cash but it doesn't move people forward. The Church should do the very difficult thing get rid of fundraisers.

Jane Chapters 46-50

Overview on Parish Finances:

- Be direct, Communicate
- frequent clear consistent message .
- The parish ministries do the work of our faith and need funding.
- Connect work of the ministries with the parish mission and funding
- How to;
 1. single collect/week
 2. annual financial report and relate to 10% of income/parishioner an ministry work

3. electronic giving parish pay (increase frequent suggestion of availability of parish pay in the bulletin as a very short note.
4. kibosh in lobby - no
5. have all staff and ministry leaders give before asking others to give.

All financial requests should relate to the mission of the parish.

Chapter 46

- Method discussed - collections have 1

Chapter 47

- Develop mature givers. be consistent in the asking and the reasoning. no short term "down and dirty " requests.

Chapter 48

- Deal with how hard it is to ask for money if you ask you give. Staff and ministry leaders should give by %, tithe.
- Give financial report 1x /year. Do it right .Giving is God's work. You must face the issue of giving to meet the needs of the ministries.

Mark: Chapters 51-55

Chapter 51: Be Responsible/Be Transparent

- Does the money we raise and spend support the mission and vision of the church?
- Read Matt 25:19-21
- The Master gives more to those who are faithful and fruitful
- Our attitude should be one of “everything belongs to God”, You! are his steward.

Chapter 52: Widen the gene pool

- Be careful of Isolation, Insulation and Inbreeding
- How are our small groups organized – are they living, breathing and growing?
- You need both stability and change

Chapter 53: Get the right people on the bus

- Best practices – applies in business and Church
- Hire the smartest person – always
- The solution is always a person
- Lots of times the wrong person “wants it” – avoid the temptation to hire this person just because it is convenient
- Get the wrong people off the bus then be willing to wait
- Characteristics of the right person – Character, Competency, Chemistry

Chapter 54: Talent attracts Talent

- Celebrating and rewarding mediocrity is demoralizing to parishioners and staff
- We need to be on the lookout for talent – encourage it and use it
- As you promote the talent you have others will be attracted to the team

Chapter 55: Work weekends

- Parish staff and to a smaller extent volunteers need to change their mindset – we need to “work” the weekend
- This is when the people are here – for the most part Reading Ray is not here during the week. We need to meet him on the weekend

Joanne: Chapters 56-60

Chapter 56 – Be Leaders Who Learn

“The moment you stop learning you stop leading”

- Read, Reflect, Replicate
- Church is hard, don’t reinvent the wheel

Chapter 57 – Prepare for Battle

With evangelization, conflict is inevitable: Pray, communicate, do damage control

- Contain, don’t amplify conflict
- More communication is usually better than less: bulletin, web site, at Mass, etc

Chapter 58 – Cards are Good; Letters are Bad

- There will be criticism. Accept that fact and move on. Don’t dwell on it.

Chapter 59 – Don’t Be Upset When the Wrong People Leave

- The vine is pruned so it bears more fruit.
- Wrong people: those who reject your vision, angry people, consumers.
- Pruning is necessary for healthy growth

Chapter 60 – Don’t Be Surprised When the Right People Leave

- Right people: give their time, energy and financial resources, those working in the trenches
- Use this as an opportunity to learn why the right people leave and make corrections. Common reasons the right people leave are miscommunication, being taken for granted, burnout, to get out of a job they were stuck with.

Beth: Chapters 61-65

Chapter 60 Don't Be Surprised When the Right People Leave

- Because their friends and family didn't like us
- Got tired of being on the receiving end of criticism'
- Although something they liked, not buying into the whole picture
- Only willing to go so far
- Because of a decision they don't agree with (sense of principle)i.e. tithing
- Because of miscommunication or missteps made (by parish)
- Because taken for granted
- Because stuck with some ministry job they never really wanted to do-left to get out of the job

Some reasons are beyond our control other times our fault. When people leave we do some soul searching.

When the right people leave grieve the loss and use it as an opportunity to learn and grow. Leave the door open for them to come back.

Chapter 61: Say You're Wrong When You're Wrong: Say You're Sorry Even When You're Not

When we refuse to take responsibility for what we've done wrong, we abdicate our position of leadership.

- if you are moving, if you are changing, and if you are growing, you probably have a lot to apologize for
- sometimes your decisions or actions will hurt people unintentionally
- sometimes people will feel overlooked or left out
- sometimes they will be offended that you failed to provide them with what they thought they needed, or deserved
- say sorry even when it is not your fault, don't let the lack of an apology get in the way of your mission and your vision, you will move your parish further and faster if you do

Chapter 62: Admit You Don't Know What You're Doing

"LORD WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING, BUT YOU DO; GUIDE US."

- Building God's kingdom requires us to go where we have not been before and do what we do, not know how to do it.
- The exercise in which we are engaged is inherently risky and scary (trying new things)
- Your faith and confidence in God will go up and your stress level will go down (admit you don't know and rely on God to guide you)
- Bible urges us to live our lives and lead our parishes with a radical sense of dependence on God – radical, as **with all our hearts**.

Chapter 63: Get Over It

The opportunities in ministry to be offended or hurt are infinite. A change in anything will bring about conflict and sometimes it is personal.

- Expect it. Anticipate it. Get over it.
- When we find ourselves in conflict it is a spiritual battle.
- Talk to God
- Talk to Someone (but let it die there)
- Talk to the Offender
- Forgive
- Learn to bring your wounds to God, ask him to heal your heart and forgive those who offended you

Chapter 64: Celebrate Wins

Because there is always more we can do, from time to time, we need to stop and celebrate “wins”.

- When an unchurched or dechurched person comes to our parish for the first time and has a great experience – that is a win.
- Someone enrolls in parish pay – that is a win.
- Someone begins serving in a ministry – that is a win.
- Someone finds time for daily Mass or Eucharistic Adoration – that is a win.
- **Any Move Toward Christ is a win, and if we don't stop and celebrate, then we can become burned out as staff members and volunteers DEFINE WINS**
- Make sure you are all on same page.
- **SHARE WINS-** Don't keep it to yourself. There are also wins that should be shared with the entire congregation. Don't keep good news to yourself; make it part of your staff culture or parish life.
- **ENJOY WINS-** Carve out a time, a place and the people who can celebrate with you.

Chapter 65: Because a Win Belongs To Everyone

- Wins in the church are not always obvious
- We define a win as any time a person takes a step on the path of discipleship or any act of faith someone shares with us.
- Any win and every step of faith takes a team of people.
- People get into ministry not only because they have heard it announced clearly and consistently explained but because they see other parishioners serving with joy and enthusiasm.
- Everything is grace. It is really not us; it's God. So there is no reason to boast about what we accomplish. As a leader, how can you take it a step further? Give other people the credit as often as you can.

Fr. Steve: Chapters 66-

Chapter 66: WHAT GETS REWARDED GETS REPEATED

- affirm, thank, reward

OVER ALL TOOLS

Chapter 67: HAVE FUN

- JPII & Mother Teresa very playful, do we laugh enough

Chapter 68: FATHER IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU

- priests can't be at everything

Chapter 69: BE AN AUTHORITY

- importance of Eucharist and prayer

Chapter 70: EVERYTHING TAKES LONGER THAN YOU THINK

- be discerning, be patient, be positive

Chapter 71: THERE ARE NO SILVER BULLETS

- Every major problem and challenge is multifaceted, and because it is, the solution must be multifaceted as well.

Chapter 72: SEEK WISE COUNSEL

- use wisdom/talent of parish & community

Chapter 73: CHRISTMAS EVE IS PARAGIGM FOR EVERYTHING

- it was a success, what did it teach us about what we want to do in a bigger way?

Chapter 74: IT'S NOT AN AIR WAR; IT'S A TRENCH WAR

- the Church will be renewed as individual lives and hearts are changed and become more fully devoted followers of Christ and, in turn, as parishes are more and more changed

Chapter 75: STOP TRYING TO MAKE PEOPLE GO TO CHURCH, AND MAKE CHURCH MATTER

- there is a hunger, we are wired for God