

HOSPITALITY BEST PRACTICES FOR PARISHES AND SCHOOLS

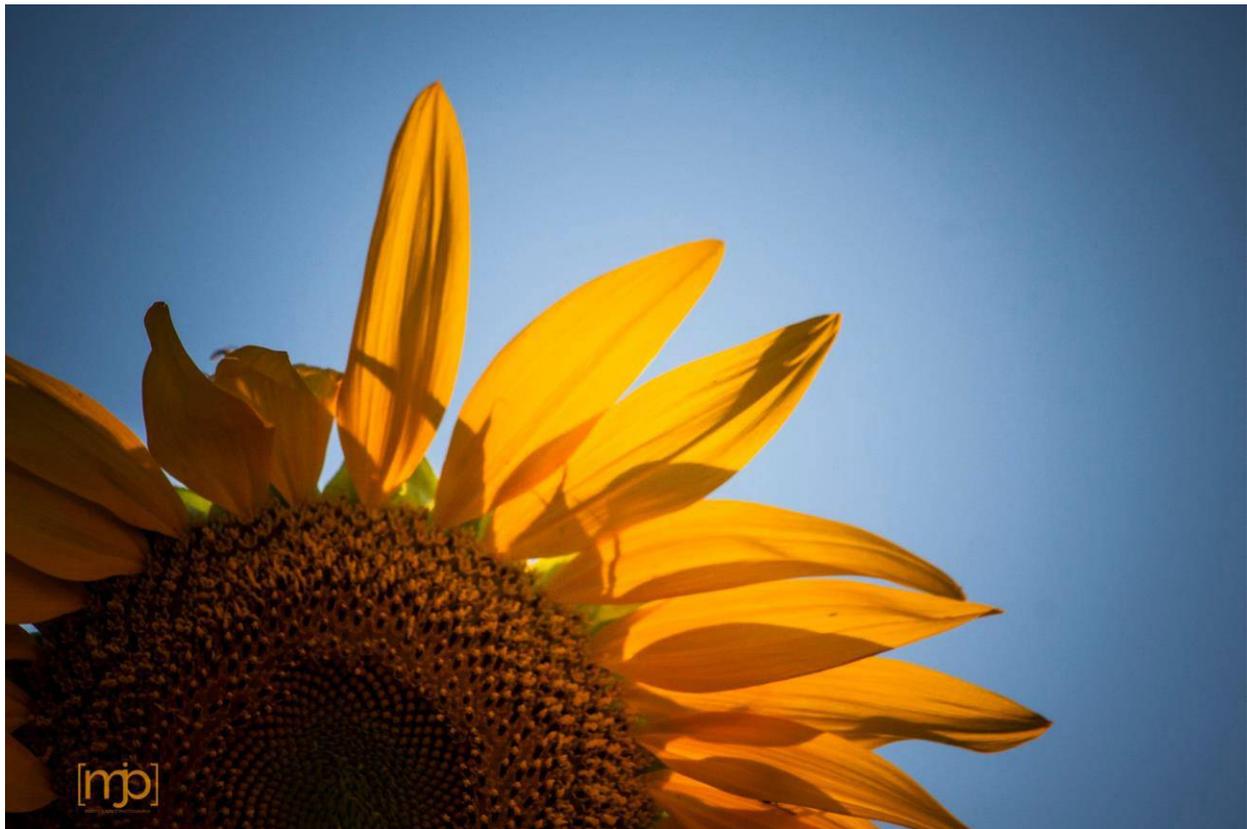


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WELCOME & HOSPITALITY PROOF

A FABULOUS LIST FOR YOU

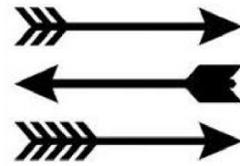
- The practice of hospitality will become second nature in your Parish with some diligence in the beginning. Especially if you are looking to expand its effects beyond the main hospitality committee.
- Hospitality is contagious...even if it makes more work, the results are worth it.
- Christine Pohl asks: "Who needs Welcome? Who needs to know they are precious to God and his People? Whose absence keeps us from being whole?"
- Absolutely ALL of us need of hospitality, and all of us need to practice hospitality.
- Hospitality – **the radical kind...is such an ancient concept and Jesus was really good at it.** For us today it's like it is fresh news, **hot off the press! It's the key to a thriving community.**
- One act of hospitality will lead to another, soon it will be spilling out the church doors, to the neighborhood and beyond. With just a little bit of teaching and leading by example. You won't be able to stop the wave. The world is starved for authentic relationships, whether people are aware of it or not.
- We need each other, we all need the same welcome at some point. We even need to know how to be the one with the open door, the plate of cookies, the smile, the handshake. It takes practice – **but it can't be dismissed as someone else's job or something unnecessary.** It is vital to parish life.
- Think of the church as a collection of wrapped gifts, or medicine that will bring health, or a beautifully prepared meal...then think of hospitality as the means to get those things to the people who need it...like a serving tray or gift basket.
- Hospitality is merely the container...a vessel that can take on many forms. One must constantly be on the lookout for how to offer and provide it!
- You are in control of the packaging...how elaborate or simple is up to you - just make sure it is beautiful and given with love. Who will be able to resist?

Lord, we ask you to help us grow into a parish where all are welcome and friendship, kindness, mercy and joy are gifts we offer to all we meet. Teach us to become people of hospitality and to look clearly and honestly at our parish community and see where love, openness and generosity are needed. Help us to know how to offer hospitality and in turn receive it. We ask that you help us become a community that will bring people closer to you, on fire with their faith and joy enough to change the world.

We pray this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen.

MINISTRY

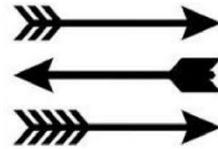
FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. Youth Ministry is a vital part of parish life. Youth and their families are the busiest and most fragmented in the community, but have a great desire to be a part of a welcoming **community**. **So that's** what parishes must provide; family- friendly youth ministry, family sensitive calendaring, events, sacrament preparation and faith formation. It is the role of the youth minister or coordinators to advocate for teenagers and all they need. Invite a variety of parents and teens to be part of planning and calendaring so the efforts of the parish reflect the needs, hopes and dreams of those you serve.
2. **Pay special attention to hospitality when gathering teens. It isn't easy for a teenager to come to a ministry event if they aren't regulars or are new. Have your team think** through what that might feel like and then design your hospitality accordingly. That means, lots of people to welcome, greet and mingle at the beginning of a session or event. Name tags, community builder games, someone to be with a new person through the activities. Be sure that they know where restrooms are, where they should put their belongings and a sense of the itinerary. Post it and announce it. No one likes a surprise! Do a fabulous job right at the beginning and it will set the stage for a successful event.
3. Food. That might seem like a given in youth ministry and it is. But if you are going to **welcome and offer hospitality, do it well. Don't just fall back on pizza and soda** – but ask the young people what they would like at events. With people being more health-conscious – they might appreciate a yogurt bar -with tons of great toppings to add. They might like a salad bar, baked potato bar or smoothies! Check out acai bowls on Pinterest too. Step it up and make it memorable!
4. **Thank you's. Don't forget to affirm and thank young people for their leadership, help,** volunteering, serving and being present at things. A hand-written note is a rare thing today – try to do that each week for those who helped in any way. This builds trust, depth of relationships and creates a willingness to say yes to community!
5. Model and teach hospitality. Your teens should be encouraged to look out for those who are new, feeling out of place or looking for a friend. Teach them how to reach out and say hello, invite in to conversation, and feel at home – like they belong. Youth ministry that looks like a club or a group – **isn't the fullest it can be. It is always inviting,** welcoming, and helping people find a place to belong. A community of faith that is real and authentic. Teach, model, and practice!

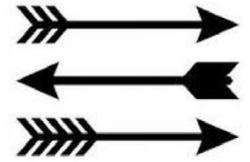
CATECHISTS

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. Catechists are really the first people parents and children often meet in the parish setting. The most important thing a catechist can do is to welcome! Have lights on, the room set, places ready, name tags or lanyards ready and some community builders set so they can settle and feel at home. Parents and children or youth should always feel welcome and know that you truly care about them – not just in the church setting, but beyond. Hospitality is key.
2. The lesson planned is really a means to an end – **it isn't** the end. So, listening, building community, praying together, sharing faith and doing something together that will model how one is to BE Christ is the most important thing you can do. Be sure to pray together, not just memorized prayers, but spontaneous prayers and keep little lists of answered prayers. Teach them to pray for each other, the parish community and those in the world in need.
3. Practice hospitality in your space. Teach them how to think of each other and serve each other. Welcome, greet, share treats, listen, stay connected beyond their time at church. Sending cards to them during holidays, holydays and birthdays builds friendships and authenticity.
4. Be there for other events in their lives – school concerts, plays, sports and such. Take church to where they are! This act of hospitality touches both children and their families. Let them know that church matters and their parish community loves them!
5. If our parishes need to become more welcoming, it starts with the children. Teach them how to be ministers – how to greet and welcome, how to usher and how to be kind to others at church. It all boils down to noticing. Do they see a family in need of a little help with their children? An elderly person who needs a door open? A person who needs a seat when the pew is full? A person who is new and is looking for restrooms, the parish office or where coffee and donuts are offered? They can help in these areas and bring a little life and joy to the ministries too! Practice these with them and let them find their passion!

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

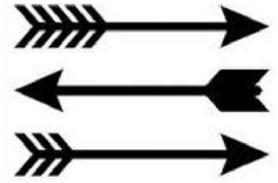


FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES

1. **Children's Liturgy of the Word is a fantastic ministry for every parish. It is a time where the littles of the parish get to hear the Good News through story, share a bit and sometimes make a little craft that will remind them of the Gospel. It is also evangelization for parents and children. Young families need some special attention – and this helps provide a time for parents to be fed by the Word and homily while their children are too, each on their own level. It should be a warm, welcoming blessing to the community.**
2. **The catechists and helpers have a big task – getting the little one's out of church quickly and then dive into a great lesson and wrap things up all with little busy ones in about 20 minutes. This ministry is for the brave! So, the catechists need to be equipped and affirmed – given all the support they need for this vital ministry. Making sure they have their resources and materials by Friday afternoons and chatting with them on Monday to see how things went. This is the link needed for healthy ministry.**
3. **Affirmation and follow through. Parents need to know how good it is for them to make the effort to get to mass with their children. They should hear it from the pastor, coordinators and the whole community! If you want young families present and active, the whole community must show it and make room for them. Families should be encouraged to ask their children about their time in Children's Liturgy of the Word and find ways to connect the message to their everyday lives. Give the tools for that to become a reality!**
4. **Children are vital to parish life. Every once- in- a- while, welcome the children back into mass and let them share what they learned, made or heard. It will be a delightful way to show that faith is learned, modeled and experienced at every age.**
5. **Space and resources are important! Make sure the catechists and volunteers are trained and have the very best materials to use and a space that is happy, safe and child-friendly. Using the parish council meeting room, a hallway or lounge is not conducive to learning. Invest in your children's ministry and families will feel welcome, heard and loved. Invite them to help make things better too. They may have great ideas, supplies to share or some creativity to make a big difference!**

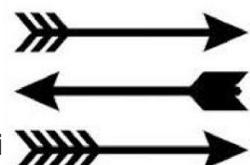
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. Vacation Bible School is such a good idea on a million different levels. It is evangelization at its finest and a way to engage families, youth and children in a concentrated week of learning, faith building and fun. **If you haven't put one on in your parish, talk with and visit those who have, learning what are some good things to know and do to be successful. If you are experienced at VBS, look at things with fresh eyes – invite new people to be part of the VBS team.**
2. Spend a lot of time on planning for hospitality. It might be the first time a family steps into the parish or meets the pastor! Look at all your promotional material – is it welcoming and inviting? Is it easy to register? Is the person registering people or answering the phones a happy inviting person? Are the forms easy to fill out? Can it be done online? Is VBS cost prohibitive to anyone?
3. Timing. When is VBS offered? Is it a good time of the day for families? Some offer VBS in the evenings or on the weekend to make sure no one is left out. What do your families need? Could you do a quick survey by mail, survey monkey or phone? Find out long before you start planning!
4. Parents love VBS because it is safe, happy and holy child-care. They get a couple of **hours to catch up on laundry, shop, get work done from the office etc. Don't begrudge busy families for seeing it as this – it's a gift! If you want to engage them – try asking for help with snacks or something before the week so they feel like they have contributed and are part of the fun and are closer to being a part of the community!**
5. Beyond VBS – **what is the next thing you want families to be a part of? If you don't know, gather a team of families to brainstorm how to stay connected. Could you have a picnic? Game night? Bonfire? Movie Night? Parents Night Out? Plan for it and get the information into the hands of parents, grandparents and neighbors before the week is out. When families feel welcome, listened to and understood – they will come back – so be ready!**

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

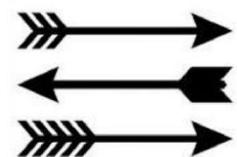


FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES

1. Hospitality and welcome when we are serving in the community and beyond are about extending the Eucharist to those in need. Many parishes have concerted efforts in justice and service and parishioners doing things in the community without much fanfare. How can we make the most of all those opportunities? Have a plan and commit to sharing the love, welcome and joy from your parish with others.
2. Bring things from the parish to those in need. Do you have ministries in your parish that make things? Quilts? Prayer shawls? Meals? Picnic tables or benches? Perhaps rosaries, stained glass or screen print tee-shirts? Find out what amazing gifts your parishioners have and invite them to share. This acknowledges their gifts, invites them to engage and brings joy to others through the offering.
3. Serving with joy. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis encourages Catholics to share **their faith with joy**. **Don't have dour faces or look grumpy or irritated** – no one will want what you offer. Instead, offer a smile, a bit of light and joy – that will bring people to want to know the source of your joy! Those in need in our communities are hungry for love, for peace, joy and hope and we have these in abundance – but must consciously try to share them with others.
4. What exactly do the poor and marginalized need around hospitality? They need to be acknowledged as people with an inherent dignity – created in the image and likeness of God. The hospitality offered should be food, shelter, clothing, attention, kindness and all the things Jesus encourages in Matthew 25. When we serve on behalf of our ministry or parish – we are an extension of the Eucharist. We are formed by the sacrament and sent in mission to bring joy, welcome and hope!
5. Make service a regular part of your parish life. When it is an everyday occurrence – our parishioners begin to see that it is part of our faith to offer hospitality, service, time and love to others. Make a commitment to monthly events that all can participate in!

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

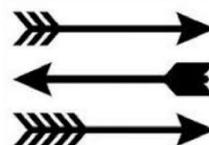
FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. The Rite of Christian Initiation is all about invitation. Your team must be prepared to invite, welcome and offer hospitality at every meeting, gathering and celebration. It should be extended to their families as well. Who is on your team? Your best welcomers? The most joyful people in the parish? The best catechists and mentors? Step up the team this year!
2. A thought for the RCIA team and pastor – what are you inviting people into? The Catholic faith, a beautiful legacy of God shaping lives throughout history and giving us Jesus his son and the first church of disciples and apostles – bearing witness to what Jesus did for them. And now – us giving witness in our time. That is incredible. We are also inviting RCIA candidates into a community of believers and what do they find in our parish? Take time to look at your parish through the eyes of a seeker. What is there that shows you are welcoming, loving, joyful and a place they can call home?
3. Radical welcome. Sometimes, the parish at large is the last to know you even have RCIA candidates. Let them know early and often who these lovely people are. Ask them to pray. Invite them to offer hospitality at their formation sessions. Invite them to parish events and be sure they have sponsors and mentors who stick with them and make sure they get to know people and feel comfortable.
4. Diocesan celebrations. Think ahead to the Rite of Election. What can your team and parish community do for those seeking the sacraments? How will you affirm their choices and help them feel like they belong? Notes of encouragement, paying for their dinner and travel to the Mass, and letting them know you are praying for them are all signs of a welcoming parish.
5. The Easter Vigil. This is the night. Have the candidates been well-prepared and informed about all that will take place? Do the parishioners know all that will take place? Make the most out of the liturgy and take care to make sure everyone is well-cared for and have a celebration along with a gift from the parish. A big welcome is due!

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

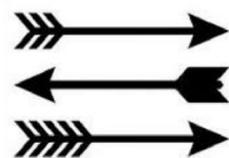
FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. What an amazing ministry this is. With fewer couples choosing a church wedding, we need to celebrate when we are invited into this journey with the newly engaged. It is opportunity for the parish to mentor, share faith, encourage, affirm and help the couple set a firm foundation. This is a gift to the parish too – it reminds us that life is certainly a fabulous journey and the vocation of marriage is a gift to the church and the world. So, we help couples figure out what it means to have a sacramental marriage and a vocation to the world.
2. Your parish team should be made up of couples of all ages and stages in marriage. They should also be joyful witnesses of their faith and people who love to share their story and have the gift of making people feel welcome. The team should pray regularly for the couples they minister to and make the time of preparation well worth the time and effort for the couples.
3. But first – hospitality. How do you welcome? Be sure to have a team ready to invite and welcome the couple or couples warmly with a great setting, good refreshments to make them feel at ease. Staying connected between meetings is good too – a tweet or message – a card or call. Just checking in to see how they are doing and if the parish can do anything for them is always a welcome message.
4. Authenticity. Gen X and Millennial generations are not always quite convinced of the whole institution of the church and why church weddings are good or why the rules are the way they are for marriage. It is up to the team to teach more through conversation and dialogue than from a position of authority. Their genuineness and authenticity will often speak to the couple more than any books or videos ever could.
5. The parish should know of couples preparing to be married too! This sacrament is indeed a gift to the community and the couples should be known, invited, affirmed and welcomed at every turn by the whole community. The children might create cards or posters, notice on the website and in a newsletter, are great ways to introduce the couples and make way for parish support!

BAPTISM PREPARATION

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. This beautiful sacrament offers parishes the opportunity to welcome, invite and connect with parents in a very powerful way. Hospitality is key for making people feel welcome, affirmed and hopeful. Every meeting must include a great atmosphere - good snacks, a warm welcome and a good learning environment! Those in the ministry need support, resources, affirmation and a budget for refreshments and fun.

2. Parents coming for the sacrament may be coming back after a time away, new to the church or encouraged by a family member to seek the sacrament. However, the parents arrived, it is imperative that they feel accepted, honored, affirmed in their role as a parent and supported by the church.

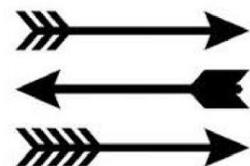
3. A welcoming community is a good place to raise up children. New parents need to be encouraged to connect in other ways after the celebration of Baptism. Give them good reasons to come back. Parent events, children events, family activities etc.

4. The parish community should be invited to welcome those in baptism preparation. Cards, meals, banners or some way to commemorate the baptism could be created by children or teens in other ministry settings. Announcements, pictures, a write up on the website or in the bulletin is great too!

5. Have a plan to invite the newly baptized and their families to upcoming events. Don't let go! Stay connected and continually invite, including them in planning and doing things together. We don't just welcome at the sacrament, but extend the invitation in the days, months and years to come. Let them know they are important to the parish community!

FIRST RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST PREPARATION

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



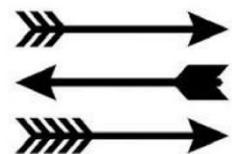
1. These two sacraments are very special in the life of a child, their family and the parish community. Often, families seek out this sacrament and it becomes a reason they

attend faith formation, and participate in weekend liturgy. Others eagerly await the day as engaged parishioners. What a wonderful opportunity for welcome and hospitality. The preparation for this sacrament offers lots of times and ways the parish can connect with the children and their whole family. So, begin with a great team. Start praying for the new group of children and young people who will be preparing for the sacrament asking especially how to welcome and help them feel at home and know they belong

2. Communication – a way to extend hospitality. Have a calendar for parents right away in the fall so they know exactly what to expect during this special year. Dates for parent/child/family meetings, practices, when sessions are and when the celebration of the sacraments will occur. Make sure to give them all they need to be the best teachers, mentors and supporters of their children. Create a Facebook community, connect on Flocknote or another text service – use every opportunity to encourage, uplift and offer welcome.
3. Each time you gather with the children and families is a gift. Make use the time wisely – **don't make them jump through hoops. Be kind, patient loving and ever extending the invitation to chat, to learn and to join in weekend liturgy.**
4. Spend time thinking and planning the sacrament celebrations with parents, pastor, liturgy team and musicians. When the stage is set for an encounter with Christ – beautiful things happen. Make sure the stage is set, ready and reflects the needs and voices of the families. Plan ahead for the extended family who might attend and be ready to radically welcome them!
5. Have ready greeters, welcomers and staff at the celebration of the sacraments – they will be able to guide and help visitors, encourage families and to witness the wonderful preparation and readiness of the children. It will be cause for celebration all around. Be sure to have planned follow up for families – to keep them close, connected and involved.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES

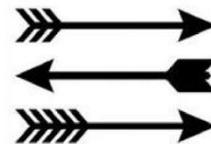


1. The sacrament of Confirmation is an incredible opportunity to renew the whole church byway of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The young people preparing for the sacrament have some serious decisions ahead of them and need the prayer, support, welcome and affirmation of the parish community. How will that happen? Perhaps have the first names of the candidates on slips of paper and invite parishioners to pick up a name after mass one weekend and keep that person in prayer during the time of preparation. Pray for open hearts, gifts of the spirit, joy and passion. That will make a difference!

2. Each time the young people gather should be an occasion of celebration. Today when there are many things that take the time and attention of young people – that they have chosen to prepare for a sacrament is a big deal. Tending to hospitality will not only make the gatherings nice, it will be a witness to the young people of how to be church. We gather, break bread and go out into the world to share the Good News! Have a team dedicated to hospitality and welcome.
3. Offering opportunities for the young people to be hospitality ministers is a great idea. Take a few weekends out of the year to have them come, greet, welcome and offer refreshments after mass. The trick is to have them offer the kind of hospitality that would make them want to stay, to become part of the parish community. Radical Hospitality.
4. The parents and families of the candidates could use that hospitality too. A note, a card or some way to acknowledge the commitment, care and love of the parents or guardians will be appreciated. It takes a big commitment on the part of the adults in the life of a teenager or youth to come to mass, to be a good example to make sure their faith has been formed and they have a community to belong to. That is huge – affirm those adults!
5. The celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation should be readied far in advance. Special attention should be paid to the fact that visitors will be in attendance – extended family and friends. How will they be greeted and welcomed and made to feel at home? Who will instruct them kindly, and gently as to what is expected during the mass and what they should expect. Making all those announcements with kindness, compassion and a welcoming attitude will go a long way. Thank all those who helped with Confirmation in any way. They should be given gifts, public thanks and leave knowing they are appreciated! **Don't forget the Bishop and the Emcee along with your pastor, musicians, liturgist, catechists, maintenance people and anyone else!**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. At the heart of your ministry's mission and vision - hospitality is there. Children, youth and families come from all walks of life and it is the privilege of the DRE to invite, welcome and make all who walk through your doors feel like they belong. Take a look at your mission and vision - and make some updates to include words of welcome, hospitality, friendship and openness.

2. The DRE is the advocate for children, youth and families. The parish serves the people and all decisions must be made for the good of the all. How is money allocated in the parish? Are Religious Education families on the boards, councils and active in ministries? Find ways to make the connections so everyone and anyone would feel welcome to be a part of parish life. Advocate for hospitality!

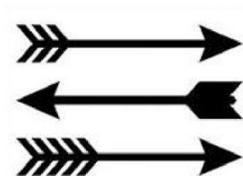
3. Do the children and youth in your programs learn hospitality basics? How to greet and welcome? How to think of another person before themselves? Would they give up their seat, offer the last donut, share a hymnal or move over in the pew? Observe a bit and then add some good training and mentoring into your gatherings!

4. A Director should insist that the very first thing a catechist must do before starting with prayer is to make sure each child or teen is greeted, welcomed and called by name. It may mean being prepared earlier, being intentional or inviting some other youth to help with it - but it will make any lesson a better lesson when all feel welcome and part of the little community created in catechesis!

5. Where do parents go while their children are in programs or sessions or at events? You may wish to offer classes or speakers for them, but often they just need a rest from the chaos of life today. Offer coffee, fruit infused water, and some great snacks along with a place to sit and chat with other parents. No agenda - no expectations. Just space. Hospitality experienced is hospitality shared!

MINISTRY AFFIRMATION

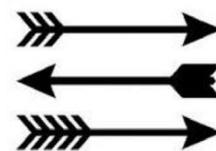
FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. Parish volunteers and ministry staff are the very heart of a faith community. Their commitment, creativity, strengths and passion shape and drive a parish in amazing ways. It is for this reason they need affirmation and encouragement along with incredible hospitality. They should receive that which they regularly give. Most likely they will scoff at any attempts at this, but there is a humility in being able to receive as well as give. When they can receive – they become truly authentic in their service and ministry. Give them opportunities for authenticity.

2. Regular celebrations are important. Successes of programs, events and outreach are reason to gather and affirm those involved. It should become the culture of the parish to take time to reflect on things accomplished before jumping right into the next things. A little party, snacks, ice cream, cake, great coffee from a local place – anything to take the time to be together and acknowledge effort, work and a job well-done.
3. Take some time to list all the people who make the parish run. Then – next to their names write something you know about them. Then, next to that – a way that their presence and work at the parish might be acknowledged. A card? A hand-written note, a call from the pastor? Be creative. This is practicing hospitality. They will do this too when it has touched their hearts – and the gift will continue to bless the parish community.
4. Staff, the pastor, or a seminarian who might be leaving or retiring needs attention. No matter how long a person has been employed, they need a good send-off and thank you. Gather a team to brainstorm on how to do this well. A parish is the living sign of Jesus in the world today – we must live up to that and treat our people with respect, dignity and graciousness. Often, the church has not said good bye well – especially if there has been some situation that called for letting a person go. They still should be acknowledged and leave knowing they were treated well.
5. Ways to affirm: notes, flowers, funny Catholic things (Google that – you will be amazed) Public acknowledgement, a visit or call from the pastor, a lunch date, special treat, gather the team or staff to do a special cheer or song (anything fun will do), have a mass, pray over and with them, balloons, posters, etc. Be creative. The parish that lavishes love like this is contagious. Try it and see!

HOSPITALITY AND PARISH MINISTRY MEETINGS



FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES

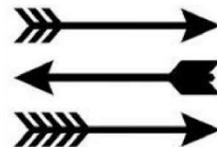
1. Get to know those on your committee, planning team or council. Play, break bread, go on retreat, and pray together. Be a community built on a common purpose and common faith. Share faith at your meetings – take time for this before getting to the difficult or heady decisions. Be open to each other – listen before speaking. Pray for wisdom and discernment. This creates a welcoming place.
2. Make sure you have diversity on the council. Members are advocates for ministries, households and the most vulnerable in the parish. They all need a voice! Welcome them warmly and

offer the best hospitality – see what they need to be able to be a part of the committees and offer that. (Transportation, child care etc.)

3. Continue to grow and learn in your role – attend seminars, share leadership books and webinars -let the parish know you are doing this so you can serve them well. Keep confidences. Be truthful and honest. Let your decisions be made with love, mercy and kindness. Learn what it means for your parish to be a sacrament to the world. Discuss this, pray on it and keep it ever in your mind as you make important decisions in regard to staff, facility, stewardship and the future. This all creates an environment where hospitality thrives.
4. **Don't see spending money or time on hospitality as a luxury. It is the heart of growing disciples,** strengthening parish life and keeping parishioners well-served. It makes for the welcoming community that people hunger for. Give people a reason to come on Sunday and invite their friends.
5. Be transparent and vulnerable. This creates a community of authenticity and honesty. Share minutes and documents. Let people drop in on meetings and be a part of your team, ministry or event. Cliques are a thing of the past and have no place in a vibrant parish today. Offer to share skills and abilities with others – offer leadership training and let people get to know the parish leadership. That extension of welcome and openness will bring gift and blessing to the parish.

COFFEE AND DONUTS

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



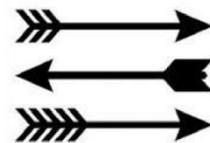
1. Like most people coffee and donuts is a great reason to come to a certain mass, skip breakfast or encourage middle and high school youth to get up, get ready and get to mass. Coffee and donuts is also a fabulous way to build community, and be hospitable – when we do it right. Assess the look of the gathering space first. Is it accessible to all? Is it clean and are there nice decorations on tables and good lighting? Is it conducive to conversation?
2. Are you offering the right thing for your parish social? Do you cater to the needs of those who are gluten intolerant, have allergies or are trying to cut out caffeine and

sugar? If we don't consider those things we may be alienating people who just might want to be more engaged in the community. Take some time to survey people to see what might be the next generation of Coffee and Donuts!

3. This ministry of hospitality becomes less so if we charge money, serve in Styrofoam cups and are not mindful of who might be missing from this lovely event. Gather those who are part of this ministry and brainstorm on ways to make it more inclusive, environmentally sound and available to all. This is the time to ask if the team has the right people on board. Those who are grumpy, cross or pay more attention to their team than those coming might need to be replaced or given a gentle reminder of what a ministry of hospitality is all about. Invite people to observe this ministry and give some feedback on how it can be made more welcoming.
4. This ministry is a great place to invite new-comers and visitors. Perhaps give them a coupon for coffee and donuts on the house! Have people at the ready to sit with new people, invite them to their table and to be on the look -out for those who look a bit out of place or confused. This is radical hospitality – heaping lots of hospitality on top of a ministry that offers welcome.
5. Use the time and space to invite, share flyers, and to show off what the parish is up to. These can be table tents, little half sheet flyers or table-runners made from butcher paper with messages scrawled in marker. In other words – make it fun, welcoming and THE place to be on a Sunday morning!

YOUNG ADULTS

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. Young adults are looking for a place to be welcomed. They hunger for the holy, community and belonging. Do you have someone who has a ministry to this age group? Find someone! Young adults range from 18-39 and have every configuration of work, life, school and family. Their presence in our parishes is vital and they need an advocate in the parish.

2. Ask them often what they need and what the church can do for them - then do it. We like to do surveys and gather information, but at some point we have to make changes that will engage young adults in our parishes. It won't look like what we are used to, but get used to that! They are looking for vibrant parishes and have ideas on just how to do that!

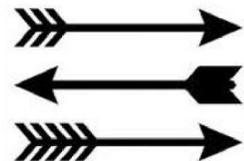
3. We imagine that we have to make over our churches to have lasers and light shows for young adults, but really it's much less complicated and less expensive! They have expectations for things to be done well; music, liturgies, meetings, communication methods and gathered activities. They are busy, used to the latest technology and customized everything. However, at the heart of things is that they are holding churches to a different standard and are asking us to give them a reason to stay, belong and be involved. Make some simple changes to your website, social media platforms and ask at every meeting, **"Have we considered our young adults?"**

4. Food, faith and follow through. Gatherings should include elements of all the things we are good at and love; prayer, sacraments, theology, social justice, catechesis, Scripture and saints. Share the amazing ways the Church is alive today. Do this in a casual atmosphere with some great food - be creative and spend some time on Pinterest! The follow through is to offer a great event, and to continually invite young adults into relationship -- with Jesus, with the parish community, with one another.

5. Offer intentional invitation to be a part of parish leadership - with their lifestyles in mind. Young adults have great ideas, but a long-term commitment on a council or committee isn't going to work. Find ways to include their expertise, opinions and ideas. Make it easy for them to get involved! The key here is really to get to know the young adults in your parish and to commit to making the church a home for them. For a deeper look at Young Adult Ministry - look on a bookshelf in the parish office for "Sons and Daughters of the Light" - the USCCB original document on Young Adults - and the next book, "Connecting Young Adults." Dust them off, take a fresh look at how you can better serve this amazing group!

WELCOMERS AND GREETERS

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



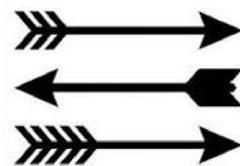
1. These ministers are the shining stars of weekend worship. They open doors, greet, help people find their way to restrooms, coat rooms, coffee and donuts, and a million other places. They are the first people anyone sees when walking through the doors. People in this ministry must be warm, welcoming, happy to be there, informative, joyful and helpful. Take a minute to think of the people in that ministry in your parish community. Do they fit the description? Do people comment on how welcoming the parish is? If so, then you are doing a fabulous job. But most of us need a wee bit of work.
2. Offer training to those interested in being welcomers and greeters. Teach them how to do a great handshake, how to open doors and help people with strollers, walkers, wheelchairs or crutches in. Have them practice a joyful welcome and happy smile. It

might seem silly, but we take it for granted that everyone knows how to welcome or what we even mean by that – **and they don't.** So, make a list of what's important to the parish with this ministry, create job descriptions and train. It will show – and it will make a difference.

3. You may have people who have been doing this ministry for a long time and don't think they need training. They do. If they don't fit in with the mission of the ministry, it might be time to help them find a new place to use their gifts and talents. Weekend masses are crucial and we can't get hospitality wrong then – we may not have a second chance with a visitor or someone coming back after a time away. Put those who are great at this ministry right out in front. It will help become a place of welcome that is authentic and genuine when you have the right people on board.
4. This is also the job of every parishioner – to welcome and greet. They need to be told! You might help them become good at it too. Have them warmly greet and welcome those sitting in the pews with them. You might have a list of how to be a welcoming person on the screens before mass, in the bulletin or on your parish social media platforms. Let people know it is an expectation. It takes time for the culture of a parish to change, but it can happen!
5. This ministry is one people might skip if they are scheduled – **they assume that it isn't** important, or someone else might fill in. If everyone sees themselves as a welcome or greeter – they can jump right in and help. So, maybe put that out to the people – that the parish never wants to be without a welcome or greeter and to step up and help if you see the need. Practice makes perfect. And – pretty soon, everyone will take responsibility for being a parish of hospitality and welcome!

LITURGICAL MINISTRY

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES

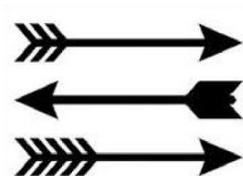


1. The roles in Liturgical Ministry are extremely important. The Eucharist is the heart and soul of our Catholic faith and we want those who come to worship and celebrate the sacrament – open, welcomed and ready to receive all the liturgy has for them. The main thing in this ministry is to be prepared and do all you can to NOT have to scramble for things at the last minute – but to be ready for anything that might come your way. Anticipate needs of those who will be coming through the doors. Be in prayer for those who will be there and those who are not able to be with the community.

2. When inviting people into this ministry, be sure to have people of all ages and backgrounds at the table. The conversations, plans and ideas will be more diverse, beautiful and exciting. Listen to new ideas and teach the team as you go. There is a great deal of learning that takes place when you are behind the scenes helping this way and becomes a gift to those who are on the Liturgy team and of course the whole community.
3. This ministry is often responsible for the environment in the church proper. Each liturgical season has its own beauty. Discuss how your parish would like to express the seasons, use guidelines from your Diocese or the USCCB and find the very best way to help people enter into the season with beauty, prayerfulness and joy. This usually means with powerful symbols, bringing nature inside for the season (real plants, and flowers, trees and such). The goal is to help people be ready for the encounter with Christ in the Sacrament. What will that be for those in your parish?
4. Are the lights on? The musicians present and ready? Are all those serving present? Ushers, Welcomers, Greeters, Lector, Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, Musicians, Cantors, Priest, Deacon and Servers? Check to see if there are any special **announcements, Children's Liturgy of the Word and the like**. If you need to fill in for **someone who is missing...take a deep breath, say a prayer and look for those who love to help and can do what is asked**. Be sure that everything needed for the mass is ready – and that the team has time to pray together. **Remember, it's about Jesus, not us!**
5. Joyfulness. Your team has prepared, now as people gather for Mass, be out welcoming and greeting, listening, talking and helping people find what they need. Thank those who served in any and every capacity after Mass. Blessings!

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES

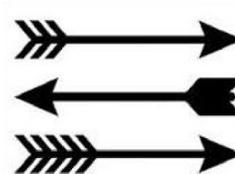


1. The school offices are the hub of everything that comes in or out of the school. All communication to the students, faculty, staff, parents and community beyond should express welcome, hospitality and joy. Your school has something to offer that no other has – find that giftedness and use it to invite others in and find a place to belong where values, hopes, faith and dreams are shared.

2. Be sure that the first points of contact in the offices are the very best. Warm welcomes on the phone and at the door is important along with whomever comes through the door is the priority at the moment – and tasks can be left for a bit to tend to the needs at hand. Consistency and authenticity are the key to good relationships – so encourage that, affirm it when you see it and train for it regularly.
3. Are the offices and places people tend to gather welcoming? Lighting, seating, refreshments and someone to assist are key. Everyone should be treated with kindness – student, parent, visitor, teacher, staff – stranger. All should receive the same generosity and welcome!
4. Are the people who work in administration people of faith who exude joy? As a Catholic school, this is key to mission and vision. Skills and expertise can be learned – but faith, passion for the faith and joy must be experienced. This is what sets your school apart from others – lead with your strengths!
5. Your administrations should be the first to lead with community impact – volunteering, sitting on committees and forums and being a voice for your school and families out where they live. By your example – families and students will follow and together offer hospitality to your city or town and begin to make an impact where you live.

CLASSROOMS AND SPACES

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



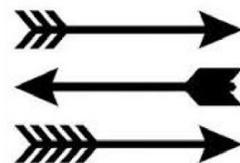
1. Students are the reason the school exists! They are incredible people with great potential. They are also vulnerable, growing, learning and discovering who they are, what they can do and what their purpose might be. It is a gift and privilege to serve them at this time in their lives. When they are welcomed, treated like family and loved, they flourish. So, extend welcome in every way – helping new students find their way

around, get connected and feel confident. The same for new faculty and staff. If you think you are paying enough attention to that – pay some more!

2. The school day is only part of the life of each person - but a very big part. Be sure to start each day with prayer for peace, contentment, joy and grace to be manifest in the classroom and beyond. Use language that contains words of hospitality in the first greeting of the day, when you see people in classrooms and around the school. Language is important and key in creating a culture of welcome.
3. It is the job of everyone to welcome and extend hospitality – let students know it is expected in the classroom, the lunchroom and beyond. Creating a sense of community helps strengthen the body of Christ. Are their community builders, games, discussion questions and that can be incorporated simply and quickly that help move students and faculty beyond acquaintance to missionary disciples accompanying others on their life journey too?
4. Listening – before one can be open to learning, one as to be open. Are there students and teachers, staff and others who have burdens? Has there been a disaster of some sort that needs to be spoken of prayed about or discussed? When we are sensitive to these needs, we show others that they are more important than our agenda or our schedule. This is an act of hospitality. This is the kind of compassion Jesus shared regularly with those he met.
5. Students and teachers showing respect to and for one another is a hallmark of faith, Tradition and Christian practice. Learning how to do this well spills out in every aspect of life. When encouraged – it becomes a way of life to put others first, tending to their well-being and witnessing to the faith. Hospitality sets the stage for encounters with Jesus.

OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

FIVE BEST HOSPITALITY PRACTICES



1. Impact a school can have It might not seem that a school can have an impact on a community, but it can be immense! A school that tends to values, fidelity, morality, leadership, community and joy has a lot to share. Any marketing, advertising and public

relations should not just focus on academics, but all the things that make good citizens and civic responsibility. You can shine!! Let everyone know who you are and who you follow!

2. Service in the community and beyond is a natural outpouring of celebrating the sacrament of Eucharist. The Eucharist forms us – and we are sent in mission. What are the needs in your community? How can the school community respond to those needs in collaboration with community efforts? Be a light to others!
3. Reminding students and families that their lives at home, at work and beyond are important witnesses of the faith. In the early church, people knew who the flowers of Jesus were by their LOVE. That is a goal for the school community – to let others see how different you are – by your love, joy and welcome!
4. Look for ways to connect in the community – it might mean taking away something **you do to include opportunities in the community. An Alzheimer’s walk, a music festival,** a community concert. Find ways to insert your school into the mix in a fun, unique and hospitable way. People will get to know you and that your school community is hard-working, collaborative and welcoming!
5. Pray for your community. There is no such thing as a perfect town, but one of the principles in Catholic social thought is “subsidiarity.” **This means grassroots. So, grassroots, organic and local is where it’s at.** Take care of where you live. Pray, serve, grow and build – keeping those values and beliefs at the core of all you share!