

## FOUR STAGE PROCESS FOR A FORMAL STUDY OF THE PARISH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL(S)

Suggested Prayers and Readings and Agendas for the STEERING COMMITTEE Meetings.

### STAGE 1 THE STEERING COMMITTEE:

- Gathers the reports of the School Study Committees, other information about the schools in the study and additional information as needed.
- Performs an analysis of the Challenges, Limitations, Opportunities and Strengths (CLOS analysis) for Catholic elementary education in the area
- Makes assumptions about the future needs for Catholic elementary education in the area.
- Recognizes the specific issues, identified by the Regional Vicar, that the Catholic elementary schools need to address in the next five years.

### MEETING 1

Scripture suggestion: Matthew 10:26-27

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

"So do not be afraid of them. Everything now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops.

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** What do we need to proclaim about the religious education of our children and the Catholic schools in our area?

Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Update on work of Parish Elementary School Committee (s)
- 3) Development of plan for sharing information with parishioners and community
  - What information has been shared? Record on newsprint
  - What information needs to be shared with parishioners?
    - Enrollment
    - Parish financial support of school
    - Baptisms
    - Standards appendix G
      - Or elements of the self-study - addenda HB
    - Issues of personnel and human resources: orders of sisters and priest

- tuition rates
- options that have been considered over the past year

Then parishioners can respond to these:

- pros and cons
- voice their own priorities
- begin to establish criteria

4) Development of plan for consultation with parishioners

What is the purpose of the consultation?

What manner of consultation with parishioners needs to take place?

Survey: for what purpose?

Interviews: with whom, by whom?

Other meetings: facilitated

Some questions to frame the discussion:

What is the desired future for Catholic Education in this area?

In considering this question, how do you define “future”?

What is the real goal we are trying to achieve?

Give people a chance to write down some thoughts. Share these

Facilitating questions: what common issues were heard?

What divergent issues were heard?

5) Set next meeting date. ID prayer, minutes, agenda responsibility for the next meeting.

6) Closing Prayer

**MEETING 2**

Scripture suggestion: Matthew 11:28-30

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.

Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** In this FORMAL STUDY OF THE PARISH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL(S), what burdens can I foresee turning into a blessing?

## Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Report of the first information sharing with Parishioners from Parish Elementary School Committee (s)
- 3) Development of a plan for sharing information with parishioners and community
- 4) Review the results of building assessments for existing school buildings
  - What common issues were heard?
  - What divergent issues were heard?
  - What additional information is needed?
- 5) Brainstorm internal strengths and limitations of the parish school.
  - Use multi voting or other technique to select top strengths and limitations.
- 6) Brainstorm external opportunities and threats that exist for the school.
  - Use multi voting or other technique to select top strengths and limitations.
- 7) Use a grid or some other structure to sort strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Internal strength		
Internal limit		
	External threat	External opportunity

- 8) Identify communication requirements and responsibility
  - The Steering Committee provides each School Study Committee with their assumptions about study area, any specific issues that the formal study must address, and the results of their analysis for all the information that was sent to the Steering committee by the school study committees.
  - Each School Study Committee keeps the Parish Pastoral Council, the parishioners and the school community informed about the information, assumptions and issues which must be addressed that have been recognized by the Steering Committee.
- 9) Set next meeting date. ID prayer, minutes, agenda responsibility for the next meeting.
- 10) Closing Prayer

## STAGE 2 THE STEERING COMMITTEE

- reaffirms and understands the Parish Mission Statement(s) and the responsibility of the baptized Catholics to provide for the religious education of Catholic children, the characteristics of vital parishes regarding education and the Standards for Quality Catholic Elementary Schools Within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (Appendix G).
- understands the specific issues identified by the Regional Vicar that the formal study of the parish(es) elementary school(s) should address and to accept responsibility for developing options that will address them.
- reviews feedback from the Parish Pastoral Council(s) and the School Study Committee(s) from Stage 1.
- identifies and prioritize the goals for the formal study of the school(s).
- develops options to provide access to quality Catholic elementary schools for the children of the parish(es) for the foreseeable future.

## MEETING 3

Scripture suggestion: Matthew 17:1-5

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

"Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as dazzling as light. And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said, 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you want me to, I will make three shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with a shadow and suddenly from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favor. Listen to him.'

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** What is God asking me to do in this FORMAL STUDY OF THE PARISH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL(S)?

Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Review any information from Parish Elementary School Committee (s)
- 3) Develop goals for the religious education of Catholic children and/or for the schools that any new proposals need to accomplish.
- 4) Develop options (different ideas) to accomplish the goals.

5) Set next meeting date. ID prayer, minutes, agenda responsibility for the next meeting.

6. Closing Prayer

## MEETING 4

Scripture suggestion: Luke 13:6-9

A reading from the gospel according to Luke.

He told this parable, 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to his vinedresser, "For three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied, "leave it one more year and give me time to dig around it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down."

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** In providing religious education and formation for our school age children, what are our strengths what still needs to be cultivated?

Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Review any information from Parish Elementary School Committee (s)
- 3) Revise and finalize goals for the religious education of Catholic children and/or for the schools that any new proposals need to accomplish.
- 4) Revise and add to the options (different ideas) to accomplish the goals.
- 5) Use multi voting or some other technique to identify the options that have the greatest support. Help the group to identify why. Provide an opportunity for anyone who feels strongly about an option that is not generally supported to convince the group.
- 6) Set next meeting date. ID prayer, minutes, agenda responsibility for the next meeting.
- 7) Closing Prayer

### STAGE 3 THE STEERING COMMITTEE:

- Considers the responses of the School Study Committees to the developing options and revises them as needed.
- Develops criteria for testing if the options being developed will ensure access to quality Catholic elementary schools for all parish children for the foreseeable future
- Tests the options being developed against the criteria.
- Revises or eliminates options that do not meet the criteria.
- Identifies the options meeting the criteria and communicates these to the School Study Committees

### MEETING 5

Scripture suggestion: Luke 5:4-7

A reading from the gospel according to Luke.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch." Simon replied, "Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets." And when they had done this, they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signaled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled both boats to the sinking point.

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION** : What can we do differently to increase our catch? In what ways can our parishes benefit from helping each other?

#### Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Review any information from Parish Elementary School Committee (s)
- 3) Test the options being developed against criteria developed from the goals and purpose for the study.
- 4) Eliminate options that do not meet criteria
- 5) Agree on a coordinated plan for sharing options with all interested (see page 8 of Addendum HB)
- 6) Identify communication requirements and responsibility
  - The Steering Committee provides each School Study Committee with their revised list of options, and the rationale for the options proposed
  - Each School Study Committee consults with the parishioners and others in the manner agreed.

7) Set next meeting date. ID prayer, minutes, agenda responsibility for the next meeting.

8) Closing Prayer

## MEETING 6

Scripture suggestion: Matthew 13:4-9

A reading from the gospel according to Matthew.

He said, "Listen, a sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, at once, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Anyone who has ears should listen!" The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION QUESTION: What is the rich soil in our area that has the potential to yield a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold?

### Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Report of the consultation with parishioners and others from each Parish Elementary School Committee (s)
- 3) Revision to the list of options based on the reactions from the consultation
- 4) Set next meeting date. ID prayer, minutes, agenda responsibility for the next meeting.
- 5) Closing Prayer

#### STAGE 4 THE STEERING COMMITTEE

- Analyzes the results of the consultations and develops a draft report containing the recommended option
- Circulates the draft report to the School Study Committees
- Considers the responses of the School Study Committees to the draft report of major findings.
- Develops a final written report of major findings that includes:
  1. identification of how religious education of the children will be provided
  2. the reports of the School Study Committee(s) including the results of the assessment of the current or prospective parish school(s) in light of the Standards for Quality Catholic Elementary schools
  3. the **external opportunities and challenges** supported by appropriate data as identified by the steering committee
  4. **assumptions** of the steering committee about future conditions.
  5. the **internal strengths and limitations** supported by appropriate data identified by the steering committee
  6. **issues** identified by the Regional Vicar that **the recommended option must address.**
  7. **results of consultations** with parishioners, parents of school age and pre-school children, Major Superiors of Religious communities and Pastors' Committee(s) of Personal Parishes, as applicable
  8. the **recommended option** to ensure access to quality elementary Catholic education for all parish children for the foreseeable future and the specific **actions, including responsibilities and time lines**, required to implement the recommended option.
- Submits the final report containing the recommended option to the Regional Vicar to be conveyed to the Archbishop.

#### MEETING 7

Scripture suggestion: Jeremiah 29:11-14

Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, -Yahweh declares, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. When you call to me and come and pray to me, I shall listen to you.

When you search for me, you will find me; when you search wholeheartedly for me, I shall let you find me (Yahweh declares. I shall restore your fortunes and gather you in from all the nations and wherever I have driven you, Yahweh declares. I shall bring you back to the place from which I exiled you).

REFLECTION QUESTION: What is God's plan for our parish elementary school and religious education programs?

## Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Consider any additional information from each Parish Elementary School Committee (s)
- 3) Identify which option will be recommended
- 4) Identify a small writing team who will develop a draft of the proposal and the time line for the completion of the draft
- 5) Set next meeting date. ID prayer, minutes, agenda responsibility for the next meeting.
- 6) Identify communication responsibilities
- 7) Closing Prayer

### **MEETING 8**

Scripture suggestion: Matthew 14:24-31

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

While the boat by now some furlongs from land, was hard pressed by rough waves, for there was a head-wind.

In the fourth watch of the night he came towards them, walking on the sea, and when the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, "Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid." It was Peter who answered. "Lord," he said, "if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water." Jesus said "Come." Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking toward Jesus across the water, but then noticing the wind, he took fright and began to sink. "Lord!" he cried "Save me!" Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. "You have so little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** How do we keep focused with this work when our steps falter like Peter's?

## Annotated Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes
- 2) Review the draft of the proposal and propose changes
- 3) Sign the final draft of the proposal
- 4) Identify communication responsibilities
- 5) Make provision for a possible other meeting date if it becomes necessary.
- 6) Closing Prayer

## ALTERNATE READINGS

Scripture suggestion:	Hebrews 8:8-11
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And in fact God does find fault with them; he says:

Look, the days are coming, the Lord declares, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors, the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, which covenant of mine they broke, and I too abandoned them, the Lord declares.

No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel, when those days have come, the Lord declares:

In their mind I shall plant my laws writing them on their hearts. Then I shall be their God, and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for each to teach his neighbor, and each his brother, saying "Learn to know the Lord!" No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest,

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** How does our WORK WITH THIS STEERING COMMITTEE help us to know God?

Scripture suggestion:	Matthew 16:15-18
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A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

"But you," he said, "who do you say I am?" Then Simon Peter spoke up and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Simon son of Jonah, you are a blessed man! Because it was no human agency that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my community. And the gates of the underworld can never overpower it.

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** How does our plan for ensuring Catholic education opportunities for our children strengthen my belief in Jesus?

Scripture suggestion:	Revelation 21:1-7
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Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, Look, here God lives among human beings. He will make his home among them; they will be his people, and he will be their God, God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness or pain. The world of the past has gone."

Then the One sitting on the throne spoke. "Look, I am making the whole of creation new. Write this, What I am saying is trust worthy and will come true." Then he said to me, "It has already happened. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty; anyone who proves victorious will inherit these things; and I will be his God and he will be my son."

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** How is God with us in the writing of our proposal?

Scripture suggestion:	Matthew 16:24-26
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A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life?"

The gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** How has our proposal given rise to Christ's agenda rather than individual agendas?

Scripture Texts from: The New Jerusalem Bible Copyright 1985, Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd. and Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

## CLOSING PRAYER FOR EACH MEETING

Source: Shorter Christian Prayer Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 1988.

Night Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours could be used.

- Any of the "Prayers over the people" from the back of the Sacramentary (pp. 579-583)...with a blessing from the leader of prayer or the Regional Vicar.
- A hymn commonly known to all.
- A communal prayer commonly known to all and/or appropriate to the season.