

Inventory Model Overview: Eight Essential Focus Areas



1. Gospel Centered Vision

- Mission, Vision & Identity
- Parish Self Awareness & Understanding
- Atmosphere of Excellence
- Growth & Replication

A healthy parish clearly understands that its reason for existence is to serve the Living God and to share its love of God with others. This vision provides a foundation for how it behaves, how it presents itself to its neighbors and what it truly values. The vision is based on a realistic context that integrates its past, its assets, strengths, limitations and environment.

2. Vibrant Worship

- Liturgical Preparedness
- Congregational Participation
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- Effective Preaching

Building on the vision of the Gospel, healthy parish communities remember that the fundamental purpose of liturgical services is to worship God. The community strives to please God, not themselves -- and to consistently offer their best through worship that is holy, joyous, peaceful, thankful and enlivening.

3. Shared Leadership

- Sharing /Delegating Responsibility
- Leading Change
- Functional Structures & Administration
- Open Financial Practice & Reporting

Healthy parishes craft administrative structures that are appropriate to the size and vision of the community. Ministries are defined, funded and equipped. Parish lay leaders see themselves as stewards of a Christian community collaborating with the rector to build health and vibrancy of the parish. They are NOT the parish business managers, trustees, owners, disinterested commentators and/or critics.

4. Open Communication

- Consensus and Dialogue
- Dealing with Conflict
- Internal Communication Methods

Putting a collaborative leadership structure into action requires an ability to effectively communicate as a body. To do so healthy communities work to establish a clear competency for consensus and dialogue, listening, and an ability to humbly speak the truth to one another. They seek and integrate multiple perspectives and marginal views. Then they consistently reinforce communication by appropriately harnessing multiple forms of spoken, written, visual and electronic communications forms.

5. Authentic Community

- Atmosphere of love & honest fellowship
- Entry & incorporation mechanisms
- Connectedness to larger church
- Appropriate facilities

Enabled by an ability to dialogue openly, healthy parishes work hard to establish a culture where their identity as Orthodox Christians is lived out in such a manner that anyone who enters can see the hallmarks of Christian community: love, selfless giving, mutual encouragement, forgiveness, kindness, patience, hospitality and compassion. Christ can be

recognized in their midst. People linger, smile and laugh. Healthy parishes think through assimilation paths for new members -- they make room. They see themselves not as independent congregations but as interdependent with other Orthodox communities.

6. Christian Formation

- Orthodox spirituality
- Education
- Financial generosity

Supported by an appropriately comprehensive parish wide education effort, vibrant parish communities develop a commitment to lifelong learning and personal spiritual growth and change. Educational efforts are informational, formational and transformational - incorporating self study, experience events and mentoring in addition to books and classes. There is a clear focus on understanding and applying Orthodox spirituality. Stewardship is taught in the particular context of gratitude and generosity and love of neighbor.

7. Active Service

- Discernment of gifts
- Effective ministries

Clergy offer consistent endorsement to members as they discern how they can best contribute to the community. Members are regularly, actively encouraged to discover their gifts and to use them for God's glory. An appropriate set of internally and externally focused ministries provide ample opportunity for people to put these gifts and talents to work.

8. Spreading the Gospel

- Parish evangelization atmosphere
- Personal evangelization practice
- Sensitivity to spiritual needs of others
- External communication.

Healthy parishes do not see themselves as a closed community --keeping the Good News as "our little secret". They consistently work to shine their light to the community in which they reside with an evangelistic intent not primarily centered on numerical growth but a desire that others will be brought to Christ. The parish does not wait to get everything right on the inside before reaching out -- but consistently works to make things right on the inside while they reach out.