



# PLANS OF HOPE

HOUMA-THIBODAUX PARISH PLANNING

## RESOURCE J



### Tips on recruiting new volunteers

“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few;  
so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest”

MATTHEW 9:37-38

#### RECRUITING NEW VOLUNTEERS

- Recruiting new people can be something we feel discouraged about before we even start!
- Perhaps it is because we have not found success in our past efforts.
- Perhaps it is because we have never really had to recruit volunteers before.
- So, let's take some time to offer you encouragement and help.

#### 1. PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT MATTERS

- We should ask God to send the right people to lead small groups.
- We need to ask Him to show us who we should invite to discern this endeavor.
- We would do well to pay attention to what He is telling us or who He may be pointing out to us.
- Over the first two years of strategic planning, we have seen fruit in intentionally asking God who He would like us to ask to be a part of the process.
- We saw even more fruit as many of our implementation teams prayed a discernment Rosary, pausing to ask God for specific names for PMD or other initiatives. Often those names were not on any initial list. Ask the Lord for help. Pay attention to who comes to mind. Pay attention to who starts to frequently cross your path. These are all ways we can allow the Lord to point out to us the people He has already chosen.

## 2. THE ART OF LOOKING AGAIN

- It is important to recognize that sometimes we fail to look beyond the obvious. We often “see” the people who are already involved in the parish or people whom we are already quite acquainted with. Fruitful recruitment will require us to learn how to “look again”. It will require us to look beyond those who are right in front of us.
- One consistent, common theme expressed across the diocese is that people want to be involved, but often don’t know how to be involved. We have also heard that people don’t feel informed about the needs of their parish. Every parish has people who are waiting to be invited! Every parish has people who have already begun to notice a call from the Lord. Many of them are ready for “something”, but they aren’t quite sure what that something is.
- We now have a multitude of resources at our disposal that can help us to recognize people that originally may not have been considered before. For example, you might consider using the parish picture directory and the parish Facebook page. Think about other resources that you also might access. An exercise your team might consider entails getting together to pray and ask God to reveal “who” should be considered. Afterwards look through these resources and see what names may surface.
- Additionally, if your team remains open to the idea of God revealing new people as potential volunteers, then things like parish listening sessions and Sunday Mass attendance become opportunities to recognize the people who might be the answer to your prayers.
- Consider putting into place a process for informing parishioners of the parish needs and make it easy for them to respond to you. Be sure to follow up quickly and personally, especially since they have taken that big step of expressing their interest in volunteering!

## 3. VISION IS IMPORTANT

- It is important that you clearly share the full vision when you invite someone to consider involvement in a ministry. For example, if you invite someone to discern becoming a small group leader, it is important that you share the vision for forming disciples in the parish. You could share what God is doing in the diocese and in your parish; this is so important! People want to know that what they are giving their time to is ‘going somewhere’. They need to be able to ‘see’ the big picture and the passion behind what they are being asked to do.
- You might want to practice sharing the vision with each other first. There are many videos on the diocesan website that can assist you in sharing the vision with others. You can share one of these videos, then offer your own personal input at the end. A ‘vision pitch meeting’ might be another useful approach. If your team discerns a list of names, have someone call each of them personally. Simply ask them to come to a meeting to, “allow us to share about an exciting opportunity.” At that meeting, with all those you are recruiting, share the vision with the group, and tell them what you are asking of them. Afterwards, invite them into a time of discernment.

4. MAKE IT CLEAR WHAT YOU ARE ASKING

- Be sure to communicate clearly what you are asking them to commit to. Be clear with how you see their gift and contribution making an impact. Give them time to discern and set a date by which you would ask for a response one way or another.

5. THOSE RECRUITED CAN BECOME YOUR BEST RECRUITERS

- It is important to cultivate the norm that we are ALL a part of inviting others to become more actively involved. If for example, someone is invited and discerns they want to become a small group host... then you may encourage them to help find one more host the next time you start recruitment. When they are able to share through the lens of their own experience, their witness is often very powerful for others.

6. CONSIDER PRUNING NEEDS

- Unfortunately, there are some instances in which certain parishioners have done things a certain in the parish for many years or decades. And sometimes this can develop an attitude that makes new ideas and new people feel very unwelcome or as though there is not space for anyone else. We heard this described over and over again across the diocese, especially from young adults. Having tough conversations and facing the conflict that comes with these situations is difficult, but it is essential if we are to 'make a space' for more people to feel welcome and come on board. If you recognize this problem, with reverence, love and humility, pray about this and talk to your pastor to discern a way to move forward.

7. CONSIDER ALL THE NEEDS IN THE PARISH

- It is important that as you are recruiting for one need, you are always considering ALL the needs within the parish. This is because we want to help people discern the best place for them to serve...and we want to allow them to be in places where their gifts and charisms could be maximally offered. So, for example if adult and youth formation is looking to recruit new volunteers; consider what qualities, attributes, and charisms you hope for in each of these ministries. Then, as names come forward, consider both ministries and decide who might be the best fit for each.

8. A PLAN WILL BE HELPFUL

- Developing a recruitment plan and timeline will be very helpful. Putting all of this on the calendar, along with scheduled time for communal discernment, personal follow up, and clear deadlines, will definitely help to stay organize.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Your adult formation team discerns that the Pilot for *Art of Living* Groups will start on January 7th. You have 5 leaders now and would like to recruit at least 5 additional small group leaders.

November 1: Team meets to discern names of potential small group leaders  
(pray and look at Parish Directory, Facebook, etc)

November 8: Team meets for a 2nd round of discernment of names and divides list in two  
Team makes personal call invitations to the Vision Pitch Meeting on Nov. 18th

November 14: Target date for team to finish all calls and invitations

November 18: Vision Pitch Meeting; everyone is asked to discern and reply by Dec. 5th

December 5: Target date to get responses from those recruited

December 12: Large meeting for new volunteers; more orientation about small groups

December 19: Training Meeting for new volunteers

January 7: Kick-off