

# A Welcoming Parish

This checklist offers parish leadership some concrete, practical criteria and descriptions of how a welcoming parish might look and feel.

Each statement offers useful ideas and possibilities for hospitality. This checklist represents different ministries within the parish.



**We all know what it feels like to be welcomed at a gathering of friends and family. Feeling a sense of welcome is so important to our experience of Church. Welcome and hospitality are cornerstones in the foundation of enabling people to feel welcome in a Catholic parish. Welcome and hospitality communicate to us in tangible ways who God is in this place and how Christ reaches out to us in love and reconciliation. Indeed welcome is often the first “sacrament” we encounter in our affiliation with a parish.**

## **Parish Church and Environment**

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

4 = Always    3 = Sometimes    2 = Seldom    1 = Never  
0 = I don't know

### **Our parish:**

1. \_\_\_\_ has a sign clearly displaying the parish name.
2. \_\_\_\_ has a well maintained and inviting exterior with walkways and stairs that are well lighted and free from debris.
3. \_\_\_\_ has clearly marked parking spaces and entrances to Church property.
4. \_\_\_\_ ensures that seating is accessible, appropriately spaced and comfortable for worship and meetings.
5. \_\_\_\_ is accessible to individuals with disabilities, including adequate seating and access to gathering spaces.

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## **Communication**

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

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### **Our Parish:**

1. \_\_\_\_ Mass times and times of other regular events are clearly and accurately posted.
2. \_\_\_\_ office has a courteous person answering the phone.
3. \_\_\_\_ phone recording is accurate and user-friendly.
4. \_\_\_\_ website is regularly updated and easy to navigate.
5. \_\_\_\_ bulletin, flyers and other informational material has a warm, welcoming format and tone.
6. \_\_\_\_ responds to requests for information in a respectful and timely fashion.
7. \_\_\_\_ provides visitors with welcome and parish information in the pews or other accessible locations during holidays, holy days, weddings and funerals.

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## **Parish Staff**

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

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### **Our parish staff members:**

1. \_\_\_\_ are welcoming and friendly.
2. \_\_\_\_ are available, accessible and willing to help.
3. \_\_\_\_ welcome phone calls and questions.
4. \_\_\_\_ extend hospitality and welcome to all people and encourage the parish community to do the same.
5. \_\_\_\_ demonstrate respect for the dignity of each person.

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## **Welcome and Invitation**

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### **Our Parish:**

1. \_\_\_ warmly welcomes guests, visitors and all parishioners to worship, celebration of the Sacraments and other gatherings.
2. \_\_\_ has a team of ministers who greet people as they enter for worship.
3. \_\_\_ is sensitive to and representative of the cultural, social and racial diversity among parishioners.
4. \_\_\_ provides assistance to individuals with special needs, the elderly and young families.
5. \_\_\_ provides opportunities for those who are new to the parish to become engaged in ministries and welcomes new people to ministries.
6. \_\_\_ fosters a sense of hospitality among all parishioners.
7. \_\_\_ regularly schedules welcome events for new members, neighbours...
8. \_\_\_ is a place where all feel welcome.

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## **Worship and Celebration of the Sacraments**

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### **Our Parish:**

1. \_\_\_\_ invites people to participate in the Liturgy.
2. \_\_\_\_ provides written instructions, non-verbal cues or explanation of Mass parts that are new or unfamiliar, especially for those who are not regular worshippers.
3. \_\_\_\_ is welcoming to non-Catholic relatives and friends who gather for funerals, weddings, baptisms and other Sacraments.
4. \_\_\_\_ has current information about the celebration of the Sacraments, including any special procedures, readily available and easily accessible.
5. \_\_\_\_ provides opportunities for those gathered for Mass and the celebration of other Sacraments to build community – tea/coffee and biscuits, etc.

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## **RCIA/Formation Ministry**

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

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### **Our Parish:**

1. \_\_\_ has Jesus Christ at the centre and growing in intimacy with Him is the primary objective of our ministry.
2. \_\_\_ provides formation for RCIA Team Leaders and Catechists.
3. \_\_\_ creates a safe environment for people to get to know each other and freely share about their relationship with God and others.
4. \_\_\_ strives to offer spiritual opportunities that generate interest and enthusiasm, resulting in both formation and transformation of the participants.
5. \_\_\_ encourages individuals to deepen their understanding of themselves as disciples.
6. \_\_\_ creates awareness, makes available and supports various models and opportunities for faith formation including:
  - \_\_\_ Bulletin inserts                      \_\_\_ Web-based resources and webinars
  - \_\_\_ Audio-visual resources            \_\_\_ Resources & support for study groups
  - \_\_\_ Online courses                        \_\_\_ Social networking            \_\_\_ Print media
  - \_\_\_ Home group meetings                      \_\_\_ Other

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## **RCIA/Formation Ministry cont.**

### **Our Parish:**

7. \_\_\_\_ provides opportunities for participants to share their faith.
8. \_\_\_\_ encourages participants to ask questions.
9. \_\_\_\_ has ministers and leaders who respond to questions and provide explanations with respect and in a language that is appropriate and comprehensible, without insulting or embarrassing individuals.
10. \_\_\_\_ introduces candidates, catechumens and others preparing for reception of the Sacraments to the community through the parish bulletin, website or at Mass.
11. \_\_\_\_ offers regular prayers, signs of support and words of encouragement for candidates, catechumens and others preparing for reception of all the Sacraments.
12. \_\_\_\_ responds with sensitivity to individuals who are divorced, separated, or single parents.
13. \_\_\_\_ is welcoming to non-Catholic parents who are involved in Sacramental preparation.
14. \_\_\_\_ provides opportunities for those who have received the Sacraments to continue to be engaged in parish life.