Developmental Initiative Worksheet

You can use this worksheet after you’ve decided on a developmental initiative. It may help in your assessment of readiness. The categories used in the worksheet are explained in more detail in *Finding God in All Things*: Contemplation, Intercession, and Intervention. That book discusses the theories, methods, skills, emotional intelligence, and stance of effective parish development.

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| ***Finding God in All Things*: Contemplation, Intercession, and Intervention**, Michelle Heyne & Robert Gallagher, Ascension Press, 2023. You can find **“A Developmental Initiative Worksheet”** and a **“Developmental Initiative Evaluation”** in Shaping the Parish Resources at [www.orderoftheascension.org](http://www.orderoftheascension.org) |

ACTION PLANNING

1. What are you planning to do? What is the action plan? First steps. How will you monitor and adjust along the way?

2. Theoretical base and strategic assumptions for the project

a. Theoretical Base (connect related theory to the project and the particulars of your parish) –

b. Strategic Assumptions (In your parish as it is now – what were you assuming would happen allowing the project to move forward? A strategic assumption has enough significance that if it turns out to not be true, the project will fail)

A. Results: What are the initial results are you seeking? This section is a brief statement of overall objectives expressed in a way that integrates the description of one of the DIs with the particularities of your parish.

Do the same regarding longer-term development goals? Relationship to the parish’s overall health? Relationship to the three purposes of a parish church?

B. Reflection

1. Strategic

*These elements may help you consider related factors.*

* Long term, developmental, likely to have a ripple effect

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not likely |  |  |  | Very Likely |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comment:

* Related to the primary task of a parish church (form people in faith, renewal in baptismal identity and purpose, facilitating the movement between renewal and apostolate)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not related |  |  |  | Very related |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comment:

* Can anticipate adequate resources of time, money, and energy devoted to the initiative? -

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Anticipate inadequate resources |  |  |  | Anticipate very adequate resources |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comment:

2. Demand System

*What is really developmental is usually also not urgent. It may be important, but it is not urgent. How do you establish a new demand system that serves what’s important?*

* How will you cope with all the other demands, expectations and pressures of the parish an your life as you try to focus on the DI? –
* How will you work to create a new “demand system” that will make this initiative part of the parish’s routine business? –

3. Critical Mass

*In general, critical mass theories are about building the overall level of commitment, competence, and emotional maturity at the center of the parish so that it grounds the system in a mission orientation and an organizational culture that supports the mission. In relationship to a specific Developmental Initiative there may be two considerations.*

* What will you do to create enough “weight” to support this particular DI? Will there be enough physical and emotional energy to get the work accomplished? This has to do with the social and political process by which you help the parish move forward. (For example, if working on Group Functioning – can you anticipate enough initial support from members of the groups you want to involve?) - Describe it. –
* In most DIs there is a second consideration. Will enough of a critical mass develop in relationship to the *desired results* of the initiative? (For example, if working on Group Functioning – How will you develop a critical mass of competence and commitment in the groups going through the process? What will you do so people become more skilled?) -

* Is there an “emotional inversion” in the parish, either broadly in the parish in general or in regard to this particular DI?

4. Internal Commitment

*This is often interrelated with critical mass considerations. You want as many people as possible, at least a critical mass, to have a high level of commitment to the direction or action that was chosen. This makes it more likely that the intervention will continue to have its benefits for the parish over time and under stress. The assumption is that commitment is built upon a base of valid and useful information and free choice. One element builds on the other. The more the information is valid and useful, the more likely the free choice, the more there is truly free choice, the more likely there will be internal commitment.*

How will you help people engage an adequate amount of valid and useful information? –

How will you design the process so that people have an adequate degree of free choice vs. acting from habit or emotional pressure)? –

5. Your influence (especially take note of “OD Roles” and “Circles of Influence”)

Assess your influence in relationship to this specific DI? –

6. Readiness

* Adequate dissatisfaction – Is there dissatisfaction with the way things are in relationship to the DIs field of interest?
* Favorable stance of people – Is there a person, or more than one person, who wants this to happen and is willing to spend energy making it happen? A person with enough influence with people who would need to cooperate in order for it to happen?
* Competence for change – Did you have the skills and knowledge needed for this particular intervention? –
* How does it fit with the parish’s current culture? –
* Resources available – Are there adequate resources of people, money, facilities and such to implement the project/change? Any concerns? –
* Energy and attention – What are the likely problems around having the needed amount of energy? -
* Formal authorization – Most of the efforts that can shape a parish only require the

investment of the parish priest. That role assumes the authority to initiate efforts to improve the faithfulness and health of the parish. But there are situations requiring vestry action. Is formal authorization needed from some group within the parish or diocese? –

7. Intervention Choices

*We are constantly making choices about interventions. Who to involve - just the leadership, a working group, everyone in the organization? What to focus on - the issue it would be easiest to make headway on or the most strategic opportunity? The style of work - do we take a problem solving approach or use some appreciative process? How deep shall we go - are we working on deep underlying assumptions about how we work and relate with one another or are we simply trying to get this problem behind us?*

* What is the unit focus of the intervention? Is there a need to engage at several levels? Rationale for this
* What is the opportunity, problem, or issue to address?
* What is the intervention method?

8. Your stance

* What leadership style do you see yourself taking in doing the intervention (p 42)? How does that match with your preferred leadership style? Do you find yourself needing a broader range of styles?
* What is your usual stance in relationship to the parish and its leaders (loving critic, unloving critic, uncritical lover)? How might that impact the intervention?

The form is based on worksheets use in Shaping the Parish programs, 2011 – 13.