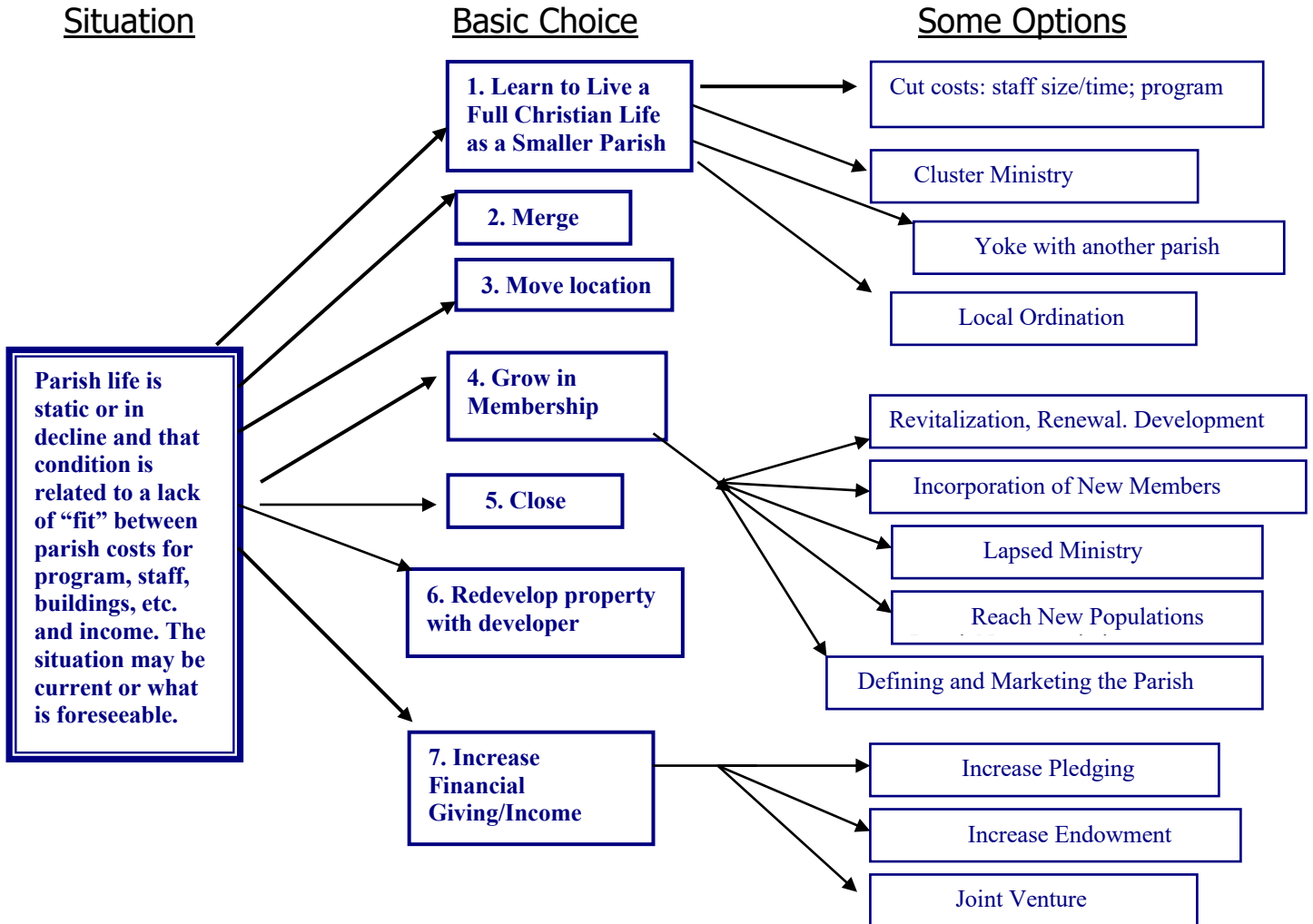


Parish Options

When parishes are static or in decline (see Parish Life Cycle) they may face choices about whether to “downsize” structures and programs or to attempt to increase in size. This diagram offers the standard options available in such a situation. Parish leaders can use the diagram to explore the choices before them and add, revise and drop options. The task is to adapt in a way where you maintain the parish’s identity and integrity. You create a new arrangement that allows you to be viable and vital for a number of years.



In exploring options the parish may want to consider:

1. What are our strengths? How might they serve us in pursuing selected options?
2. What new strengths do we need to develop?
3. How do we usually undermine ourselves; shoot ourselves in the foot? How might that impact this?
4. Are we prepared to act on some options more than others? Which ones? What can we do to expand our options – deal with anxieties, get information, etc.?
5. What is the level of internal commitment among leaders to the option we select? How to build commitment and ability to collaborate around the option – (develop inclusion/participation/acceptance of people and parish culture; increase participation in information flow; make decisions based on free choice and looking at alternatives rather than habit or pressure).