



March 2005

Development Directions

A free resource for pastors, principals, development directors, volunteers and anyone engaged in the ministry of Catholic development.

Inviting People into Your Development Processes

In ISPD's 7 I process (Identify - Inform - Invite - Involve - Implement - Invest - Improve), the third "I" is the most important - invite. This is the step that we feel is also the most overlooked by development directors, principals, pastors and presidents. Please let us explain.

Here at ISPD, we maintain that if any development effort is going to be successful, the people in charge must believe in the following statement: ***Development is the meaningful involvement of people in your mission and vision for the future.*** That is a definition we have used for 16 years, and by now we know it is a true statement. ***Belonging leads to believing.*** If we want people to believe in our mission, our vision, our goals, and our values, we must seek ways to engage them. It is not enough to simply write a letter asking for volunteers, or make an announcement from the pulpit, or post something up on a bulletin board, or include an article in the newsletter or the bulletin. If we want positive response, we really need to extend the invitation - personally.

One question we get in our workshops is: What are we going to invite people to help us do besides running a fund-raising effort? And, therein lies a major problem. Catholic development is not just about fund-raising. It is about engaging people in our vision, and exciting them about our present situation. There are many areas that we can invite people to belong. Here are some:

- Input sessions
- Cup of coffee meeting
- Strategic planning sessions
- Questionnaire and surveys
- Round table discussions
- Parish Town Hall meetings
- After Mass informational meetings
- Pastor-President-Principal sponsored Q&A session
- Pastor's Cabinet

The list can go on and on and on. ***It is up to us as Catholic development leaders to create the roadways, avenues and vehicles to invite and engage people.*** That is one of the biggest challenges we face.

Over the years, in working with Catholic parishes and schools, ISPD has had excellent success in getting people to come to and/or participate in various meaningful events. When speaking about 60-80 people showing up, or engaging 200+ people at a 1 ½ day Long-Range Planning Convocation, we usually are met with skeptical faces. However, the proof is in the results. Just recently, in case you may want to "pick these people's brains," we had the following turn out:

- Over 300 people showed up at St. Dominic Parish in Cincinnati for a two hour Long- Range Planning Convocation
- Over 250 people attended a 1 ½ day Long-Range Planning convocation at Toledo Central Catholic High School in Toledo, OH
- Over 75 people took part in a 2 day workshop planning session at Archbishop McNicholas High School in Cincinnati
- Over 1500 people filled in a survey at Christ the King Parish in Tampa, FL
- Over 50 people attended the opening meeting of a four meeting planning process at Pope John Paul II High School in Slidell, LA
- Over 1,000 people attended the public kick-off of Lima Central Catholic High School's Capital Campaign in Lima, OH

The list goes on and on. Here are some hints on what we have found to be successful. If no shortcuts are taken, this is effective.

- All leaders (pastor, principal, development director, president, committee or team member) must approach the invitation process with a positive mind and be enthusiastic about why they are inviting people.
- Leaders (pastor, principal, development director, president, committee or team member) cannot make up the mind of someone who is being invited. You never know who will say "yes" and who will say "no."
- The invitation needs to first be in the form of a personalized letter or note inviting that person to whatever.
- The note or letter must be addressed to a specific person or persons and personally signed by the person in charge. Rubber stamps are not allowed.
- On that note or letter, there needs to be some personal, handwritten remark from the person in charge saying how hopeful you are the person will be able to accept the invitation.
- In that letter, there needs to be information that shows you are organized, aware of their time commitment, and appreciative. We suggest you include:
 - Agenda or bullet points of what they are being invited to
 - The date(s) and time(s) of the meeting(s)
 - The goals and/or objectives of what you are looking to accomplish
- The envelope that the letter or note goes into should be personally addressed by hand writing, typing or running it through a laser printer. No labels please!
- The letter or note needs to be followed up within five days with a personal phone call from a credible person.
- Preferably, this credible person needs to be the pastor, principal, development director, president, committee or team member.
- Those very important people that you want to attend this gathering or meeting need to be invited by the pastor, principal or president. The more credible the person is who extends the invitation, the more positive responses you will have. (Father Jim Manning, pastor of St. Albert the Great Parish in Dayton, OH called all 85 people who were invited to the parish's long-range planning process. 82 people showed up for the first meeting, and 80 attended all 4 meetings).

- Once you have your master list of people to invite, distribute that list to some of your core leaders in the parish and/or school who may personally know some of the names on that list. Have these core leaders make the "informal call." This is the call where a core leader would say to someone he/she knows, "By the way, Polly, I saw where you had been nominated to work with Our Lady of Lourdes on our planning process that begins next month. That is great! I really hope you will be able to attend those four meetings. You certainly can bring a lot to the table." This "informal call" does wonders.
- When you are not able to get in touch with people or they do not return your call, send them another note two weeks after the original invitation. This time, include the names of the people who have accepted the invitation - simply indicating that this is a credible process and key people are accepting the invitation.
- To those who say "yes," send an immediate thank you and state the date(s), time(s) and place again. Also, send along any pertinent information for them to read in advance.
- To those who say "no" send an immediate note indicating that you are sorry they cannot attend, but that you will keep them in the "communication loop" by giving them the results of this event and/or process.
- Have someone make a phone call 2-3 days before the gathering/meeting to simply remind folks once again.

What we have found is that people are receptive if treated with personal care and respect. In addition, just because someone cannot attend, please do not dismiss that person as being disinterested. There are all kinds of ways to follow-up with those who do not participate. We will discuss that in a future issue of *Development Directions*.

The **INVITE** Stage of the 7 I process is the first step to establishing a meaningful relationship. Please handle this stage with great care.

ONLINE GIVING

As more and more people continue to pay their bills online, as more and more people bring high speed internet connectivity into their home, as more and more people use e-mail communication as one of their main "tools in the toolbox," and as technology becomes better and better for all of us to integrate into our lives, online giving will continue to become one of the main avenues for individuals and families to support their Catholic church and schools. Our question is this: Are you prepared for the change?

When we ask that question in our seminars and workshops, most Catholic institutions say "no." We would like to see that change, mainly because we see that online giving will increase by as much as 50% over the next 4-6 years.

We all need to do the research to determine the best steps to set all of this up. Here at ISPD, we would like to recommend Catholic Financial Services (CFS) as a place to begin. The Diocese of Baton Rouge has recently started using CFS as their provider of online giving.

CFS provides a transaction-processing system that enables dioceses, parishes, schools, parishioners, and other Catholic organizations to accept unlimited transactions online from anywhere. It is a safe, simple, secure way to authorize, settle and manage credit card and electronic check transactions online.

Catholic Financial Services, a division of Catholic Online, was developed after years of research based on the expressed needs of Catholic organizations to bring not only the donation process online but to also conclude the complete banking transaction in an easy to use, secure manner.

Some of the CFS features are:

- Free to use by senders
- Information is kept secure
- Send to anyone with an e-mail address
- Send a donation to your parish (weekly offering, capital campaign, etc.)
- Send a donation to your Catholic school (annual fund, capital campaign, etc.)
- Send a donation to your diocese (Bishop's Appeal)
- Pay your Catholic school tuition
- Pay your child's cafeteria bill at school, or school books and supplies
- No up-front costs

This is certainly worth investigating. For more information about CFS, we recommend that you contact Shari at sharim@catholic.org. Get ahead of the curve by providing another vehicle for your donors to give to your Catholic institution.

- [Catholic Financial Services](#)

DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

ST. DOMINIC PARISH: INVITING AND ENGAGING PEOPLE

On November 17, 2004, St. Dominic Parish in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, hosted a Long-Range Planning Convocation open to all of their parish families. Father Jim Walsh, the pastor, invited every parish family to attend and help parish leaders solve the 30+ challenges that St. Dominic Parish faces in the future. Over 300 people attended!

The evening was exciting and filled with lively discussion as parish leaders divided the group into 20 small groups who were led by trained facilitators. The main thrust of each group was, "Solve the Challenges." At the completion of the two hour session, all of those present were asked to "multi- vote" the Challenges in order to get a priority order. The top five Challenges that the parish will be addressing over the next 6 - 12 months will be:

- How can we invite and involve members of our parish community to give of their time, talent and/or treasure so that each views themselves as owners - helping them become aware of our parish needs and the individual gifts that each possess that can be used to fulfill those needs?
- How can we increase Mass attendance and participation?
- How can we determine and maintain affordable tuition?
- How can we communicate parish opportunities for service, connect the helpers with those in need, and sustain an on-going commitment to outreach?
- How can we reach out to inactive Catholics?

Numerous solutions were offered, and as implementation teams take over and address these Challenges, more people will be involved in the process.

St. Dominic Parish was successful in getting between 300-400 people to their parish Convocation because of the following reasons:

- All parish leaders bought into the planing process and why they were doing it.
- The pastor stood tall and strong as the spokesperson for the invitation.
- Every family in the parish was personally invited with a letter and a follow-up phone call.
- Every family who had an e-mail address was e-mailed via that form of communication.
- There were announcements at all Masses for several weekends in advance.
- There were signs up all over campus for two weeks in advance.
- There were articles in the bulletin, the parent letters home, the newsletter, and any other written communication vehicles.
- Every major ministry/commission in the parish was personally visited and invited to come.
- The pastor delivered a homily on the importance of building a faith community.
- School students were given a "free homework" night. (The parish felt it was that important).
- All activities in the parish were canceled and/or re-scheduled on that night.
- Food was served.

There were other reasons that people came, but by looking at the list above, it is fairly easy to see why St. Dominic Parish had such an exciting evening and why the invitation process was so successful.

SPRING 2005 WORKSHOPS

Dynamic presenters share proven strategies and discuss development issues during one and two day seminars. These workshops are conveniently held across the country at an affordable price of \$49- \$99 We hope you'll join us soon!

Topics Include: Attracting New Students ** Total Stewardship ** Strategic Plan for Development ** Long-Range Planning ** Annual Fund

Tentative Locations: New Orleans * Toledo * Orlando * Chicago * Kansas City * Detroit * Trenton * Erie * Los Angeles * NYC * Birmingham

Exact Dates are pending.

- [Check Here for Details](#)

ISPD - Bringing people, process and ministry together to build the Kingdom of God

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