



Parish Assessment

Introduction

Embarking on a Parish Assessment involves a multidimensional approach to understanding both the objective and subjective elements within the community. The goal of this assessment is to gather nuanced insights into the demographics, needs of young people, ministry efforts, and potential growth areas within the parish.

This list of inquiries may seem extensive, and sourcing this information might seem daunting, especially for those new to this process. The intention is not to overwhelm but to guide a structured exploration to glean a holistic view of the youth ministry environment.

Potential sources of information sought by these questions could include:

- Pastor, Parish Council Members, Parish Staff or Ministry Leaders
- Existing Records or Databases
- Local Officials or Organizations
- Parents and Grandparents
- Young People

Assessment Questions

Demographic Overview:

1. How many young people are currently in the parish? How many are registered? How many are involved? How many live in the parish area?
2. What schools or educational institutions are in the vicinity, and what are the demographics of these institutions?
3. What cultural groups are present within the parish and local community?
4. What socioeconomic groups are present within the parish and local community?

The Needs of Young People:

1. Are there common challenges facing the young people in the parish?
2. Are there opportunities for education and employment within the local community?
3. Are the young people in the parish safe in their neighborhoods and schools?
4. What prevalent issues exist for young people in this community? (bullying, substance abuse, violence, unemployment, homelessness, mental health, etc)
5. How connected are young people to peers, parents, local government, the parish?
6. Do young people in this community have adequate access to spaces to relax, engage in sports, arts, or other hobbies?
7. What are the primary paths young people in this community take when they transition to young adulthood?

Assessing Youth Ministry Efforts:

1. Program Evaluation:

- What programs or activities have been specifically targeted towards young people in the past year?
- What parish-wide programs have young people successfully integrated into? What parish-wide programs have young people been ignored or tokenized at?
- What has been the historical participation rate of young people in parish activities or events?
- What challenges or barriers have been identified in attracting and engaging young people?
- Are there cultural, linguistic, or socio-economic factors that influence youth engagement?
- How are these programs communicated to the youth and their families?
- What feedback has been received from participants in these programs?

2. Resources and Infrastructure:

- What spaces or facilities are currently available for youth activities within the parish?
- Are there dedicated resources (financial, materials, or human) for youth ministry?

3. Leadership and Training:

- Who within the parish has previously been responsible for youth ministry?
- Have there been any training or development opportunities specifically focused on youth ministry?
- Has there been any intentional and systematic effort to help every parishioner understand their role in ministering to our parish youth?

4. Community Outreach:

- How does the parish currently collaborate with schools, community centers, or other local organizations that cater to the youth?
- What opportunities exist for strengthening ties with these entities?

5. Feedback Mechanisms:

- How does the parish currently gather feedback or input from young people about their needs and interests?
- Are there avenues for youth to be directly involved in decision-making or leadership within the parish?

Visioning the Future:

1. Growth Areas:

- Based on initial observations, where are the primary areas of growth or enhancement for the youth ministry?
- Understanding what can be cut and that most programs have a life cycle is crucial to growth. What programs or efforts should be discontinued?
- Are there emerging trends or needs among the youth that the parish should be aware of?

2. Stakeholder Collaboration:

- Who are the key stakeholders (both within and outside the parish) that should be engaged in strengthening youth ministry efforts?
- How can a more collaborative approach be developed to ensure the holistic development and engagement of young people?