

The Welcoming Parish

We all know what it feels like to be welcomed at a gathering of friends and family. Many times, however, Catholic parishes don't apply the same thoughtful attention to detail as we would if we were planning a party at home. And feeling a sense of welcome is so important in our experience of Church. Welcoming and hospitality are cornerstones in the foundation of Church. They 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.

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 clearly marked parking spaces and entrances to Church property.
3. _____ has clearly marked buildings, doors, meeting rooms and offices.
4. _____ has walkways and stairs that are well lighted and free from snow, ice, leaves and other debris.
5. _____ has clearly marked restrooms and/or otherwise provides this information to those gathered.
6. _____ Mass times and times of other regular events are clearly and accurately posted.
7. _____ website is regularly updated and easy to navigate.
8. _____ registration materials and other forms are sensitive to household situations.
9. _____ bulletin, flyers and other informational material have a warm, welcoming format and tone.
10. _____ warmly welcomes guests, visitors and all parishioners to worship, celebration of the Sacraments and other gatherings.
11. _____ is sensitive to and representative of the cultural, social and racial diversity among parishioners.
12. _____ provides assistance to individuals with special needs, the elderly and young families.
13. _____ provides opportunities for those who are new to the parish to become engaged in ministries and welcomes new people to ministries.
14. _____ welcomes individuals of diverse age and background to serve in liturgical roles and ministries.
15. _____ ensures that all song sheets, music issues, missalettes and other worship aids are distributed and/or easily accessible.
16. _____ is accommodating and welcoming for those with small children. The availability of a nursery/childcare, a "cry room" and/or Children's Liturgy of the Word is clearly expressed.
17. _____ reaches out to those who have been absent from Mass due to illness or other reasons

18. ____ has people who reach out to families when a loved one has died to help them plan the funeral liturgy.
19. ____ has a team of people who bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound.
20. ____ has a ministry to prepare couples for marriage.
21. ____ has regular opportunities for couples to enrich their marriage.
22. ____ has a healing ministry to those who are going through or have gone through divorce.
23. ____ has in place a means to help parishioners discover their gifts and talents and to exercise them within the community.
24. ____ provides opportunities for individuals of all ages to deepen their knowledge of Scripture and Church teaching.
25. ____ encourages and assists individuals to connecting their faith and life at home and in the marketplace.
26. ____ creates awareness, makes available and supports various models and opportunities for faith formation including:
 - i. ____ Bulletin inserts
 - ii. ____ Home study materials
 - iii. ____ Audio-visual resources
 - iv. ____ Bible study groups
 - v. ____ Small Christian communities
 - vi. ____ Web-based resources and webinars
 - vii. ____ Online courses
 - viii. ____ Social networking
 - ix. ____ Print media (books, magazines, etc.)
 - x. ____ Other
27. ____ schedules educational opportunities that are considerate of time restraints and family needs.
28. ____ provides childcare when appropriate
29. ____ introduces candidates, catechumens and others preparing for reception of the Sacraments to the community through the parish bulletin, website or at Mass.
30. ____ is a place where I feel welcomed.

Comments: