

Meeting the Stranger Suggestions from people attending Saturday April 25 meeting convened by Justice and Peace office.

1. Contacting people

For newer districts without churches. Send information for insertion in community newsletters. What information? 1. Times of services. 2. Special events, such as grief ministry, care of the sick. 3. Programs such as for mothers and children. 4. Youth clubs. 5. Social events. 6. Photo gallery about every three years.

Within a parish boundaries. Distribute leaflets of what the parish church has to offer. These can be hand drops using youth in the parish. Twice yearly at least. Leave a reply card. These cards can also be left in the church seats. Card may have special printed approach: "Do you commit yourself to Jesus?"

(Not mentioned: using an approach by pairs. Doing a survey by seeing if there are Catholics in the households in the parish)

2. Greeting people at the church.

Special skill (we don't accept people who can't sing in the choir) Meeting people. An extrovert is needed. Facial features: smile and eye contact. No looking away when you are speaking to someone. Hand shake should be firm. Concentrate on these actions, not try to be handing out bulletins at the same time.

3. Greeter needs to be alert Have a good memory for faces and for names. Know how to spot the stranger and what an opening statement could be.

Examples Where are you from? What is your name? Do not ignore the children.

Statement of weather: Weather doesn't fail.

We could use the skills now being taught in hospital visiting. People cannot become a visitor unless they go around with an expert first of all.

Greeting skills techniques are taught by airlines and food stores. We can be taught skills.

(Instead of filling a volunteer form each year, we should be asked to identify our skills probably related to our work, such as finance, music, salesman.

In addition: to avoid the same people having to volunteer year after year, parishes should for a big event like a dance, draw up a schedule describing different tasks, the time required and the time when the work occurs. This technique builds commitment and support in small ways.

Resource. A video in the pastoral centre library, out of date images.

Book: Discover your God-Given Gifts Don and Katie Fortune 234.13

This book is both analytical and inspiring, especially Chapter 31

4. Spotting the stranger Have two people to greet the regular attendee. Have at least two to approach the stranger. If the stranger is of a certain type, ex from another country or aboriginal, you may want to conduct them to seats near to someone in the parish of the same background.

5. At the service. People come to church because they need prayer.

Problem of noise before the service. Song practice. Chatter. Reverence for the Blessed Sacrament.

Solution Blessed Sacrament should be reserved, in a special secluded place .

6. Personalizing the service. A. Try to place people in the church near to others who you know have like background or interests. Also get to connect with the same groups of newcomers over a period of weeks.

B. Change the opening format of the service. Have the priest available for introductions. Before the service starts have intercessory prayers, both groups as in those celebrating anniversaries, and those seeking personal prayers.

C find opportunity to introduce the newcomers to the priest. Mass offering may be needed.

D the newcomer may be wanting prayers and mass said.

E. handshake of peace, alternate before mass with an opportunity to talk briefly to others.

7. Eucharistic ministers They should know as many people by name as possible and use these names. Practice not accepted by everybody.

8. Visiting homes. Separate this from money raising such as Bishop's Annual Appeal.

(I HAVE HANDOUTS ON HOME VISITING AND ONE TO ONE VISITING.)

9. Special events. It is these that build community. A feast day of a country and the promotion of coloured clothing from other countries.

Young people being complete charge of the ministry. Readers ushers

Celebrating a first sacrament together. Gifts from the church. A flower for the baptized and a subscription to Prairie Messenger Role of CWL and K of C.

10 Celebrations street party. Small gatherings in home in neighbourhoods. Not necessarily Bible study.

11 After liturgy. Important that we connect and meet with people leaving. Six weeks is a reasonable time for repeats.

The welcome area must be available for all. The refreshments must be in direct line leaving. Not up or downstairs. Or in separate building, or to the side. Sometimes we need to direct traffic. Give out free tickets for the breakfast to someone new.

12 Picnic on the street. Block parties. Getting to know neighbour. Know your neighbour different from trying to get the people to come your church.

13. Parting words. Thank the person for coming. (remember name)
Special attention to children and names.
Good wishes for some event that they will have told you about.
Make an indefinite connection for another time..

14. We should create a sense in the people attending that one hour is a reasonable time minimum to be in the church for a liturgy. Attendance should become a vital part of the day.