

Building Bridges

to the Heart of Your People

STRENGTHS AND TALENTS: KEYS TO ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

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Participant Guide





Participative Culture in Your Parish



What aspects of the fully participative parish culture do you already perceive or experience in your parish? Rate each aspect and note why you rated as you did. Compile your group's answers and discuss.

Aspect of fully participative culture	1= do not perceive at all 2 = very rarely have experienced 3= have experienced occasionally 4= is a common experience	Why you rated as you did Note specific examples as much as possible
Each person is valued as a gifted child of God		
Creating a sense of belonging is foundational to parish planning and practice		
Our parish encourages each person to fully participate as disciples and stewards		
Our parish offers opportunities to connect with each other and to grow in our communal love of God and one another		
We are committed to invite every person to contribute to the life of the parish and the needs of others through stewardship of talents and strengths		
Leaders demonstrate the qualities of servant leadership by calling forth the gifts and talents of individuals with whom they serve		
People are sent forth to live as Christian disciples in their daily lives, sharing their gifts and their faith with others		



You: A Gift From God



Think about what you have just read above, then respond to the questions below.

Share when you are ready to do so.

<p>In what ways do you recognize yourself as a gift from God?</p>	
<p>How do your talents provide you a glimpse of the grace of God in your life?</p>	



Stewardship of Talents and Strengths



Think about your life at present. Make a list of the ways you are already a good steward of your talents and strengths: In what ways do you recognize your talents already at work in your life? How do you use your talents and strengths in relationships, at work, in your parish and the world?

How might you grow as a good steward in the future?

Blank space for writing responses to the first set of questions.

In what ways does your parish currently invite and encourage people to discover their talents, build strengths, and grow as good stewards of their talents and strengths?

Blank space for writing responses to the second question.



Your Strengths at a Glance



Think about experiences of success, times when you have contributed to a positive outcome in a project or situation, or things that you love to do and do well. Examples of strengths are found on the following page.

<p>Experience: Recall specific experiences or meeting a challenge and/or overcoming an obstacle. What happened? What knowledge, skills and talents contributed to your solution? What strength emerges for you in this experience?</p>	<p>Investment (practice of)</p> <p>Knowledge —what you know, acquired through education, training or experience — and Skill — what you can do —</p>	<p>X Talent: Natural way of thinking feeling or behaving</p> <p>What talent(s) were at play in the experience</p>	<p>= Strength: Your ability to provide near perfect performance in a given activity</p>

Some examples of strengths in various aspects of life are listed below.

This list is not intended to be exclusive of the potential possibilities, which are endless! The list is simply provided in order to help you consider the strengths you may recognize through reflection on your life experience.

Solving complex problems	Working on complex tasks
Building relationships	Teaching or helping others develop skills
Brainstorming solutions	Facilitating meetings
Creating a strategic plan	Moving people into action
Working with different individuals	Building complex systems
Mentoring others	Dealing with conflict
Analyzing data	Organizing information
Creating spreadsheets	Working on creative projects
Presenting to large groups	Selling ideas or solutions
Organizing activities or projects	Getting things done
Creating interactive exercises or activities	Setting and achieving goals

Do other strengths come to mind for yourself or others? List them below.



Explore Your Top 5



Your Top 5 talent themes	Key words or phrases you like to describe this theme	Recent situation in which you applied the talents from this theme
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Use the prompts below to discern your mission and the ways your strengths and talents contribute to fulfillment of your mission. Keep this in mind and reflect upon it periodically, updating it as life, experience, and an on-going sense of call and purpose bring possibilities to mind. Talk with family, good friends, a spiritual director or mentor about this. Discernment happens within a caring community!

What gives you joy? What service, work, or activities bring you a sense of meaning and purpose? How do you perceive Christ's call in this?

What strengths and talents will contribute to the fulfillment of your mission?

Who needs you to do this? Who will be the recipients of your ministry, service, work, or relationship? What might the impact be?

Your mission:

How will you live this mission in the coming year?



Your Team's Domains



Write the names or initials of each team member to indicate their themes.

What do you notice in the composition of your team? Is a domain heavily or lightly represented? How does this impact the effectiveness of your team?

Executing	Influencing
Achiever	Activator
Arranger	Command
Belief	Communication
Consistency	Competition
Deliberative	Maximizer
Discipline	Self-Assurance
Focus	Significance
Responsibility	Woo
Restorative	

Relationship Building	Strategic Thinking
Adaptability	Analytical
Developer	Context
Connectedness	Futuristic
Empathy	Ideation
Harmony	Input
Includer	Intellection
Individualization	Learner
Positivity	Strategic



Building the Best Team



Identify the strongest domain for each team member. If a member has themes in multiple domains, ask the member to identify his or her preference. Are all domains represented, based on this initial compilation? If not, does a member have a theme in the missing domain upon which you agree he or she will draw? If no member has a theme to fill the gap, expand your team or partner with others.

Executing	Influencing	Relationship Building	Strategic Thinking
Achiever	Activator	Adaptability	Analytical
Arranger	Command	Developer	Context
Belief	Communication	Connectedness	Futuristic
Consistency	Competition	Empathy	Ideation
Deliberative	Maximizer	Harmony	Input
Discipline	Self-Assurance	Includer	Intellection
Focus	Significance	Individualization	Learner
Responsibility	Woo	Positivity	Strategic
Restorative		Relator	

In the space provided below, note each member's preferred or agreed-upon domain and his/her identified strengths and talents.

Discuss how this insight will influence current or future ministry together. How can you build on the talents and strengths of your team?

Team member	Domain (Preferred or Agreed-upon)	Strengths and Talents



An Appreciative Process



	Discover What is working? Be attentive	Dream What could be? Be intelligent	Discern What should be? Be realistic	Do What will be? Be responsible
In what ways does our parish provide opportunities for people to discover their talents and build strengths?				
How are people formed as disciples and stewards? Is there an ongoing process of stewardship as a way of life?				
How are parishioners invited, discerned, and mentored into ministry in the parish and to serve beyond the parish?				
In what ways is parishioner participation valued, invited and encouraged?				



CATHOLIC
LIFE & FAITH

If, Then...Plan!



BRIDGES
LEADERSHIP SERIES

Use the questions below to discern your next steps for strengths development in your parish. Be attentive to the strengths, themes, and domains of team members as you discuss your responses, develop and implement a plan. Suggestions, ideas, and resources for each aspect are included in the linked web page Build bridges! Be sure to insure that all parish leaders know what you are doing, why, and what the potential impact may be for your parish.

If...	Then...	Plan: Who will do What, When, How?
If your parish has not previously focused on stewardship as a way of life	Plan to introduce stewardship in the coming 1-3 years	
If you do not currently have a process through which parishioners may discover their talents and build strengths	Form a team to create a plan for introducing strengths development in the coming year	
If your parish has a current strengths development process in place	Examine all possible avenues for bringing strengths to parish life. Create a plan to make the shift from strengths as a program to an ongoing process.	
If discussions about full participation surfaced aspects of parish life that need attention	Form a team to create a 1-3 year plan for addressing the aspects identified	
If you do not have an annual opportunity for leaders to gather and be formed	Convene leaders in the coming six months. Share with them their call to servant leadership as builders of bridges. Invite them to offer their talents and strengths to create an ongoing plan to strengthen ministry and evangelization in your parish.	