

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

MISSION STATEMENT DEFINED

A mission statement defines the very nature of what an organization does. This is not to be confused with a statement of the activities that are performed. The mission statement defines that which would stop being done if the organization (the religious education program of the parish) ceased to exist. The purpose of the mission statement is to present a clear and concise (able to be printed on the back of a business card) statement of why the organization exists. The function of the mission statement is to enable the organization to stay focused on why it exists and to help align all that is done with this central purpose. It is the driving idea behind why the organization continues to exist and if the idea ceases to have meaning then the organization should cease to exist. The mission statement does not change from year to year. The mission statement is “an image of what the people of the enterprise aspire for it to be or become.”¹

VISION STATEMENT DEFINED

A vision statement is different from a mission statement in that the vision statement expresses how the organization is living out its mission statement in a particular historical circumstance. While the mission does not change from year to year, the way the mission is exercised must change because the circumstances change under which the mission is done. The vision statement will be reviewed and perhaps rewritten every five years or so to reflect growth and development as a program and the changing environmental circumstances of the parish. The vision statement is a declaration of the values which guide the exercise of the mission. It attempts to create value through the sharing of this knowledge so that people better understand their contribution to the mission.

In parish “x,” for example, assume that the stated “mission” is to “preach the gospel.” Parish “x” is a comfortable suburban parish. However, over time, the parish is gradually encompassed by urban sprawl. The stated mission to “preach the gospel” remains the same but the tactics used to do so must change to meet the new demands placed on the parish.