

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

...MAKES ACCESSIBLE
THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH
SO THAT ROOTED IN JESUS CHRIST
WE MAY FIND THE FULLNESS OF
HUMAN FREEDOM BOTH
HERE AND HEREAFTER.

Mission Statement for Religious Education
Catholic Diocese of Erie
Department of Religious Education
1995



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

...FORMS SOLID
FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH
THROUGH DEDICATED PLANNING FOR
EXCELLENCE

Vision Statement for Religious Education
Catholic Diocese of Erie
Department of Religious Education
2000

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

VISION 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.

1. Karl Albrecht, *The Northbound Train*, New York: American Management Association, p150. Please note that this Handbook chooses to take a reverse view of the definitions of the terms as presented by Albrecht - but the ideas are the same.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WRITING

1. WRITING TEAM

Writing a mission/vision statement is a team effort. The team should be no larger than ten (10) people. This is a suggested list of members:

- a. Religious education leader
- b. Religious education staff members: (paid or volunteer)
including grade level coordinators; secretaries; etc.
- c. Pastor or his representative
- d. A representative from the Pastoral Council or Education Committee
- e. Catechist(s)
- f. Parent(s)

2. TIME CONSIDERATIONS

The group is informed that this task will take several meetings over several months to a year and will require preparation before the sessions. Everyone must be aware of the commitment of time required. People leaving in the middle of the process is disruptive. It is also important not to add people to the group in the middle of the process. Careful planning at the beginning of the process is essential to accomplishing this task in a way which energizes people for the work of Christ instead of draining them.

3. SITE CONSIDERATIONS

It is ideal for people to go to a location apart from the parish. The room should be comfortable and there should be refreshments appropriate to the time of day and season of year. The work that will engage the group is difficult and strenuous and so anything that can be done to make them comfortable will enable a successful conclusion.

4. LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

It is preferable that the process be lead by someone from outside the parish. The discussions that will ensue in this process will require someone neutral who can listen to all sides of the conversation, encourage everyone to participate, and no one to dominate. It is not the role of the facilitator to contribute to the process but rather to make sure that the process moves along at a reasonable rate and that all parties are heard.

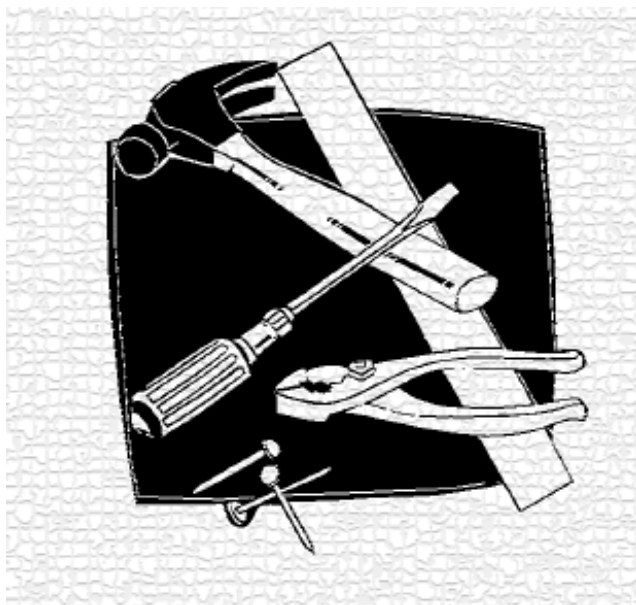
5. MATERIALS CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a list of suggested materials:

- Prayer for the beginning of each session
- A flip chart and markers for recording responses
- A tape recorder may be useful in this process

MISSION STATEMENTS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A SUGGESTED WRITING PROCES



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2000

MISSION STATEMENT

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION

1. GOAL

This process is to identify and name the energizing purpose that lies underneath the organization's activity to enable all the people involved in the program to get in touch with this originating mission.

2. PROCESS

This is an inductive rather than deductive process. It requires naming what is currently being done and then distilling out of the activity that center which holds all of the activity together. This process requires honesty in the naming, so that the truth is spoken about what is actually happening as opposed to what one wishes was happening (or knows should be happening).

3. A DANGER TO AVOID

The danger in this process is to forget the goal. This process is not about evaluating the program or the people running it (though much of the material that is discussed, if properly recorded, can be an aid in program evaluation). The process is about energizing the program with a renewed commitment to its founding principles.

4. TIMING

The timing of the sessions is at the group's discretion. Using longer blocks of time (day long sessions) as opposed to shorter periods reduces the amount of time spent "getting people back up to speed." Meetings held as close together as possible will most effectively retain continuity.

5. PROCESS SUGGESTION

It is suggested that this packet is not made available to the entire group ahead of time to avoid the formation of judgements before the process begins.

MISSION STATEMENT

A SUGGESTED WRITING PROCESS

1. PRAYER

It is important that these activities be done in the context of prayer and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. LISTING

Create a list on a marker board or flipchart of all the activities in which the program is involved. This list should be inclusive. It should list all of the large visible activities as well as the small but often time consuming activities that make up the successful operation of the religious education program. This is why it is important to include all those who work in the program so that no one's activities are overlooked. An initial list can be done by all the participants as preparation for the first session to save time.

3. THE WHY PROCESS

Take all of the activities that were generated in the listing process and ask each person separately to apply the following question to each activity. "What is the primary motivation for doing (the activity)?" For example: one of the activities of a grocery store is selling fresh vegetables. The responses to this question might vary from, "because they have a very high profit margin," to "because they are essential for people's health and customers' health is important." Once everyone has identified the primary motivation for the activity, it is important that people have the opportunity to share the reasons for this particular perspective. The only rule in this sharing is that there not be evaluations of people's responses because there are no right or wrong answers. The motivations for each program activity should be recorded. Do each activity in turn, both large and small.

4. THE DISTILLING PROCESS #1

Take each activity and each motivation expressed for the activity and ask the following two questions, "What one word would describe best each motivation that was expressed?" and "For whom is this activity done?" List these words, in turn, for each motivation and for each separate activity. From the example above two words might arise: "profit" and "health," and "shareholders" and "customers."

MISSION STATEMENT





A SUGGESTED WRITING PROCESS, CONT'D

5. THE DISTILLING PROCESS #2

Combine all the words on the two lists (motivation words into one list and target audience words into a separate list). The process for this section is to remove all the duplicate words and to come to agreement that “like” words could indeed be represented by one particular term. This is a difficult part of the process because it requires wrestling with the meanings of words. No one should be forced to accept a definition of a word that cannot be agreed upon. It is better to list two words than to force the combining of words that cannot be mutually agreed upon.

6. THE RANKING PROCESS #1

Have each person take all the words on both lists and rank the words in order of importance choosing only the five most important (5 words for each list). #5 is the most important word on the list, etc. Combine each person’s choices by indicating the number of times that a particular word is rated in the top five (first the “motivation”

Word	# of 5's		# of 4's		# of 3's		# of 2's		# of 1's		Total
Profit	(x 5=)	15	2	8	1	3	7	14	3	3	43
Health	2	10	(x 4=)	16	3	9	4	8	6	6	49
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p># of votes received</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>weight of the individual item</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>weighted total for each vote</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>weighted total for each word</p> </div> </div>											

7. THE RANKING PROCESS #2

The weighted totals for each group of words should indicate the approximate feelings of the group in relation to each word. The group is free to rearrange the words at this point if they feel that they do not like the relative weighting of the particular words but only with the agreement of the entire group. From the conversation to this point, are there any words that can be combined into a larger idea?

8. THE SELECTION PROCESS #1

The group should take the top two concepts that emerge from the motivation ranking process and the top one selected by the “for whom” process. The choice of only one from the “for whom” list forces the identification of exactly for whom the work is done. Coming to grips with this concept is critical for the success of the program. These concepts are given to one person who is charged with the process of actually writing the mission statement using the words from the group. Establish a specific time limit for the crafting of the statement.

MISSION STATEMENT

A SUGGESTED WRITING PROCESS, CONT'D

9. THE SELECTION PROCESS #2

Once a statement is crafted, the group can then accept the statement or seek refinements. The only rule at this time is that each person must agree that the statement is one that they can “live with and support.”



10. NOTES TO THE STATEMENT WRITER

- a. The statement should fit on the back of a business card.
- b. The statement intends to inspire the work done (not to impress anyone else).
- c. The statement must be comprehensive of all the roles of the program without the need to name each of the roles (is a list of programs inspiring?).
- d. The statement seeks to be direct, clear and forceful.
- e. The statement must be realistic enough that people can see themselves participating in the attainment of the mission as articulated.