

Reflection - Assessment on Program March 2012

TRAINER NOTES:

- 1) Whenever a person indicated they were “on the fence” or stretched a rating across two numbers we scored it as the lower number.
- 2) Comments - are partially a summary, some quoting to give a flavor, adding similar comments into categories. In a couple of cases the comments weren’t clear. Follow up needed.
- 3) We are noting items that may require testing with all participants later. Also noting where program improvements could be made and what “wondering” we find ourselves doing in response to ratings and comments.

This reflection-assessment is part of the action-learning process in Shaping the Parish. It's intended to serve participants as they fill it out as well as the training staff/designers as they consider revisions to the program for a future cycle.

This worksheet is asking questions that can't really be fully answered until a year or two after the program cycle ends. We understand that these are your early hunches and impressions.

What we say we are trying to do:

Shaping the Parish™ is a program to develop and nurture healthier parishes.

We are offering two interdependent elements:

1. A support system for your parish as it seeks increased health
2. The development of people in the parish with increased skills and knowledge for shaping the parish

Shaping the Parish assumes that vibrant, faithful churches will flourish as parishes and their leaders improve their own:

- Spiritual practice
- Emotional and social intelligence
- Change theory and methods

Shaping the Parish is attempting to create a support and learning process that:

- 1) Has short term beneficial results for the parish while also
- 2) beginning the parish on a long-term pathway for transformation: a more vibrant parish, more deeply grounded in spiritual life that supports the primary task of a parish; and that
- 3) along the way increases the competency of parish leaders for emotional and spiritual life and in change theory and methods.

We focus on immediate, tangible improvements while building long-term health.

1. Elements of program

Shaping the Parish assumes that vibrant, faithful churches will flourish as parishes and their leaders improve their own:

- Spiritual practice
- Emotional and social intelligence
- Change theory and methods

To what extent does the assumption seem correct to you? (That parishes can become more vibrant and faithful by attending to the three areas)

Not at all			Very much so	
1	2	3	4	5
			///// //	///// ///// /

Has one (or two) of the three elements been more important than others for you? Or do all three work with a kind of synergy for you? How so?

Synergy ///// //

-Takes all three to be effective in developing parish that flourishes

Spiritual Practice ///

- Working to improve spiritual practice helped me focus on the other areas
- Wonderment - How do spiritual practices help increase EI & SI, shape change theory. How does the energy flow from what-the-church-does uniquely into what we know and expect of ourselves and our communities.
- Allows people to open up to the questions and the tools to find the answers

The *In Your Holy Spirit* “map” allows us to navigate these

- Spiritual Practice esp. grounding in Eucharist and Daily Office
- Emotional & Social Intelligence = Community and Reflection

Emotional & social intelligence ////

- Like to figure out how to integrate this into my own spiritual practices
- “Personally important focus” “Got most out of this learning about self and others”
- Necessary and helpful in deepening spiritual practice
- helps us to be more effective in application of developmental initiatives

Change theory & methods ///

- The most intellectually stimulating but difficult to incorporate into new behaviors.
- MBTI helps with use
- Esp. dealing with resistance and sabotage

Struggle with change theory //

Spiritual -easiest; emotional - challenging but doable; theory - hardest.

Observation - The reading and work seems front-loaded. I imagine the more we become experienced using the tools the less time consuming and frustrating it will be. [Trainer note: This does state one of the program assumptions. It's part of why we have been wondering if the work scheduled for Weekend 6 needs to be shifted to the front along with adding skill training in facilitating groups.]

This is a well thought out program that is providing the right kind of tools to understand the many components involved in "change" of a culture and the "spiritual direction" necessary to achieve a more healthy parish.

2. Overall objectives

Please rate each.

Shaping the Parish is attempting to create a support and learning process that:

1) Has short term beneficial results for the parish while also

Not at all					Very much so
1	2	3	4	5	
		//	////// //// ////	/	

2) beginning the parish on a long-term pathway for transformation: a more vibrant parish, more deeply grounded in spiritual life that supports the primary task of a parish; and that

Not at all					Very much so
1	2	3	4	5	
	/	///	////// ////	////	

-May depend on the new rector

3) along the way increases the competency of parish leaders for emotional and spiritual life and in change theory and methods.

Not at all					Very much so
1	2	3	4	5	
		/	////// //// ///	////	

3. Developmental Initiatives

Just regarding those you have decided to work with

1) Seem to help us get at short-term impact

Not at all					Very much so
1	2	3	4	5	
	/	///	//////	//////	//////

2) Appears that they will get at long term developmental needs

Not at all					Very much so
1	2	3	4	5	
		///	//////	//////	//////

4. Demand system assumption

It's an axiom that "programmed events crowd out non-programmed ones." That's one way of talking about how the existing demands and expectations of parish life make it difficult to address strategic issues. The program has been assuming that it needed to have processes, structures and a climate that helped participants make strategic initiatives part of the parish demand system.

1) The assumption seems correct to me

Not at all					Very much so
1	2	3	4	5	
		///	//////	//////	//////

2) The program has helped me do that

Not at all					Very much so
1	2	3	4	5	
	/	////	//////	//////	//////

Working to create demand systems and having the language to do so has made a significant difference.

3) What else might help?

- Periodic on site visits by trainers to assess, provide coaching (maybe using local training people)
- The restructured report forms were helpful - more animation (like on YouTube)
- Need help in introducing many initiatives in a short time period
- How to stay focused? Less wordy e-mails
- More attention to change theory and methods - improving getting people on board so as to make the initiatives work in the long haul.
- More stories of parishes that have made the turn around
- Insisting on a parish team; either a team all participating in the full program or a back-in-the parish team

Trainer comment: One participant seems to have both missed and gotten the point at the same time - said “The number of initiatives to introduce in a short time feels like a new demand system.” That’s exactly what we are trying to accomplish.

5. Bob and Michelle have been:

Are far too flexible in working with the circumstances and needs of participant		They have about the right balance between the two		Are too rigid in upholding the program’s norms and standards
1	2	3	4	5
		////// //// //////	////	

Comments:

- You’ve been flexible and understanding of my context
- I was initially concerned with the exams, etc. However, you are always willing to work with the participants whenever necessary.
- I have needed some handholding but am not good at asking for it ... still assessing why, when I need it.
- I have appreciated the pushing - I am a pressure prompted J - and respond well to that. ... The program demand system worked well for me
- Has been challenging but not unbearably so. It’s been very good at forcing me to be intentional.
- On several occasions there have been circumstances that have prevented us from implementing our developmental initiatives, or completing and sending the requisite forms to Bob & Michelle for their review and response on the desired schedule. I appreciate their availability, counsel and encouragement

for us to press on and their willingness to adjust their deadlines to allow us to continue to participate in the program.

Trainer note: We were pleased with this response. It has taken a lot of time and energy to stay connected with participants in a way that helps them hang into the work.

One person wrote, “I understand rigidity, don’t always agree with it.” In regard to the individual we’ll follow up and ask for more information.

6. What you may need to ask of participants to better achieve the objectives

- All come as part of parish team (either all in full program or at least a back home team)

- Regularly scheduled conversations in between sessions

Start with a mini DI - use some method in a meeting or in a program [Trainer note: This comment is especially interesting. This is what we did do for the first two weekends. We may want to look at this again.]

- Testing in registration process - “Are you able and willing to work on initiatives that might run for a long term in order to see the results?”

- A sense of urgency in taking on the program and a clear hope of what needs to be accomplished [Trainer note: For us this misses how people really work. By definition the program is helping people reshape the parish “demand system” so it can add a strategic dimension to what is driven by urgent (the short term crisis, and routine, necessary business of the parish). Our assumption is that strategic work is rarely experienced as “urgent.” It’s usually something we can put off without experiencing much short-term cost.]

- Recognizing that this is a major undertaking and not to be taken lightly. It requires time and effort. I wasn’t fully aware of just how much effort so it’s been a balancing act getting everything done along with daily life routines.

7. What you are currently asking of participants that may not be needed in achieving the objectives.

- It has all been helpful and growth inspiring for me - especially the tough stuff. Another said that what is being asked is “reasonable.”

- Reduce evening work time, increase day work time

- The specific action planning questions [Trainer note: On the whole what we’ve seen is that the structured format has increased participant grasp of theory and their ability to apply it.]

-The exam structure used in the first weekends wasn't as helpful for me as the structure used in weekends 4 and 5. [Trainer note: Our intention has been to provide various approaches. However, we have received behind the scenes comments that the later approach (less memorizing of theory) to exams may have undercut creating an adequate demand system to do the required readings.]

8. Based on my experience so far:

I would encourage others parish leaders to participate in the program (circle one)

Yes	No	Not sure
///// ///// ///		////

-Been beneficial to me and my parish
 -Come as a parish group
 -This program is like giving birth for the first time—no amount of information could properly prepare you for what is involved (the pain and agony) of being part of the Shaping the Parish but I would say it is extremely worthwhile and would encourage parish leaders to participate.

Trainer note on 7 and 8 - May need to check out time given to theory - methods - casework. Also balance of experiential/participatory work vs. presentation with discussion.

Two items gathered on newsprint after group mentioned them in discussion.

9. I would be likely to use support in the year after we end:

Peer support	Michelle & Bob distance coaching	Both
X (if face to face)	XX	xxxxx xxxxxx x

10. In the long term the program would best be run by:

People external to the diocese	People internal to the diocese
///// ///// //// // a couple were on the fence	

The conversation around this suggests that many participants are uncertain about sharing the inner workings of their parishes and selves with people who are too close in and that there could be political difficulties when trainers

uphold needed standards (some participants running to bishop's office to complain)

Trainer notes: A couple of participants who were on their own (no parish team) noted that they had a difficult time working six DIs. Wondered about reducing number. Most of those on their own were doing fine with the DIs. This may reinforce the idea that all participants need to come as part of a team. The support seems important in implementing the initiatives. Our impression is still that the number of initiatives needs to be at least six if there is to be the chance of having the hoped for short and long term impact.

As a whole the group reports a weakness in systems thinking (organic spirituality, etc.) - Has shown itself in a number of ways. Tendency to be interested in tools and methods without having the grounding in theory and dynamics to make proper use of them. Weakness in theory and system dynamics shows in DIs at times when hard ways to begin are selected over easy and more effective ways, when there's a failure to see that in some cases there is a base needed for more advanced work. We may want to look at ways to do an early assessment of participants about such things and modify the design to address it.

DIs - Program was a change from CDI where people made up their own projects. Usually not strategic work. Might it be possible to require fewer DIs (maybe 4 rather than 6) and get the needed results - short-term impact, longer-term process, participant learning rooted in the experience? Might require further refinement and limiting of available DIs.