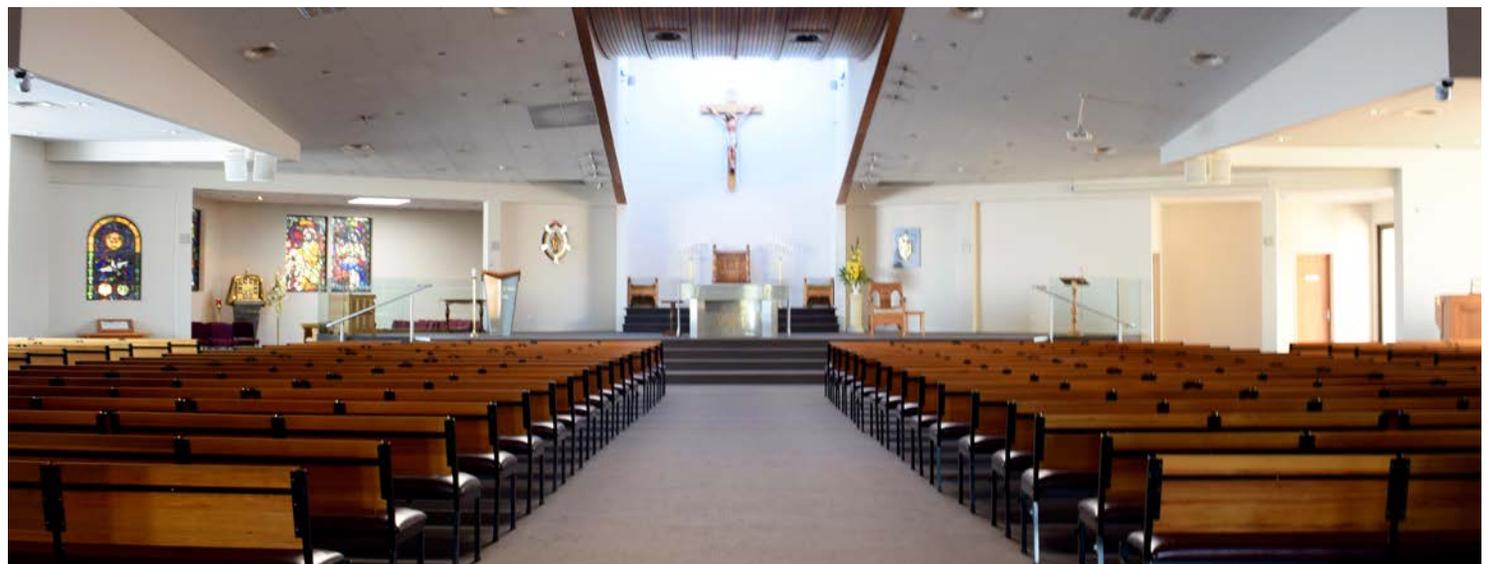


A Welcoming Parish

This checklist offers parish leadership some concrete, practical criteria and descriptions of how a welcoming parish might look and feel.

Each statement offers useful ideas and possibilities for hospitality. This checklist represents different ministries within the parish.



We all know what it feels like to be welcomed at a gathering of friends and family. Feeling a sense of welcome is so important to our experience of Church. Welcome and hospitality are cornerstones in the foundation of enabling people to feel welcome in a Catholic parish. Welcome and hospitality communicate to us in tangible ways who God is in this place and how Christ reaches out to us in love and reconciliation. Indeed welcome is often the first “sacrament” we encounter in our affiliation with a parish.

Parish Church and Environment

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

4 = Always 3 = Sometimes 2 = Seldom 1 = Never
0 = I don't know

Our parish:

1. ____ has a sign clearly displaying the parish name.
2. ____ has a well maintained and inviting exterior with walkways and stairs that are well lighted and free from debris.
3. ____ has clearly marked parking spaces and entrances to Church property.
4. ____ ensures that seating is accessible, appropriately spaced and comfortable for worship and meetings.
5. ____ is accessible to individuals with disabilities, including adequate seating and access to gathering spaces.

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Communication

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

4 = Always 3 = Sometimes 2 = Seldom 1 = Never

0 = I don't know

Our Parish:

1. ____ Mass times and times of other regular events are clearly and accurately posted.
2. ____ office has a courteous person answering the phone.
3. ____ phone recording is accurate and user-friendly.
4. ____ website is regularly updated and easy to navigate.
5. ____ bulletin, flyers and other informational material has a warm, welcoming format and tone.
6. ____ responds to requests for information in a respectful and timely fashion.
7. ____ provides visitors with welcome and parish information in the pews or other accessible locations during holidays, holy days, weddings and funerals.

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Parish Staff

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

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0 = I don't know

Our parish staff members:

1. ____ are welcoming and friendly.
2. ____ are available, accessible and willing to help.
3. ____ welcome phone calls and questions.
4. ____ extend hospitality and welcome to all people and encourage the parish community to do the same.
5. ____ demonstrate respect for the dignity of each person.

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Welcome and Invitation

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

4 = Always 3 = Sometimes 2 = Seldom 1 = Never
0 = I don't know

Our Parish:

1. ___ warmly welcomes guests, visitors and all parishioners to worship, celebration of the Sacraments and other gatherings.
2. ___ has a team of ministers who greet people as they enter for worship.
3. ___ is sensitive to and representative of the cultural, social and racial diversity among parishioners.
4. ___ provides assistance to individuals with special needs, the elderly and young families.
5. ___ provides opportunities for those who are new to the parish to become engaged in ministries and welcomes new people to ministries.
6. ___ fosters a sense of hospitality among all parishioners.
7. ___ regularly schedules welcome events for new members, neighbours...
8. ___ is a place where all feel welcome.

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Worship and Celebration of the Sacraments

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

4 = Always 3 = Sometimes 2 = Seldom 1 = Never
0 = I don't know

Our Parish:

1. ____ invites people to participate in the Liturgy.
2. ____ provides written instructions, non-verbal cues or explanation of Mass parts that are new or unfamiliar, especially for those who are not regular worshippers.
3. ____ is welcoming to non-Catholic relatives and friends who gather for funerals, weddings, baptisms and other Sacraments.
4. ____ has current information about the celebration of the Sacraments, including any special procedures, readily available and easily accessible.
5. ____ provides opportunities for those gathered for Mass and the celebration of other Sacraments to build community – tea/coffee and biscuits, etc.

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RCIA/Formation Ministry

Rate your parish efforts according to the following scale:

4 = Always 3 = Sometimes 2 = Seldom 1 = Never
0 = I don't know

Our Parish:

1. ___ has Jesus Christ at the centre and growing in intimacy with Him is the primary objective of our ministry.
2. ___ provides formation for RCIA Team Leaders and Catechists.
3. ___ creates a safe environment for people to get to know each other and freely share about their relationship with God and others.
4. ___ strives to offer spiritual opportunities that generate interest and enthusiasm, resulting in both formation and transformation of the participants.
5. ___ encourages individuals to deepen their understanding of themselves as disciples.
6. ___ creates awareness, makes available and supports various models and opportunities for faith formation including:
 - ___ Bulletin inserts ___ Web-based resources and webinars
 - ___ Audio-visual resources ___ Resources & support for study groups
 - ___ Online courses ___ Social networking ___ Print media
 - ___ Home group meetings ___ Other

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RCIA/Formation Ministry cont.

Our Parish:

7. ____ provides opportunities for participants to share their faith.
8. ____ encourages participants to ask questions.
9. ____ has ministers and leaders who respond to questions and provide explanations with respect and in a language that is appropriate and comprehensible, without insulting or embarrassing individuals.
10. ____ introduces candidates, catechumens and others preparing for reception of the Sacraments to the community through the parish bulletin, website or at Mass.
11. ____ offers regular prayers, signs of support and words of encouragement for candidates, catechumens and others preparing for reception of all the Sacraments.
12. ____ responds with sensitivity to individuals who are divorced, separated, or single parents.
13. ____ is welcoming to non-Catholic parents who are involved in Sacramental preparation.
14. ____ provides opportunities for those who have received the Sacraments to continue to be engaged in parish life.