

Consultation Summary
St. Joseph Catholic Church
Springfield, MO

How many consultation sessions were held at the parish?

3

On what dates) were the sessions held?

March 26 and 27, 2022, after each of the weekend liturgies.

About how many participants attended?

60

How were invitations issued?

Parish bulletins, "Pastor's Reflections" several weeks in a row, announcements from the pulpit.

How did you invite and connect with those at risk of being excluded or those on the peripheries? Were there any groups of people whose participation was especially noteworthy and why?

We invited parishioners to invite others to participate, but "the peripheries" were not present. In part the thought of a two-hour process probably kept some people away. Perhaps later on we should have other "consultations" that target different populations.

We did have a group of six youths participate.

Were there specific groups of people who did not participate and why (if known) why they did not participate?

We had no young adults and only one couple with elementary age children. Participants tended to be older and the pillars of the parish. In statistical terms we had a skewed sample.

Through the consultation session, what were some of the positive descriptions of how the Church is journeying with people to "grow in holiness"?

Several groups mentioned that participation in small groups contributes to a stronger sense of faith and the faith sharing helps us grow in our faith.

Participants appreciated the availability of our pastor and deacon, men who try to get to know us.

Excellent homilies.

Many parishioners are involved in liturgies and RCIA. Involvement leads to growth in faith.

Our parish's relationship with the school supports the young who are learning about their faith.

Opportunity to participate in Eucharistic adoration.

Music at Mass connects people to our act of worship.

What were some of the challenges, disappointments, or frustrations conveyed in describing how the Church journeys together to “grow in holiness”?

There was a sense that the past two years have been difficult because of the Covid experience. Many of our people are tired. We need to reconnect with people.

Lack of communication. There is a sense that parishioners don't always know what's going on in the parish.

We need to find ways to communicate needs to parishioners.

Distance -- most parishioners do not live close to the parish. Distance is a factor when we plan additional events beyond Sunday mornings.

Several individuals spoke to the need for more adult education.

The availability of the parish library and access to Formed.

Some additional recommendations

- More activities for young adults
- Social activities for youth
- More diverse small groups
- Streamline RCIA
- Do a better job of promoting RCIA
- Rides to church

What were some of the positive descriptions of how the Church is “forming intentional disciples”?

A common theme was that people see St. Joseph as a welcoming community. We reach out to visitors and work quickly to get new-comers involved in ministries. Our small size is an asset.

Those participating in small groups find that this experience strengthens their faith.

There are many ways to get involved in the sacramental life of the parish.

Involvement in the food pantry and other community outreach efforts foster a deeper faith in participants.

Recent improvements in the area of communications were noted, especially efforts to reach out to new parishioners.

We actively recruit youth to be involved in liturgical ministry.

What were some of the challenges, disappointments, or frustrations conveyed in describing how the Church journeys together to “form intentional disciples”?

We need to find better ways to retain our young people.

Those unable to receive Communion feel estranged from the church (divorce and remarriage, gay/lesbian, etc.).

We need a refresher course for Catholics, explain what and why we do what we do.

Child care is not available.

What were some of the positive descriptions of how the Church is responding to the commission of “being sent forth to witness”?

Social events that bring people together

Support for Grant Beach Neighborhood Association

Food pantry

Jail ministry

Communion and visiting for homebound

Assist with Sacred Heart’s cold weather warming center

Dinners in which we invite our neighbors

Giving Tree at Christmas

Poor Fund

What were some of the challenges, disappointments, or frustrations conveyed in describing how the Church is responding to the commission of “being sent forth to witness”?

We need to rebuild momentum after Covid. Several of our outreach efforts, such as visiting residents at Franciscan Villa, were interrupted.

We need to do a better job of communicating our activities to the parish.

We need to do a better job of communicating the needs that our neighbors encounter.

We need to do a better job of providing financial reporting.

During the overall consultation process, what dispositions, attitudes, or feelings were notable? What tensions or disagreements emerged from the listening process? What was significant, surprising or unexpected during the consultation session? What new perspectives or horizons opened up? What were the fruits that the Holy Spirit brought about through this experience?

The tone throughout was very positive. The two hours went very quickly.

We experienced no conflict or discord.

People appreciated the chance to talk. They expressed the hope that other such opportunities could be arranged in the future.

In general, the desire to be involved is overwhelming.

What did participant have to say about areas where the Church or your parish is in need of healing and conversion in its spiritual life, culture, attitudes, structures, pastoral practices, relationships, and missionary outreach?

Catholics who have trouble with some aspect of Catholic belief or Catholic practice tend to be very secretive about these issues. They presume they will be branded as a “bad Catholic” if they openly speak contrary to what the church teaches. However, it is only in bringing these issues out in the open that we can truly minister to each other. These consultations invited such honesty, and this approach was warmly endorsed by participants, but no one single event is going to elicit such openness and transparency.

What dreams, desires, and aspirations for the church were expressed by participants?

They want the conversations to continue!