

TEACHING TUESDAYS: SIGNS OF PARISH VITALITY WELCOMING & CONNECTING MINISTRIES



"Dear Lord, Today I thought of the words of Vincent van Gogh: 'It is true there is an ebb and flow, but the sea remains the sea.' You are the sea. Although I experience many ups and downs in my emotions and often feel great shifts and changes in my inner life, you remain the same. Your sameness is not the sameness of a rock, but the sameness of a faithful lover. Out of your love I came to life, by your love I am sustained, and to your love I am always called back. There are days of sadness and days of joy; there are feelings of guilt and feelings of gratitude; there are moments of failure and moments of success; but all of them are embraced by your unwavering love. . . . O Lord, sea of love and goodness, let me not fear too much the storms and winds of my daily life, and let me know there is ebb and flow but the sea remains the sea. Amen." Fr Henri Nouwen

Recording:

Here is [the entire recording of our Teaching Tuesday session of May 11th, 2021.](#)

Notes:

Here are some of the things we says about Welcoming & Connecting Ministries: *A healthy parish is intentional and strategic about welcoming guests; it is prepared to invite and provide next step connections. Our church family is a place to belong. Guests are valued. Welcoming ministries are dependent on the leadership of active lay members.* In our meeting today we are going explore how Welcoming and Connecting Ministries are built upon the foundation of our **Becoming Beloved Community**, having a faith community of mutuality in place, into which we can welcome guests and new members.

We used breakout groups to tackle these four questions about becoming beloved community, especially the kind of beloved community into which we can invite seekers and quests...

Group 1: *What are ways that a parish community can "share life" outside of the church building?*

Group 2: *What are the various kinds of small groups which happen naturally and we can create in a parish?*

Group 3: *What are various worship services and experiences we can offer to our community?*

Group 4: *What are the major life transitions and milestones a church family shares and supports in each others' lives?*

Our collected thoughts are on the following page. That "mind map" is the kind of collected wisdom and experience on which can we lean as we consider our context of emerging from the pandemic. Those are the ways we know how to create and sustain community for ourselves and all around us whom we might reach.

Whether we are meeting in person or online, we want trained and prepared greeters and to grab every opportunity to make connections with guests which allow us to stay in touch and reach out.

Online Greeters Best Practices:

One needs to be present with account privileges to turn off chat functions if problems arise.

Say hello and welcome attendees.

Share links to the program bulletin, online connection card, prayer resources, the parish website, social media, etc.

Highlight important details and announcements, offering invitations to connect or attend again.

Getting Connected

Contact Cards... remeber that we can't ask too much! Name and email is enough and all most will offer these days!

Use Google Forms to make a quick and easy online contact card, [here's an example I made Tuesday morning!](#)

You can use services like [Bitly.com](#) with a free membership to make more appealing links:

<https://bit.ly/ourcontactform>

Use services like Meetup, Eventbrite and Zoom (with registrations turned on) to manage attendees and capture information when people join your meeting. In Zoom attendees can be automatically admitted to the meeting once they register (provide their name and email), and now you can send a thank you note for their attendance!

Previous Weeks' Recap Documents with links and resources:

Week One on [Compelling Mission and Vision.](#)

Week Two on [Clear Path of Discipleship.](#)

Week Three on [Faithful Financial Practices.](#)

Week Four on [Inspiring & Capable Leadership.](#)

