

SELECTING A PARISH LEADER *(for pastors)*

Pastors are asked to appoint a parish leader as the main point person and coordinator of the Year of Service. While each pastor must discern who God is calling to take on this important role, we have provided a number of tips, considerations, and suggestions that pastors may find helpful in making their selection.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.

When initially considering who to appoint as the parish leader for this initiative, we encourage you to think outside of the box. While a pastor's first impulse may be to appoint the parish DRE, current pro-life coordinator, or other social ministry leader, consider that these leaders already have a long list of responsibilities and may not be able to fully devote themselves to the *Year of Service*.



iStock.com/ ChiccoDodiFC

We encourage you to think beyond your first impulses and consider appointing a leader who may not initially be on your radar. Consider asking other ministry leaders for suggestions on who may be well-suited for this initiative. Because ministry leaders work closely with so many different people in the parish in various settings, they may be able to identify candidates who would otherwise be overlooked.

Are there young adults in your parish excited to serve others and find their place in the Church? Is there someone in your Hispanic ministry who is passionate about serving mothers in need? Do you know of any parishioners who currently volunteer at a local pregnancy center who can bring special knowledge and insight?

These are just some ideas to consider as you discern who God is calling to this special task.

REMEMBER THAT THE YEAR OF SERVICE IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A PASTORAL INITIATIVE.

While your parish may have a number of devoted pro-life champions who enjoy educating others on policy initiatives or collecting signatures for pro-life petitions, the focus of the *Year of Service* is not political or policy driven. Although these efforts are very important and commendable (and part of the bishops' [Pastoral Plan](#)), the *Year of Service* is focused on providing real, tangible support to pregnant women in need. Part of the vision for this initiative is to move the conversation from what sometimes seems like a partisan divide into *pastoral unity*.

When identifying possible parish leaders, make sure that you are confident that these candidates understand and can clearly communicate this pastoral vision to the rest of the parish. If the goal is to better reach out to mothers in need, partisan messages can prevent women in need from hearing the most important message of the *Year of Service*—that the Church is there for them and desires to support them and walk with them during this challenging time.

CONSIDER THE FUTURE.

While the *Year of Service* is a one-year commitment, depending on what your parish discovers through the inventory and how your parish discerns it is called to respond, implementing your parish plans may take you outside the March 25, 2020 - March 25, 2021 timeframe. *Do the candidates you are considering have the bandwidth and desire to continue to shepherd this pastoral initiative beyond March 25, 2021?*

This is not to say that the parish leader is the only person that can be appointed to ensure that your parish plans are implemented. The parish leader will also have the support of the core team, of which other members may be chosen for future tasks. However, if you are aware of a specific conflict in time or scheduling, you may want to consider other candidates to ensure consistency. When inviting a candidate to be the parish leader, let he or she know that responsibilities could possibly extend past the *Year of Service* itself.

TAKE IT TO PRAYER.

While we know that pastors are incredibly busy, and it may be tempting to appoint a parish leader and move on quickly, we hope that you will be able to devote time in prayer to this decision. Appointing the right person at the beginning of this initiative can very likely save a pastor time down the road. It's important to choose a leader who you feel you can trust to truly take the lead and work well with other parish ministry leaders and staff. The parish leader will likely set the tone for the *Year of Service* in your parish, especially among the core team. We pray that the Holy Spirit may guide your discernment.



iStock.com/ WDnet