

developing diverse leaders

This excerpt from the U.S. bishops' Best Practices for *Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One*, describes a process for development of diverse leaders within one parish. A skilled, diverse leadership force is one of the best assets for the development and implementation of pastoral strategies and initiatives. It also builds community and a sense of belonging.

Developing Diverse Leaders: Best Practices for Shared Parishes

The parish [that is the focus of this case study] was very multicultural and there was a considerable amount of spiritual formation happening within the different language groups. However, there was no cross-cultural program where people could develop both spiritually and as leaders. The parish was offered an opportunity to participate in a 14-week program called *Servant Leadership*. Meeting weekly, the group explored such areas as self-awareness, empowerment, transparency, and community building as they developed a creative and respect-filled style of *servant leadership*.

The program created space for people of many different cultures to share what each topic meant to them from the point of view of their culture and history and to have their perspective broadened by the sharing of others and by reading the written thoughts of respected authorities in the area of spirituality and leadership. Over the course of those three months, relationships and a sense of community formed. Most of the participants would go on to serve in leadership positions in the parish, bringing with them their broadened perspective, which would be important

especially for those who would eventually go on to serve on the multicultural parish council.

For some, the experience was so powerful that they wanted to share it with others. They were prepared as facilitators and for the next few years shepherded others through the same process that had been so life-giving for them. Seeing the fruits of this program, two years later, the pastor decided that it would benefit his multicultural staff: so for a year the priests and lay staff participated in the program to deepen their understanding of one another and what it means to be a servant leader.

IDENTIFICATION OF ROLES

The pastor sees the need to provide spiritual growth and leadership development opportunities for parish leaders from the culturally diverse communities in his parish. He proceeds to identify Servant Leadership as a program that covers both areas well and decides to make the investment to bring the program to the parish. Leaders from the various cultural communities respond well to the pastor's invitation to participate in the program and have a very good experience in it. The pastor decides to provide the same opportunity for the priests and lay staff in the parish.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES UTILIZED

Knowledge: The pastor knows that parish leaders are ready to grow spiritually and to develop more leadership skills. He identifies a good resource to provide the formation needed. The pastor also knows how to successfully invite and secure participation of leaders from the various cultural communities in the parish.

Attitudes: Openness to grow spiritually and to develop new skills on the part of the pastor, parish leaders, and staff; openness to share cultural perspectives on the program's content; and openness to develop a sense of community among culturally diverse members. Generous investment of time, talent, and treasure in formation.

Skills: Consultation and research to identify the most suitable program were in place. Organizational skills to set up the training program in terms of space, times, hospitality; and related resources. The program itself improved the skills of participants in terms of self-awareness, empowerment, transparency, and community building as they developed a creative and respect-filled style of servant leadership.

PASTORAL PLANNING INSIGHT

A skilled leadership force is one of the best assets for the development and implementation of pastoral strategies and initiatives. It also builds community and a sense of belonging.

PASTORAL PRINCIPLE

Champion formation and leadership development within each cultural/ethnic community through common experiences.

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