Leader: We gather this evening as parish leadership to consider our role in helping to “welcome home” our brothers and sisters. In Baptism, we are God’s instruments in reaching out to one another. As we pray to let go of the many issues, tasks and people from our busy day, we ask that Christ help us to focus on the important issue of welcoming people back to our faith.

Call to Prayer
Leader: Let us remind ourselves that we are in the presence of our God as we begin in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Just as you called your disciples to radiate your love and hospitality in the early Church, likewise you call us to be a bright light shining in our parishes today. Let us recall Jesus’ words.

Reader 1: A reading from the Gospel Matthew (5:14-15)
You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. The Word of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

Leader: As children made in God’s image and likeness and as followers of Jesus in the Catholic Tradition, what does it mean give light to all in the house as we consider Catholics Come Home?

Please take a moment to prayerfully reflect on this question and then feel free to share with those near you.

Prayers of the Faithful
Reader 2: Knowing that God hears us, let us offer the following prayers.
Please respond: Lord, help us to give light to all in the house.

Reader 3: Lord, in the Spirit Jesus, may the oil of our parish lamp incorporate a prayerful relationship with You. We pray.
All: Lord, help us to give light to all in the house.

Reader 4: In the Spirit of Jesus, may the oil of our parish lamp incorporate generosity for the sake of love. We pray
All: Lord, help us to give light to all in the house.
**Reader 5:** In the Spirit of Jesus, may the oil of our parish lamp incorporate the heart and practice of true hospitality. We pray.

**All:** Lord, help us to give light to all in the house.

**Reader 6:** In the Spirit of Jesus, may the oil of our parish lamp incorporate the vision and courage to step outside our comfort and norm and into radical welcoming demonstrated by the early disciples. We pray.

**All:** Lord, help us to give light to all in the house.

**Leader:** Let us now take a moment to offer our specific prayers. (Pause) For all of these and for those we hold in our heart. We pray.

**All:** Lord, help us to give light to all in the house.

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Leader:** Let us join hands and pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us. **Our Father.....**

**Closing Prayer**

**Leader:** Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the many gifts that you have given our parish. Be with us as we search for creative ways tonight and in the coming weeks and months to welcome our brothers and sisters home. Help us to give light to all in our house. In Jesus’ name we pray.

**All:** Amen

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**Prayer to Close the Meeting**

In Gratitude

*(Pray Together)*

Lord, we thank you for entering into our meeting and discussion today. We are grateful for your Son who taught us how to be a light for the world. Bless our ideas and our plans for “Catholics Come Home” and give us the energy to bring our ideas to reality. Instill in us the true heart of hospitality so that we might help others be a light to all who come to our House. Amen

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Developed by Mary Ann Otto, Stewardship and Special Projects Director, Diocese of Green Bay
Three Key Questions

Why do I go to Mass?

Why am I Catholic?

What do I know about Jesus?
Talking about Our Faith: GASP!

G = God

Everyone has some idea of God they can share. God who created everything. God who said I AM WHO AM. Who is God for you?

A = Actual Sin

Without focusing on various doctrines of sin, everyone knows and can share how they personally have done “stuff” that they wish they had not done and wishes they had done some things they did not do. We all have actual experience with our less-than-best-self. What language do you feel comfortable using to describe this?

S = Savior

When you think about Jesus, what excites you the most?
The incarnation (God becomes human!);
Jesus’ life and ministry (what Jesus did and said)
Jesus’ passion and death (Jesus died for all. Jesus died for me.)
The resurrection. (Sin and death no longer bind us!)
Identify what part of the Jesus event you really love. This is the starting point to being more comfortable talking about our Savior, Jesus Christ.

P = People of Pentecost

The story does not end at the resurrection. We believe that God resides within and between us, that we all must journey together, as church, as community, as People of Pentecost, towards the end of time and life eternal. Where do you see the Holy Spirit alive and well, working in your life and in the life of others around you today?

G = God

Who is God for you?

A = Actual Sin

How would your describe “actual sin?”

S = Savior

What excites you most about Jesus?

P = People of Pentecost

Where do you see the Holy Spirit alive and well?
Theology of Hospitality

Hospitality in its truest form is a profound expression of love. The road to true Christian hospitality begins with our own conversion as people and as a Church. Like most matters of faith, the call to change our minds and hearts is a journey. But, we have a great Teacher.

Jesus was the master of hospitality not because of his charismatic personality or his great storytelling ability but first and foremost because of the lens through which he saw others. Unlike the people of his time, Jesus saw everyone through the lens of Divine love. His natural ability to exercise extreme hospitality was obvious in his treatment of women, children, the poor, the wealthy, the tax collectors, the Romans, the Jews and especially those who would become the craftsmen and craftswomen of his Church. There was no judgment, there was no expectation, there was only invitation. It was the ability to be hospitable not to gain something but for the sake of love, itself.

Today’s culture often confuses entertainment with hospitality. This hospitality is often targeted at a certain audience and assumes the guest will reciprocate in some way. As families and friends we take turns hosting Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings as we share in the financial cost and labor in preparing for the event. Hospitality in its truest form has no motivation other than inclusion though it has the potential to reap Divine benefits. Consider Abraham and Sarah’s surprise visit by three angels in Genesis 18 or Paul’s reminder to “not neglect hospitality” (Hebrews 13) because we might be “entertaining angels.”

Hospitality can be risky when it challenges the current practice of a parish. Jesus’ own Tradition was threatened by his radical hospitality and his willingness to embrace people from all walks of life. For some, to embrace others means to risk their own place within the Community. To be open to others also means to be open to the giftedness and voice they will bring to the Church.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, hospitality in its truest form has the potential to grow a Church from a small band of disciples to a global Community of over a billion members. Hospitality in the manner of Jesus carries many promises. For the Diocese of Green Bay in the Lenten Season of 2010, the promise is to welcome our brothers and sisters in Baptism, home.

Developed by Mary Ann Otto, Stewardship and Special Projects Director, Diocese of Green Bay
Comfort Zones Activity

1. Smiling, making eye contact and saying hello
2. Shaking someone’s hand
3. Opening the door to person coming in
4. Giving someone your phone number or email
5. Introducing self by name and asking other person’s name
6. Moving over in your pew to the middle
7. Asking someone else to move towards the middle of a pew
8. Emailing a person after Mass and thanking them for coming to your parish
9. Telling someone you’ll pray for them (either for something specific or in general)
10. Talking with someone you don’t know on the way between the parking lot and the church
11. Walking up to someone during coffee and donuts and introducing yourself
12. Talking “small talk” (non-parish business) during coffee and donuts
13. Standing behind an information table and inviting people to come over and talk with you
14. Introducing yourself by first name before Mass or during sign of peace (without a priest prompting you)
15. Approaching someone you know is going through a difficult time (ex. A family member died a month ago)
16. Introducing two people to one another when you don’t/barely know either of them by name
17. Smiling or softly greeting people you make eye contact with during Mass/Communion
18. Inviting someone you know is new to come back next week
19. Inviting someone who can’t receive Eucharist to come up at Communion with arms crossed
20. Inviting someone to meet you at a parish event
21. Handing out bulletins or special visitor’s gifts
22. Asking someone you know to pray with you
23. Talking about why you belong to this parish, why you are Catholic, what you like about Pastor X
24. Wear a nametag or special clothing that identifies you as part of X ministry
25. Approaching an inactive Catholic this Lent and inviting them to join you at Mass.