Fall Leadership Evening Workshop, 2009
Marketing 101
Handout for People who could not attend

Focus of Session: Getting people into your parish for the first time

People form an impression of someone within **3-5 seconds** of meeting them and then begin to seek out information to confirm their first impression.

There are Four Methods that Lead People thru the Church Door to Mass
1. **Internet** – Must have a parish website! – Please attend Web site Workshops

2. **People looking for info who make a parish Phone Call**
   Relatively cheap ideas to get info out:
   a. Run an ad with Mass times in the local phone directory and say “visitors welcome”
   b. Provide info at local hotels, restaurants, bars, gas stations

**When people call the parish – 3 keys**
1. **Friendliness** – Remember all you learned during your customer service jobs!
2. **Return calls within 24 hours**
   …Or immediately after get message if more than 24 hours. People (unfortunately) expect instant service and so we have already lost brownie points with them, making it important to call back ASAP.
3. Answer their question and **ask a follow-up question**
   Ex. When someone asks what time is Mass, give them answer and then ask “What kind of Mass are you looking for?” or “Do you know where we are located and how to find us?”

When someone asks a question other than location/Mass time (Ex. When do First Communion classes start?)
   a) Answer them and **ask follow-up question**. Ex. “Do you live nearby that you can join us for Mass next Sunday? I could introduce you to the person who teaches the class.”
   b) Direct them to the right person and if that person is there to get the phone call, make sure they ask a follow-up question
   c) If the proper person to answer their question is unavailable, have them get back to caller within 24 hours or tell the caller exactly what day they can expect a follow-up phone call. Make sure that person asks a follow-up question when they call.
3. **Drive – By** – people will drive by your parish to look at it before they come to Mass.

3 keys for a good first impression

1. The parish should look alive and active. How do you do this? Have personal touches added to the general structure or grounds. Ex. Flyers attached to the doors that announce some upcoming event. Banners outside announcing the parish picnic or giving people info about special Masses, like Our Lady of Guadalupe, the parish patron saint or Christmas. Outside Advent and Lenten decorations. Even flyers posted on glass doors of churches helps a parish look alive and active. **Something, anything besides a 100% upkept grounds.**

2. Reconciliation and Mass times should be HUGE. The small glass enclosure rarely cuts it these days – use that to give info on the parish itself, like the pastor/parish director and parish motto or mission.

3. When staff are at the church, are cars visible? Often parishes have a special parking area, out of the way of the street. Even though you may walk farther to get to your office door, you will give people the impression that people “hang out” at the parish if your car is seen as people drive by.

4. **Personal Invite**

One thing NOT to do!

**Don’t worry about asking them why they stopped coming to church or why they are inactive.** They will talk about this when they are ready and it is time. If you ask them, they will give you a reason. (Humans are rational beings – even if they just drifted away, they will NOT give that as the reason) If you ask them, that reason they give will only steer the conversation to defending (or not) the church, to them being defensive and to you being on the “other side” of them as someone who is active. They will bring this up when they are ready OR there will be a time down the road when you can tell that they want you to ask (think of tears in eyes) and you can bring it up then.

One thing TO DO!

**Do ask them if they would like to join you for X, Y or Z thing at church**  Personal invitations matter. Having people care about them matters. People are used to being asked for all sorts of things nowadays. And people are used to politely saying “no” if they have absolutely no interest in it. Their feelings will not be hurt if you ask. Even if they say no, they will know you cared enough about them to ask.