

PREPARING FOR THE FAMILY NIGHT

APPENDIX B

Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples! —Isaiah 62:10

Taking time to properly prepare for *The Parish Family Night* will help make your evening successful. Your planning should begin with your parish priest's blessing and direction. Meet with him to decide important details such as dates, recruiting of assistants, and worship during the event. Then, set a date to meet with the session leaders and other volunteers. Make sure to coordinate this with the priest's schedule so that he can be present as well. Taking the time to get together will ensure that everyone is working toward a common goal for the evening.

We must always remember that everything we do is for God's glory, and we need His grace in this worthwhile endeavor. Ask your priest to begin and end each organizational meeting with a prayer. If your priest is not able to attend, ask for His blessing to use the following prayers:

Prayer for Before the Meeting

Our Lord and Savior, You became Man and labored with Your hands until the time of Your ministry. Bless us as we begin this work. Help us to bring it to completion. Lord, enlighten our minds and strengthen our bodies, that we may accomplish our tasks according to Your will. Guide us to bring about works of goodness to Your service and glory. Amen.
—*Prayer before any task*

Prayer for After the Meeting

Thank You, Lord, for Your strength and guidance in our work. You are the fulfillment of all good things. Fill also our souls with joy and gladness, that we may praise You always. Amen.
—*Prayer after any task*

On the next page is a checklist to guide your planning. Make enough copies of the page to use for all 12 sessions. Some of the tasks may be discussed at the planning meeting, while others will be decided during the initial consultation with the priest. Remember, your responsibility doesn't end when *The Parish Family Night* is over. Take time to reflect on what was successful and what could be done differently for future gatherings. Gather feedback from the families who attend, as the ministry will not thrive if they don't think the gatherings are beneficial.

May God guide and bless your preparations for family night. If we can be of any assistance during this process, *please* contact us.

With love in Christ,

Center for Family Care

PLANNING CHECKLIST

Date: _____ Time: _____ Theme: _____

Is this date cleared with the other ministries of the church?

Who will lead the group session? Who will assist?

Who will lead the children's break-outs session? Who will assist?

Who will lead the teenagers' break-out session? Who will assist?

Who will lead the adults' break-out session? Who will assist?

Are we having food?

- What type? Are there any fasting considerations?
- Who is responsible for coordinating?
- Where is the money for the food coming from?

What supplies are necessary for the sessions?

Where is the money for the supplies coming from?

Can we use supplies that the church already has?

Who will get supplies for the sessions?

What must take place for setup?

Who will help set up?

Who will help clean up?

What will be done for promotion?

- Bulletin or Web site posting
- Announcements by the priest
- Mailing, e-mailing, or phone calls

How will we handle the prayers and services?

- Which prayers and services will be offered?
- At what point in the evening will they be offered?
- Who will make copies of the services and/or prayers for everyone?

What time should different volunteers arrive (clergy, session leaders, volunteers, set up group, etc.)?

What efforts should be taken to make everyone feel welcome and included?

Could there potentially be any participants with needs that require special consideration? If so, how will we work to make this program beneficial to them?

Create an action plan:

- What still needs to be done? Who is doing each task? When will it be done?
- How will we check on the progress of everyone's tasks?
- Do we need additional meetings?