

How to Organize a Parish Mission

The purpose of organizing a Committee to prepare for a Parish Mission is to pave the way for parishioners to experience the graces of a Parish Mission through prayer, creativity, hospitality, nourishment, and fellowship, and to provide a comfortable, inviting atmosphere for those attending the mission.

Timeline:

Begin to organize a Committee to prepare for your Parish Mission approximately three or four months prior to the Parish Mission dates. Parish council members, Eucharistic ministers, lectors, liturgy committee members, greeters, ushers, Catholic school representatives, Knights of Columbus, prayer group leaders, youth group leaders, and religious education director and teachers are just some examples of those who should get involved. Try to get someone from each of those groups on the Parish Mission committee so they can communicate to their ministries about the mission and to solicit help.

Chairperson/Coordinator of Team:

Each Parish needs a chairperson who coordinates a team of volunteers to assist with the many aspects of the parish mission.

Prayer:

Fr. Larry wrote a special prayer to be said in anticipation of a Parish Mission. A copy of this Parish Mission Prayer is attached to this document. Father asks that you say this as a community prayer at Mass after the intercessions in the last month leading up to the Parish Mission. Our hope is that the power of prayer will lead many people to the Parish Mission and ultimately to a closer relationship with God

Child Care:

Providing child care is important as it allow parents with young children the opportunity to attend if they did not have a babysitter at home.

Phone Calls:

Consider calling every family in the parish to invite them to the mission. Various ministries within your church such as Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers may be able to help in this area. You can also offer transportation if anyone expresses they do not have a way to get there. If there is no answer, leave a message. It is possible that you may reach people who have not been regularly attend Mass.

Publicity Committee:

The Publicity Committee is a key component to the success of having a large number of people attend the Mission. One parishioner should lead this committee as the chairperson. Six months prior to the Mission, this chairperson should be in contact with Mary Therese Craig, Executive Director of The Reason For Our Hope Foundation, at 814-455-7364. This committee must be in place in order to promote the Mission in the six months leading up to the start of the mission.

Father Larry receives many requests for Parish Missions each year, and it is not possible to fulfill each one. The parishes that were not able to be scheduled for a Mission may be in close proximity to your parish, and therefore, by advertising in other area bulletins and the newspaper, these people could attend the Mission as well. Also, many parishes have only about 40% of the total available Catholics in the area attending and supporting the parish. So it is important to reach those who are away from the church for some reason. Radio stations, newspapers, diocesan publications, and television bulletin boards are effective means to reach these people. A timely article on the religion page of the local newspaper is also a very effective tool. Included in this Packet for Parish Missions is a sample press release that you could submit to your local radio stations, television stations, and newspapers.

Parish bulletin reminders should begin weeks before the Mission in order to allow people to reserve the time on their calendars. Included in this Packet for Parish Missions is a flyer that you can download and place in strategic places such as bulletin boards for nearby churches and Catholic schools, grocery stores, other retail stores, and businesses owned or managed by parishioners. If your parish has a website is very important to post information about the Mission on your website.

Meeting once a month with the Publicity Committee will help facilitate the objectives of the committee. Attached is "Publicity Committee Checklist" of suggested items in a timeline format to be accomplished by the Publicity Committee in order to successfully reach as many people as possible to attend the Parish Mission.

A 10 minute DVD, to be played at all the Masses either the weekend before or the weekend of the Parish Mission, will be mailed to your pastor approximately one month before the Mission. In this DVD Fr. Larry is in his Mass vestments and is speaking from his parish church, and it is the exact same homily that he gives to every parish at all the Masses to encourage people to

come to the Mission. This is a very effective tool to bring people to the Mission. It must be shown in place of the homily at the Masses or it can be played before or after the homily. The video must be shown at all Masses or Fr. Larry will not come. This DVD is available for review now on our website at: www.thereasonforourhope.org. Just click first on “Meet Father Larry”, then “Packet for Parish Mission”, and finally on “Parish Mission Intro”. It takes a few minutes to download.

Music Ministry:

The Music Ministry within your church is an important part of the Parish Mission. Please have the leader of the Music Ministry review the “Parish Mission Guidelines for Musicians” which is a part of the Packet for Parish Missions.

Greeters:

Each night, you will need greeters at all the doors, holding baskets with the items they will need on that evening; pencils, pens, paper, list of sins to confess, etc.

Ushers:

Finding seats for everyone is such an important welcoming gesture. Set up chairs to make sure no one has to stand. This is God’s Home. He is a hospitable God.

Media and Books:

CDs, DVDs and books are made available for the Parish Mission through The Reason for Our Hope Foundation. All media will be shipped ahead of time to your parish along with price cards for the media and a price list. The parish contact for will be sent an email with UPS tracking numbers and a list of the inventory shipped. Each night of the Parish Mission, the media should be available for sale both before and after the Parish Mission. Shortly after the mission is completed your parish contact will receive a call from the foundation regarding shipping the media and the price cards back to us as well as the proceeds from sales.

Publicity Committee Checklist for Parish Mission

Approximately 6 months prior to Parish Mission:

- Establish and meet with a Publicity Committee to organize publicity for the event. Also contact Mary Therese Craig at The Reason For Our Hope Foundation at 814-455-7364 to advise her of the name and phone number of the chairperson for the Publicity Committee.
- Place a brief announcement in the Parish bulletin announcing the upcoming Parish Mission and asking the parishioners to “save the dates”.

Approximately 5 months prior to Parish Mission:

- Prepare a flyer to be placed on bulletin boards for your parish, nearby churches and Catholic schools, grocery stores, other retail stores, and businesses owned or managed by parishioners. Look in the online publicity packet for a sample flyer. Make a list of all places that the flyers could be displayed, including your parish bulletin boards, nearby churches and Catholic schools, grocery stores, religious bookstores, other retail stores, and businesses owned or managed by parishioners.
- Send a copy of the flyer to Mary Therese Craig at The Reason For Our Hope Foundation.

Approximately 4 months prior to the Parish Mission:

- Complete the sample press release with the details of your Parish Mission. Make a list of the various area radio stations, newspapers, diocesan publications, and television bulletin boards that the press release can be sent to. Gather all details on the proper person to distribute the press release to.
- Send a copy of the press release to Mary Therese Craig at The Reason For Our Hope Foundation.

Approximately 3 months prior to the Parish Mission:

- Prepare a Facebook Event for your Parish Mission and send the link to Mary Therese Craig at mtcraig@thereasonforourhope.org . She will post the link on The Reason For Our Hope Foundation Facebook page and also on our website under “Father Larry’s Speaking Engagements”.

- Contact Mary Therese Craig at The Reason For Our Hope Foundation at 814-455-7364 to advise her of the progress of the Publicity Committee.

Approximately 2 months prior to the Parish Mission:

- Prepare a Parish Mission prayer that can be said at Mass following the intercessions approximately one month before the Parish Mission. There is also a prayer on our website that could be used.
- Hand deliver the press releases to the area radio stations, newspapers, diocesan publications, and television bulletin boards to the specific contact person.
- Post a flyer on your church bulletin boards.
- Distribute flyers to each ministry area of your parish, i.e. parish council, rosary society, family ministry, liturgical ministry, usher ministry, RCIA, religious education, music ministry, and if there is a school affiliated with your parish, a flyer could be sent home with the students.
- Distribute the flyers to the list you previously prepared of nearby churches and Catholic schools, grocery stores, religious bookstores, other retail stores, and businesses owned or managed by parishioners.
- Post the Parish Mission information on your church website.

Approximately 1 month prior to the Parish Mission:

- Start to say the Parish Mission Prayer after intercessions at all the Masses for the month leading up to the Mission.
- Place a telephone call to your contact at the area radio stations, newspapers, diocesan publications, and television bulletin boards, to remind them of the upcoming Mission and to answer any questions they may have.
- Place an announcement in your church bulletin to be run for the three weeks leading up to the Parish Mission.
- Check with your pastor to be sure that he received the DVD to be played at all the Masses either the weekend before or the weekend of the Parish Mission.

Approximately 1 week prior to or the Sunday before the start of the Parish Mission:

- Play the DVD from Fr. Larry at all the Masses. Fr. Larry is in his Mass vestments and is speaking from his parish church, and it is the exact same homily he gives to every parish at all the Masses to encourage people to come to the Mission. This is a very effective tool to bring people to the Mission as long as it is played during the homily at the Masses. You will need a big screen television and a DVD player. This DVD will be mailed to the pastor approximately six weeks prior to your Parish Mission and must be played at all the Masses.
- Contact Mary Therese Craig at The Reason For Our Hope Foundation at 814-455-7364.