

# Ideas for Your Parish or School

Here are some ideas of how we can serve our communities, lessen the burden of the economic crisis, and build trust with outsiders:

Sharing of Resources - Inventory available resources of the church community (e.g. tools to borrow, plumbing or mechanical skills, kitchen space or utensils, financial advice, extra work clothing) and create a kind of church "Craig's List" (or "Kingdom List") for trading, bartering, or borrowing.

Parent Support - Organize occasional childcare for families in need. Instead of opening it up to the entire community, target and invite the families you are already aware are in need.

Movie Night – Offer a movie night with no fee and no program... just an evening out. Invest in a little popcorn for your participants.

Clothing Exchange - Setup a clothes trading program or event. People can come together and trade clothes, or make free clothes for people who need help. Make sure to donate left-over's to St. Vincent de Paul ([www.vincentbaltimore.org](http://www.vincentbaltimore.org)) or other charities that distribute clothing.

Stone Soup - Help everyone save money, and build some community by having a potluck gathering where people bring different contents for soup, and you all make and eat the soup together.

Transportation- Establish a website or bulletin board to help setup car pools for people in your community.

Housing - Setup a volunteer to coordinate a program where people in your church or community get help renting out their empty rooms. Helping them with advertising, cleaning it up, screening, etc.

Finances - Have a garage sale at the church, members and locals can bring their stuff to the church, take a little square, and sell their stuff. A large aggregated sale like this benefits b/c more people will be interested in a monster garage sale.

Education - Have volunteers teach financial classes at your church, advertise them as free to the community. Have classes focus on financial stewardship focused on the principles of reducing debt, budgeting, giving, and saving. Offer financial mentorship.

Services - Setup a ministry of mechanics who take one Saturday a month to consult on car problems for locals and members.

Employment - Setup a job board, connecting the employers in your church with the people without jobs in your church.

Employment – The Catholic Review is presently offering free “position wanted” ads. Consider doing the same in your bulletin or newsletter

Food Pantry – Take up an extra (non holiday related) collection of canned goods and food supplies for your local food pantry.

Lunches for the Homeless - If your church or school does not already offer this service, considering adding this service. Organize the making and distributing of a lunch meal for the homeless with sandwich, water, fruit or vegetable, and snack.

While Waiting - Collaborate with a community service that had had increased usage during the economic crisis. Find out when their busiest time is and gather volunteers to come and offer a story-time, sing-along, or other distraction while others wait. Make sure not to distract those offering the service itself!

Holiday Gift - Help to organize inexpensive gift and/or coupon making for family gift exchanges.

#### Workshop Possibilities-

Have Human Resource professionals from your community offer tips on resumes, interviews and applications.

Have construction people or “handymen” offer presentation of how to save energy through better insulation, weather stripping, etc.

Have bankers and/or financial managers offer workshops on managing debt or improving savings.

Have tax professionals offer tips or assistance with tax filing.

(Some of the ideas were taken from Catalyst and Leadership Journal magazines)