



INSTITUTE FOR
Evangelization
ARCHDIOCESE of BALTIMORE

Pastoral Council Discernment Timeline

Timeline at-a-glance

- Month 1 Pastor to make initial invitation to discernment: pulpit, print, social media
Invite Prayer teams to pray for a successful discernment of new Council members
- Month 2 Pastoral Council Discernment Meeting, Gifts Discernment tool
Those interested in serving will contact Pastor within 2 weeks;
Pastor will reply with info on council roles for further discernment
- Month 3 Gifts Discernment tool shared and completed
First "Official" Pastoral Council mtg
Reflection Activity using Core Mission Priorities / Emmaus Reading

MONTH 1 | Initial Invitation by Pastor:

We are Forming a New Pastoral Council!

Have you been energized by the recent activities in our parish or intrigued by some of the new initiatives? A Pastoral Council, through prayer, reading the signs of the times, and conversation with deep listening, serves as a visioning and advising body to the Pastor. Perhaps you would consider serving with a diverse group of engaged parishioners as a Pastoral Council team member for a period of one to three years.

Pope Francis has called us as a Church to adopt a synodal way which is a spirituality that allows us to "see the ways in which the Holy Spirit graces the life of the Church, drawing each one into a deeper love of Christ and moving us to desire an ever-greater communion, participation, and mission!"[1]

I invite you to consider serving on the pastoral council through prayer and reflection, and to present yourself for an informational meeting on DATE at ##pm in the Church/Chapel. We will continue to discern together through prayer and reflection, through questions and conversation and work towards forming a council that will vision together God's preferred future for our parish in the next five years.

Have an immediate question? Please don't hesitate to stop me after Mass or contact me at the parish office. Otherwise, I hope to see you at the information and discernment meeting on DATE.

Pastoral Council Discernment Timeline

MONTH 2 Date & Time| Initial Discernment Gathering in Chapel

Notes:

Create a prayer experience using **1 Cor 12 Many Parts**
How many have come forward: ##
Who is missing? Make personal invites
Discernment (two ways! The person & the pastor)
 Goal Size: would like around 8-14
 Who: representative & diverse in culture, age, and life-stage
Tie in with parish theme if there is one

Proposed Agenda:

Pastor Welcomes & shares Vision
Introductions; sharing a word or phrase why they're here
Gathering prayer
What a pastoral council is / slide show
- What did you hear, what surprised, what affirmed things you already thought
Discernment Prayer
- Synodal Style: Quiet, prayer, reflection question, sharing
- It's ok to discern this is NOT for you
Pastor's Overview of Parish Ministries –
- Understanding the additional discernment done by both possible members and the pastor, and that conversation with other min leaders may be an option (If not selected to serve on PC).
Sending – Pastor to pray over the people & the people to pray over the Pastor; Distribute a prayer card or sacramental for use in each person's continued discernment.

Action Items:

Pastor arranges bulletin/pulpit announcement a month before the first meeting
Pastor provides a prayer card or other small sacramental for the closing
OPR shares with pastor possible Gifts Assessment Tools to use following initial meeting
OPR to bring projector & laptop, and presentation notes (if needed)
OPR to bring Bible and any prayer handouts needed for readers (if any)

MONTH 2 (2 weeks following initial Discernment Gathering)

- Anyone who discerns they would like to be considered for the council reaches out to Pastor.
- Pastor can share with them a gifts assessment either following the initial mtg, or 2 weeks later.
- Pastor continues to discern, then invites people to the first Pastoral Council mtg next month.

Pastoral Council Discernment Timeline

MONTH 3 Date & Time | Discernment Follow Up / First Council Mtg – location?

Notes

- How many have responded to attend?
- Hispanic Facilitator or interpreter needed?
- Who is not represented and needs a personal invite:
 - Hispanic
 - Young Adults
 - Senior Citizens
 - Faith Formation families
 - School families

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions
- Opening Prayer
- Review Roles & Responsibilities of Pastoral Council, including officers/leaders
- Surface who may be interested in these roles for further discernment
- Core Mission Priorities activity using the Emmaus Reading
- Time for Reflection of Scripture and leadership roles

Possible Next Steps

- Deep Dive on Core Mission Priorities
- Deep Dive on LBV pastorals
- Signs of an Evangelizing Parish
- Gifts Assessment for others in the parish
- Ministries Assessment
- Sacred Purpose Workshop

Recommended Resource

[In Service to the Parish and the Church: A Formation Series for Parish Pastoral Councils](#)

[How to have Conversations in the Spirit? Steps towards a Synodal Church | Synod on Synodality | Salt + Light Media](#)

["Conversation in the Spirit" with Fr. David McCallum, SJ | USCCB](#)

Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out your holy and true command.

— ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI