

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

# A TOOLKIT FOR MINISTRY LEADERS

This toolkit is for anyone working in Catholic ministry  
to bring the new Pastoral Plan to life.

**KNOWING  
JESUS CHRIST,  
EMBRACING  
HIS MISSION**





This toolkit was designed to assist Catholic ministries in participating in the Archdiocese of Seattle’s Pastoral Planning Process, which was developed after a broad consultative process with the people and ministries from 2020 through 2021.

Photos by Stephen Brashear.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Vision	<b>5</b>
Pastoral Plan	<b>6, 7</b>
Steps for Planning	<b>8</b>
Form a Team	<b>9</b>
Initial Kick-off	<b>11</b>
Reflection Worksheet	<b>12, 13, 14, 15</b>
Start Where you Are	<b>16</b>
Engage your People	<b>18,19</b>
Calibration	<b>21</b>
Finalize the Plan	<b>23</b>
Bring it to Life!	<b>24, 25</b>
Track Progress	<b>27</b>
Toolkit Links	<b>29</b>
Other Resources	<b>30, 31</b>

Click on section title to take you to the page





# THE VISION

A successful pastoral planning process will result in a Church that reflects the Risen Christ to others. Our goal is to help people draw closer to the Church and joyfully share Christ with the world today.



“Your participation is needed to ensure our mission, the mission of Jesus Christ, takes root in the hearts and minds of our people and ministries. My hope is that by refocusing on the mission together, we can re-envision all our parishes, schools, and ministries to be a church, as Jesus, that is close to the people and that continually draws people closer to Christ, regardless of where they are in their faith journey.”

- Archbishop Paul D. Etienne





Meeting the person of Jesus — as the Samaritan woman at the well did — is life-changing, said Archbishop Etienne.

# An invitation to a deeper ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

**“H**ow well are we living our faith?” That is the question Archbishop Paul D. Etienne is inviting Catholic individuals, families, parishes, schools and institutions to prayerfully consider as the Archdiocese of Seattle enters the next phase of its pastoral planning process.

The brevity of the text on the next page may surprise you.

“I think when people hear ‘pastoral plan,’” the archbishop said, they assume “we’re going to roll out a detailed plan that tells everybody what to do. And that is not what this is at all.”

“What the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council has put together,” he said, “is something very broad as a starting point for people, as a guide to begin this time of prayerful discernment about how well we are living our faith and accomplishing the mission of the Church.”

In a large, diverse archdiocese, the archbishop said, “it’s not helpful to mandate ... that everybody is in lockstep.” The planning process will take shape locally as each person, parish and ministry prayerfully discerns how they can more faithfully and fruitfully carry out their mission.

“The mission of the Church,” the archbishop said, “is helping people to be more fully conformed to the person of Jesus in order to carry his presence into the world and to live as he lived.”

Encounter with Jesus is essential, he said. We need to help people “see the world through the eyes of faith” and recognize Jesus in every sacrament, every proclamation of the word of God, and every act of love for one another.

Ultimately, this is not our work, Archbishop Etienne said.

“This is Jesus’ work,” he said. “How are we allowing him to work through us as individuals, as faith communities rooted in the Gospel, rooted in the sacraments? We are agents of Jesus. We are disciples of Jesus. We are witnesses to his resurrection.”

– Kevin Birnbaum, *Northwest Catholic*, June 2021

## WHY PLAN?

The “outcome” of a successful pastoral planning process, Archbishop Etienne said, will be a Church that:

- has drawn closer to her members, closer to the people.
- reflects the face of the Risen Christ to others.
- is patient and merciful with one another.
- has spent time with the Gospel and is living more closely the values of the Gospel, the teachings of Christ.
- has undergone a conversion experience and can be a more credible witness to Christ in the world today.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Take time to read and reflect on the mission, areas of focus and values on the next page. Find more resources at [archseattle.org/pastoralplan](http://archseattle.org/pastoralplan).
2. Commit to offering the “Prayer for Pastoral Planning”.
3. Read the Gospels, especially the Resurrection accounts (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20–21) and stories of people encountering Jesus, like Zacchaeus (Luke 19) and the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). Ask yourself these questions:
  - Why did that encounter change the course of their life?
  - What does that tell me about how Jesus is seeking to change the course of my life?
  - Have I had that encounter?
  - Do I know what it is to live my life differently because I have met the Risen Jesus?

# KNOWING JESUS CHRIST, EMBRACING HIS MISSION



Encounter Jesus. Become Disciples. Make Disciples.

## MISSION

Jesus said to his disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18–20

## FOCUS

- Encounter Jesus Christ and one another.
- Accompany each other, as one human family, on the journey of discipleship.
- Live the unconditional love and joy of the Gospel.

## VALUES

- Faith in Action
- Hope in Resurrection
- Truth in Love
- Unity in Diversity



# STEPS FOR PLANNING

While there isn't a single way to approach pastoral planning, here is an overview of the actions outlined in this toolkit.



# FORM A TEAM

**You don't have to do it alone!**

Having a team of people who are inspired by their own encounter with Jesus and wish to help others grow closer to Christ is the best way to approach Pastoral Planning for your ministry. Working as a team not only lightens the load but also encourages fresh ideas, diversity in discussions, and leverages the fullness of the gifts of the community.

Focused on pastoral planning, think of this team as a steering committee that develops the ideas and action plans for your ministry. This group will do the "heavy lifting" of planning and strategic vision work, it will also be important to provide opportunities for others to be involved to buy into the vision and ensure consistent action is taken ([see page 18, "Engage Your People"](#)).

Before your team gets started rolling up its sleeves, don't forget about Jesus! Encourage all team members to spend time focusing on their own relationship with Jesus. Each team member should be encouraged to get started by exploring the [Pastoral Plan toolkit](#) for individuals.







# INITIAL KICK OFF

**Your first meeting sets the tone and gets everyone on the same page.**

Connect with each other on a spiritual level by (for example) attending Mass together, praying together or going to adoration as a team. Archbishop Etienne recommends starting every meeting with sacred scripture to hear the word of God and ground ourselves in mission.

Follow the structure of the [Pastoral Plan](#) to help guide your discussions and reflections. Consider scheduling regular meetings (monthly, quarterly or even more frequently) to ensure the spiritual dimensions of the faith is the consistent foundation your ministry is built upon. You may wish to hold separate reflection meetings about each of the three focus areas, taking time to meditate on Scripture and share your experiences and perspectives. This will strengthen the bonds between team members, keep Christ at the center of the work, and ensure your spiritual batteries are charged.

On the following pages are some reflection worksheets that may help get you started.



# REFLECTION WORKSHEET 1

**Focus: Encounter Jesus Christ and one another. Refer to page 7.**

Read the Resurrection accounts and reflect on how people’s lives were changed by their encounters with Jesus Christ.

Suggested Scriptures: [Matthew 28](#) • [Mark 16](#) • [Luke 24](#) • [John 20–21](#) • [Acts 1:1–11](#)

## Encounter Jesus Christ

1. In what ways do we equip ourselves and others to encounter Jesus Christ?
2. What specific goal(s) are we setting to serve this mission focus?
3. What action(s) will we take to accomplish our goal(s)?
4. Which value(s) in the Pastoral Plan does this relate to?

## And one another

1. In what ways do we equip ourselves and others to encounter one another?
2. What specific goal(s) are we setting to serve this mission focus?
3. What action(s) will we take to accomplish our goal(s)?
4. Which value(s) does this relate to?

# REFLECTION WORKSHEET 2

**Focus: Accompany each other, as one human family, on the journey of discipleship. Refer to page 7.**

Suggested Scriptures: [Luke 24:15-17](#) • [Luke 22:27](#) • [Matthew 25:40](#) • [Acts 1:8](#)

## Accompany each other

1. In what ways do we accompany one another? How might we provide better accompaniment?
2. What specific goal(s) are we setting to serve this mission focus?
3. What action(s) will we take to accomplish our goal(s)?
4. Which value(s) does this relate to?

## As one human family

1. How do we recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ?
2. What specific goal(s) are we setting to serve this mission focus?

(Continued on next page)

# REFLECTION WORKSHEET 2 CONTINUED

Focus: Accompany each other, as one human family, on the journey of discipleship. Refer to page 7.

Suggested Scriptures: [Luke 24 15-17](#) • [Luke 22:2](#) • [Matthew 25:40](#) • [Acts 1:8](#)

## As one human family (continued)

- 3. What action(s) will we take to accomplish our goal(s)?
- 4. Which value(s) does this relate to?

## On the journey of discipleship

- 1. How are we responding to Jesus' call to live as his disciples?
- 2. What specific goal(s) are we setting to serve this mission focus?
- 3. What action(s) will we take to accomplish our goal(s)?
- 4. Which value(s) does this relate to?

# REFLECTION WORKSHEET 3

Focus: Live the unconditional love and joy of the Gospel. Refer to page 7.

Suggested Scripture: [1 Peter 3:15](#) • [John 13:34-35](#)

## Live the unconditional love

- 1. How do we demonstrate the unconditional love of Jesus Christ?
- 2. What specific goal(s) are we setting to serve this mission focus?
- 3. What action(s) will we take to accomplish our goal(s)?
- 4. Which value(s) does this relate to?

## And joy of the Gospel

- 1. How are we joyfully witnessing the Gospel?
- 2. What specific goal(s) are we setting to serve this mission focus?
- 3. What action(s) will we take to accomplish our goal(s)?
- 4. Which value(s) does this relate to?



Click here to download  
Reflection Worksheets



# START WHERE YOU ARE

After completing the previous exercise, you’re ready to start focusing on the next phase of the planning process.

As with any planning process, it’s important to understand where you’re starting from. You could consider this a benchmark from which you’ll eventually measure progress. Take stock of your existing programs and activities. Pay close attention to those that require significant time, energy, money and other resources.

Here are some simple steps you can follow:

- 1. Make a list of all your ministry’s programs and activities.
- 2. Complete a simple audit for each one. You may wish to start with the Assess the Situation Worksheet (next page).
- 3. Highlight areas that are particularly strong and producing great fruits. Capture these strengths, which will help you as you move through the planning process.
- 4. Note Take note of the fruits of your current efforts.  
Are they producing good fruit ([Gal.5:22-25](#)) or not ([Gal.5:19-21](#))? Efforts that are not producing good fruit, should either be pruned or stopped altogether.

After completing this exercise, your team should have a good sense of which activities to prioritize to achieve the goals identified in the initial reflection.



# ASSESS THE SITUATION WORKSHEET

Here is a sample matrix to review current efforts:

Name of program/activity	
Description	
Target audience	
Number of participants	
Resources needed (people, spaces, \$\$)	
How it connects to the Mission	
What are its strengths	
What are its weaknesses	
What are its areas of opportunity	
Other Notes	



Click here to download  
Assess the Situation Worksheet

# ENGAGE YOUR PEOPLE

**While your planning team may drive the initial research, planning, and vision work, it will be important to engage all your people along the way. They are critical to the success of the mission of the Church!**

By engaging people early on, you'll help them be more familiar with and invested in the plan, which may inspire them to renew their own relationships with Christ — and participate in the planning process moving forward. Each team should determine what method works best, but here are a few suggestions:

## Host a Town Hall

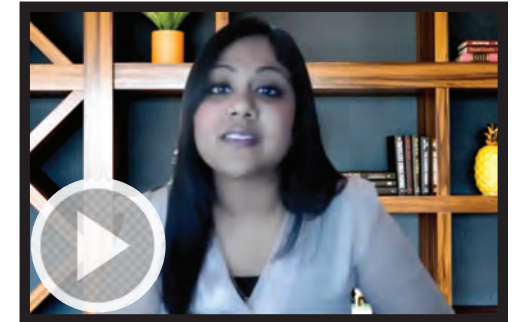
Start the meeting with the [Pastoral Planning prayer](#), Archbishop Etienne's [video](#) about the Pastoral Planning process, and distribute the toolkit for individuals. The planning team leader (parish pastor, principal, or ministry director) can share their hopes for the pastoral planning effort and invite people to share their feedback. Facilitate a discussion about how your parish, school, or ministry will participate. You may even wish to share some of the initial thinking or goals developed in the reflection process for feedback. Provide notecards for people who aren't comfortable speaking up. Close by inviting people to pray for the planning effort and spend time with the [Pastoral Planning Toolkit](#).

## Host a Webinar and/or Film a Short Video

Instead of a live event, people may be more comfortable participating in an interactive webinar or watching a video. For either of these channels, follow the suggested content for the town hall, but remove the group discussion sections. Be sure to follow up with each webinar attendee by sending them the [Pastoral Planning Toolkit](#).

## Host a Reflection Series on Encounter, Accompaniment and Living the Gospel

These could be in-person, online or hybrid events. The reflection series should start with a prayer, followed by an explanation of the focus area for the night. For example, you may wish to show the [short video](#) from Jaisy Joseph, a member of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, who describes the art of accompaniment. Then work through a reflection worksheet with your people, starting with Scripture and then reflecting on the set of questions. This could be done individually, or you may wish to have people work in small groups.



## Gather Feedback

Get feedback from your people along the way with a survey. Consider sending out a survey to learn how people feel about your ministry work and hear their ideas. You can also use this as an opportunity to invite more people to participate in the planning process or future subcommittees. Questions could include:

- How are we accomplishing the mission of the Church to help people grow closer to Christ?
- Which activities are best achieving our mission?
- What activities are not bearing fruit?
- What are our top strengths?
- What are our areas for improvement?
- What do you wish to see more of? Less of?
- What else should we consider as we enter our planning process?
- What issues are on the hearts and minds of our people?







# CALIBRATION

**Our goal is to help people draw closer to Christ and joyfully carry out his mission in the world today.**

Our goal is to help people draw closer to Christ and joyfully carry out his mission in the world today. How well are you achieving that goal, based on the feedback to date? Come together with your team to discuss, synthesize, and finalize a plan of action based on your the goals and priorities.

Now is the time to put your insights into action! Based on the data you collected, what insights did you uncover? How are you already achieving the mission of the Church? What's needed to help people encounter Jesus, accompany each other and live the Gospel?

It would be a good idea to have team meetings to pray, discern and discuss this before developing any plan for how your ministry is going to proactively engage with Pastoral Planning. (If you've come this far, you've already been engaged!) How will you continue to engage your people? What will help them renew their own relationships with Jesus?







# FINALIZE YOUR PLAN

Here is a sample framework for developing a plan for your ministry:

- Start with the overall mission of the Church, Jesus' great commission to his disciples ([Matthew 28:18–20](#)).
- Outline the plan's focus areas.
- Provide an overview of the work and research accomplished to date.
- Share the high-level insights that were derived from the data.
- Share your insights and what actions should come from them.
- Outline your set of recommendations and put them into a plan.

Once this initial framework is complete, share it with others for feedback.

Do these recommendations make sense?

Should they be tweaked?

Are there other areas or items that should be considered?

Bringing people into the process will both strengthen the plan and help with buy-in and adoption when the plan is rolled out.



# BRING IT TO LIFE!

Once your plan is final, you'll be ready to roll it out.

It's important to take the time to proactively communicate about the Pastoral Planning process, its progress, the people involved and the decisions that have been made along the way. Before making any changes in your parish, school or ministry, you'll want to make sure people understand the "why" behind them. You'll also want to make sure people are aware of the Pastoral Planning process and have access to tools and resources to help them renew their own faith. Here are suggestions for ways to promote the plan, invite people to participate in the process, and really bring it to life:

## Website

Create a section on your website dedicated to Pastoral Planning. You may wish to post the Pastoral Planning prayer, Archbishop Etienne's video and a link to the Pastoral Planning page on the Archdiocese of Seattle website. Be sure to include what your team is doing and how people can get involved. This should be updated as milestones are met.

## Social Media

Incorporate Pastoral Planning into your regular social media calendar. You can repost items from the Archdiocese of Seattle Facebook or Instagram accounts or pull assets from the Parish Communication Toolkit. Use social media to gently remind people we are here for Jesus and to inspire them to embrace his mission. This should include content around encounter, accompaniment and living the Gospel. It may include sharing videos from the archdiocese or making your own videos. Use a mix of premade content and posts tailored to your community to promote this renewal of faith.

## Letter

Write a letter to your community about the Pastoral Planning process and invite them to participate. Provide links to online resources.

## Email Newsletter

Create a section in your email newsletter and aim to provide a monthly update on progress. This may be an invitation to an event, a video, a Scripture reflection, links to resources and so much more!

## At Mass

Regularly speaking about the Pastoral Planning process will help keep parishioners engaged. Perhaps aim for a quarterly update to share the latest opportunities for people to deepen their own faith, to participate in planning activities or to join a subcommittee.

## Special Events

Use the Pastoral Planning process as an opportunity to promote special events to help parishioners deepen their own faith. This may include a focused promotion around adoration, a family rosary night, new Bible study groups, faith sharing circles, a book club or community outreach opportunities.







# TRACK PROGRESS

**Pastoral Planning will look different for each ministry since it should be tailored to the unique situation and needs of each community.**

There isn't a single "right way" to do it, but successful planning should result in greater relationship with Jesus, His Church, and our one human family. You should keep track of all the Pastoral Planning efforts. What are you learning along the way? What is working with your community? Do you need to spend more time focused on helping people encounter Christ, or do you need to focus on accompaniment? How are people sharing the Gospel?

Eventually, we'll begin to pull case studies and develop sharing opportunities so we can learn from each other and be inspired by the amazing pastoral creativity we have across the Archdiocese of Seattle.

If you have any questions about how to get started or need support along the way, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are eager to assist you along the way, would love to hear about your learnings, successes, challenges, and questions. We are here for you!

## GET SUPPORT

### Planning & Mission Effectiveness Team

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# TOOLKIT LINKS

Here is simple list of the tools highlighted in this toolkit:

- **Pastoral Plan:** <https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/>
- **Pastoral Plan Prayer PDF:** [https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PastoralPlanning\\_Prayer.pdf](https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PastoralPlanning_Prayer.pdf)
- **Pastoral Plan Toolkit for Catholics:** [https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PastoralPlanning\\_Toolkit\\_fnl.pdf](https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PastoralPlanning_Toolkit_fnl.pdf)
- **Archbishop Etienne's Pastoral Plan video:** <https://vimeo.com/553104162>  
**Spanish subtitles:** <https://vimeo.com/553559976>
- **Video about Accompaniment by Jaisy Joseph:** <https://vimeo.com/553531328>
- **Reflection Worksheet:** <https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Reflection-Worksheet-Final.pdf>
- **Assess the Situation Worksheet:** <https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Assessment-Worksheet-Final.pdf>



# OTHER RESOURCES

## Encounter Christ

- **Encounter Jesus Christ page on Archdiocese website:**  
<https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/encounter/>
- **Faith Formation Online resource page on Christology**  
<https://seattlearchmedia.weebly.com/christology.html>
- **Bishop Barron on Having a Personal Relationship with Jesus**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2KZDQSxwF4>
- **Encountering Christ (for kids-classroom/teacher resources)**  
<https://www.thereligionteacher.com/encounter-christ/>

## Accompany Others

- **Accompany Others page on the Archdiocese website**  
<https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/accompany/>
- ***Called by Name, Sent in His Name - Reflections on an Outward-Bound Church by Archbishop Paul-Andre Durocher (Book)***  
<http://www.twentythirdpublications.com/cabynaseinhi.html>
- ***The Art of Accompaniment-Four Essential Conversations on Becoming the Kind of Parish the Church Needs Today by Bill Huebsch (Book)***  
<http://www.twentythirdpublications.com/artofacniesc.html>
- **Accompanying Youth and Young Adults on Their Journey as Missionary Disciples**  
<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/living-disciples/accompanying-youth-and-young-adults-on-their-journey-as-missionary-disciples>

## Live/Share the Gospel

- **Live the Gospel page on the Archdiocese website**  
<https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archbishop-etienne/pastoralplanning/pastoral-plan/live-the-gospel/>
- **Preparing Hearts and Minds: 9 Simple Ways for Catechists to Cultivate a Living Faith (Online Summer Series)**  
<https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/tag/preparing-hearts-and-minds-series/>
- **Preparing Hearts and Minds: 9 Simple Ways for Catechists to Cultivate a Living Faith (Book Format)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU9zIE2dmWY>
- **Father Mike Schmitz on how to Share the Gospel (and How Not to)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU9zIE2dmWY>
- **The Joy of the Gospel**  
<https://store.usccb.org/products/the-joy-of-the-gospel-evangelii-gaudium>
- **Faith Formation online resource pages**  
<https://seattlearchmedia.weebly.com/beatitudes.html>  
<https://seattlearchmedia.weebly.com/catholic-social-teaching.html>





