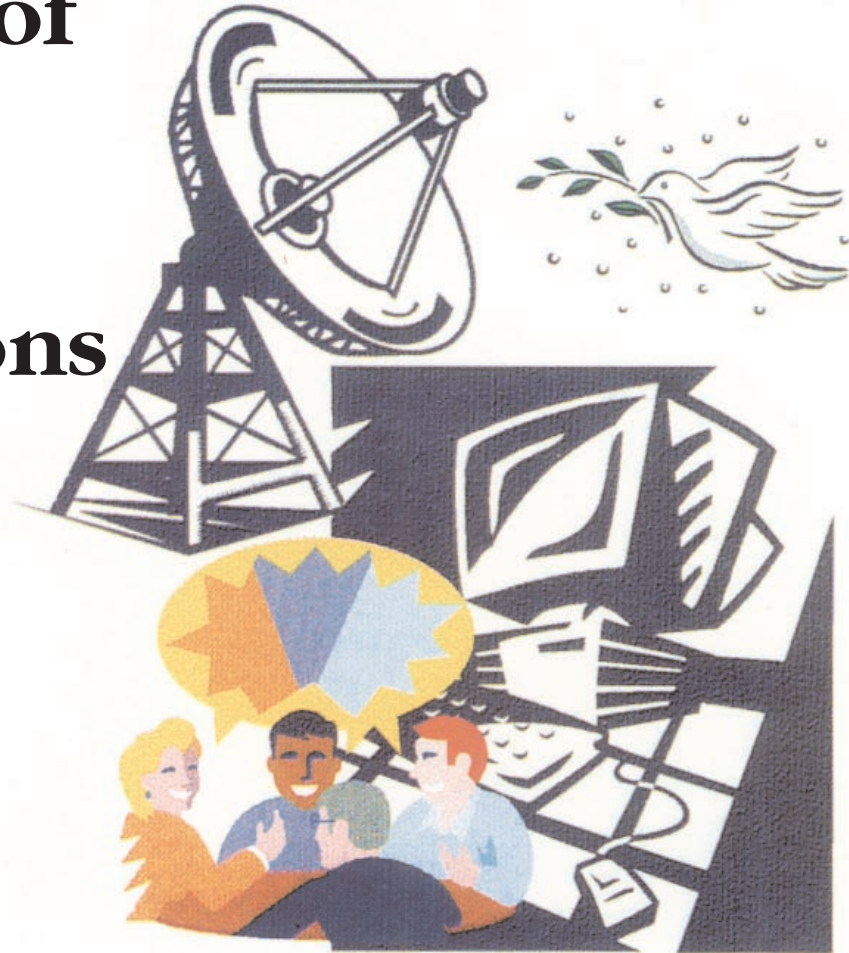


An Overview of Setting up a Parish Communications Ministry



CAHAYASUARA

Making a difference through
Social Communications





Introduction

Parishes are looking for alternative means of reaching out and addressing the variety of religious education and ministry needs of parishioners. As adults continue to become caught up with demanding diversity of new life experiences, their search for answers and insights in interpreting and responding to these experiences increases.

Families, especially, are seeking new ways to bring faith experiences and value-oriented programmes into the home. In urban and rural settings, the active, inactive and church-alienated families require the attention of the parish. How can the parish respond to such a diversity of needs, especially if parish and diocesan staff are limited?



Why a Parish Communications Ministry?

The Parish Communications Ministry (PCM) is beginning to provide increased educational and enrichment opportunities in parishes. Such a Ministry can make available quality video programmes for home use.

The message, teachings, and spiritual issues concerning the Church and personal growth can be accessible to all parishioners. Individuals, families and small groups can select and design their personal learning experiences at their own convenience.

Parishes are challenged to take advantage of the existing technology because of its availability and people's familiarity with its use.



Parish Communications Team

The set-up of Parish Communications Ministries is varied and often determined by financial resources, staff (paid/volunteer, full-time/part-time), parish support (leadership, organisations and parishioners) and space.

A team made up of appropriate people identified in the parish would have to be set-up. Ideally there would be a designated manager who would oversee the entire operation. The Parish Communications Team (PCT) could comprise the following:

- Parishioners with communications expertise (e.g. professionals working in television, video radio, public relations, advertising, etc.);
- Faith educators
- Representatives from parish organisations.

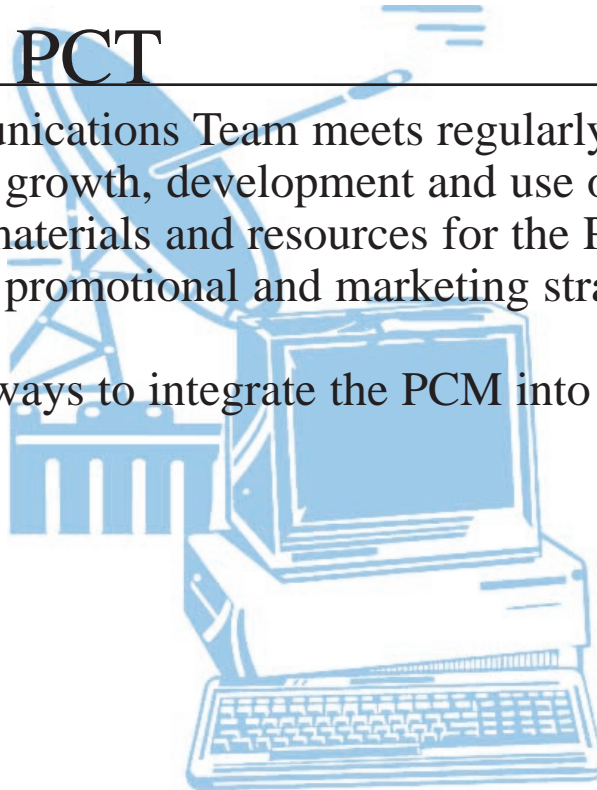




Role of the PCT

The parish Communications Team meets regularly to:

- evaluate the growth, development and use of the PCM;
- select new materials and resources for the PCM;
- discern new promotional and marketing strategies and techniques;
- define new ways to integrate the PCM into the mission of the parish.





Commitment of Parish Leadership

To be effective, the Parish Communications Ministry needs the commitment and active support of the Parish Priest and the Parish Pastoral Council. This support may be expressed by:

- establishing a budget for the PCM;
- encouraging all parish ministries and organisations to actively support the PCM through regular use of the PCM;
- identifying a PCM representative on the Parish Pastoral Council;
- monitoring the growth and development of the PCM;
- maintaining a centre for the PCm to reach out to parishioners;
- encouraging parishioners to participate in the operation of the PCM;
- promoting and markeing the PCM within the parish.



Setting Direction and Goals

The success of the Parish Communications Ministry goes beyond its initial establishment. Setting direction and identifying long-term goals are important processes to ensure that the PCM is relevant and responsive to the needs of the parish.

Key questions to ask are:

- What do we see as an ideal PCM?
- What do we need to realise this ideal?
- What kind of support do we need?
- Who can assist us?
- What steps need to be taken to realise goals in the coming year? In the next 3-5 years?
- How will we evaluate the impact of the PCM?



Parish Media Resource Centre

The parish should set up a Parish Media Resource Centre (PMRC), where the operations of the Parish Communications Ministry would be physically located. It would also house the materials and resources of the PCM.

The PMRC should have suitably designated times for parishioners to borrow/use the facilities and resources of the PCM. The designated times should be widely publicised in the bulletin and notice board.

The frequency and duration of opening the Parish Media Resource Centre depends on the availability of full-time/part-time staff. Ideally the PMRC should open daily, especially after the weekly masses.



If full-time staff are available, the PMRC could be open during the day on weekdays. If only part-time volunteers are available, then the PMRC could be open during weekday nights. The PMRC could also be open after children's catechism classes.

The following could be considered when planning the availability of the PMRC. What will be the:

- opening hours to the parish?
- fee for borrowing materials?
- duration of borrowing materials?
- maximum number of materials a person or family may borrow at one time?
- procedure for reserving materials?
- procedure for using the viewing facilities?
- penalty, if any, for the overdue/lost/damaged materials.

[Click here for an existing model of a Parish Communications Ministry \(The Good Shepherd Communications Ministry\)](#)