

## **Best Practices**

### Archdiocese of Boston Parish and School Responses to the U.S. Economic Crisis

#### **I. CIVIC COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

**A. Contact local government and non-profit agencies for available resource information (see attached listing)**

**B. Collaborate with local food pantries (see attached listing)**

#### **II. ECUMENICAL INITIATIVES**

**A. Share resources among interfaith clergy groups\***

\*(Contact Fr. Kevin Sepe, Pastor, St. Francis of Assisi, Braintree at 781-843-1332 for further information)

**B. Research possible resources through interfaith communities**

1. For example, Brockton Interfaith Community works with the Brockton Housing Partnership. This partnership consists of 13 banks and provides advice to people facing foreclosure\*

\*(For more information regarding foreclosure, see attached documents)

**C. Invite an ecumenical panel to the parish to field questions and provide resource information**

#### **III. PARISH INITIATIVES**

**A. Prayer based Initiatives:**

1. Lenten Evenings of Prayer with and for the unemployed
  - a. *Invite parishioners who have lost a job to gather for prayer and song*
  - b. *Following the song and prayer session, attendees can be asked to serve as a focus group and discuss the question: “what can the parish be doing to help us during this difficult time?”*
  - c. *Resource packets should be made available to the group that evening*
  - d. *As a follow up, a parish response will be crafted based on what is heard.*
2. Parish Novena in honor of St. Joseph the Worker
  - a. *Ask the Liturgy Committee to design and implement this novena*
  - b. *Novena to be held April 23<sup>rd</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>*
3. Remember those who are suffering in this crisis in homilies and intercessions and invite them to seek assistance

4. Share the “Prayer upon losing a job in hard times” posted by Fr. Austin Fleming at [http://concordpastor.blogspot.com/2009/01/prayer-upon-losing-job-in-hard-times\\_08.html](http://concordpastor.blogspot.com/2009/01/prayer-upon-losing-job-in-hard-times_08.html)
  - a. *Pray and encourage others to pray this prayer*

## **B. Drives/Donation Based Initiatives**

1. Provide an EFT program\*
  - a. *i.e., electronic funds transfer, whereby the parish is able to take donations in addition to weekly parish collections*
2. “Three More Per Week” Campaign\*
  - a. *Ask able parishioners to contribute \$3 more per week*
  - b. *In this simple campaign, you can suggest to parishioners that most of us would not think twice about spending \$3 on a loaf of bread, half-gallon of milk, a package of bacon, etc.*
  - c. *Use fliers with photos of “three dollar” items to encourage parishioners to “pick up an extra loaf of bread” for the parish by adding \$3 to their current offering*

\*(For more information about the EFT Program and the “Three More Per Week” initiative, please contact Fr. Timothy Harrison at Holy Family Parish, 978-281-4820)
3. Provide an “Assistance Ministry” box in the Church
  - a. *Welcome people to contribute to the box if they are able*
  - b. *Urge those in need of short term financial assistance to contact the parish about Assistance Ministry*
4. Parish Tithe\*
  - a. *Designate 10% of the weekly collection to go to various local Church and Social Service organizations/charities.*

\*(Contact Fr. Kevin Sepe, Pastor, St. Francis of Assisi, Braintree at 781-843-1332 for further information)
5. Participate in Operation Rice Bowl
  - a. *Operation Rice Bowl is the official Lenten Program of the Catholic Relief services\**

\*(For further information about Operation Rice Bowl, visit <http://orb.crs.org/>)
6. Raise funds through recycling paper, cell phones and metal products
7. Contact St. Vincent de Paul Society about assistance in paying rent, electricity, heat, food vouchers and school financial assistance for parishioners
8. Organize charitable drives for clothing, furniture, household supplies, holiday projects for families in need
9. Create and donate “New Life” baskets for new mothers

### **C. Services Initiatives**

1. Organize “coffee hour” discussion/information sessions as an opportunity for people to gather, network and share information
2. Provide a “Faith Works Employment Support Network” wherein parishioners and others respond to the needs of the unemployed in two parts:
  - a. *Part I – address spiritual and discernment needs*
  - b. *Part II – search out and share resources, information, networks, etc.*
3. Bring experts on job recruitment together to advise and share information
4. Provide a job fair in consultation with the parish council
5. Provide a professional social worker from the parish to evaluate requests for assistance
  - a. *The social worker could counsel the requestor on various government and non-profit resources available to respond to specific situations.*
  - b. *The social worker can also recommend what actions the parish should take to assist the people requesting help*
6. Form a “Home Visitation Ministry” wherein the needs of the homebound can be identified and appropriately met

### **D. Cost – Saving Initiatives**

1. Use effective solutions to save on heating/air-conditioning costs
  - a. *Minimal improvements and adjustments can sometimes yield great savings*
    - i. Some examples are timed thermostats, zone specific heating, window insulation, updating to more effective appliances, purchasing oil before the winter months to take advantage of lower prices
2. Control lighting
  - a. *The ability to slowly turn up lights and the use of area specific lighting (for weddings/funerals) can save money*

## **IV. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION INITIATIVES**

### **A. Waive or reduce registration fees for families that are struggling**

### **B. Confirmation Service Projects**

1. Provide breakfast for the homeless
2. Provide ice cream socials at nursing homes

3. Wrap Christmas presents at My Brother's Keeper

**C. Collect for parish or local food pantry**

**D. Provide food baskets for families in need**

**E. Organize "sock drive" for St. Francis House**

**V. CATHOLIC SCHOOL INITIATIVES**

**A. Efforts to Support Students and Families**

1. Keep tuition to a minimum
2. Allow optional tuition payment plans
3. Inquire at registration about the need for aid
4. Allow parents to volunteer in order to receive full or partial tuition reduction
5. Reach out to private donors/benefactors to cover tuition, lunch, etc., or offer assistance to students in need
6. Create an Adopt-A-Student Program\* supported by alumni, parishioners and vendors  
\*(For more information regarding adopt-a-student programs, please contact Maureen Cocchiaro, M.Ed., Principal at Our Lady of Good Counsel School, Lawrence at 978-682-9761)
7. Establish school fund/financial assistance fund\* to benefit school families in need of help.  
\*(For more information regarding financial assistance funds, such as the St. Francis Fund, please contact Russ W. Wilson, Principal at Blessed Sacrament School, Walpole at 508-668-2336)

**B. Efforts to Support the Schools/Save on Spending**

1. School Promotion/Efforts to Increase Enrollment
  - a. *Actively invite prospective parents and students to Open Houses, personal interviews, and on-site visits*
  - b. *Ask current school parents to indicate names/contact information of persons who might like to consider your school*
  - c. *Offer and market the best academic program possible to attract parents to invest in your school for their child's future*
  - d. *Keep updated materials and information readily available to allow parents to make an informed choice*
2. Employ a full time Director of Advancement to:
  - a. *Attract donors*

- b. *Create Memorial Gift Program*
  - c. *Create an alumni donor database*
  - d. *Create an endowment fund*
  - e. *Research grant opportunities*
  - f. *Work with local businesses and the civic community to market the school*
3. Establish sound fiscal procedures\*
- a. *If needed, enlist the aid of competent financial professionals*
  - b. *Create a multi-phase budgeting process to establish tuition*
    - i. Requiring monthly reviews by the Pastor and Principal
    - ii. And periodic reviews by the School Advisory Board and the parent community
  - c. *Try to ensure that tuition covers salary and benefits costs*
  - d. *Charge a non-refundable enrollment fee*
  - e. *Offer tuition payment plan options*
  - f. *Budget only a portion of expected fundraising*
  - g. *Create scholarship/tuition assistance program*  
 (\*For further information, contact: Mary Reardon, Principal, Immaculate Conception School, Newburyport at 978-465-7780)
4. Invite a donor to underwrite an alumni dinner\* with no charge but with a donation requirement  
 \*(For more information about organizing an alumni dinner, please contact Maureen Cocchiaro, M.Ed., Principal at Our Lady of Good Counsel School, Lawrence at 978-682-9761)
5. Delay capital projects
6. Control Spending
- a. *Tighten spending on office and teaching supplies*
  - b. *Rework contracts with vendors (for example, custodial services, etc.)*

**C. School Projects Stressing Service and Compassion**

- 1. An annual walk-a-thon fundraiser
- 2. Thanksgiving food drive
- 3. A “Souper Bowl”\* fundraiser for food pantry (collection of canned soup)
- 4. Christmas gift drive for children’s homes
- 5. Collect books for children in need
- 6. Pennies for the Jimmy Fund\*  
 \*(Contact Fr. Kevin Sepe, Pastor, St. Francis of Assisi, Braintree at 781-843-1332 for further information)