



## People of God: Four Models of Church

### *How-tos*

1. How to develop an appreciation of Church in the Sunday liturgy
  - Offer training to ministers of hospitality, emphasizing the key role they play in enhancing the experience of Church as a *Community of Disciples* and helping the community to feel “at home” and interactive. Encourage gatherings after Sunday liturgies. Hospitality ministers can play a meaningful role here, providing a congenial, inviting atmosphere.
  - Invite the pastor to develop a series of homilies presenting the institutional Church in its role as *Servant, Herald, Sacrament, and Community of Disciples*. Include the importance of evangelization and social action in the Church’s mission.
  - Teach and use hymns and songs that reflect on the role of the Church. Liturgy planners and parish staff may wish to meet with musicians to plan to emphasize the Church’s role within special feasts (for example, Pentecost as the birth of the Church) or regular Sunday liturgies (relating to specific lectionary or sacramentary texts).
  - Develop a series of short reflections for the parish bulletin, presenting liturgical or theological texts that teach the meaning of Church. (For example, through the dismissal rite, we are alerted to our role as *heralds* of the gospel, that is, to witness to the Good News.)
2. How to assist committees, ministries, and ministerial communities to live out their experience of Church
  - Through parish staff input and facilitation or in regular meetings, encourage committees, ministries, and ministerial communities to grasp their role within a wider community context. (For example: a parish drama ministry may decide to contribute the proceeds of their productions to a local organization involved with the disadvantaged; a school or catechetical/religious education program may involve its students in assisting with daycare of young children or in visiting the sick or elderly.)
  - Support committees, ministries, and ministerial communities in their search for a deeper understanding of the meaning of Church, and how this can be expressed through their ongoing ministries. Strategize how to carry out ongoing prayerful discussions of this topic through regular meetings or portions of meetings.
  - Invite committees, ministries, and ministerial communities to a retreat weekend on how their spirituality is expressed through their ministry, and how their ministry is expressive of Church.
  - Download the workshop “Creating Ministerial Communities” from [www.ParishLife.com](http://www.ParishLife.com) and use it to conduct a three-hour formation experience for individual committees, ministries, and ministerial communities or for the all those involved in ministry in the parish. For consultation on how to conduct such a workshop contact Michael Fabian: [SCCServices@renewintl.org](mailto:SCCServices@renewintl.org), (908) 769-5400 ext. 144.

### 3. How to help the parish grow in understanding the meaning of Church

- Encourage parishioners to become involved in social action, especially during the Lenten season. Recognize the challenge it is for individuals and small groups to become involved. Reduce their feelings of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of needs locally and worldwide by choosing only one focus for a particular Lent, for example participation in a Church organization such as Campaign for Human Development or Catholic Relief Services; in a Christian organization such as Habitat for Humanity; or in a civic group such as Amnesty International. Follow up participants' experiences with debriefing sessions and faith sharing and praying upon Church as *Herald* and *Servant*. (To assist in these sharing sessions, consider downloading the workshop "People of God: Four Models of Church" from [www.ParishLife.com](http://www.ParishLife.com) or select an appropriate title from RENEW International's *IMPACT* series of small community faith-sharing booklets on various social issues. Click on <http://www.renewintl.org/Resources/Pages/faithshare.html>)
- Have a speaker come to the parish to conduct a five-to-six week study of the Church as *Community of Disciples* or *Sacrament* in the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters of St. Paul, or in the Documents of Vatican II, during Lent or in the fall.
- Contact the parish or (arch)diocesan office to find out about regional or (arch)diocesan speakers, workshops, retreats, and courses on the Church. (We can publicize these locally and even offer to bring interested people with us to them.)
- Have the parish staff recommend a popular Catholic book on the Church to be used as material for adult discussion groups either at the parish or in the homes of parishioners.