

## Is Your Parish Ready for Greater Volunteer Involvement?

There are three factors that need to be carefully considered before you can effectively create a volunteer ministry in your parish. Each item requires careful consideration, frank discussion, and possibly some thoughtful action to ensure success. While it may seem daunting, honesty will pay off, if you can face and resolve any barriers to your program before you begin. Or, when you decide to go ahead, you already know of the barriers to success and take those into account in your planning and promotion.

- Three readiness factors:
- The clergy and staff point of view
  - The views of existing lay leadership
  - The “climate” within the church

### A Readiness Checklist:

Questions	Yes	No	Needs Work
<b>The clergy and staff point of view</b>			
1. Do the clergy and staff really want meaningful lay involvement?			
2. How comfortable are they with participative decision-making?			
3. How important is it to the clergy and staff to be seen to be in charge?			
4. Are people currently given freedom to take on a project “their way” within safe boundaries?			
5. Do the clergy and staff feel comfortable in sharing ministry and in supervising others?			
<b>The views of existing lay leadership</b>			
1. Do existing lay leaders feel comfortable sharing leadership with others?			
2. Does the leadership believe that, to get a job done right, you must do it yourself?			
3. Are offers of help readily received by people new to the parish?			
4. Do senior lay leaders lose anything by engaging others in the work of the parish?			
5. Are there mentors or supporters who will work closely with those new to leadership?			
6. Are there leaders who are already demonstrating success in working with /engaging volunteers?			
7. Can we give visibility to those already working well with volunteers before we begin this new initiative/program in volunteer engagement?			
8. Can we study how and why these folks are successful ?			

Questions	Yes	No	Needs Work
<b>"Climate"</b>			
1. How welcoming is the parish to new ideas and new people?			
2. How comfortable is the parish to diverse opinions?			
3. Must people earn the right to become involved?			
4. Are people encouraged to take risks or offer help?			
5. If people make a mistake or fail, do they still feel valued by the congregation?			
6. Is there a lot of parking lot discussion about people or about 'wrong' decisions made?			
7. Are lay people ready for the clergy and staff to give up control?			
8. Does the parish feel like a safe place to be open about your feelings or experience?			