

Program Timeline/Plans

One-Week Program – Gratitude Sunday

This very short program focuses on gratitude and thanking. To begin to prepare the ground for a program that focuses on Inspiring, Inviting and Thanking, you might want to set aside time around one Sunday to focus on gratitude. A culture of generosity is built on a foundation of gratitude.

We thank God for the blessings in our lives. God is generous again, again, and again. Consider how you can say thank you or show gratitude again, again, and again—and in many different ways. Find opportunities to say thank you directly. Find opportunities to deliver it personally. Gratitude needs to be planned if it is to become a habit in your congregation.

Here are some ideas to get you started. Integrate one or more of these ideas into a liturgy or program with a focus on gratitude.

1. Preach on Gratitude

Share your own experiences of gratitude in a sermon.

Offer your own gratitude in a sermon.

Invite others to share their experience of gratitude.

2. Spiritual Practice

Invite members of the parish to joining in a discipline of

- keeping your own daily Gratitude Journal
- sending two (or five) thank-you cards a week to people you notice doing good things. If, or when, you run out of people in your parish, go wider—thank the teachers in the neighbourhood school, the first responders, the aides in the nursing home

3. Create a Gratitude Team

Gather a few people together over coffee and treats. Ask yourselves:

- Who is doing things in our parish that go unnoticed or unrecognized?

OR

- If we were expecting a visit from a distinguished visitor (the Bishop, or Archbishop Desmond Tutu), what ministries and achievements would we want to share and highlight? Who are the saints in your parish you would want to introduce to this visitor?

OR

- Identify the people involved in ministries and programs your parish is involved with: outreach, pastoral care, learning and formation, worship...
How are members of your parish contributing to the wider community, volunteering, sitting on boards...

Now, how can we thank these individuals in ways that are personal, timely, and sincere?

4. Gratitude Mailing

Create a gratitude package to give to every household in your congregation, sharing the things that your parish can be grateful for. Personalize it with a handwritten note with a specific thank-you for ways the person or family makes a difference.