**Listening Sessions October/November 2018**

**Listening Session Summary Report**

**Location:** St Mary’s Riverside, IA (Cluster Parishes of Riverside, Richmond, and Wellman)

**Date of Session:** Oct 9th, 2018 **Facilitator:** Michael Hoffman

**Your Name:** Dcn Derick Cranston **Email:** derickcranston@gmail.com

**Approximate number of participants:**

**Were small groups utilized? \_\_X\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no**

**If so, how many small groups did you have?** Six

**Briefly describe the composition of the group (age/race/gender/ethnicity).**

There were 41 people present, Caucasian, ages ranging from 35 to 80 years old

**Were there any impeding factors that could have limited attendance?**

Not that we know of

**Chapter Large Group Responses. List with bullet points.**

**Chapter 1:**

* Food Pantry, “Dcn Derick is good at sending out emails to parishioners about parish events”, “Reach out to people, and tell them we have a new pastor and a new bishop, and a lot of new things are happening”
* “We serve a community Thanksgiving Dinner for the whole community, and not just Catholics”, Palm Crosses, Meals for the Seniors
* “We reach out to people we do not see on Sundays to come to the Fall dinner and other activities”, emails to parishioners about events and happenings, Social Media, College Care packages
* Faith Formation program has been inviting parents and family to events, other social functions, food pantry, Angel Tree, meals at Catholic Worker House, collection the first of the month for different charities, dinners, auctions, Coffee Club of Fridays
* “Our Fall Dinner people delivered donated meals to homebound Senior Citizens”, actively seek out kids to come to Faith Formation
* Thanksgiving Dinner, Good Samaritan Committee, Catholic Worker House, Sunday Lunch Program, Faith Formation does family projects,

**Chapter 2:**

* “How do we approach people about their faith?”, a matter of time and busy schedules, fear of being rejected or negative comments, how to respond or difficult question, Today’s society and culture, peer pressure, adults have peer pressure just like kids do, “How do we get the church community to be attractive to parents, as the sports community is?” (many parents revolve their schedule around kid’s sporting activities)
* Divorced people feel alienated from Church, breakdown of the family, busy-ness of life, Parents take their kids to Faith Formation but never go to Church, “People want to be entertained, so how do we appeal to that without veering from doctrine?”
* We are not 100% comfortable in our own faith, political correctness, negative portrayal of Catholics in Media
* School and social activities are so abundant that they get in the way of church activities, scheduling of activities in our community conflict with church activities, kid’s sports on Sundays
* Almost too comfortable in our own skin, too complacent, people do not want to become involved with Church activities, parish is in a rural area and not that physically visible
* “While there are advantages to Tradition, sometimes these traditions can seem unwelcoming and stagnant.”, non-Catholic churches seem more entertaining and welcoming, don’t know how to start that conversation to evangelize people

**Chapter 3:**

* Inviting kids to NCYC which helps bring kids closer to their faith, Bible Study, Baptism class is a good way to pull new parents back into the church, Baptismal Rite says “Parents are the first teachers of their kids”
* Host Christian Experience Weekends, Ladies Salad Luncheon, Youth Service trips,
* Lead by example, (i.e. saying grace before meal in public),
* “On Sundays we have Children’s Liturgy and before they go downstairs, Fr Bill gathers the kids and explains to them what the Gospel is about.”, Children’s bulletins, Baptism classes, Adoration & Confessions
* FORMED website available to parishioners, VBS in Summer, Bible study,
* Living Rosary before Mass

**Chapter 4:**

* Provide groceries to families-in-need for Thanksgiving and Christmas, support missionary priests, Valentine Day baskets for Senior Citizens
* Furnished a meal for Catholic Worker House, Communion and Bulletins to homebound and nursing home
* Back-Pack program, Christmas Angel Tree, Social Action Committee, prayer chain, collect towels on Holy Thursday for homeless
* Mass of the Healing, Christmas cards to elderly and homebound
* Senior Meal Delivery, Communion to homebound, prayer chain, meals for seniors, Faith Formation conducts Bingo at Nursing Home
* Mass at Pleasantview Nursing Home, Raise money to help people who have experienced catastrophe,

**Chapter 5:**

* From the heart, so easy to go to core group of people
* Challenge on how to start a conversation, how do you be a good example without being ridiculed
* Don’t take faith for granted
* Need to get people back, and know how to do it
* Be joyful and not begrudging
* Relate your own life story to people, “My faith is what gives me joy.”

**Participant Surveys** 31 out of the 41 people who attended handed in surveys

**Question 1:** Yes – 24    No – 7

**Question 2:** Yes – 10 No – 21

**Question 3:** Yes – 13 No – 18

**Question 4: List responses with bullet points.**

* We do not know why people have left our church.  We can assume we know, but we have not asked them.  They don’t know we miss them.
* The people who have left the Catholic Church do not know what they were leaving.  They would not leave if they really believed that Jesus Christ was truly present in the Eucharist.  They can’t find this in any other church.
* For those of us who attend Mass regularly, do we realize the treasure we have?  Or do we attend our church because it is more of a “social club,” our friends attend here, we’ve always done this, so you should too.
* It is easy to be a Sunday Catholic, what are we doing on a daily basis to get to know Jesus Christ Our Lord and Savior?  Maybe we believe all we “have” to do as a Catholic is attend Mass on Sunday.  Maybe we don’t know there is more to it.
* The people that our parish and diocese also needs to hear from, high school through age 40/50, young people and young families
* How to start a conversation with a stranger about religion or church
* Need more instruction on Evangelization
* More education on how to bring people back to Mass
* People bring their children for Religious Ed, but do not attend Mass
* To be good Evangelizers, we need to have a deep relationship with Christ
* Catholic people do not want to be friends. They are too busy with their careers and children. They become professors, doctors, etc. about doing the right thing and following what the Church teaches
* Importance of Eucharistic Adoration; what it means to hate sin, Even if we are being judged and ridiculed, Joy is still something we have. Jesus and the martyrs had joy while suffering, We need to be inspired by Christians suffering persecution