

Facilitating a Life and Justice Team Meeting

(from the Dioceses of Raleigh and Camden)

It's not hard to lead a parish social ministry meeting (or any parish meeting), but there are a few basics to remember. Having a plan will keep the committee on track and assure that its work goes forward in an orderly and fulfilling way.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

1. Have an agenda.
2. Make it of a reasonable length and breadth.
3. Ask someone to take minutes.
4. Start and end on time.
5. Begin with prayer.
Social ministry is faith centered. Starting each meeting by sharing a Scripture Reflection and brief prayer helps everyone to remember who they are and why they have come. You could ask a different person to lead prayer at each meeting.
6. Make sure everyone has a chance to be heard. People need to feel included if they are going to "buy into" the decisions of the group. And the quiet ones might have the best ideas!
7. Keep things on track. Keep an eye on time. Don't allow one agenda item to take up so much time that there is no time for the others.
8. Be action-oriented. What will each person do before the next meeting?

And finally... keep in mind that the Committee's role is to lead the whole parish in social action, not to do it all themselves!

From our Catholic Documents

"Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation." *Synod of Bishops, Justice in the World*

"Social justice is an integral part of evangelization, a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel and an essential part of the church's social mission. The pursuit of justice and peace is an essential part of what makes a parish Catholic. When social mission and ministry is an integral part of the entire parish, it is woven into every aspect of parish life: worship, formation and action." *Communities of Salt and Light.*