

St. Joseph Parish, Austintown, OH

Planning Team Covenant

September 2017

In our **general interactions** with each other, here is what is important to us:

- We value open-mindedness and a non-judgmental approach to others.
- We value and respect the dignity of each team member and are receptive to his/her comments and questions.
- We value each team member as a resource who represents multiple other resources for our success.
- We value clear boundaries that are consistently honored.
- We value being respectfully “called out” when we cross an agreed-upon boundary.
- We value dedication to the success of the group over our individual agendas.
- We value change that grows from deep listening.
- We value the diversity of team members as a strength.

In our **conversations** with each other, here is what we will do:

- We will express our thoughts clearly, respectfully, and honestly.
- We will bear in mind that the meaning of what is being communicated resides in the listener differently than it resides in the speaker.
- We will bear in mind that communication is 7% words, 38% vocal elements, and 55% non-verbal: body language, gestures, facial expressions, etc.
- We will feed back to a speaker to clarify understanding before expressing an opposing opinion.
- We will seek feedback to verify that what we are saying is being understood clearly.
- We will be open to correction when we misunderstand another team member.
- We will practice developing stronger communication skills using proven methods during and outside of meetings.
- We will allow pauses in our conversations to allow each other to integrate and process what is being discussed.
- We will formulate an agreed-upon communication at the close of every meeting that we can share with parishioners and others.

In our **communications and actions outside of our meeting times**, here is what we will do:

- We will honor confidentiality when it is requested.
- We will faithfully communicate the agreed-upon message that we formulate at the end of each meeting.
- We will not gossip about team members or others.
- We will accomplish all tasks that are assigned during meetings according to the timeline that we agree upon.

- We will deepen our friendships with each other to increase levels of trust among team members.

When we **make decisions**, here is what we will do:

- We will be clear about the goals, issues, strategies, etc. that we are discussing.
- We will engage in brainstorming so that all opinions can be heard.
- We will evaluate brainstormed ideas using the wisdom of all team members.
- We will support and work for team decisions even if the decision is not one's preferred decision.
- We will offer our decisions as advice to the Pastor according to the norms of Canon Law.

When we **disagree with each other** during discussions, here is what we will do:

- We will speak openly, honestly, and respectfully about any areas of disagreement.
- We will engage in disagreements as a means for creative problem-solving.
- We will be patient with each other.
- We will take the opinions of those who disagree with us seriously.
- We will use humor to ease tension, but we will not use humor to belittle a person who has an opposing opinion.
- We will second guess our first thought.
- We will discuss issues without attacking personal character.
- We will distinguish between passion and anger.