

The roles of the commission are to *link, assess, vision, and funnel.*

A commission is a strategic leadership team comprised of 6-9 people representing various ministries within one of five ministry categories (Worship & Prayer, Faith Formation, Administration, Community Life, Service & Outreach). Commission members are asked to serve a three-year term. Two persons from each commission sit on parish council. One staff person sits on each commission in advisory and resourcing capacities. Each commission has two co-chairs who are not the parish council representatives mentioned above.

Link: Every ministry under each commission needs a link to a commission member for communication and support purposes. The commission link person does not need to attend every meeting and/or event of the ministry they are assigned to link with (although some attendance is helpful in many cases). When linking is healthy, commission members know what is happening in all of the ministries they oversee, and ministry teams feel inspired and supported by the commission.

Assess: Every ministry needs ongoing assessment to discern what is going well and what needs to be improved. These assessments can happen in a variety of ways: conversations with leaders, interviews with participants, focus groups, and surveys are just some of the ways to assess ministries. When a ministry area needs extra attention, the commission may spend most of its meeting time working in one ministry area with the assistance of parishioners involved in leading that ministry.

Vision: Commission members need to be futuristic thinkers. They need to be able to dream about what is possible for the ministries within their commission. They may also need to envision what might be missing for the parish to accomplish its mission effectively and envision the development of new ministries. Commissions may also help ministry leaders discern when it is time to end a ministry.

Funnel: While commission members are responsible for overseeing ministries, they are not the ones who implement ministries. That is reserved for the ministry leaders and teams. As ideas develop on commissions, they need to be funneled through communication channels to the proper ministries where implementation happens.

The roles of parish council are to *model, mission, and advise.*

Model: A goal of parish council is to form leaders who are examples of Christian spirituality and sound leadership. Every organization needs role models, and parish council members are called to be role models for the church. Council members can become spiritual role models by:

1. Developing a strong understanding of Catholic lay spirituality
2. Identifying daily spiritual practices that are suitable for their unique life callings
3. Sharing details about their spiritual journey with other council members for the sake of inspiration, support, and accountability

Council members can become leadership role models by:

1. Learning key principles and practices of effective leadership
2. Applying effective leadership practices to their council work

Mission: A goal of parish council is to articulate a clear mission for the parish considering the purpose, vision, and core values of the parish. All Catholic parishes share the common purpose of gathering people to spread the gospel sacramentally in a local community. Parishes are a dynamic blend of Catholic identity and local flavor. This blend is expressed differently by every parish in their vision, mission, and core values. A vision is a hopeful and inspiring view of the future. Core values are the things that matter most and help us to say yes to some things and no to other things. Mission is the present parish activity that is rooted in our purpose and values and takes us towards our vision. The council consistently reflects upon and promotes the mission of the parish. This helps to bring focus and alignment of all ministries around a common mission. The mission of a parish can change every 1 to 3 years as the circumstances around the parish change and as the parish accomplishes its current mission.

Advise: A goal of parish council is to offer sound advice to the pastor to assist him with sound decision-making. The council regularly reviews the work of the ministries and advises the pastor on the future direction of ministries. The council is also a trusted group who assists the pastor when crises occur. The council may be asked to do some research to discover effective practices for a particular crisis.

