



# Community Context for Discussion

The Church is the experience of communion with God and with one another through Christ. Through the sacraments, we experience the living presence of the Trinity, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Building community is the ability to create a welcoming parish where a familial bond exists among members who desire to open wide the doors to invite and embrace all people who seek to know and form a relationship with Jesus Christ, especially those who may feel alienated from the church. How parishes manifest the love of Christ is seen in all areas of parish life. In assessing the vitality of community, topics for discussion may include the qualities of the parish that foster a sense of belonging and a sense of unity; helping Catholics understand their baptismal responsibility to share Christ with others; preparing parishioners for service; recognizing the gifts that different cultures bring to parish life.

# Community

## Key Elements of the Life of the Church in the Archdiocese of Washington

1. Organized initiatives that welcome new members
2. Includes parishioners with disabilities in every aspect of archdiocesan life and ministry
3. Welcomes persons of all cultures to participate fully in the life and ministry of the church
4. Opens all approved liturgical roles to men and women
5. Parishioners understand they have a responsibility to invite others to the Lord and the believing community
6. Regularly sponsors formal evangelization programs
7. Encourages the formation of small groups within the parish to foster unity in community
8. Identifies and uses the talents and interests of parishioners
9. Regularly invites people to participate in archdiocesan activities
10. Welcomes immigrants in the parish and makes serious efforts to accommodate their particular needs
11. Encourages people to use their talents for the good of the parish and for building a unity among parishioners
12. Actively involves seniors, adolescents, and young adults in church activities
13. Has an accurate and up-to-date census of parish membership and its ministries reflect the needs of those parishioners
14. Trains people in how to reach out to others and invites others to full participation in the life of the parish

### **Others?**

## Reflection Questions

1. What are examples of the Church's efforts in this area that are bearing fruit?
2. What are some areas where more might be done to strengthen the work of the Church?
3. What practical suggestions do you have?
4. What are the four key elements you identify as priorities?