

Educational Workshop One: The history of Christian Places of Worship

October 19, 2009 Workshop Summary

Group 1

Question 1: What did you hear and see in this presentation that helped you understand the ways in which your Parish worships today?

- Reinforcement of Father Pat's emphasis on community
- the building needs to reflect the various functions of the church community
- the facility draws us here multiple times per week
- we have no community center; only a place of worship
- we have congregation-centered activities, not activities that draw non-congregants in the larger community
- we have much more involvement of laity than in years past
- we have some interaction, but not enough
- we need to apply our resources to the concept of community
- the laity must be integral in the planning process, and be even more involved as the number of priests decline
- Jesus, as in the tabernacle, must be at the center of our activities
- we have the land, the people and the resources
- Jesus is and must be the center of the church
- singing is participating
- more laity must be involved
- the more we are connected, the more we will know each other
- the tabernacle has been taken out and this adds to the church's sterile look
- stained glass windows and statues make a church look traditional
- the ideal is for the parish to be a living body of the community; the people will come to the church just to be here, not driven by a schedule

Question 2: What improvements do you feel could be made in your Parish?

- we need to open the church more to additional activities and people from the congregation and outside the congregation
- we need to use technology and social networking to bring people in, especially young people
- we need a place for community grieving and/or celebrating the life of someone
- the parish becomes community based; parishioners come here for each other and to accomplish this a community center is built with places for teenagers and retirees
- we need to draw the community to the church; people need to be here more than once a week; to do this there needs to be multiple reasons to be at the church (example: parents here for one activity, children here for another)
- Parish is the center
- we need a place with a school and a gym; a community center with a reading area, snacks, a networking/computer room

-the church needs to be open more; the church is too scheduled, too structured and this makes it cold. The church needs to be kept open and the hours of availability need to increase. We could make this happen by delegating lock up/clean up duties to volunteers and/or having an access code/lock on the doors.

-Let's market the people and get the people together, use Facebook and other social networking tools

-add a common area for grieving and a place for wakes here at the church

-the choir area needs to be handicap accessible

Group 2

Connectedness

- physical layout of the church needs to foster a sense of connectedness of the whole church community
- alter placed in the center of the congregation to make them more involved in the liturgy
- need to incorporate the choirs into the congregation, they currently feel separated from the congregation

Cave

- people tend to gravitate to the cave when they arrive late for mass
- families with young children often sit in the cave, which does not enable them to feel like part of the liturgy

Children

- children need to be closer to the alter in order to see and hear the mass
- we need to develop facility and/or programs to keep children engaged
- space needs to be available around the alter to allow Father to bring the children up to participate in portions of the liturgy
- space needs to be allotted for a nursery program during mass, including expanding the existing program to include babies and young children to potty trained

Youth Ministry

- youth ministry programs need space to expand their programs as a way to get more youth and teens involved in church activities
- expand technology/media to support Faith Formation program
- space is needed to expand youth music ministry program, including space for instruments
- need to develop programs (like those attracting youth to the evangelical churches) to attract and retain more youth of the parish

Group 3

- Layout of our worship space is pretty good – altar is in the center
- The baptism font is appropriately designed but it is hard for the congregation to see a baptism when done during liturgy
- The choir should not be behind the altar

- An area is needed for the musicians
 - More teenagers would participate if there were more musicians
 - Worship space is cold, uninviting and too much like an airport hangar
 - A more traditional setting is needed
 - Current space not “sacred”
 - When the priest walks down the aisle into the congregation, it is hard for many to see him
 - Perhaps kneelers should be provided (the group was divided on this issue)
 - The “cave” is too far removed from the altar
 - Can’t hear in there – acoustics are bad in the cave
 - Too separated from the rest of the congregation
 - The church’s entrance is in the wrong place – it is too hard to find
 - More classroom space is needed
- More children should be involved in liturgy
- Chapel space is too crowded for the children’s liturgy
 - The kitchen is inadequate
 - There is a need for improved technology
 - Should have a media center
 - Facility should have wireless connectivity

Group 4

Question 1: What did you hear and see in this presentation that helped you understand the ways in which your Parish worships today?

- nothing of how we worship today, rather historical perspective
- can see how priest-oriented mass eliminates parishioner involvement, this is what we have evolved into today
- communal participation is at minimal level at St. Edwards (socially, activities, et.), should be extension of home and we should keep what was but move forward
- physical evolution as catholic faith changed, no longer a small group, rates growing

Question 2: What improvements do you feel could be made in your Parish?

A. special needs for activities:

- faith formation – groupings (home school?), need to grow facility size
- young parishioners will need space for future
- loss of CYO programs because no facility exists
- keep church in center for social activities
- “community”
- Keep adolescence in touch with faith facility
- Get input of teenagers in process
- Involve younger parishioners (parents, teens, etc.)
- Game night
- General feeling – church has been focused on “church” vs. “community”

B. Our physical church

- Space too far from the alter – the “cave”
- Young families may choose that space due to misbehaving children
- Closeness to alter is key
- Does not feel like a church, very cold
- Crucifix is the only feeling we have of church
- Stained glass windows do not tell a story, just exist
- Modern aesthetics
- Entry, no central way, no sense of communal gathering

C. Cemetery, should have one