

The Ministry of Peace and Justice

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Session 4, Handout 2

What's Our Mission?

As important as a good name is, a strong mission statement is even more crucial. A mission statement guides all of your ministry. Some things to bear in mind when coming up with a mission statement:

- A good mission statement should be *short enough to memorize*—one sentence, probably! Each group member should be able to recite it whenever asked by someone what the committee does. So, it should sound good when spoken aloud.
- You should also use *clear, strong language* that typical Catholics would understand. Use strong verbs. Avoid adverbs. If possible, also avoid verbs that end in “-ing.”
- Your mission statement should also be the criterion by which you evaluate all of your activities. In the future, when you're trying to think of activities to plan, you'll want to ask yourselves, “Does this idea connect to our mission, or is it outside of our scope?” A good mission statement should really help to focus your efforts, so *being specific is important*.
- *Does your parish itself have its own mission statement?* If so, you'll want to keep that in mind.

- Is your *parish's patron saint* an inspirational figure in the area of peace and justice? If so, that could be a good place to start.
- Keep *Catholic social teaching and the six areas of peace and justice ministry* in mind when you're thinking of important terms to include. For instance, the areas of peace and justice ministry suggest that any parish committee in this area will want to engage parishioners in prayer, education, and action for justice, inspired by Catholic social teaching.

Take a look at some good mission statements from parish peace and justice coordinating committees and from other organizations:

Catholic Parishes:

- “The mission of the Cluster Social Justice & Catholic Service Committee is to serve [our parish communities] as a resource, advocate, and coordinator of the works of charity and social justice” (Cluster 22 Parishes, Diocese of Portland, Maine).
- “The Peace and Social Justice Committee . . . stimulates the parish’s awareness of human social needs and develops effective responses to these needs” (Christ the Servant Catholic Church, Woodridge, Illinois).
- “Believing that social justice is a task for every person of faith, we work to assist parishioners to understand and act on the social dimensions of the Good News in our everyday lives” (St. Matthew Parish, Green Bay, Wisconsin).

Other Nonprofit Organizations:

- “The Free Library of Philadelphia advances literacy, guides learning, and inspires curiosity” (Free Library of Philadelphia).

- “We’re a nonprofit organization bringing clean, safe drinking water to people in developing countries” (charity: water).
- “To inspire and empower people affected by cancer” (Livestrong).
- “To create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice” (Oxfam).
- “To feed America’s hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger” (Feeding America).