



ENVISION
Planning Our Parish Future

*Your old shall dream dreams,
your young shall see visions.*

Joel 3:1

A Resource of the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association

WHAT IS ENVISION?

ENVISION is a comprehensive parish pastoral planning process that gets results. The process fully engages parishioners in developing and implementing a faith-based vision for their parish.

ENVISION leads a parish to:

- ⊕ A life-giving pastoral plan
- ⊕ Contagious enthusiasm for faith
- ⊕ Collaboration in mission
- ⊕ New energy, new skills, new people for parish leadership
- ⊕ Research-based decision making
- ⊕ Short-term achievements and long-term success

A LIFE-GIVING PASTORAL PLAN

ENVISION combines the best of contemporary professional strategic planning with the key elements of the catholic faith. It is based on the premise that all members of an organization can share in the creation of a “preferred future” for that organization. In applying this approach to the faith community, ENVISION proposes that all parishioners can participate in discerning how God is calling them to be fully Christ-centered and mission-focused. Parishioners respond to this call by recommending specific goals that become part of the parish plan. Specific structures of accountability ensure implementation of the plan.

A CONTAGIOUS ENTHUSIASM FOR FAITH

ENVISION is unique in pastoral planning because of its thorough foundation in the mission of the Church. This foundation comes from the 1992 plan of the U.S. Catholic bishops, *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*. Catholics who join in this mission will

1. live their faith more fully and enthusiastically,
2. be open to inviting others to consider the Catholic faith, and
3. foster gospel values in every facet of society so that the transforming work of Christ is more visible.

ENVISION helps a parish use these three goals as the foundation for parish efforts to implement the Church’s mission. These efforts are most successful, both in the short-term and the long-term, when they are supported by an effective parish-wide planning process. ENVISION provides this process.

COLLABORATION IN MISSION

The five phases of ENVISION engage a broad cross-section of parishioners in developing the parish vision and plan.

1. **ORGANIZING PHASE:** A Planning Team prepares for the Listening and Discernment phases, distributes a parish questionnaire, and holds focus group sessions on topics related to the community life and ministries of the parish.
2. **LISTENING PHASE:** A full-day, large-group gathering at the parish is held, where parishioners and parish leaders share their understanding of the parish's history and its current successes and shortcomings. They also discuss their hopes and expectations for how their community could more fully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. **DISCERNMENT PHASE:** In a second full-day, large-group gathering, parishioners identify priority areas and determine desired short- and long-term results for parish action. In a separate, retreat-style meeting, a group of parish leaders writes a parish vision statement, using the input from the two large-group gatherings.
4. **PLANNING PHASE:** The Planning Team creates a three-year parish plan of action, based on the priorities and results identified in the Discernment Phase. This planning includes identifying goals, strategies, and milestones.
5. **IMPLEMENTATION PHASE:** Various Priority Area Teams design and implement strategies to achieve the goals of the priority areas identified in the Discernment Phase. Parishioners are updated regularly on the progress of implementation and reflect on how their progress unites them more closely with the mission of the Church.

NEW ENERGY, NEW SKILLS, NEW PEOPLE

The activities of ENVISION come to life as current leaders, together with new participants in parish life, learn new ways of sharing and strengthening their faith while planning for their preferred future.

THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM (ELT) GUIDES THE PROCESS

- **Pastor** — with the Executive Leadership Team, the pastor guides the process through the five phases, ensuring accountability and maintaining a spiritual focus on the mission of the Church to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.
- **Planning Coordinator** — as a member of the Executive Leadership Team and leader of the Planning Team, a parish volunteer or a parish staff person (if available) coordinates the entire planning process for the parish. Co-coordinators are sometimes named to carry out these responsibilities.
- **Pastoral Council Representative** — a member of the Parish Pastoral Council serves on the Executive Leadership Team and regularly reports on the status of the process to the council.

THE PARISH LARGE GROUP FACILITATOR DIRECTS KEY EVENTS

- This facilitator guides Listening Day and its rehearsal, Discernment Day and its rehearsal, and Visioning Day. S/he works with the Planning Coordinator in the preparation and follow-up for these events.
- This service role requires experience with large-group facilitation. PNCEA recommends that this person be someone who will be perceived as neutral and objective about the outcome of the process.
- Parishes may also choose to contract with PNCEA to provide facilitation of these events.

PARISH TEAMS COLLABORATE IN DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE PROCESS

- The *Planning Team* works with the Executive Leadership Team in the Organizing, Listening, and Discernment phases. Some members also participate in the Visioning Day, which is a component of the Discernment Phase. In the Planning Phase, the Planning Team takes the data gathered in the Discernment Phase and drafts a parish plan.
- The *Coordinating Team* is composed of a Parish Plan Coordinator and the team leader from each Priority Area Team during the Implementation Phase. This team oversees the development of the strategies and milestones that are required for the successful completion of the parish plan. The team also coordinates the plan's implementation over the three-year implementation period.
- *Priority Area Teams*, composed of parishioners and parish staff, design and implement the strategies for specific priority areas during the Implementation Phase.

THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- Commits to the process
- Suggests to the pastor one of its members to serve on the Executive Leadership Team as liaison
- Suggests some of its members to serve on the Planning Team
- Participates in the Listening and Discernment days
- Ratifies the vision statement and the parish plan
- Reviews the implementation of the plan through twice-yearly meetings with the Coordinating Team
- Makes recommendations to the pastor about the plan's implementation, as needed or requested
- At the end of the second implementation year, prepares for the next planning cycle, which begins in Year Three

RESEARCH-BASED DECISION-MAKING

In developing ENVISION, PNCEA has partnered with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) so that the ENVISION process in each parish will have a strong foundation on data that comes from a large number and variety of parishioners.

CARA provides parish leaders with a research instrument that allows them to gather, analyze, and report the data needed to carry out the ENVISION process. The comprehensive report provides valuable data, based on parishioner responses, on these areas: Overall Parish Life, Weekend Masses, Liturgies and Other Religious Activities, Formation and Education, Parish Outreach, Evangelization, and Elements That Attract Parishioners.

In collaboration with PNCEA, CARA has included in the survey two unique measurements related to the mission of the Church. Thus, the CARA Report for ENVISION parishes will also describe

1. how parishioners perceive that the parish is implementing the three goals of *Go and Make Disciples*, and
2. how likely parishioners are to implement the three goals in their own lives.

SHORT-TERM ACHIEVEMENTS, LONG-TERM SUCCESS

ENVISION helps parishioners construct concrete 90-day milestones and one-year goals that move the parish toward the three-year goals articulated in the published parish plan. Participants begin with projects that have a high probability of achieving visible success rather quickly. These short-term projects have:

- a sense of importance
- a clear and specific goal
- pride in accomplishment
- community ownership

A GUIDE FOR LEADERS

Parishes who wish to carry out the ENVISION process rely on *A Guide for Leaders* that includes:

- Detailed agendas plus preparation lists and all handouts for 10 Planning Team meetings
- Detailed agendas plus scripted presentations for two full-day parish meetings and their rehearsals (Listening Day and Discernment Day)
- A detailed agenda for the Visioning Day retreat
- Comprehensive tables outlining the responsibilities for key events and the time frame for preparation
- Detailed agendas plus scripted presentations for focus group meetings around the three goals of *Go and Make Disciples*
- Detailed instructions for setting up and facilitating the focus groups
- A detailed list of responsibilities for the Meeting Coordinator
- A detailed list of tasks for communication, history gathering, and editing planning documents
- Prepared opening prayers for all meetings
- A detailed agenda for the workshop to train Priority Area Teams for the three-year Implementation Phase
- A list of selected resources
- A glossary of terms and an index
- Contact information for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), who will provide a design kit for help with the survey



A Guide for Leaders (Item 9425) is available in the PNCEA web store (www.pncea.org/store). In order to obtain the rights to reproduce the 66 handouts, 12 bulletin inserts, and 12 transparencies, parishes must also purchase the **ENVISION Handout CD (Item 9495)**.

A Guide for Leaders gives parishes the tools they need to carry out the complete ENVISION process. PNCEA recommends that the three members of the Executive Leadership Team (Pastor, Planning Coordinator, Parish Pastoral Council Representative) and the Parish Large Group Facilitator have a *Guide*. With this manual, all four parish leaders for ENVISION will have quick and easy access to the materials and information they need.

PREPARE YOUR PARISHIONERS FOR ENVISION

To help you decide about ENVISION and to keep parish leaders informed, PNCEA provides an **Orientation to ENVISION for Parish Leaders (Item 9725)**. This packet features an information session CD (Part 1: Planning from an Evangelizing Perspective, and Part 2: ENVISION Process and Resources). Available for purchase with the Orientation to ENVISION, these presentations may also be viewed for free with the link provided in our store with this item.

THE PAULIST NATIONAL CATHOLIC EVANGELIZATION ASSOCIATION (PNCEA)

PNCEA has over thirty years of experience in forming Catholics for the mission of the Church. Through ENVISION, PNCEA equips parish leaders with:

- the theological and pastoral foundations underlying planning with an evangelizing perspective,
- the process and skills necessary to carry out ENVISION.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF ENVISION

A parish must have:

- A pastor committed to the mission of the Church, open to collaborative ministry, and supportive of lay leadership within his parish;
- A parish pastoral council; i.e., a body that considers matters of importance to the life and mission of the parish and makes recommendations about them to the pastor, or another group that serves in such an advisory capacity to the pastor;
- An individual who can serve as the Parish Large Group Facilitator for the rehearsals of Listening Day and Discernment Day and for the Listening, Discernment and Visioning Days (unless the parish contracts to have a PNCEA facilitator);
- The resolve and the resources to invest in developing and implementing short- and long-term plans to align all parish activities with the evangelizing mission of the Church.

THE BENEFITS OF ENVISION

Parishes that use ENVISION to do their pastoral planning will reap significant benefits.

- Pastors and parish leaders partner to implement comprehensive pastoral planning with an evangelizing perspective.
- Parishioners become experienced in carrying out planning that is Christ-centered, mission-focused, results-oriented, and repeatable.
- Parishioners are reawakened to their baptismal call to holiness and mission.
- Parishioners gain greater ownership of parish life and mission.
- Parishioners are motivated to move to a higher level of stewardship and participation.
- Pastors enhance their skills for collaborative leadership, delegation, and accountability.

SUMMARY

ENVISION uses proven methods of organizational planning to help parishes take concrete steps to become more Christ-centered and mission-focused. Applying effective planning tools to parish planning encourages better stewardship of resources to carry out the parish mission.

Throughout ENVISION, parishioners gain new insights into their faith, their parish, and themselves as followers of Christ who are part of a particular faith community. They form new and deeper relationships with other parishioners. They find themselves expressing gratitude for God's gifts. They seek new ways to become more actively engaged in their community and to contribute more directly to the ongoing mission of the parish.

ENVISION TRAINING AND FACILITATION

PNCEA provides ENVISION training and facilitation for the ENVISION large group events to parishes that wish to contract for these services. For more information, please contact:

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