



“Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do” – a resource guide for the appreciation and recognition of parish staff.

Any organizational change can lead to uncertainty as well as a sense of vulnerability for staff. A Church is no different. A renewed focus on recognition and appreciation can help bring the staff and the parish closer together and serve as an antidote to any negativity arising from change. In addition, a good consistent recognition plan can help a parish retain employees through increased job satisfaction and even spiritual renewal. Employees notice appreciation expressed by recognizing their good work because it confirms that their work is valued by others. Recognition should encourage your employees to uphold and grow the mission of the church. It is important for you as priests and leaders to look at this as a primary goal and know how to engage in this process. “Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

While both are important, recognition and appreciation are two different things. A very simple way to look at them is recognition is about what people do and appreciation is about who they are. When you recognize people, you show gratitude for their contributions and achievements based on results or performance, and when you show appreciation for someone, you convey your gratitude for their value as a human being - you acknowledge their divine spark. *We appreciate* each other as sinner saved by Grace and *recognize* each other in our “good works” in joyfully building of His Kingdom together.

While recognition and appreciation from leaders is important, peer recognition should also be encouraged as we look to each other for encouragement and hope. You want to ignite a culture of recognition and appreciation amongst your staff.

Finally, there may already be great things in place to recognize or appreciate others so it will be important to keep those going as well as considering doing more. Create new traditions, make space for recognition, and appreciate and celebrate each other along the way. Feeling a sense of belonging can really lead to better retention, productivity, and joy. We as baptized Catholics, belong to Him and through Him to each other. As disciples we call all to belong to Him. To help facilitate this the following ideas are provided below:

Recognition

Make recognition frequent (catch people doing things right!): this will help build your community up and instill a strong culture of appreciation. Personalize and clearly communicate the action being recognized. Focus on the accomplishments and getting things done. A project completed ahead of time or done exceptionally well!

It must be genuine and sincere - real and meaningful.

Recommendations:

- Public recognition in gatherings, a website, or meetings can create a collective spirit of success and optimism.
- Promotions, raises or a bonus.
- An award, plaque, trophy, or certificate referencing safety, years of service, retirement, attendance, goal achievement, staff/ministry member of the month, etc.
- Creating a public space like a wall of gratitude or hallway of accomplishment



- Providing time for challenging or interesting projects, service, or learning.
- Opportunities to go to training sessions, conferences, or retreats.
- Becoming a mentor on the team.
- A gift certificate or an invitation to a favorite restaurant.
- A handwritten note, digital thank you card or sincere expression of gratitude like a verbal thank you.
 - Some tips with thank you cards, be specific about the accomplishment and effort, remember to mention the effect that the individual organization. And clearly express your gratitude for the recognition of the special efforts.
- A traveling trophy – it can be a great way to enhance team spirit and reinforce positive behaviors. Start by defining the award criteria — it can be anything from goals to peer nominations — and select a trophy, serious or silly, depending on what works best for your culture. Then determine how often the trophy should be awarded and organize a little event each time an individual or team wins it, so everyone can share in the celebration.

Appreciation

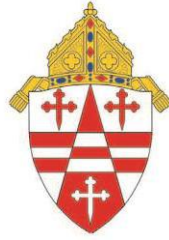
Appreciation is about acknowledging staff for who they are and what they are bring to the parish and therefore does not have to be tied to a specific event or outcome. Remember that letting staff know that you appreciate them on a hard challenging day can be just as important as recognizing them for an accomplishment on one of their best days. Appreciation can have a huge impact even though it seems simple and small.

Pay attention to the method you use to show appreciation. Some staff will appreciate this in public while some might prefer privacy. Understanding and having that relationship will be important in order to know what will be the most effective.

- Creative rewards tailored to everyone’s interests help ensure that the appreciation is genuine and real. Ask staff what they’d like from you as far as how you show you appreciate them.

Recommendations:

- Ensure people have the tools they need to succeed with equipment in good working order, needed software, etc. Replace old broken office items.
- An employee appreciation day, this could include an observed day to honor everyone’s hard work.
- Giving gifts, even small tokens that people are appreciative of.
- Get together lunches.
- Dismissing employees early from work.
- A retrospective slideshow with photos that capture the teams’ accomplishments, vacations, and celebrations from the year.
- When possible and it is applicable invite participation in some of the decision-making processes.
- Treat them with food: a pizza lunch, bring muffins, bagels, and coffee, unsolicited and just because can be great!



- Play gratitude round robins at meetings or introduce ice breakers, etc.
- Telling someone what you value about them- this is a gift to give someone! Not just because they did something great or something you want to from them.
- Checking in with them, it can be as simple as asking them how they are doing? You can discuss challenges they might be having with things; this is important to do often.
- Share what everyone brings to your team that you value.
- Have a superlatives session, you can compile a list and here are some ideas to get you going: Most likely to Make People Smile or Mostly Likely to Drink All of the Coffee.
- Compliment note station, you can have an area with blank note cards and pens and the staff can write anonymous compliments to each other. At the end of the week read them out loud to the team.
- Volunteering together.
- Bring people together as a group for adoration, prayer, and worship.