

**NATIVITY PARISH STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017
Developed by the Parish Council**

MISSION STATEMENT

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish is a Roman Catholic faith community. Centered and formed by the Eucharist, we seek to learn and to live the Gospel and to lovingly grow through service to one another and to all God's people.

FOUR PRIORITY AREAS

- Evangelization
- Outreach
- Education
- Faith Formation

PRIORITY AREA DEFINITIONS

Evangelization is “a call to each person to deepen his or her own faith, have confidence in the Gospel, and possess a willingness to share the Gospel We want to let our inactive brothers and sisters know that they always have a place in the Church and that we are hurt by their absence ... we want to help them see that, however they feel about the Church, we want to talk with them, share with them, and accept them as brothers and sisters.”¹

Outreach encompasses the identification and response to needs in our parish and the community, as well as working for social justice, which is “social change that is focused on systems and institutions ... to transform policies to be more responsive to human needs”² through advocacy efforts “directed at the root causes of human suffering, not the immediate symptoms.”²

Education is the *process* of learning. It starts with understanding and identifying the way people learn, the stage of their development, and their readiness to learn. It continues with the development of an appropriate and stimulating curriculum. From there, Education is the understanding and application of appropriate instructional strategies. The final part of the process is the assessment of the learning and the subsequent continuation or adjustment of the learning process. The final goal of Education is to develop independent learners who will then extend and apply their learning, problem solving and thinking skills to their lives. In the Nativity context, Education can be applied to

¹ <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/disciples-called-to-witness/disciples-called-to-witness-part-i.cfm>

²

<http://www.cctwincities.org/document.doc?id=117>

academic learning in the Nativity School, and learning that supports Faith Formation and Catholic Social Teaching for both youth and adults.

Faith Formation is similar to Education. It starts with evangelization, assessing people's understanding of their faith and knowing how to reach out to them. It is essential to offer a variety of opportunities for people to learn about and experience their faith, thus developing a personal relationship with Jesus in and through being a member of the body of Christ, His Church. People will not practice their faith if they do not understand it and feel it. Faith Formation must employ an array of best practices of instruction and presentation that both instructs and engages our parish community.

2015-2017 GOALS

Internal Goals

1. Increase the number of parishioners actively engaged in the parish community and participating in their faith by creating a sense of togetherness, engagement, learning and shared spiritual growth.
2. Increase intergenerational awareness and participation among parishioners in NBVM's existing outreach and evangelization ministries.
3. Increase communication and collaboration among parish staff and parishioners.
4. Determine the NBVM community's needs based on an understanding of our diverse characteristics; Discern ways parishioners' talents could be utilized to meet the NBVM community's needs.
5. Explore improved ways to support the faith formation of the parish's youth and adults, including possible alternatives to the current classroom model for youth and program offerings for adults.
6. Work with the Educational Advisory Council and the Board of Limited Jurisdiction as they develop a strategic plan for the future of the Nativity of Mary School.

External Goals

7. Strengthen and develop NBVM policies and practices to welcome all of God's people into NBVM faith community.
8. Attract and welcome new or returning members of the parish and the Church in a way that helps them to more deeply and meaningfully experience faith in their lives and in community.

9. Create a stronger connection of service and charity through greater awareness of and participation in parish social justice and advocacy ministries.

10. Become a local leader in the adoption of shared services, with parishes in the Buffalo diocese and other community and faith-based organizations located in close proximity to NBVM's facilities, including exploring shared services among area schools to position NBVM as a major regional asset.

NEXT STEPS

The Council will work with the Pastor and the Parish staff to develop Activities, Target Dates and Measurements of Progress to achieve the goals.