

Guide to Simplifying Meeting and Reporting Processes

Reorganization Working Group



GOAL:
Address Critical
Issues.

STRATEGIES: Simplify procedures and reporting processes.

Enhance the role of standing committee chairpersons from a reporting role to rotating the meeting program among them.



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Introduction

This resource has been specifically developed to:

- assist councils in simplifying meeting procedures and reporting processes
- enhance the role of chairpersons from a reporting role to rotating the meeting program among them

Meetings are essential to maintain communication through a democratic process. The purpose of meetings is to share information, make decisions and identify the right people to carry out these decisions.

It is important to optimize the time spent in meetings, recognizing we should aim to be as efficient and effective as possible.

The traditional way of delivering meetings is evolving. There are common elements vital to ensuring meetings stay on track and run efficiently, and others that may be considered to simplify meetings and reporting processes.

There are five sections in this guide. Each focuses on specific elements aimed at helping councils organize and create more simplified meeting and reporting procedures.

The overall objectives of this guide are to:

- strengthen members' knowledge of practical and efficient procedures of meetings
- develop members' skills and knowledge to enable them to efficiently and effectively plan, preside and simplify meeting procedures and reporting processes
- determine what preparations are appropriate for a chairperson to meet the aim of conducting effective and efficient meetings
- strengthen team dynamics by developing best practices and lessons learned and empowering executives and potential chairpersons to implement simplified procedures and reporting processes
- assist in providing flexibility in planning and tailoring procedures and processes, factoring in their uniqueness and diversity



Section 1: Meeting Planning/Preparation

A. Frequency of Meetings and Reporting

Regular Monthly Meeting

In accordance with the *Constitution & Bylaws*, PART XIV: Meetings, Conventions and Quorums, Section 2: Parish Council (b) “Normally the parish council regular meeting shall be held monthly.”

The number of regular meetings could be determined by the membership based on the unique characteristics of each parish council. Some councils may opt to have fewer monthly meetings but are consistent in which months they meet, for example, February, May, September and December at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday.

To ensure the League’s work is carried out and communicated to the membership, parish council executives should consider meeting on a regular basis or as deemed necessary.

Council Annual Meeting

In accordance with the *Constitution & Bylaws*, PART XIV: Meetings, Conventions and Quorums, Section 2: Parish Council (c) “The parish council annual meeting shall be held in January or February for the purpose of receiving reports and for the election of officers when applicable.”

Also addressed at this meeting is the yearly budget and instructed votes from the diocesan, provincial or national level.

There should be a meeting following the annual meeting for the new executive to assign roles.



B. Productive Meeting Planning

Meeting Guidelines

Because so much time is spent in meetings, it is crucial to ensure they are well-organized, planned and beneficial to members. In the context of simplifying meetings, it is important to note that when meetings are thoroughly planned and organized, members feel their time is respected. Well-organized meetings have a tremendous influence on the success of a team.

To have effective and efficient meetings, it is valuable to go back to the basics. Some simple, easy to follow and proven methods are as follows:

- i. Purpose/Objectives: Meetings need a clear purpose or set of objectives. This will assist in preventing “clutter” and irrelevant topics or items from creeping into the agenda and taking up too much time in meetings. Start by asking, “What is the purpose of this meeting?”
 - ii. Simplicity and Flexibility: Most meetings do not have to be strictly business or follow the traditional “stand and deliver” model where the majority of the meeting focuses on business and delivering reports orally. The following options may be considered when simplifying meetings and providing flexibility into the planning process:
 - a. Plan ahead, plan ahead and then do your best to plan ahead and have everything ready.
 - b. If applicable, block book the venue so it does not have to be done each month.
 - c. In planning, be as detailed as possible to avoid unnecessary, confusing and distracting content.
 - d. Meetings of no more than 90 minutes are more effective than lengthy meetings.
 - e. Day of the week and time of day:
 - Consider changing the meeting time to make it easier and safer for members to travel during the winter months.
 - Consider having some meetings in the evening or on the weekend to allow working women the opportunity to attend.
- f. Know the members and try to accommodate, if possible, the needs of most members.
 - g. Reporting by chairpersons does not have to happen at every regular meeting but only when directed by the agenda generated for a meeting.
 - h. Reduce the number of reports being delivered and rotate them monthly. Keep the reports concise (three minutes or less), only providing highlights that showcase the work of the committee.
 - i. Consider conducting only the essential business of approving minutes and the treasurer’s report. The remainder of the meeting may be used for:
 - a committee or action-based activity that engages participants
 - a guest speaker
 - spiritual workshop, etc.
 - j. If the purpose of the meeting is to conduct business, deliver information, brainstorm, make decisions, etc., set up the agenda to maximize efficiencies by implementing the guidelines in the following steps:
 - Preparation: Proper preparation will save time. The more work done in advance of the meeting, the more productive and efficient it will be. Preparation may include but is not limited to:
 - o ensuring executive members have followed up on any business arising from the previous meeting
 - o circulating reports in advance if any are to be presented

- k. **Begin and End on Time:** Strive to start and end meetings precisely on time. This demonstrates a commitment to keeping the meeting efficient, effective and showing respect for members' time.

iii. Annual Planning:

Yearly Calendar: It is a blueprint for the year but is not etched in stone. There always must be flexibility.

- It allows the parish council to plan and organize efficiently for the upcoming year.
- The yearly calendar typically reflects the activities the parish council intends to engage in throughout the year.
- It should include events and activities from the three core values of faith, service and social justice, as well as social events.
- A well-thought-out calendar will assist a parish council in being more efficient and organized.

Meeting Planning: A key part of preparation needs to include advance planning.

- This can ensure a balance between types of meetings and their purpose. Long-range planning allows one to plan effectively.
- Consider adopting only *one* theme per year in union with League sisters across the country. Ideally, this could be the national theme rather than multiple themes presented at diocesan, regional and/or provincial levels, which will greatly simplify the work expected at the parish council level.
- Faith (e.g., 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care, World Day of Prayer, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, seasons of the church year, feast days, etc.)
- Service (e.g., visiting the infirmed, shut-in members, soup kitchens, etc.)

- Social justice (e.g., Season of Creation: September 1st - October 4th, Orange Shirt Day, International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking)

Some things to consider incorporating into every meeting:

- o something to see, hear, do and learn
- o a personal touch (e.g., introduction of guests, birthdays, anniversaries)
- o a decision to be made based on discussion with members on a specific item
- o laughter

iv. Agenda: (sample agendas provided in addendums)

- A well-written agenda performs one-half of the work of having an efficient meeting which the meeting facilitator uses to complete the rest of the work.
- Be mindful of what is expected to be accomplished with each agenda item. It should correspond to an action, decision or next step.
- Ensure all meetings have an agenda that includes:
 - o topics for discussion
 - o presenter or discussion leader for each topic
 - o time allotment for each topic

Managing Time

- The executive should think through the agenda to determine if it is feasible to address all items during the time allotted.
- Establish and stick to the allotted time given to each item on the agenda.

- The agenda is an essential tool to keep discussions orderly and on task.

Preparing the Agenda

- Minutes serve to drive the next agenda. They also serve to document decisions and action items that arose from the agenda items. The rule of thumb for minutes is one page per hour of the meeting.
- Include the mission, purpose and core values of the League to keep members mindful of their purpose (include an agenda template).
- Clearly identify who is responsible for generating the agenda and deadlines for submission, and when, how and to whom it will be circulated.
- Start writing the agenda shortly after the previous meeting has ended, including action items and unfinished business.
- Schedule items of priority at the beginning.
- Identify by name who will lead the discussion for each agenda item.
- As indicated in the long-range planning, rotate chairpersons to facilitate part of the meeting. For example, if planning a food bank drive, allow the chairperson of service to look after all the details associated with that event. If planning to participate in “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care”, ensure the chairperson of faith looks after all the details for that event and chairs the meeting when this is presented.
- Identify any supporting material required before the meeting and ensure it is available at the meeting.

v. Communications

For executive meetings:

- The president or secretary distributes a draft agenda to request any additions or comments. A good rule of thumb is one week prior to the meeting.
- Submissions of additional agenda items should be received three days prior to the meeting. Any received after that date could be deferred to the next meeting depending on the fullness of the agenda.
- If the parish council chooses to write and submit reports at meetings (not mandatory), consider the following to maximize efficiencies:
 - o Circulate reports in advance.
 - o Address discussion or clarification only arising from the reports at the meeting, without reading the report.

Identifying motions in advance provides the framework for any discussion or action and helps simplify the process. Have the motion form provided to the secretary in advance.

For Regular Meetings:

- Background materials should provide members with the information needed to meaningfully participate in the meeting.
- Ideally, participants should receive this information one week in advance.
- Let participants know if materials will be available at the meeting or if they should bring their own copies of the digital materials that were provided. Strive for a paperless meeting.

Items to circulate to members prior to a regular meeting might include:

- Notice of the meeting, with all applicable details (date, time, location, etc.).
- Meeting materials (i.e., minutes, agenda, items requiring a motion, treasurer's update, etc.).

Identify multiple methods for communicating the meeting (bulletin, mass, emails, social media, church website, etc.).

vi. Territorial Acknowledgements

Start with: The Catholic Women's League of Canada thanks God for all creation. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Metis and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries and whose respectful stewardship has enabled us to enjoy the riches of the Creator's blessings.

Then add official treaty territorial message: For example, "We acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground for many Indigenous peoples and, in particular, our neighbours, Paul First Nation, Enoch Cree Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, Alexander First Nation and Papaschase First Nation on whose territory we work, live and play, and on whose territory we stand. We commit ourselves to being in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and to the work of ongoing reconciliation and healing."

For official guidance on territorial acknowledgement, please visit the following federal government site, cspc-efpc.gc.ca/tools/blogs/insights/indigenous-territory-eng.aspx.

C. Delivery Methods

The *Constitution & Bylaws* permits meetings to be held in person or in a partially virtual setting where some members attend in person while others participate via teleconference or videoconference. Within the League, fully virtual meetings are an accepted form of meeting only in a government-declared state of emergency.

Whatever method of delivery is chosen, it is essential to decide the format during the meeting planning process. Knowing how the meeting will be conducted in advance helps participants plan their attendance/ involvement, thereby simplifying the process through proper planning.

1) In person

The traditional method of meeting is to gather in person at a prearranged meeting space such as a parish hall.

In-person meetings can be a better option if the meeting involves:

- a presentation or demonstration
- brainstorming requiring more active engagement, such as using a whiteboard, breaking up into groups, etc.

These meetings do not rely on an elevated understanding of technology and can still proceed without technology if it fails or breaks down. Sorting out technological issues can take up a great deal of participants' time.

2) Conference Calls

These are telephone calls that interconnect three or more telephones simultaneously. The process for a conference call meeting should be like that of a virtual meeting (see below).

Guidelines:

- i. Be on time for the conference call. As a courtesy, strive to arrive five minutes before the meeting start time.

- ii. Take the call in a room where you will not be disturbed and there is no distracting noise.
- iii. Refrain from eating, as this can create distracting noises.
- iv. Follow the established order for speaking. For example, everyone should wait to be called upon by the facilitator to prevent multiple speakers at the same time.
- v. If delegated to take meeting notes and if using a computer, ensure the microphone is muted so the clicking sound from the keyboard is not distracting.
- vi. Be prepared to be present for the entire meeting. Avoid distractions such as multi-tasking during the meeting.
- vii. It is good etiquette for all participants except the facilitator to mute their microphones until called upon to speak.

3) Virtual Meetings (**Please refer to the *Constitution & Bylaws* to ensure compliance with bylaws before conducting any meeting virtually**).

Virtual meetings are real-time interactions over the Internet using integrated audio and video, chat tools and application sharing. They offer a way to engage participants in a fully interactive online experience.

Process for Conducting a Virtual Meeting

- i. Provide an agenda with timed items to keep participants on track.
- ii. Distribute documentation needed in advance of the virtual meeting to allow participants time to read the information.
- iii. Provide clear directions on the time and steps to access the meeting site.

Guidelines for Participants of a Virtual Meeting

- i. Be on time for the meeting. If possible, turn the webcam on so others may see you.
- ii. Follow the group’s established guidelines for contributing to the discussion. For example, use the raise hand feature, alphabetical order or spontaneous contributions while not interrupting another speaker. This will ensure the meeting runs efficiently and stays on track.
- iii. As a gentle reminder, ensure to ask about the dress code for the meeting. Perhaps it is business casual or casual, but it is always a good rule of thumb to ask. Even though it is a virtual meeting, it is always good to err on the side of professionalism.
- iv. Background noise can overpower the microphone system making it difficult for participants to hear. Ensure any background noise is minimized.
- v. Mute the microphone when you are not talking. It helps reduce noise and echoes.
- vi. Speak up. When entering the virtual meeting, let the others know who you are. Make sure to speak clearly and loudly enough for all to hear.
- vii. It is recognized that not all meetings run at convenient times, and some may be scheduled over a mealtime. It is recommended to avoid eating food on camera or while speaking. A good rule is to turn off the camera while eating.
- viii. Stay seated and stay present. Use attentive body language— sit up straight, do not make big extraneous movements, and do not let your eyes wander too much.
- ix. If you have a noisy keyboard, consider using a pen and paper to take notes or turn off the microphone.

D. Meeting Space

Setting up a meeting space needs to be done before the meeting. Some things to consider adding to a list for this function include:

- Have inspirational music playing softly before the meeting.
- Change the seating arrangement as the agenda items dictate (circle, semi-circle, group seating etc.).
- A head table can be seen as a barrier between the executive and members. It is beneficial for executive members to sit amongst the membership.
- Set up a sacred space (consider including the parish council banner, candle, photograph of Our Lady of Good Counsel and liturgical decor as appropriate).
- Add personal touches, decorating the room in different themes for the church seasons or special celebrations, e.g., a memorial of deceased members.
- Have a greeter at the door to welcome members.
- Ensure the room is well-ventilated and the room temperature is comfortable.
- Use a microphone and podium if available.
- Include a table for members to register and collect their name tags.
- Use display boards to highlight council activities.

E. Changing Venues

To add interest to the meeting, moving a regular or executive meeting to a venue other than the church meeting room may sometimes be appropriate.

- Arrange to have the meeting at a restaurant that can provide a private dining room that could accommodate the parish council. Negotiate the cost of a meal to precede or follow the meeting. This could be a Christmas meeting, the last meeting before summer break or the annual meeting of members.
- Request a tour of a local hospice/long-term care facility and have a parish council meeting in one of its meeting rooms following the tour.
- Consider a meeting at a cultural venue such as an art gallery or theatre. They are often free if you offer to promote their events to members, and it is a good public relations gesture.

Section 2: Meeting Planning/Preparation

A. Purpose of Preparing Reports

There are various types of reports prepared for meetings, such as written reports circulated before the meeting, oral reports given at the meeting, visual reports such as PowerPoint and summary reports. The following are some benefits of reports:

- Provides information on issues and items of interest and/or importance.
 - Brings members up to date on what has happened since the previous meeting, leading to more engagement and interaction.
 - Gives members a sense of pride and enthusiasm for their work.
 - Ignites enthusiasm in members.
 - Communicates the work that has been accomplished and/or activities undertaken.
 - Gives members opportunities to ask questions arising from reports.
- If there is something the parish council could consider, pose a question in the report and ask to have it added to the agenda for discussion.
 - The closing should be a short review of what was covered and to thank those who may have assisted.
 - Proofread the report and, if possible, ask someone to review it for clarity.

B. Writing a Report

Reports of one page or less are more effective for keeping members engaged. A simplified format consists of an opening, key points and closing.

- Use the opening to draw the reader/listener to the rest of the report. If possible, tell real-life stories about people the council is helping.
- Using bullet form, the key points of the report highlight important activities and provide updates.

C. Distribution of Reports

Distributing the reports in advance reduces the need to read them at the meeting, thereby decreasing the business portion. As an added benefit, this allows members to read the reports and be prepared to ask questions and/or provide feedback.

Methods of distribution may include, but are not limited to:

- soft copy by email
- soft copy posted on the parish or parish council's webpage
- hard copy by mail
- hard copy provided at the church

Section 3: Facilitator

A. Role of Facilitator

The facilitator plays a crucial role in ensuring a meeting is planned efficiently, runs on time, respects participants' time and produces results. Having the appropriate support and tools to conduct meetings will serve to ensure they are simplified, stay on track and maintain the objectives.

The approach the facilitator takes may play a key role in simplifying meetings by recognizing:

- she is the head “cheerleader” of the parish council.
- she needs to convey the important role the League has in the fabric of the church and Canada.
- she appreciates the development of the potential of all members through encouragement and mentorship.
- she recognizes a group of informed individuals, working together, can accomplish more than one person working alone.
- when she treats participants with respect, they will act responsibly in assuming accountability for their decisions.

Note: Please see Characteristics of an Efficient Facilitator in the Addendum.

B. Engaging Regular Meetings

Bonding

- Take time before the meeting begins to invite members to share a personal experience, celebration, challenge, etc. with their neighbour, table or small group.
- Use ice breakers to create interaction:
 - o Pose a question and ask members to discuss it with a partner.
 - * What interests you most about the parish council?
 - * What type of spiritual activity is most gratifying to you?
 - * What is one social justice issue that is of concern?
 - * Who might be a good guest speaker at one of the meetings?
 - * How might the council enhance or change its fundraising activities?
 - o Pose an open-ended statement and have members share their response with another member.
 - * “The most interesting book I ever read was...”
 - * “If I could learn a new skill, it would be...”
 - * “If I could have a conversation with one person it would be...”
 - * “A place in the world I would like to visit is ...”
 - * “One thing few people know about me is...”



- Have refreshments available.
 - o coffee, tea, juice and/or water available as members arrive
 - o some fun food to share; invite a member to donate some baking, an appetizer or food from another culture
 - o healthy refreshments such as fruits and vegetables

Brainstorming

This exercise is crucial for providing creativity and new ideas for the parish council. Thinking outside the box is encouraged. Remind members to be respectful of others' ideas and contributions. Ensure their contributions are validated even if the ideas may not be used. Celebrate the uniqueness and difference of ideas being presented.

The recommendations for opportunities may be:

- prayer - retreats, liturgies, spiritual programs
- sanctity of life - respect for life and the dignity of all humans
- Catholic teachings - study groups, guest speakers, book clubs, workshops
- awareness of the role of women in the church
- sharing awareness of all vocations - the single life, married life, religious life, ordination, etc.
- volunteer activities to serve others - soup kitchens, funerals, food banks
- advocate for the disadvantaged
- demonstrate care for God's creation
- make members aware of resolutions adopted by the League
- promote peace - in parishes and communities

Section 4: Meeting Follow-Up

A. Action Items

Documenting, assigning members and following up on action items maximizes efficiencies by:

- giving a meeting a clear purpose
- establishing clear expectations, priorities and deadlines
- empowering members to be productive and focused

B. Review of Meeting Effectiveness

It is highly valuable for the executive to review meeting procedures and reporting processes as soon as practical following each meeting and suggest ways to enhance them. The questions below may assist in the review.

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- What can be done to facilitate the meeting and/or reporting process?
- How engaged were the members?
- Consider asking members for their feedback now and then. Circulate three or four questions only (keep it very short and to the point) to get their feedback anonymously.



Section 5: Addendums

ADDENDUM #1: Catholic Women's League Annual Planning Calendar

This calendar contains annual events that may change in accordance with the church calendar. Consult a liturgical calendar for dates of feasts and solemnities that you want to include.

Consider making a list of annual events to honour and include them in the calendar. These can change from year to year. In addition to these suggested items, fill in the dates and information for each regular and executive meeting and specific events that typically take place in the parish council.

Examples:

- feast of the patron or patroness of the parish
- bazaar or fundraising events
- publication dates of the council newsletter
- events in which the League cooperates or works with other groups within the parish
 - o Knights of Columbus, parish pastoral council, sacramental preparation program or youth program
- Consider adding diocesan, provincial and national events as applicable.

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st - World Day Peace/Holy Mary Mother of God • Annual meeting of members (*in January or February in accordance with the <i>Constitution & Bylaws</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Presentation of annual budget and reports o Election/reaffirmation of the parish executive council • Membership drive/recruitment month (this can be done at the end of the year as well)
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash Wednesday/Lent (or in March) • Parish council annual meeting of members (if not held in January) • Provincial holiday (third Monday) • New member welcome/orientation
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership recruitments wrap up (consider planning a welcome/ orientation event for new members) • World Day of Prayer (first Friday in March) • Stations of the cross • Lenten retreat • Leadership training • Diocesan annual meeting of members/convention (some may be in April or May)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care (usually first Friday of the month) • March for Life • Mother's Day - second Sunday

June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father's Day - third Sunday • Provincial annual meeting of members/convention (some may be in May or July) • Presentation of service pins and awards and socials (may be done anytime of the year)
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National annual meeting of members/convention
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Season of Creation (September 1 – October 4) • Marketing the League (can be done at any time of year, often in conjunction with the local membership drive)
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to Life campaigns • Member recruitment begins (snowbirds begin to leave following Thanksgiving) • Recruiting for executive council positions if an election year
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorial service for deceased members
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th - Feast of the Immaculate Conception • Membership drive/recruitment all month (this can be done at the start of the year as well)



ADDENDUM #2: Catholic Women's League Annual Planning Calendar

These events and links are offered as suggestions to help plan the yearly calendar with a focus on balancing the three core values. The focus of the events is inclusive and not exclusively Catholic. This reflects the church's priority to be both ecumenical and inter-religious in prayer, service within the community and social justice needs across the globe.

Identify dates, activities and events to be aware of as presented in the following sample calendars. Depending on the parish council's priorities, a selection from the calendars may be incorporated into the executive annual planning calendar.

Faith Standing Committee Annual Planning Calendar

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st - World Day of Peace (usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/war-and-peace/world-day-of-peace) third week - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (weekofprayer.ca/)
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8th - International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Season of Lent
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Season of Easter 26th - Feast Day of Our Lady of Good Counsel (cwl.ca/feast-day-of-our-lady-of-good-counsel/)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> first full week - National Hospice and Palliative Care Week (chpca.ca/campaigns/national-hospice-palliative-care-week/) Laudato Si' Week (laudatosiweek.org/) March for Life (various dates) (marchforlife.ca/) 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care (cwl.ca) 13th - WUCWO Annual Day of Prayer (wucwo.org/index.php/en/prayers/wucwo-annual-day-of-prayer) 24th - Anniversary of <i>Laudato Si'</i>, 2015
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st - World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (educationforjustice.org/resource/world-day-prayer-care-creation/) 21st - the League's National Day of Prayer for Christians in the Holy Land
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Mission Day (vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/missions.index.html)
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Season of Advent 12th - National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous People (also the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe) (ccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/prayer-and-spirituality/national-day-of-prayer-in-solidarity-with-indigenous-people/)

Social Justice Standing Committee Annual Planning Calendar

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27th - International Holocaust Remembrance Day (un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/)
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th - World Day of the Sick (vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/sick.html) • 20th - World Day of Social Justice (un.org/en/observances/social-justice-day) • 22nd - National Human Trafficking Awareness Day (canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/) • last Wednesday, Anti-Bullying Day/Pink Shirt Day (pinkshirtday.ca/about)
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th - International Women's Day (internationalwomensday.com/)
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22nd - Earth Day (earthday.org/)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th - World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (un.org/en/observances/elder-abuse-awareness-day) • 19th - World Humanitarian Day (un.org/en/observances/humanitarian-day) • 20th - World Refugee Day (un.org/en/observances/refugee-day)
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12th - World Day Against Child Labour (un.org/en/observances/world-day-against-child-labour) • 21st - National Indigenous Peoples Day (caanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013248/1534872397533)
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9th - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day)
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 1st - October 4th Season of Creation (seasonofcreation.org/) • 10th - World Suicide Prevention Day (iasp.info/wspd/) • 21st - International Day of Peace (internationaldayofpeace.org/) • last Sunday - World Day of Migrants and Refugees (migrants-refugees.va/world-day-of-migrants-refugees/) • 30th - Orange Shirt Day (orangeshirtday.org/)
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's History Month (femmes-egalite-genres.canada.ca/en/commemorations-celebrations/womens-history-month.html) • 1st - International Day of Older Persons (un.org/en/observances/older-persons-day) • 10th - World Day Against the Death Penalty (worldcoalition.org/) • 10th - World Homeless Day (worldhomelessday.org/) • 11th - International Day of the Girl Child (un.org/en/observances/girl-child-day) • 17th - International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (un.org/en/observances/day-for-eradicating-poverty)
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Day of the Poor (vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/poveri.html) • International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (afsp.org/international-survivors-of-suicide-loss-day) • 16th - International Day for Tolerance (un.org/en/observances/tolerance-day) • 20th - National Child Day (canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/national-child-day.html) • 25th - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (un.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day)
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (un.org/en/observances/slavery-abolition-day)

ADDENDUM #3: Sample Parish Council Minutes

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Date:	Time:	Location:
Meeting called by:		
Type of meeting: (Circle)	Regular	Special
Facilitator:	Executive	Committee
Minutes recorded by:		Annual
Timekeeper:		
Number of Attendees:		
Opening		
Spiritual Program	Presenter	
Mass:		
Spiritual Reading:		
Prayer:		
Other:		
Adoption of Agenda		
Time allotted:	Presenter:	
Moved By:		
Seconded By:		
Discussion:		
Adopted (Y/N):		
Adoption of Previous Minutes		
Time allotted:	Presenter:	
Moved By:		
Seconded By:		
Discussion:		
Adopted (Y/N):		
Business Arising from Minutes		
Presenter:		
a)		
b)		
c)		

Executive Reports:	
Time allotted:	Notes (If applicable, include action items arising)
President:	
Secretary:	
Treasurer:	
Vice-President:	
Committee Reports:	
Time allotted:	Action Items Arising
Faith (At every meeting):	
Service (Optional):	
Social Justice (Optional)	
New Business:	
Time allotted:	Notes and Action Items Arising
a)	
b)	
c)	
d)	
Closing	
Type	Presenter:
Prayer:	
Reading:	
Other:	
Adjournment Next Meeting	
Date:	
Time:	
Reports due date:	

ADDENDUM #4: Regular Meeting Sample Agenda for Parish Council



Name of Parish Council CWL

National theme

Regular Meeting: Month, Day, Year

1. **Call to Order:** President
2. **Opening Prayer:** League Prayer (meeting can be concluded with this prayer as well)
3. **Welcome of Guests, Special Events (birthdays etc.):** President
4. **Traditional Land Acknowledgement:** Can be read by the chairperson of faith (see sample below)
5. **Adoption of Agenda:** President
6. **Adoption of Minutes:** President
7. **Unfinished Business:** President
8. **President Report:** In addition to updating members on what has happened within the parish council, the president can provide updates from the national, provincial and diocesan levels. If possible, consider using the national website for ideas.
9. **Secretary Report:** Secretary
10. **Treasurer Report:** Treasurer
11. **Vice-President Report:** Vice-President
12. **Faith Component** (at every meeting): Can be led by any member of the parish council and would normally be prepared by the chairperson of faith. This important component of every meeting can be situated at any time in the meeting, depending on the content of the meeting. Perhaps just before the “social time,” at the beginning or at the end. Consider varying the time at which this happens.
13. **Service Component** (Optional): This can be included as activities/updates are available.
14. **Social Justice Component** (Optional): As per the annual planning.
15. **New Business:**
16. **Upcoming Events:**
17. **Closing Prayer:** Consider using the prayer created for the national theme or the League Prayer.
18. **Date for Next Meeting:**
19. **Adjournment:** President

ADDENDUM #5: Executive Meeting Sample Agenda for Parish Council



Name of Parish Council CWL

National theme

Regular Meeting: Month, Day, Year

1. **Call to Order:**
2. **Opening Prayer:** League Prayer (meeting can be concluded with this prayer as well)
3. **Adoption of Agenda:**
4. **Adoption of Minutes:**
5. **Unfinished Business:**
6. **President Report:** In addition to updating members on what has happened within the parish council, the president can provide updates from the national, provincial and diocesan levels. If possible, consider using the national website for ideas.
7. **Secretary Report:** Secretary
8. **Treasurer Report:** Treasurer
9. **Vice-President Report:** Vice-President
10. **Committee Updates:** In addition to updating members on what has happened within the parish council, updates from the national, provincial and diocesan levels can be provided for ideas.
11. **New Business:**
12. **Agreement on Items to be Brought to the Regular Meeting:**
13. **Upcoming Events:**
14. **Date for Next Meeting:**
15. **Closing Prayer:** Consider using the prayer created for the national theme or the League Prayer.
16. **Adjournment:**

ADDENDUM #6: Subcommittee Meeting Sample Agenda for Parish Council



Name of Parish Council CWL

National theme

Subcommittee Meeting: Month, Day, Year

(I.e. fundraising, funeral lunch, World Day of Prayer)

The success of subcommittee meetings will largely depend on the ability of the presider to guide the committee to a definite goal. Guidelines for productive meetings include:

- Always start the meeting on time and work with a definite agenda. Members should receive all information, both positive and negative.
- Periodically review the subcommittee responsibilities relative to the League's mandate.
- Make sure adequate minutes are kept.
- Encourage sharing of ideas.
- Keep discussions on track.
- Keep the subcommittee focused on the central question and move toward a decision.
- Seek consensus. Sometimes an idea is compromised by trying to get every person to completely agree.
- Close the meeting by noting achievements. Check at the end of the meeting to see if members feel all relevant subjects have been adequately covered.

1. **Call to Order:**
2. **Opening Prayer:** League Prayer (the meeting can conclude with this prayer as well)
3. **Adoption of Agenda:**
4. **Adoption of Minutes:**
5. **Unfinished Business:**
6. **New Business:**
7. **Action Items Timeline:**
8. **Prepare the Report of Actions for Next Council Meeting:**
9. **Date for Next Meeting:**
10. **Closing Prayer:** Consider using the prayer created for the national theme.

ADDENDUM #7: Characteristics of an Efficient Facilitator

Some qualities a facilitator may display in simplifying meetings include:

- Maintains a neutral role, especially when sensitive matters are being addressed.
- Is a positive role model.
- Enjoys working with and helping people feel good about themselves to achieve their desired results.
- Shows empathy for others.
- Is a good organizer.
- Delegates responsibilities and duties to the appropriate members of the parish council.
- Takes responsibility for her actions.
- Articulates the purpose of the meeting and communicates the objectives to be attained.
- Maintains the participants' focus on the objectives under discussion.
- Listens to and acknowledges the value of all input received.
- Works with her executive to create an efficient and effective council by developing an updated policy manual for the council, yearly budget, calendar of meeting and event dates, timelines for completion of activities and a reliable communication system.
- Guides group discussions to keep meeting participants on track by asking key questions, employing *Robert's Rules of Order* when required and reminding groups of their stated goals.
- Strives for consensus among members.
- Ensures group assumptions are stated and tested, all participants' voices are heard, and that input has been received from various sources.
- Acts as a "neutral party" during discussions but ensures the outcome of those discussions meets the council's objectives.
- Takes notes to record key points of conversation and group decisions for future follow-up.
- Assists the group in developing strategies to turn decisions made at a meeting into actionable plans.

Your Behaviour	What It Reflects	Impact on Group
smile, make eye contact, keen to know every member	approachability	better rapport, sense of belonging
sure what to do, resourceful	confidence, well-informed	security, feel safe, participative
firm, express expectations clearly, address misbehaviour (with respect)	calm, caring, strong	disciplined, cooperative
show concern for everyone's welfare	caring	feel safe, better rapport
cooperates and collaborates with other leaders	team spirit, fun-loving, enthusiasm, role model	cooperative, united, enthusiastic
know and acknowledge each member's strengths	caring, sincere, observant	united, sense of belonging

ADDENDUM #8: Checklist for Guest Speaker

TASK	YES	NO	ACTION
Is there money in the budget? Exactly how much?			
What is the purpose of the presentation/speaker (e.g. which core value?)			
What do you want members to learn from the speaker?			
Determine the maximum time limit for the speaker.			
Who will invite the speaker?			
Clearly identify the topic for the presentation.			
Confirm the cost/remuneration with the speaker.			
Confirm the time frame with the speaker.			
Will the speaker be physically present, or will it be a virtual presentation?			
If the presentation is virtual what platform will be used? (e.g., Zoom)			
Request a biography from the speaker.			
Identify needs of the speaker: lectern, chair, table, laptop, audio/visual equipment, microphone, printed materials, any physical limitations, e.g., wheelchair access.			
Who will confirm the booking time, date, location one week in advance?			
Request permission to record the presentation.			
If permission is granted to record, confirm method/conditions for sharing recording.			
Assign a member to act as hostess for the speaker.			
Designate a member to thank the speaker and present the remuneration/thank you card.			
Prepare the thank you card and cheque for remuneration ahead of time.			

ADDENDUM #9: Sample Meeting Survey #1

Meeting Date:	YES	NO	Not Applicable (N/A)
Were you greeted by a member when you arrived?			
Did the meeting start on time?			
Did the facilitator adhere to the agenda?			
Were members encouraged to participate in the discussions?			
Were the voices of all members heard and valued?			
Was the business of the meeting discussed in an effective and efficient manner?			
Was there a spiritual component to the meeting?			
Did the guest speaker enhance your understanding of the topic presented?			
Was there adequate time to socialize with another?			
Will you attend the next meeting of the parish council?			
Comments:			
Do you have any comments you would like to share with the executive, which could help us to improve your experience at future meetings?			

ADDENDUM #10: Sample Meeting Survey #2

Meeting date:

1. What is one thing you enjoyed about today's meeting?

Answer:

2. What one thing do you wish would not be done at these meetings?

Answer:

3. What is one thing you wished we did at meetings?

Answer:

4. Is there anything else you would like to share with the executive regarding these meetings?

Answer:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us.





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Inv. #636