



Home Visits to Invite Small-Community Participation

Personal invitation is always successful. In the process we rely on the Spirit and believe that what the parish is offering is attractive and beneficial to others. Remember each person is of incredible value and each contact is a sacred encounter. The aim is to reach out to as many individuals as possible to assure that no one misses this amazing, grace-filled opportunity to deepen faith and grow in a community of love. Truly your work is an extension of Jesus' call to his disciples to "Come and see" (John 1:39).

If at all possible, visit the entire parish or a geographical section of the parish before the first season. For the following seasons, target specific groups of people such as: parents of newly baptized children, those who have completed the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) process in the past three years, new members of the parish, and so on.

Motivation and Strategies

While inviting, motivation, as well as technique, is essential:

- Send a letter from the pastor to the people to be visited (see Handout 9b for a sample letter).
- Select, train, and prepare home visitors, using the suggestions that follow.

Provide the following materials for those who will be making the visits:

- Handout 6, "Key Reasons for Signing Up for *ARISE Together in Christ*"
- Name tag with parish identification
- Letter from the pastor authorizing the visit
- Blank small-community sign-up cards
- Referral cards for pastoral needs, to be given to the pastor
- Flyers about *ARISE*
- *ARISE* Prayer bookmarks

- Parish bulletins for list of parish staff, and other helpful information
- Way to report visits and responses (Information from each visit is noted to assure important matters receive follow up and to avoid duplication.)

After the first week of visiting, gather the visitors to pray, share experiences, and support one another. During this gathering a follow up letter of thanks from the pastor and the pastoral staff could be addressed and mailed to those families who have been visited.

General Guidelines for Home Visits

As you approach a home, remember that God is present in the persons living there. The person who opens the door has a life with joys and concerns. Your task is to share respectfully without trying to “sell” the process. Your care may be what the Holy Spirit uses to make someone more aware of God’s presence in his or her life.

- Go in twos to visit others. Ask God’s blessing on the people of the home before you knock on the door. Simply pray: “Dear God, bless this house and all who dwell within.”
- Address the person by name, and introduce yourselves.
- Engage in small talk (Beautiful day, nice garden, etc.)
- Share the purpose of your visit.
- Listen for facts and feelings that might need pastoral response. Show compassion and acceptance.
- Keep eye contact without staring.
- A sample dialogue is given on the facing page.

Concluding Tasks and Comments

- Complete a sign-up card if the person agrees. Ask about other family members that might be interested. Explain that someone will contact each person as the season nears.
- If someone wants time to think about joining a small community, ask when you could call back for a reply. Give the person the card, pray the **ARISE** Prayer with him or her, and ask the person to pray for the parish. Thank the person for his or her time.
- If a personal problem or a complaint surfaces, use a pastoral referral card. A sample of a pastoral referral card can be found in the Appendix as Handout 9c.

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Parishes who are signed-up members of the ARISE Together in Christ process may make copies of this page for their own parish use.

Sample Dialogue

Hello, my name is _____

and this is _____.

We are from _____
Name of Parish

on _____
Street where parish is located

I hope that we are not catching you at a bad time; we won't take much of your time.
(Small talk here.)

As you may have heard, our parish is beginning a wonderful spiritual process called **ARISE Together in Christ**. Are you familiar with this?

One of the most exciting parts of **ARISE** will be the small faith communities. We are looking forward to being a part of one of these and are here to invite you personally to be part of a small community.

Show flyer and comment briefly on the value of small communities, which are summarized here:

Small communities:

- meet once a week for six weeks
- have a choice of meeting times during the week
- are centered around Scripture
- use structured materials
- are guided by trained leaders
- are held (usually) in informal settings such as a home

We would love to have you participate in a small community