

A Parish Priest's Role in Discernment

1. Teach about the need and opportunities for discernment throughout the year.
2. Pray and stay attuned to people's gifts and share with them what you are hearing/seeing to encourage them toward ministry. For those whose gifts lean toward the gifts and roles of Holy Orders, encourage them to consider the call to Holy Orders.
3. Understand the Diocesan discernment process and your role in it.
4. Invite and encourage members of the parish to take part in the Here I am Circle as it seems appropriate.
5. Stay in conversation with those who are taking part in the first circle.
6. If a member is encouraged to seek the second circle toward Holy Orders, after the first circle is completed, meet with them (the +Bishop suggests three times) as you continue to discern if you can affirm the possibility that there is a call to Holy Orders. Talk about what was heard in first circle (you will receive a summary from the facilitator or COM chair); discuss areas of possible growth, areas of concern, areas of difficulty, areas of potential and gifts.
7. Once you feel as if you can affirm the possibility the person is called to Holy Orders and further discernment by a local group is warranted, meet with the seeker to discuss possible members of a local discernment team. Utilize the information found in the beginning of the Circles of Light process to put together the team.
8. Contact the chair of the COM and the +Bishop to let them know that you will be putting together a local discernment team. The Chair will then provide you with the name of a COM member who will meet with the team-PRIOR TO THE DISCERNMENT BEGINNING-and provide an orientation to the process and the materials.
9. The priest is the person who puts together the team, starting with carefully choosing a facilitator who will lead the team with the ability to model deep and active listening, as well as thoughtful and provoking questioning skills.
10. Consult the Press on the Kingdom document for helpful information and provide it to the local discernment team.
11. During the course of time when the local discernment team meets, hold the group in prayer.
12. Meet with the facilitator after the circle is finished to receive a report.
13. Meet with the seeker to discuss the team's discernment.
14. If the team discerns a call to Holy Orders, contact the +Bishop and inform him/her.
15. At the next Vestry meeting, share the results of the discernment team. The Vestry will then need to nominate the seeker for Postulancy. The Diocesan office has this form, so you will want to acquire it prior to the Vestry meeting.
16. If the Vestry nominates the seeker, the seeker will also have to fill out a form accepting the nomination.