

# St. Margaret of Scotland Subcommittee Report Recommendations for SMOS Strategic Plan

**Committee Name:** Formation for Faith and Life

**Scope:** Reference Subcommittee Charter, May 2005

**Committee Members:**

- Joe Master
- Cheryl Thomas
- Kelly White
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- Pat Kiernan
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## **Strengths:**

SMOS School and Parish are vibrant communities with many active ministries in place, and an excellent educational program. Both the parish and the school are fiscally sound with most parishioners and school families highly satisfied with the opportunities offered them as parish members and school families.

## **Weaknesses:**

While there exists a connection between the parish and school, the unique charism of SMOS parish may not always be effectively communicated or modeled in the school community. Also, some parish families feel that the school does not always meet the needs of their children, particularly those with learning disabilities or the most gifted. Finally, the opportunities offered our teens and young adults (20-30) are few and the parish sometimes loses its young members at this important time in their faith development.

## **Opportunities:**

The closing of Immaculate Conception/St. Henrys Parish while immensely sad for that community, and the closing of Holy Family Parish and School, have offered SMOS parish unique opportunities to add diversity and life to the parish. The affected families at both IC/SH and HF parishes bring with them many years of experience in ministry and school support that we must tap into at SMOS. The challenges such mergers present may seem great, but the excitement, particularly the willingness of Holy Family school parents to get involved in SMOS School, is infectious and heart-warming.

## **Threats:**

Decreases in Catholic households in the area make the work of those remaining even harder. We must maximize resource use between the parish and school, and create a strategic plan that coordinates the use of resources and strengthens the

interdependency between parish and school. Also, the influx of new members to the parish and school, particularly the school, while a blessing must be managed in such a way (financially and socially) that the new members feel welcomed and valued without compromising the excellence that all families--new and old--expect from SMOS.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Create a paid parish position (full or part time) that will oversee the connection between school life and parish life. The person hired for this position will make sure that the charism of the parish is both communicated and lived out in the school, oversee the Children's Liturgy program at the church, act as a liaison for SMOS families whose children attend a PSR program, and facilitate the creation of a youth group for middle school and high school age youth in the parish.
2. Facilitate a meeting of the SMOS parish leaders and religion teachers at the school to make sure that the religious education program in the school is aligned with and reflective of the mission and spirit of the parish.
3. Institute a partnering program between the Parish ministries and the school on a ministry/grade level basis that enriches the relationship between parish and school families as well as those students who attend PSR and home school programs. This program will foster a deeper understanding of parish life among school children and families, and will allow parish members the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the school. Many of the activities are centered on the sacraments and, by the end of a student's years at SMOS School, will provide her/him with an experience of SMOS parish in all its breadth and richness. (See attached chart for specifics)
4. Advocate the expansion of the Atrium Project--a religious education Program based on the Montessori model--for 3-6 year olds in the parish, and the expansion of the program for children 6-9. This would include the allocation of financial resources to allow parish members to be trained in the program and a location (in parish center or school) for the program to be housed.
5. Offer a monthly or biweekly open "meeting" with social time and prayer for youth may be helpful to keep young people connected. While not many programs in the parish are particularly geared to High School age youth, many of them have connections with Catholic high schools. Perhaps the Social Justice Committee can make sure to invited youth to its programs, explore programs like Habitat for Humanity that span all ages groups, Etc.

Finally, parents have also expressed the need for guidance in dealing with teenage personalities and their rebellious nature toward church. Offering programs through the parish to address these needs either structured or dialogue-based is recommended.

Sacrament/Concept: Baptism/Birth

Responsible Group: Greeters/Hospitality/Mom's Club

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Congratulation & Welcome Cards
- \*2 Explanation of Baptism
- \*3 Candle Activity
- \*4 Help Lead Baptism songs when Baptism is during mass

Grade Option: Montessori/ Kindergarten

Concept: Mass Ministers

Responsible Group: Lectors, Choir, Servers, Ushers Lectors, Choir,  
Servers,  
Ushers, Religious Ed Teachers etc.

Possible Activities:

- \*1 "Thank you for serving" cards
- \*2 Help coordinate yearly appreciation gathering
- \*3 Lectors read Bible stories to students at school
- \*4 Students' families bring up gifts on Sundays
- \*5 Speak with students about responsibilities

Grade Option: 1st or above

Sacrament/Concept: Eucharist

Responsible Groups: Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Adoration

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Learn about and participate in Eucharistic Adoration
- \*2 Prepare thank you cards
- \*3 Prepare congratulation cards for First Communicants
- \*4 Participate in Sacrament of Reconciliation Service during

Preparation

- \*5 Help with Bread and Wine preparation, perhaps a prayer service

Grade Option: 2nd grade and all First Communicants

Concept: Church facility/Altar Society and Flowers

Groups Responsible: Altar Society? Father or "Church Historian"

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Learn about church building and statues etc.
- \*2 Learn how to care for church building & linens
- \*3 Bring flowers for decoration
- \*4 Help with Seasonal decorations

Grade Option: 3,4 or 5

Sacrament: Anointing of the Sick

Groups Responsible: Prayer Chain, Parish Nurse, and Visitors of Shut-Ins

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Learn about some of our special parishioners and their needs
- \*2 Make pictures and cards to send
- \*3 Sing Christmas Carols
- \*4 Communicate regularly

Grade Option: 3,4,or 5

Sacrament: Holy Matrimony/Holy Orders

Group Responsible: Pastor, Vocations Office

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Holiness of Marriage talk during Family Life
- \*2 Congratulation/Blessing Cards
- \*3 Create and provide special decoration or memento from parish

Grade Option: 5th and above.

Concept: Death, Community Support

Group Responsible: Ladies' Auxiliary

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Condolence/Prayer card to family
- \*2 Design placemats to be used at reception
- \*3 Roll plastic ware in napkins to be used
- \*4 Learn about other functions of Ladies' Aux.

Grade Option: 3, 4, 5, and 6

Concept: Social Justice

Group Responsible: Social Justice Committee

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Learn about Social Justice Issues
- \*2 Participate in Service Project
- \*3 Prepare information materials for parish

Grade Options: 7th & 8th

Concept: Service

Group Responsible: St. Vincent de Paul/Parish Center

Possible Activities:

- \*1 Learn about functions and people
- \*2 Participate in Service Project
- .3 Help write/publish newsletter/information for parish

Grade Options: 7th & 8th