

Ongoing Steps

The many volunteers who answer their baptismal call by their involvement, are the backbone of all our Church ministries. Through their dedication and activity, they promote the Reign of God.

It is the responsibility of each faith community and parish to ensure that volunteers are well equipped to carry out their ministries. For this reason, **Screening in Faith** has an on-going component. The initial steps only serve to lay down a foundation for the vital work of supporting, forming, giving feedback to and appreciating our volunteers.

Many parishes already do an outstanding job of providing these elements for their volunteers. These steps ensure that faith communities like your parish stay committed to volunteer ministry development.

Parish Screening Committees

A Parish Screening Committee of 2 to 5 members is set up to assist in carrying out the programme. This team develops and maintains a process for all volunteer ministers.

This includes:

- Ministry Position Descriptions
- Appropriate Recruitment Processes
- Ministry Information Forms
- Interviews and Reference Checks for High Trust Positions
- Police Records Checks for High Trust Ministries
- Formation & Preparation
- Feedback & Review of Processes
- Support & Appreciation

The Parish Committee works in cooperation with the pastor, ministry and group leaders in carrying out many of these processes, particularly with respect to feedback, supervision, evaluation, support and appreciation.

Your goodwill and cooperation are appreciated

If you are one of the many faithful who have been generously volunteering in your parish for years, you may be questioning the need for this process. Unfortunately, not all volunteers have the same motivations and intentions. Some individuals do take advantage of groups and organizations that have lax or non-existing volunteer screening and management practices.

It is therefore critical that consistent policies and procedures be in place. This greatly reduces merely subjective and/or personal choices being made as to the suitability of candidates. With standard procedures in place regarding selecting, screening and supporting volunteer ministers, everyone – including volunteers themselves - can feel more confident about our Church faith communities.

Jesus, though without sin, accepted baptism for the forgiveness of sins to set an example to all his future disciples of his willingness to share in our humanity. He did not decline baptism on the grounds that it didn't really apply to him. As the faithful, we are also Christ's disciples. By accepting to participate in this initiative, you are helping to build a more vibrant and safer parish community. You are setting a wonderful example for generations to come of humble and willing service after the example of Christ himself.

There are many different gifts, but it is always the same Spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord...The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good. 1 Cor 12:4-5, 7



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Screening in Faith

BASIC INFORMATION

on the
Archdiocesan
Volunteer and Staff
Screening

Where did this Screening Programme Originate?

- ✱ The **Ontario Screening Initiative (OSI)** was begun in 1999 by the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture & Recreation with Volunteer Canada.
- ✱ It was directed at all Church, sport, recreational and community organizations. Its goal was to encourage them to screen their volunteers, especially those dealing with vulnerable people and to assist them in developing the necessary resources and procedures to do so.
- ✱ Among Church groups, the Catholic, Anglican, United and Unitarian churches participated in the OSI
- ✱ A programme called **Screening in Faith** was developed for faith-based communities. It became the basis of all Ontario Catholic Diocesan screening programs. The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (then OCCB) strongly recommended all Dioceses in Ontario implement screening of their volunteers

When was **Screening in Faith** mandated in our Archdiocese?

- ✱ In February of 2005, then Archbishop Anthony Meagher, mandated that the *Screening in Faith* initiative be implemented in every parish of the Archdiocese of Kingston.
- ✱ This mandate and the Screening Policy continue to be in effect under the leadership of Archbishop Brendan O'Brien.
- ✱ The policy states that all volunteers, both those presently serving and those seeking to do so, are to be screened. In addition, the screening policy also applies to staff members both at the parish and Diocesan level.

Volunteer Ministry and Responsibility

Through our baptism, we are called to share our gifts with one another and with the world. Given the importance of being sent by God, it is essential that we as a community do all we can to prepare ourselves for ministry.



Given the reality of today's Church, including declining numbers of ordained ministers and vocations to the religious life as well as issues such as clustering, we have come to understand the significance that lay volunteer ministries are playing and will continue to play in the Church. However, volunteer ministries also require appropriate preparation and formation.

We have the **duty of care** to ensure a safe and caring community of faith through proper matching of gifts, screening, preparation, support and feedback of volunteer ministers. We need to foster a climate in which the right people share gifts in the right way, at the right time.

It is our responsibility as a Church to create relationships and environments where the most vulnerable (children, youth and vulnerable adults) feel safe and cared for appropriately. We must also ensure that Church resources, such as money, property, facilities and all its tools are managed and used appropriately.

Goals and Steps

How does this affect you as a parish volunteer?

The overall goal of this initiative is to enhance the support, training and formation of our volunteer ministers and ensure the safety of vulnerable people.

First Steps

The first steps include gathering basic information on all your current volunteer ministries. This is standard procedure for most volunteer-based organizations, but for many faith communities such as your local parish, this will probably be the first time formal information on volunteers has been collected.

The type of information that may required of you in order to be involved in a ministry relates to your level of responsibility and authority. Those involved in HIGH TRUST ministries, i.e. working with children, youth, vulnerable adults, will be asked for more detailed information including references, an interview and a police records check.

Those working in other ministries where risks are lower are asked for much more basic information such as address, contact information, previous experience in volunteer work, and hours of availability. These ministries are termed GENERAL and INCREASED TRUST. A few examples are choir members, committee members, lectors and church decorators.

All information gathered for the purposes of this initiative will be held in strict confidentiality at the parish. It is the responsibility of the Parish to have accurate records on who is ministering on their behalf.

There are many gifts, but it is always the same Spirit...the particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good. 1 Cor 12:4,7