

PLANNING THE CELEBRATION

HOSTING THE CELEBRATION

A different parish or parish cluster in the (arch)diocese could host each year; or one parish or parish cluster could be the consistent host.

PLANNING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

The (Arch)Bishop, Rural Life Committee, or other representative of the (arch)diocese may suggest a location and timing for the Rural Life Celebration.

The current planning committee could recommend a location for the following year's event.

The planning committee may include the following members: (A) Two Co-chairs plus at least one person in charge of each of the following: (B) Program, (C) Food and Entertainment, (D) Logistics, (E) Publicity/Promotion, and (F) Volunteers.

Chairs or Co-chairs: Oversee the work of the committee including: choosing the host family farm in collaboration with Bishop's office as appropriate; establishing the overall plan for the celebration (date, theme, food, entertainment, etc.); tracking the timeline of events; keeping committees on schedule; communicating regularly with committee members and helping them as needed; collecting money for expenses; acting as primary liaison for (Arch)Bishop's office.



Program: Arranges the liturgy, music, seating arrangements, Eucharistic ministers, and decorations.

Food/Entertainment: Provides for food, refreshments and entertainment. May want to split this between two people or groups depending on the elaborateness of the plan.

Logistics: Provides contingency plan for inclement weather; arranges for portable outhouses; parking plans; orders tent; works with promotions team and places directional signage where needed; addresses local concerns, regulations and establishes liability insurance.

Publicity/Promotions: Provides all promotions for the event; distributes flyers to parishes; arranges for diocesan newspaper promotion; works with logistics team to prepare needed directional signage.

Volunteers: Coordinates volunteers for set-up; food service; parking; transportation; take down and clean up. This committee can be eliminated if each committee stated above agrees to find their own volunteers.

INVITEES

You may invite all members of each parish in the (Arch)diocese, and other neighboring churches as appropriate.

If possible, it is best to send a personal invitation to those invited; especially members of the host parish(es), priests/diocesan personnel, and the neighboring parishes.

SCHEDULING THE CELEBRATION

- Any season
- During the week or on Sundays
- One day or over several days

Considerations

- Experience dictates that Sundays yield the best attendance.
- A weekday celebration may also allow local Catholic school students, teachers and administrators to attend as a group.
- In general, considerations should be made to include as many people as possible; however, some rural communities may prefer a smaller, more local event depending on the diocese or venue restrictions.
- The schedule of the (Arch)Bishop should be taken into consideration before a date can be established.

LOCATION OF THE CELEBRATION

- Family Farm
- Park
- Parish Center
- Religious Community Center
- Church
- Multiple sites

Considerations

- Experience dictates that family farms and parks are the best locations to host the Celebration. Ask within the parishes if any family farmers would be willing to host the Celebration.
- It is recommended that there always be a tent and alternative site identified if the Celebration is to take place outside.

PUBLICITY

Community newspapers

There is often a community bulletin board section that publishes events for free. Contact the editor to ask if they would like to cover the event.

(Arch)diocesan newspaper

Contact the editor to let them know the details of the event.

Collaboration

Work with (Arch)diocese to promote the event throughout all the parishes, including: bulletin announcements, posters, and pulpit announcements. Promotion can begin six months in advance of the event with a “save the date” announcement.

Schools

You may promote the event through the local schools via posters and flyers. Contact the (Arch)diocese to ask if they would be willing to print the flyers and posters for you.



THE PROGRAM: COMPONENTS TO CONSIDER

- Mass or prayer service.
- Local (Arch)Bishop, guest Bishop, and/or other guest speakers.
- Banners from each attending parish.
- Catholic Rural Life display and materials will be provided.
- Special recognition for century farms (plaque, ceremonial honoring, comments by recipient, etc.).
- Blessing ceremony (sower, seed, crops, land, equipment, etc.).
- Seeds, cuttings, etc. to share.
- Tree planting ceremony.
- Many resources are available to support these components.



FOOD

Those who understand the role of the farmer as provider of food and sustainer of God's resources, have values that focus on the relationship between food, agriculture and rural concerns in a common search for justice. A shared meal helps celebrate these common values and all those who provide food for us.

Considerations

- A local farmer may donate some of the food.
- Potluck lunch or dinner.
- Sack lunch, or "bring your own meal plus something to share".
- Caterer for all or part of the meal.
- Encourage in-kind donations.
- Simple meals work best.

ENTERTAINMENT

This is an optional component, but it helps build relationships and a sense of community.

Considerations

- Petting zoo
- Door prizes donated by local businesses
- Outdoor games
- Local talent (musicians, plays, skits, etc.)
- Music
- Dancing
- Speakers (local farmers, community members, students, Mayor, etc.)

Note: It is important to avoid inviting anyone currently campaigning for office unless you plan on inviting ALL candidates. This is not a political event.