

Ministry Fair Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Get the support of your pastor, staff, and parish leadership. Ask them to promote the fair at their gatherings, meetings, etc.
- Form a team with as many volunteers as possible.
- Set a date well in advance of the fair. A successful fair takes a great deal of planning. Get the word out early!
- Personally invite every organization/ministry in your parish to provide information about their ministry – a brief description with the goal of the ministry, activities, contact information, when they meet, any training requirements, expectations, etc. You can use this to create your time and talent ministry booklet, brochure, or list.
- Invite each organization/ministry to set up a booth/table/display for parishioners to visit.
- Make sure every table/booth has someone present during the hours of the fair to answer any questions.
- Make sure the set-up allows for maximum visibility, fluidity of movement, and easy accessibility.
- Provide some sort of food and beverage during the fair.
- Locate the ministry fair in a place that will attract a great deal of traffic without being obstructive. Some parishes use the social hall, gathering space, or outdoor space. If you host the fair outdoors, make sure you have a rain contingency plan!
- Promote the fair as a change to explore the opportunities available at the parish. It is an education and informational experience – a time to celebrate the good things happening in your parish and inviting more people to be a part of it!

DON'T:

- Allow soliciting and sign-ups to go on during the fair. Putting people on the spot will work against you. In fact, it often reduces the number of people attending the fair. The fair is never to be a substitute for Commitment Sunday.
- Expect every organization to set up a table, and never try to coerce them into participating. Instead, let them see the fruits of this for the other ministries. They will be more likely to participate in the future.
- Try to do it all yourself. You will find parishioners who love to help with this time of event – use them!
- Try to hold a big ministry fair every year. It is very labor intensive on the part of many people. And unfortunately, due to the frustrations and burn-out, many parishes end up making the ministry fair their only stewardship effort for the year. While it can be fun, educational, and community building, it is not the most important part of your parish stewardship effort.