

MARY MOTHER OF MERCY PARISH

PASTORAL STRATEGIC PLAN

2025–2028

Focused on Outreach to Families with Children & Young Couples

Mission Statement

Together with Mary, our Mother, our community welcomes all to receive, live, and share the Divine Mercy that comes from Jesus.

Identity

Mary Mother of Mercy Parish was established on June 22, 2011, representing the combined parish communities of Our Lady of Lourdes (Glassboro) and Our Lady Queen of Peace (Pitman). The parish continues to be staffed by the priests, deacons, and lay faithful of the Diocese of Camden who are committed to proclaiming the Gospel and forming intentional disciples of Jesus Christ.

Vision

A welcoming, dynamic Catholic community committed to strengthening families in the practice of the faith, fostering spiritual growth, and cultivating deeper engagement among young couples and families with children.

At the heart of this vision is the call to move beyond a merely cultural expression of Catholicism toward intentional discipleship—where individuals and families consciously choose Christ, grow in relationship with Him through prayer and the sacraments, and live the faith actively in daily life.

Institutional Goal for 2025–2028

For this planning cycle, Mary Mother of Mercy Parish will concentrate its pastoral efforts on one primary demographic identified through parish listening sessions and Pastoral Council discernment: families with children and young couples.

This Strategic Plan seeks not only to increase participation, but to strengthen and support young families in becoming intentional disciples—capable of living, witnessing, and passing on the Catholic faith in their homes, parish life, and the wider community.

Guiding Pastoral Principle: Intentional Discipleship

Throughout the implementation of this Strategic Plan, initiatives will be evaluated not only by attendance or participation, but by their ability to foster intentional discipleship. Parish ministries and leaders are encouraged to frame opportunities not as obligations, but as invitations to deeper relationship with Christ, growth in faith, and participation in the mission of the Church.

Process Phases

1. Listening sessions held with families, couples, and parishioners to identify pastoral priorities.
2. Review and refinement by the Pastoral Council and objective-based focus groups.
3. Pastoral synthesis and drafting of the Strategic Plan.
4. Council review and incorporation of feedback.
5. Identification of implementation leaders and volunteers.
6. Phased implementation over three years.
7. Ongoing assessment and annual review.

OBJECTIVE #1: SERVICE

Christian service is the lived expression of discipleship. Families grow as intentional disciples when they serve together, learning that faith is not merely believed but lived. Through acts of charity and mercy, parents and children are formed to see service as participation in the mission of Christ.

Goal #1: Develop Family-Friendly Service Projects

Year 1 / Step 1 - Survey existing parish ministries to identify current service initiatives. - Compile and publish a list of service opportunities that are age-appropriate and Safe Environment compliant, clarifying where children may participate directly. - Identify parish-wide collaborative projects suitable for families (e.g., flags for veterans, Christmas cards, care packages, parish grounds clean-up). - Utilize SignUpGenius and QR codes to support participation. - Incorporate a brief prayer or Gospel reflection to connect service with discipleship.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Establish a rhythm of rotating family service opportunities. - Strengthen partnerships with community organizations. - Explicitly frame service as a response to baptism and a lived expression of following Christ.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Establish an annual Family Mission Day consisting of parish-wide collaborative projects that allow families to serve together without disrupting existing ministries.

Goal #2: Seasonal Family Workshops in Place of Parish-Run Retreats

Year 1 / Step 1 - Promote existing diocesan and Catholic retreat opportunities. - Pilot seasonal family workshops during Advent and Lent that combine prayer, catechesis, and hands-on activities.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Expand workshops to additional liturgical seasons. - Integrate simple service elements into workshops.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Discern feasibility of an annual Family Spirituality Day focused on intentional discipleship.

Goal #3: Communicate the Mission of Each Parish Ministry

Year 1 / Step 1 - Update ministry descriptions to clearly articulate purpose, mission, and opportunities for families.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Create short ministry introduction videos highlighting discipleship.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Host an annual Ministry Showcase to help families discern involvement.

Assessment (Service) Family service projects that are simple, prayerful, and clearly connected to faith show strong participation.

Pastor's Analysis (Service) When service is presented as discipleship rather than obligation, families are formed more deeply and sustainably.

OBJECTIVE #2: SPIRITUAL

Parents are the primary evangelizers of their children. The parish exists to equip and accompany families in forming habits of prayer, sacramental participation, and faith-filled living.

Goal #1: Provide Seasonal Pamphlets and Worship Aids

Year 1 / Step 1 - Produce seasonal pamphlets for Advent, Lent, and Easter. - Create simple pew inserts explaining the Mass, including responses and postures. - Include brief weekly discipleship invitations for families.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Explore inclusion of a children's page in the bulletin, ensuring copyright compliance.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Compile materials into a Family Liturgical Resource Packet with digital access.

Goal #2: Develop Family Prayer Resources

Year 1 / Step 1 - Create one-page guides for daily family prayer.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Offer parent workshops on helping children engage during Mass. - Produce short prayer videos and testimonies.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Discern whether to publish a parish-created prayer handbook or curate trusted external resources.

Goal #3: Provide Mass Participation Helps for Children and Parents

Year 1 / Step 1 - Develop laminated Mass guides for families.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Expand guides by age group with QR-linked explanations.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Maintain and revise materials based on feedback.

Assessment (Spiritual) Simple, tangible resources help families engage more intentionally.

Pastor's Analysis (Spiritual) The aim is not information alone, but conversion of heart and habit.

OBJECTIVE #3: COMMUNITY BUILDING

Intentional discipleship flourishes in community. Young families are strengthened through accompaniment and witness across generations.

Goal #1: Provide Regular Family Gathering Opportunities

Year 1 / Step 1 - Launch after-Mass hospitality gatherings with simple food and conversation starters.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Increase frequency and establish volunteer hospitality teams.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Establish annual family-centered parish traditions.

Goal #2: Establish a Guest Speaker Series

Year 1 / Step 1 - Identify speakers who witness to conversion, marriage, perseverance, and faith.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Host quarterly testimony evenings.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Integrate the speaker series into the parish calendar.

Goal #3: Host Seasonal Prayer and Meditation Gatherings

Year 1 / Step 1 - Plan one seasonal prayer gathering.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Expand seasonal offerings.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Establish gatherings as parish traditions.

Assessment (Community Building) Community-building efforts are most effective when tied to faith and inclusivity.

Pastor's Analysis (Community Building) Discipleship is often learned through relationships and example.

OBJECTIVE #4: TECH & PHYSICAL PLANT

Facilities and communication serve discipleship by removing obstacles and fostering welcome.

Goal #1: Plan and Install a Parish Playground

Year 1 / Step 1 - Research feasibility, safety, and cost.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Fundraise and finalize design.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Install and integrate into parish life.

Goal #2: Improve Signage and Changing Facilities

Year 1 / Step 1 - Install changing stations in all bathrooms and improve signage for bathrooms and cry rooms.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Train ushers to assist families.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Maintain and review facilities.

Goal #3: Strengthen Digital Communication and Audio Systems

Year 1 / Step 1 - Refresh website and standardize QR code use.

Year 2 / Step 2 - Upgrade cry room audio and produce discipleship-focused videos.

Year 3 / Step 3 - Maintain a sustainable digital ecosystem.

Assessment (Tech & Physical Plant) Improved facilities and communication directly support family engagement.

Pastor's Analysis (Tech & Physical Plant) Hospitality and clarity are essential tools of evangelization.

Intergenerational Witness & Accompaniment

The formation of intentional disciples does not occur in isolation. Parish leaders and seasoned parishioners play a vital role in modeling faithful Catholic life for younger families. Intentional intergenerational presence helps families see that discipleship is lived over a lifetime.

Conclusion

By focusing intentionally on families with children and young couples, Mary Mother of Mercy Parish seeks to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ—not simply participants in parish life, but women and men who pray, serve, evangelize, and live the faith with conviction. Supported by parish leaders and the witness of seasoned parishioners, this plan aims to strengthen families and renew the life of the entire parish community.