

Optimizing Space Usage in Parishes



This five-step process and checklist is designed to help parishes thoughtfully and strategically optimize their available space. Whether you're exploring ways to support ministry, engage with your community, or generate revenue, this plan will guide you from assessment through to implementation.

Each step outlines key actions to take and tips to ensure your parish buildings are being used to their fullest potential—sustainably, purposefully, and in alignment with your mission. Use this tool as a starting point for conversation and planning with your parish leadership.

Step 1: Conduct a Space Inventory

- ✓ Identify available spaces
- ✓ Measure and document
- ✓ Assess current usage

Step 2: Analyze Needs and Opportunities

- ✓ Understanding parish needs
- ✓ Exploring community needs
- ✓ Evaluating willingness to share space

Step 3: Review Financial and Operational Considerations

- ✓ Potential revenue streams
- ✓ Cost-benefit analysis
- ✓ Legal and compliance considerations

Step 4: Develop a Space Utilization Plan

- ✓ Creating a usage matrix
- ✓ Drafting policies and agreements
- ✓ Setting up a Team and/or Coordinator

Step 5: Implement and Improve Continuously

- ✓ Summarize findings
- ✓ Advertising and promotion
- ✓ Monitoring and adjusting

Checklist



A practical tool to help assess and reimagine your parish spaces, step by step.

Step 1: Conduct a Space Inventory

- ☐ Walk the property and write down every usable space.
 - Both the obvious and the overlooked: worship areas, halls, classrooms, offices, rectories, storage rooms, basements, and even outdoor areas.
- ☐ Measure spaces if it helps (square footage, seating capacity).
- ☐ Take note of accessibility, fire exits, and anything else worth remembering.
- ☐ List what each space is used for now, for how often and by whom.
- ☐ Notice which rooms are busy and which sit unused most of the time.
- ☐ Identify your busiest and quietest times during the week.

Step 2: Analyze Needs and Opportunities

- ☐ What do you need space for right now.
 - Think: worship, meetings, kids' programs, outreach, office and administration, storage?
- ☐ Are there any growing needs or things you've wanted to try but haven't had the room?
- ☐ Think about local groups or services that might be looking for space
 - E.g., schools, daycares, non-profits, recovery programs, community kitchens
- ☐ Look for overlap: What could support your mission while meeting a local need?
- ☐ Talk honestly as a parish: How much space are you open to sharing, and what are your concerns (security, cleaning, wear and tear)?

Step 3: Review Financial and Operational Considerations

- ☐ Could you bring in revenue by renting space for meetings, events, or offices?
- ☐ What would it cost to maintain or upgrade the space for those uses?
 - Think: utilities, insurance, cleaning, etc.
- ☐ Weigh the pros and cons. Would the income be worth the effort?
- ☐ Make sure you're covered legally
 - Confirm Canon 6 approval is required before occupancy
 - Review zoning and insurance requirements
 - Check for accessibility and safety compliance

Step 4: Develop a Space Utilization Plan

- ☐ Match your available spaces with parish and community needs. A simple chart or spreadsheet works fine.
- ☐ Sketch out a schedule — when is each space in use, and when could it be?
- ☐ Write up some basic policies: who can use the space, how to book it, and any rules.
- ☐ Choose someone (or a small team) to keep things organized and be the point person.
- ☐ Plan to check in every few months and make adjustments as you go.

Step 5: Implement and Improve Continuously

- ☐ Share your findings with the Parish Corporation or Vestry and get their input.
- ☐ Let people know what's available! Use your bulletin, newsletters, social media.
- ☐ Consider partnering with a Realtor, especially if you are looking for a long term tenant.
- ☐ Keep an eye on how things are going. Ask for feedback and be ready to adapt.