



Parish Twinning: *Engaging the Parish in Solidarity Photo Book Project*

Background: As part of the parish twinning project, St. Anthony's: Standing with Haiti, the group decided to create a photo book highlighting St. Anthony's parish life, which they would share with the parishes that it would visit in Haiti.

This activity uses that project as an impetus to engage the home parish/school in the twinning relationship. It includes a lesson for youth and a discussion activity for adults.

Activity Purpose:

- Engage various parish groups in discussion about twinning, questions they have about their potential sister parish, and what they think is important for the sister parish to know about them.
- Use that feedback to create a photo album of parish life to share on the first visit to the sister parish.

Possible Target Groups:

- School
- Liturgy
- Youth
- Young Adults
- Music
- Faith Formation

Lesson Plan for Youth/School Groups (Grades 4 and up):

Materials: Sticky notes (two different colors); map of the country/region that you will visit, map of the world, whiteboard/chalkboard

Lesson Title: Getting to know our friends across borders	
Objective: Participants will be able to brainstorm questions they would have about a sister parish/school and what a sister parish/school should know about their parish community.	
Activity	Method
Introduce yourself to group as member of the group that will visit potential sister parish sites in (name country/city/etc.).	Introduction
Using a map of the world , have students try to identify where the country that you will visit is. Ask the students to	Large Group Discussion

discuss why they think that members of their parish/school community are going. There are no wrong answers, this is just a discussion.	
Ask students if they have ever gone over to a friend's house. Discuss these questions in partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do friends visit each other? • What does it mean to be a friend? (What do you do? How do we treat each other?) 	Partner Discussion
Have students share their answers with the large group. Write answers on the board, or let students do so. Explain to students that just like their friends here at home, God made us to love and be friends with people all over the world. We are traveling to visit our friends in (name country) to get to know them better, and to let them get to know our parish/school.	Large Group Discussion
Present the map of the country, and point out where in the country you will visit. Explain to the students that in order to get to know people, we need to ask questions about them. In the next activity, they will brainstorm what want to know about their new friends.	Direct Instruction
Take one or two students suggestions from the class about what they may want to know and write them on the board as an example.	Modeling
On a piece of paper, have students write some questions that they may want to know about the people that you will visit. You can help them think of categories: school, home, family, play, etc.	Independent Work
In small groups, have students share their questions. Using the first color sticky note, have students write five questions as a group that they want to know, using the questions in their notebooks as a reference. (Every group should be using the same color sticky note.)	Small Group Work
Have students pick one question to share with the large group. Once all groups have shared, students should place the sticky notes on one side of the map.	Large Group Discussion and Chalk Talk
Explain to students that part of being a friend means sharing things about ourselves. In their groups, they will brainstorm what makes their school/parish unique. (What do you like about your parish/school? What is it like to be part of this parish/school? What do you do in this parish/school?). Explain that the traveling group will present a book of photos about your parish/school to the people they visit, with some sentences about parish life. For older students, have them think about what is	Direct Instruction

truly important about the school/parish. How do we treat each other? What do we care about?	
Students work in groups to write ideas about what makes the parish/school unique on the other color sticky note. Each group should again select five.	Small Group Work
Again, students share with the larger group, placing the sticky notes on the other side of the map.	Large Group Discussion and Chalk Talk
Tell students that after the visit, you will be back to share some of what you learned and what your experience was. Share that you hope that this will only be the beginning of the friendship between these two parishes. Ask students to pray for you and the new friends that you will make.	Wrap-Up

Activity for Adult Groups:

Materials: Map of the country that you will visit, whiteboard/chalkboard

Begin by explaining that the parish is beginning a sister parish relationship in (name country), and that you will be part of the group making the initial visit.

Ask the group to discuss what they think a sister or twinning relationship involves. This is just a word association, so there are no correct or incorrect responses. After a few responses, pose this question, **“We use the word ‘sister’ to describe this relationship. What does it mean to be a sister or brother?”** Key points:

- Relationship is rooted in love
- Relationship is not based on giving and receiving, although that may happen
- Relationship is based on mutual support and compassion
- Genuine affection and solidarity

Present the map of the country and point to the exact area(s) that you will visit. Explain that you are going primarily to do just that: visit, form relationships, and share. As part of that sharing, you are bringing a photo album that highlights the character of the parish. You are asking for this group’s help in brainstorming:

- What makes this parish special
- What you want to know about the people/parishes we will visit

Ask group first to brainstorm what makes the parish unique or “alive.” Ask them to consider that we are sharing who we are at our core: **If you took away our nice facilities and we were simply a community, how would you describe the character of that community? Your ministry?**

Write responses on the board.

Repeat this activity, this time brainstorming questions about the people you will visit. First explain to the group that we are asking questions as friends, interested in each other's lives.

Write responses on the board.

Explain to the group that when you return, you will share what you have learned and what the experience of sharing was like. Thank them for their time and ask them to pray for you and your new friends. (You may invite them to ask any questions of you about your travel plans, the reason that this twinning project is happening, etc.)