

Whom Do You Serve?

Does your parish have any of the following?

- Mothers new to our parish or new to our area
- Expectant Mothers needing assistance
- First time expectant Mothers
- Mothers in need of peer support during difficult pregnancy
- Expecting Mothers in need of prayer
- Young Mothers in need of support

It is our mission to reach all expecting Mothers. Pregnant women have a glow, naturally, so how do we know if a mother is in need of prayer, having a difficult pregnancy, or is in need of assistance? She could be carrying the burden of her needs silently with her. The GP Angels should interact with the expecting mothers of the parish often to build fellowship and trust.



Bottom line, if there is a bump on the belly of a woman in the parish an Angel should make contact with the mother as soon as possible. Sometimes there is help needed but out reach was never given.

Ideas

•**New Mom to Parish** Moving to a new area presents its challenges naturally. Moving and being pregnant magnifies these challenges: finding the local pharmacy and grocery store, researching a good doctor and pediatrician, losing a network of close friends and family, etc. Your parish Gabriel Project Angels can be a sign of welcome and renewal of spirit. Introducing the parish's activities and ministries, and parishioners to the expecting mother and her family will allow her and her family to connect with others and build community.

•**Prayers All Around** Pregnancy and childbirth is one of the most honorable tasks the human body under goes and, despite medical advancements, it is also the presents the most risk. Keep prayer packets in the back of the parish for the Angels to reach quickly when they meet a new mom. Remembering the Mother and asking how her pregnancy is progressing can be a beautiful way to support the Mother in the event complications arise. (Loss of job, medical health change in mother or baby, or even miscarriages.)

•**Tapping into Existing Parish Programs** Inviting an expecting Mother to attend the parish's Holy Hour, Feast Celebrations, Mother's Bible Study, or Play Group is a wonderful way to be a guide for parish's spirituality. The woman in these groups can be an open ear or simply new friends that the expectant Mother will be able to interact with once the baby arrives. If the parish does not have something like this consider hosting one on a monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly basis.

•**Meals for Moms** When meeting new mothers ask for her contact information so that in the event of bed rest, or other situation, you're able to reach her to arrange for Holy Communion to be brought to her, hot meals prepared by the Angels, and companionship. This is also a great way to help out a mom once her baby arrives!

Promotion

Getting the word out to the parish

Gabriel Sunday

1. Meet with your pastor to plan how the Gabriel Project will be presented to the parish. It is essential the whole parish know about the Gabriel Project.
2. Pick a Sunday with readings which tie in with the Gabriel Project. October, which is Respect Life Month, January, March 25 the feast of the Annunciation, and/or May are good times to introduce the Gabriel Project.
3. The Sunday before insert a flyer in the bulletin preparing the congregation for Gabriel Sunday.
4. On Gabriel Sunday, have someone speak at all the Masses about the Gabriel Project. The speaker may be the pastor or someone who is involved with the Gabriel Project and is a good spokesperson
5. Include the Gabriel Project in the prayers of the faithful.
6. Brochures with volunteer sign-up cards are made available in the pews or at a table near the entrance of the church where parishioners can sign up to volunteer or donate money if they desire. During the presentation, draw these materials to the attention of the congregation.
7. Ask the congregation to pray about the area of work God is calling them to do with the Gabriel Project. Request the prayerful support of the entire parish for the Gabriel Project.
8. On Gabriel Sunday or at another designated time, the pastor can bless the parish's Sign of Life.

Angel Training

A list of volunteers, angels, is gathered from Gabriel Sunday. All Gabriel Angels must attend an Diocesan sponsored training at the parish or at the Diocese before seeing Mom. This is imperative. The Angels must also obtain continuing Education at the regularly Scheduled Gabriel Project Workshops at the Diocese. The diocesan Gabriel Project Arlington office provides training regularly and all training materials.

1. Pick a date and time, coordinating with the GPA office, for Angel Training. It is nice to have the training on a Saturday morning following the parish's regular Saturday morning Mass to encourage the prayer aspect of Gabriel Project.
2. Invite the Pastor to join us after Mass for refreshments and ask him if he could welcome the participants and say an opening prayer.
3. The host site provides attendees a continental breakfast such as coffee, juice, supplies, bagels, pastries, fruit, etc. The diocese can pay for this expense with prior approval. Please forward a cost estimate for GPA's review prior to placing the final order. Suggestions of places that have been used in the past are: local supermarket, Panera Bread, or Kimberly's Catering (703-448-7298).
4. Promote Angel Training through the parish bulletin, website, and announcements.

Commissioning of Volunteers and Angels

Once you have volunteers committed and angels trained they must be recognized in front of the church community with a commissioning ceremony during Sunday Mass.



Promotion

Promotional Items

The following are available to you through the GPA office. We highly encourage you to utilize all avenues of promotion for your Gabriel Project in order to have a successful ministry.

- Sign of Life - Can be purchased through the GPA office. The Sign of Life is a 4' x 6' wooden freestanding sign with a message and image of the Madonna of the Streets in English and Spanish. The sign serves as a witness to the entire community and advertises the church's willingness to help a pregnant mother in need.
- Business Cards - Angels may carry GPA business cards with them as they visit: doctor's offices, pharmacies, day care centers, etc.
- Poster Board - Provided by GPA, these boards may be placed around the parish or used at parish functions. The GPA emblem and phone number are on the poster.
- Web Page Template - We encourage every GPA site to have a Gabriel presence on their parish's website to reach out to new moms and volunteers.
- Brochures - A great tool to be placed in the parish and may also be used at other ministries activities and presentations. GPA can mail brochures to your parish.
- Fliers - GPA has generic fliers available for you to customize for Gabriel Sunday, Angel Training, and Gabriel Project. Promoting your parish based event with fliers is always a good idea.
- Bulletin Announcement - Let the parish know of the ministry's events and successes also when the ministry is in need of prayer.



Bulletin Announcements

Gabriel Sunday

The Office for Family Life of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington is proud to announce that Gabriel Project is starting at (insert parish name). This diocesan parish-based pregnancy assistance program will be officially introduced on "Gabriel Sunday," the weekend of August 18-19. Learn more about how to help and/or sign-up to for a future training. Your prayers are appreciated for this ministry now, as we prepare to implement it at our parish, and throughout the year as we serve any pregnant women needing support. For more information, please contact...

Gabriel Project Training for prospective Gabriel Project Volunteers will be held (insert day, date, and time) (following the 8:30 a.m. Mass). Your prayers are appreciated for this ministry now, as we prepare to implement it at our parish, and throughout the year as we serve any pregnant women needing support. If you are interested in participating, or for more information, please call the Gabriel Project office at 703-841-2755 or visit their website:

www.arlingtondiocese/offices/family/volunteer.html

Gabriel Sunday & Angel Training Check List

<u>Items to Do</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Gabriel Sunday	
<input type="checkbox"/> Set a Gabriel Sunday date with pastor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Set training date	
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact GPA for customized flier for bulletin	6 weeks before
<input type="checkbox"/> Publish bulletin announcement to announce Gabriel Sunday	6 weeks before
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact GPA to publish Herald ad	4 week before
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit volunteers to assist at GS sign up table	1 week or more
<input type="checkbox"/> Request GPA brochures	1 week or more
<input type="checkbox"/> Create blank volunteer sign-up list for each weekend Mass (Full name, phone, e-mail); set up table; pens/pencils	week of GS
<input type="checkbox"/> Display board (optional)	(optional) available only for 48 hours; pick up and drop off from GPA
<input type="checkbox"/> Take photo of parish pastor with coordinator and/or volunteers at GS table	day of GS
<input type="checkbox"/> Post-intro news release – with photo	week after GS
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact GPA to order outside sign	week after GS
Training	
<input type="checkbox"/> Publish bulletin announcement to announce parish training date/time (timed with FYI)	6 weeks before
<input type="checkbox"/> Advertise training dates using flier	6 weeks before
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform pastor of training date and invite pastor to join us after Mass (If Mass will be held before training. If no Mass for pastor to meet at start of training) for refreshments and ask him if he could welcome the participants with encouraging remarks and say an opening prayer.	6 weeks before
<input type="checkbox"/> Order refreshments. Please include a variety of pastries and fruit to give options to trainees.	week of GS or sooner
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit volunteers to assist at welcome/sign in table	week of GS or sooner
<i>See "Site Responsibilities" to help prepare training room</i>	

Website Template

Discuss with the parish pastor and webmaster as to how your parish would like to implement the Gabriel Project link. All Gabriel parishes are highly encouraged to have a Gabriel Project presence on their website. GPA has prepared a website template that may be posted directly or as a tool for your parish website to promote Gabriel Project. Here are some suggestions.



1. **Parish already has a website template** So not interfere with the parish's current website formatting, create an additional ministry link under the parish's existing "ministries" or "programs" link. Keeping the parish's background, font, etc simply use the suggested text from the GPA parish website template.
2. **Parish website does not currently have strict guidelines** Feel free to use the GPA parish website template as is. Your webmaster should be able to copy and paste the files, updating where necessary, into the parishes website program.

The important idea is to have a Gabriel Project presence on the parish website that is inviting and warm and that can be an extension of the parish's vision to reach new moms and volunteers.

Monthly Support

Regular Support Meetings

Plan a monthly meeting so that all the volunteers can get together and keep in close contact with one another for support, encouragement, accountability, spiritual enrichment, and continuing education. Use this time wisely and fruitfully. After each meeting everyone must leave with a new idea, new knowledge, and new inspiration or renewed motivation to continue as an Angel.

Start each meeting in the presence of God. Plan to get together for a special Mass, the Rosary or Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, before your meetings. Each parish Gabriel Project will be unique in its character because of differences in resources available, number of volunteers, and demographics within the community. (Practical Guidelines for running meetings in Gabriel Resource Manuel.)



Invite each volunteer to sponsor one meeting a month. Allow them to come up with the meeting theme and details. They may solicit assistance from other volunteers with them at the helm.

Encourage the monthly theme to reflect the liturgical season. For example:

- November - Advent preparation: Reflect on the Mary's Magnificat and her journey to child birth as the volunteers prepare on the journey to Christmas. Enlist the parish DRE or Adult Education coordinator for more ideas and resources.
- October - Respect Life Month and Month of the Rosary: Invite a speaker from the Respect Life office to present topics that are current in the Respect Life arena. i.e.: Current legislation up for vote, bioethical development, or issues concerning families.
- Book Club - pick a Catholic author to read and schedule an afternoon tea to discuss avenues the book addressed. (Could be fiction, theological, or even a few articles revolving around the same subject.)
- Catholicity - Our Catholic culture has a lot of rich treasures from iconography to sacramentals. Pick 3-5 of these treasures (photo copy or actual) and give them to the volunteers prior to the meeting for advance reflection. At the meeting go around the group to share what one thought about the item, how they've seen it used, or how they've used it themselves. If you can find back ground information on the item share this with the group after everyone has shared their thoughts. This can be adapted to a variety of settings.

Utilize the meetings to also:

- Share success stories related to Gabriel Project and in one another's lives.
- Exchange ideas on how to reach out to mothers in the parish.
- Pray for the volunteers of GPA and the women who GPA serve in your parish and around the archdiocese.
- Pray for special needs of the parish and its ministries.
- Build fellowship and community among the volunteers.