GOING & GATHERING · PART II

The Small *(Effective)* Church

Deploying the Gifts God Has Given · The Rev. Canon Michael D. Vinson · November 6, 2026

"There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" JOHN 6:9

1 · REFRAME	2 · DIAGNOSE	3 · DISCOVER	4 · DEPLOY
the story we tell about smallness	why our parish is small	the gifts already in our hands	limitations into solutions

◆ WORKSHEET 1 · 2 MINUTES · ON YOUR OWN

Stuck or Strategic?

Be honest before God. On each line, fill in the circle that shows how much it describes your parish today. Most of us are a little of both.

WHY ARE WE SMALL?	NOT US		SOME		VERY US
STUCK					
Small by mistake — *doing important things poorly*	○	○	○	○	○
Small by exclusion — *barriers that keep others out*	○	○	○	○	○
Frozen in time — *unwilling to change or adapt*	○	○	○	○	○
STRATEGIC					
Small with a purpose — *to know, pastor, and love by name*	○	○	○	○	○
Small for a while — *a young mission, a season of rebuilding*	○	○	○	○	○
Small for infiltration — *leaven hid in three measures of meal*	○	○	○	○	○

Now circle the one line that most describes your parish. One gift we already have that could move us toward strategic:

Size is not an obstacle to effectiveness. Rather, it is a catalyst for missional imagination.

◆ WORKSHEET 2 · 5 MINUTES · WITH YOUR PARISH

Five Loaves and Two Small Fishes

Take inventory of the gifts already in your hands. Write what comes to mind; don't edit. Listen to everyone — someone may see the gifts the rest of you stopped noticing.

SIX GIFTS TO LOOK FOR

Known · Needed · Household · Nimble · Rooted · Real

People

Who do we have, and what are they good at?

Places

Homes, building and grounds, spots in our Parish Mile

Practices

What do we already do well? Teaching, liturgical feasts, music, hospitality

Relationships

Schools, workplaces, civic groups, neighbors

Character

What is our parish's personality? What would a neighbor say we are known for?

◆ **OUR TWO STRONGEST GIFTS**

1 _____

2 _____

"All should be called for counsel … because the Lord often reveals what is better to the younger." — The Rule of St. Benedict 3

◆ WORKSHEET 3 · 8 MINUTES · WITH YOUR PARISH

Limitations into Solutions

"Make the men sit down." Our Lord ordered what was there, gave thanks for it, and put it into his disciples' hands. Do the same with your limitations.

1 · Tick the two limitations most real for your parish — or name your own.

- ☐ Lack of clergy and staff
- ☐ Limited finances
- ☐ Inadequate space or location
- ☐ Other: .....
- ☐ Low or no visibility
- ☐ Difficulty shepherding everyone
- ☐ Personal time constraints

The rule: every solution must use at least one gift from Worksheet 2. No solving it by wishing for more money, more clergy, or more people.

2 · For each, write one small-church solution.

LIMITATION A _____

Our small-church solution

.....

.....

The gift we'll use ..... *Who could lead it* .....

LIMITATION B _____

Our small-church solution

.....

.....

The gift we'll use ..... *Who could lead it* .....

◆ **3 · A SOLUTION WORTH STEALING**

Heard from another parish in the room:

_____

_____

◆ WORKSHEET 4 · 8 MINUTES · WITH YOUR PARISH

Clarifying Missional Effectiveness

Put it all on one page. Fill in what you can — you will not finish, and you need not.

FIRST, DECLUTTER BEFORE YOU ADD

1 · What has ceased to be effective?

2 · What costs more than it is worth?

3 · Planting today, would we begin this?

4 · Can it be refreshed, or should it end?

5 · What do we wish we didn't have to do?

One ministry to refresh or lay down with thanks: .....

	Belong DEEP COMMUNITY	**Believe** FORMATIVE CATECHESIS	**Become** TRANSFORMATIVE SPIRITUALITY
Existing What we already do			
Evolve · Adjust · Conclude What needs to change, or end well			
New One thing to begin, using our gifts			

◆ OUR ONE NEXT STEP

_____

_____

Who will take it home _____ Begin by _____

Take this page to your rector, vestry, and Going & Gathering Team. The *Going & Gathering* parish workbook will carry it to a ninety-day plan.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." — John 6:12