



# Opportunities in Your Parish before Training

One person, the Gabriel Project® Coordinator, with a few volunteers will accept the task of getting the Gabriel Project® started. After attending the Gabriel Project® Training, they will form the parish Gabriel Project®. It will take persistence and commitment for some time to get an active Gabriel Project® firmly in place, but with reliance on God's help, it will happen.

## 1. Permission from Your Pastor

Present the Gabriel Project® to your pastor and seek his approval to proceed. Inform the parish council and / or finance council about the Gabriel Project®. The Archdiocesan Gabriel Coordinator should be contacted for information and training.

## 2. Introduction to the Entire Parish - Gabriel Sunday

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®.

- 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®.
- The Sunday before insert a flyer in the bulletin preparing the congregation for Gabriel Sunday.
- 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
- Include the Gabriel Project® in the prayers of the faithful.
- 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.
- 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®.
- On Gabriel Sunday or at another designated time, the pastor can bless the parish's Sign of Life.

## 3. The Sign of Life and Other Necessary Materials

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. The following materials are available:

- The Sign of Life
- Mother and Baby Prayer Books
- Cards, Brochures and Posters
- Angel and Resource Manual at training

## 4. Angel Training

A list of volunteers is gathered. All Gabriel Angels must attend an Archdiocesan 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 Archdiocesan Respect Life Office provides training regularly and all training materials.

## **5. Finances**

The Gabriel Project® will not be a financial burden on the parish, but it is important to let the pastor and finance council know of the financial needs of the Gabriel Project® parishes. All monies donated to the Gabriel Project® must be deposited in a separate account to which the Gabriel Coordinator has access.

- The main expense is the Sign of Life paid for by the parish
- The materials and training are provided by the Respect Life Office
- All the work of the Gabriel Project® is done by volunteers
- Fundraising is optional but people generously give when asked

## **6. Monthly 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® must have a coordinator and volunteers to do different tasks within the Gabriel Project®. Each parish Gabriel Project® will be unique in its character because of differences in resources available, number of volunteers, and demographics within the community.

## **7. Major Catholic Support Services**

The Gabriel Project® works in collaboration with other parish and Archdiocesan Agencies to provide the best of care, mostly free, for Mom.

***Pre-Natal, Delivery and Post-Natal Care,*** By law, each Hospital must provide charitable services to indigent patients to be eligible for Government Monies. This includes Catholic hospitals.

***A Catholic Health Care Provider,*** Should ideally, should care for Mom throughout her pregnancy. If she must attend the Public or non-Catholic Health care Systems, she is very likely to be offered Sterilization, Contraception, Depo-Provera or IUD's. Abortion may also be offered, particularly if there is fetal malformation or disease. See how the Angel can protect Mom.

***Mother & Baby Assistance,*** for the Gabriel Project®. Parish baby showers collect supplies for Mothers & Babies in need. Organize a Baby Shower or Bassinet Sunday, on Mother's Day, in October, or some other time. MAKE IT AN ANNUAL EVENT.

***Project Rachel,*** is the outreach to women (and men) who have had an abortion or been involved in an abortion decision, offering confidential care, counseling, reconciliation and healing.

***Society of St. Vincent de Paul,*** provides person to person services to individuals in need, giving emergency assistance with food, clothing, rent and utilities.

***Fertility Awareness and Natural Family Planning*** is offered through the Family Life Ministry or other Archdiocesan Agency to help couples understand the gift of their own fertility when planning their families.

***Parish Social Ministry,*** usually an outreach of Catholic Charities, provides professional social service at the parish and helps Gabriel Moms obtain their benefits including Medicaid, WIC, etc.

*Catholic Charities*, among its many services usually has:

- ***Services to Pregnant Adolescents and their families.*** These services are particularly helpful when working with minor children who are pregnant (under 18 yrs), where medical, psychological and legal difficulties require professional help.
- ***Adoption, foster care, and post adoption services.*** All adoptions must go through a reputable Catholic adoption agency if possible. Catholic Charities will work with the local Gabriel Project® in providing workshops on this and other topics. **NEVER ARRANGE A PRIVATE ADOPTION FROM THE GABRIEL PROJECT®.**

## **8. The Michaels**

The Michaels are a group of men in the parish committed to helping Mom by supporting the Gabriel Angels. A woman volunteer should always accompany a Michael. All requests for Michael support are channeled through the Michael coordinator who maintains a roster of men available for

- meeting with the father-to-be or, in his absence, with the mother-to-be or both as a mentor,
- transportation to an appointment or other places with proof of up to date liability insurance,
- auto & household repairs,
- financial advice,
- assistance in finding employment, and
- giving masculine example and help.

## **9. Help from the Parish**

Many parish volunteers and organizations want to help the Gabriel Project®. Suggested tasks for these volunteers are:

- organizing the Annual Parish Baby Shower, collecting maternity and baby items or shopping for baby items at garage sales
- transportation to and from doctor's appointments, (Some volunteers may want to reserve a day or morning once a week to take women to their destination. Company is very important as Mom may feel pressured to abort or contracept by the Medical Service.)
- child care
- income tax preparation
- car and appliance repair
- meal preparation
- fundraising

## **10. Stewardship**

You may get more items donated than you need at a particular time. Through parish donations, baby showers and bassinet Sundays the parish Gabriel Project® will receive maternity clothes, baby clothes and baby items. Keep an inventory of items available. Items need to be culled for usability and safety especially items for a baby. Make sure they are in good repair, clean and usable. Baby cribs and car seats are of special concern and must meet federal standards. Are they safe for a small child? Someone who has storage space and time to keep track of items may want to be in charge in this area. A clean and secure place to store the items with easy access for Angels will be important. Some diocese use commercial

storage facilities. All items must be given freely to Mom with no strings attached just as they have been donated to the Gabriel Project®. However, as there is always a shortage of car seats and cribs, they can be lent to Mom. All items collected at each parish must be available as needed to other parish Gabriel Projects® in the diocese.

## **11. Transportation**

From time to time, Moms may need transportation to an appointment or other place. Before an Angel or Volunteer transports Mom in their vehicle, they must be able to show proof of up to date liability insurance.

## **12. Commitment**

A Gabriel Angel is committed to

- replying to Mom promptly
- checking up on her regularly
- praying for her daily
- arranging for services and responses to needs
- keeping all communications and information confidential
- be available when Mom needs a listening ear
- communicating with the parish coordinator
- attending support meetings

If an Angel is going on vacation, is overwhelmed with a family situation or for some reason cannot be available as an Angel, she must notify the parish Gabriel Project® Coordinator that she is temporarily unable to fulfill her commitment.

The Gabriel Project® Coordinator is committed to

- knowing all the Angels
- matching each Mom with an Angel
- communicating training, meeting times and workshop times
- communicating with the pastor
- encouraging collaborative ministry
- following up with Angels concerning the Moms they are helping
- mailing in the Confidential Intake Forms

## **13. 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 Mass.