# Continuation Committee – Training Outline

## Best Practices for a Vibrant Christ Renews His Parish Program

*Summary: Two to two and a half hour session of prayer, presentations and discussion regarding the role of a Continuation Committee and how we can most effectively fulfill the commission that the Lord has given us to lead the Christ Renews His Parish program in our parish.*

**A. Opening Meditation/Prayer**: (5 minutes) (Share a scripture to focus on Christ’s calling each one of us. As members of our Continuation Committees, this is a call to a further walk with Christ, building on what Christ accomplished in us on our Renewal Weekend. This call of Christ to serve Him and our parishes on a Continuation Committee is a deepening of that call.)

**B. Welcome and Introduction to Day.** Our theme is “STRENGTHEN CONTINUATION COMMITTEES, STRENGTHEN CHRIST RENEWS.” (Total of 15 minutes this section.)

Goals of Session:

* Discussion on topic of Continuation Committees (CCs).
* Exchange of ideas on what makes a CCs successful.
* Sharing on what has worked well within different parishes, and where opportunity for growth within our parish exists.
* Work towards a common understanding of best practices.

Context: A practical approach is needed to complement the general approach in the Handbook.

Format: Two facilitators to make short presentations on different topics, calling on members of their own Committee to expand on particular topics, followed by group discussion. Each presentation topic will be about 10 minutes, and there will be 10 minutes of discussion after that. Full agenda – save questions for general discussion time. At the end of all the presentations, there will be a time for personal reflection on some spiritual “Challenge Questions,” followed by a time of common prayer with one another, and a re-commitment exercise are planned.

Presenters:

**C. Introductions from Attendees:**

* Your parish
* Your Christ Renews Weekend discerned ministry
* How long on CC
* If you are a co-chair, please share that.
* Other Christ Renews service (Mission Teams, DF/HG/FS Facilitators)

**D. Housekeeping Issues.** (Location of restrooms.)

**E. Make sure all attendees sign the sign-up sheet.**

**FIRST DISCUSSION TOPIC**: What are the basic responsibilities of a Continuation Committee? [**10 minutes of presentation, 10 minutes of discussion]**

This doesn’t sound like a terribly interesting topic. We all inherently know many of these things, even if we haven’t read the Handbook in a long time.

But how many of our Continuation Committee members actually have Handbooks? When’s the last time you read the section on CCs?

When you joined a CC, what kind of training did you get about what your role was? How often do you as a Committee talk about your various roles? How do you determine who gets what role?

Listen for roles and responsibilities you may not have thought of. And ask yourself HOW WELL you are fulfilling these roles. Bring those thoughts to our General Discussion.]

* Provide a support structure within a parish for the operation of the Program.
* Facilitate Retreat Weekends.
* Provide a knowledge base for Teams, CSDs and various discerned ministers for presenting a weekend.
* Foster consistency among Teams and with the Christ Renews Handbook and Parish Christ Renews Policies
* Foster the development of solid leadership (CSDs, HF/FS and Discernment Facilitators, Continuation Committee membership).
* Be the eyes and ears of the Pastor and the Pastoral Council to ensure faithfulness of Christ Renews to Catholic doctrine, good pastoral practices.
* Facilitate continued spiritual growth of Christ Renews graduates by hosting periodic opportunities for community and personal spiritual growth.

Facilitator Sharing: Facilitators to share how the committee within his or her parish is working to meet these goals. Examples may include:

* Developing articulated policies for Christ Renews
* Promoting leadership development
* Establishing good relationships with the Pastor, Pastoral Council, and different parish ministries
* Ensuring that the teams stay on track
* CC meetings with the CSD and Lay Director during the course of Team formation
* Promoting continuing spiritual and social interaction of Christ Renews graduates after their program has ended.

Discussion: What do participating Continuation Committees see as their current strengths, their current weaknesses? What specific topics do you want to talk about?

**SECOND DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Composition of Continuation Committees.

 [**10 minutes of presentation, 10 minutes of discussion**]

[Why is this important? The more effective our Committees are, the more robust Christ Renews will be.]

* A good balance of men and women.
* Different age groups on the CC bring different gifts.
* “Martha” and “Mary” roles (Luke 10:38 – 41)
	+ Some members with practical skills (budgeting, scheduling, website maintenance, supplies)
	+ Other members with a passion for the overall spiritual vitality of Christ Renews in parish.
	+ A good mix of “charisms” represented on the Committee (reference to the Called and Gifted Program)
* Selection, Approval by Pastor, Commissioning
* Initial training of new members – responsibility of whom?
* Rotation (formal or informal)and filling openings
* Interpersonal relations and trust
* Promoting community and fellowship on CC.

Facilitator Sharing: Pick one or two of the above topics and share how your Continuation Committee handles it.

* Role of Spiritual leader within Christ Renews. Focal point. Stand up and be identified and be proud of Christ Renews. Co-Chair is someone involved in different ministries in parish, visible. Attend every Evening of Discipleship of new Teams. Present vision of Parish Service at Evening of Pentecost. Get to know all CSDs, LDs. As much as you can, get to know all Men’s Teams. Attend all Agape Services. Attend special times of prayer in the Parish for Christ Renews members in need. Be a friend to all who have been through Christ Renews.
* Importance of “Service” ministries
* Process for New Member introduction to CCs. (Materials, sit-down meeting, share witness with one another, ask about skills, interest, talk about needs.)
* Called and Gifted Program as a way to get a better handle on what your personal gifting from the Holy Spirit is.
* Promoting friendship among CC members.

Discussion: [10 minutes]. How does your CC structure facilitate building a strong Committee?

**[BREAK – 10 MINUTES]**

**THIRD DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Meetings. **[10 minutes**]

* Frequency (how frequently do you meet – monthly, quarterly, less frequently?) Lack of sufficiently regular meetings will weaken Christ Renews
* Agenda, Minutes.
* Amount of time. Sticking to an established time limit
	+ Rotating responsibility for leading prayer, leading the meeting, sending out the agendas, refreshments
	+ Meeting with CSD and Lay Directors promptly after Discernment
		- to help foster participatory relationship
		- to introduce concept of ministry mentoring
	+ o introduce Parish Christ Renews Policies
* Celebratory meetings with CSDs and Lay Directors after Weekends (at a home with refreshments, and agenda limited to hearing from CSDs and Lay Directors regarding past Weekend, Team Formation
	+ Does your Continuation Committee have periodic meetings with representatives of the Pastoral Council or a subcommittee? Are they invited to CC meetings?

Facilitator Sharing: Pick one or two of the above topics and share how your CC handles it.

Discussion: [10 minutes.]

**FOURTH DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Individual Ministries within Continuation Committees. **[10 minutes.]**

* Expectation regarding the amount of time that individual Committee members spend on their Christ Renews ministry on a monthly basis
* How do you break down different roles and responsibilities? How do members select their roles?
	+ Chair/Co-Chair
	+ Minutes
	+ Budget
	+ Communications within Christ Renews community of parish (e-mail communication on topics of common interest)
	+ Website maintenance
	+ Mentoring CSDs – How do you handle this?
	+ Invitations, especially to parishioners who are “underinvolved”
	+ Evening of Pentecost planning, coordination and delivery
* Development of Ministry Guidelines to supplement the Handbook and provide practical guidance on Retreat weekend topics (Kitchen Coordinator, Invitations, HELP Letters, etc.)
	+ Liaison with Pastoral Council and Pastor
	+ Solicitation of Weekend Volunteers (how do you do it, what works well?)
	+ Solicitation of HG/FS and Discernment Facilitators
	+ Solicitation of candidates for CSD
* How does your parish do it?

Facilitator Sharing: Pick one or two of the above topics and share how your CC handles it.

Discussion: [10 minutes]

**FOURTH DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Invitations.

The goal is to have 15-30 invitees. Many parishes consider 24 an ideal number for the best experience. Experience has shown that 3-4 men and 1-2 women will be no shows.

* Key Reasons for Invitees to Attend:
	+ Become Involved in the Parish
	+ Get a spiritual booster—grow in my faith
	+ To meet and get to know new people
	+ Feel called by God or through prayer
* Secondary Level Reasons for Invitees to Attend:
	+ Spousal pressure
	+ Experiencing Personal challenges that requires a change
	+ To “check the box” that they attended
	+ To share their faith and spiritual journey experiences
* Key Reasons for Invitees NOT to Attend:
	+ “I’m not a retreat person”
	+ “I’m not religious enough”
	+ Don’t want to stay overnight in the church
	+ Feelings of inadequacy about Christian knowledge or teachings
	+ “It takes too much time”
	+ “I’m too busy”
	+ “I need my weekends for family time”
	+ “Six months is too long!”
* Messages for MEN
	+ Focus on opportunity to become better Catholic men, husbands, fathers
	+ Offer the opportunity to meet and know other men like you and to build a network
	+ Explain the sense of brotherhood
	+ Emphasize the retreat is for all levels of faith
* Messages for WOMEN
	+ Focus on the weekend as a spiritual booster shot.
	+ Explain that you meet others like yourself and build meaningful new relationships while you grow in your faith
	+ Emphasize the retreat is for all levels of faith
* Get your priest’s endorsement
* Create awareness and interest through parish communication opportunities
* Use existing parish groups for likely leads
* Consider doing a “pre-approach” with spouses who have attended Christ Renews to determine best approach
* Match the message to men—and women!
* Match the demographics of the invitee
* Use other Christ Renews groups to assist as needed
* Consider creating a men’s and women’s brochure as a leave-behind

**FIFTH SEGEMENT:**

1. General Wrap-Up and Pre-Parish Break Out Session: [**5 minutes**]

Facilitator to present his personal summary on the following questions. Encourage participants to bring their reflections back to their Continuation Committees for consideration.

* What general themes have emerged?
* Have you learned anything that will help you personally become a better member of your CC?
* How can your CC improve?

2. Personal Reflection on Challenge Questions. If time allows, allow participants to spend 10 minutes of personal refection time before calling them together for prayer.

3.Closing Prayer and Recommitment Ceremony. (All participants invited to share prayers for their parish, committee, group, etc.)