

Attracting New Members

Ideas from Discussions at the Spring Gathering 2016

- **Pray** for an increase in OFS vocations.
- **Brochures:** Use the Come & See Brochure as a handout or as an informative item in parish information racks and bulletin boards.
- **Business Cards:** Use business cards to promote your fraternity.
- **Magnetic OFS Members:** Pay attention to gifts of the Spirit! Members who are enthusiastic and welcoming can extend compelling invitations to fraternity gatherings. Members who are especially attuned to hospitality can make a lot of difference in the tone and comfort level of newcomers because they are often able to "read others."
- **On-going Formation:** Great ongoing formation draws everyone into deeper relationship to God and others. It facilitates OFS vocations by being inviting and welcoming, and it lays a foundation for what is to come. Remember: Bored people do not return.
- **Outstanding Formation Teams:** Relating to and working with new members enlivens fraternity. Have 2 people at each level at each level of formation (orientation, inquiry & candidacy).
- **Outreach Events:** Hold specific sessions for outreach events, rather than using the monthly Fraternity Gathering as an outreach. The monthly Fraternity Gathering is the "privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members." *Rule, Art. 22* Outreach can interfere with valuable formation time at Gatherings which is better served by talking about expectations, sharing stories about being an OFS member, discussing our Rule and Constitutions, singing proclaiming the Gospel, learning from one another and all the other wonderful things we do during fraternity meetings.
- **Accept Diversity:** Accept the diversity of gifts that your members have. Avoid repeating "the same old stuff."
- **Prepare:** Be ready with a satisfying answer when people ask "What is a Secular Franciscan?"
- **Small Group Discussion:** Use small group discussion of formation topics and then share what members have come up with in the larger group.
- **Annual Formation Mass & Pot Luck:** Celebrate, and invite others to join you!
- **Outreach & Invitation:** Increase activities and service projects by inviting coworkers and family members to serve alongside you at the soup kitchen, healing service, Capuchin warehouse, Gospel event, Holy Doors Year of Mercy Pilgrimage, Gleaners, Senior Center, or whatever it is you or your fraternity do.
- **Your Tau:** Wear your Tau Cross as a visible sign of the presence of the OFS, and of the Franciscan Family in this world.
- **Pray the OFS Rule:** Carry the little red rule book with you, and use it often.

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- **OFS Presence at Parish & Community Events:** Have members and a table or other display at Parish events such as Ministry Fairs, Missions and Talks. Also use your display at community events such as art festivals and county fairs.
- **Email Quotes or Banners:** Many email providers have options for adding quotes or pictures with email accounts. Using a favorite quote, banner or picture with your name in emails sparks curiosity.
- **Ask Fraternity Members:** Encourage your present members to ask those they think might be interested to visit and learn more.
- **Yearly Open Meeting:** Provide an open meeting yearly where there is no pressure on people for whom this is a new idea, such as a picnic or a Christmas party.
- **Announce** your Yearly Open Meetings and other Outreach Events on the Catholic Radio Station or in Diocesan Newspapers.
- **Hospitality:** Host events such as donuts after Mass, movie nights, concerts, vocation talks, ecumenical gatherings, and other gatherings in your parish or community. Highlight when the OFS has provided service, decoration or coordination.
- **Visit:** Be an invited guest in an educational setting and show them the Joy of being a Secular Franciscan and explain why you do what you do.
- **You want the best, then be the best!** Put forth the best in demeanor and appearance, educate those around you. Take the opportunity to evangelize, and to give attention to those in need. Your interest and every experience in doing so will help you to improve.