

HOW TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

By Chris Bencharski –SD,

August 5, 2019

1. **Council Newsletter** - Issue a monthly newsletter with an encouraging Grand Knight's message, Chaplain's message, council meeting date and upcoming activities. Hand out to all members and prospective members after mass and perhaps email or mail to non-attending members.
2. **Phoning Committee** - Divide your council roster into groups and phone all members before each meeting.
3. **Attendance Competition** - Set up a competition among groups and keep a record. After 5 or 6 meetings, present a prize to the top group (K of C hat or another prize). The competing groups could be Power of Ten Groups, Phoning Groups, Groups of Mentors and New Knights, etc. Invite each member to the meeting to receive their award.
4. **Award Presentations** - Each meeting should include a presentation to members. Presentations could include:
 - perfect attendance
 - recognition certificate for a certain project
 - family of the month
 - knight of the month
 - group of the month
 - project of the month
 - years of service (20, 25, 30, 35, etc) award
 - wedding anniversary certificate (25, 30, 35, 40, 45 50, 55, 60 years +Knights to receive a certificate should be phoned beforehand to attend the meeting to receive the award. Many awards could target members who haven't been attending regularly. (years of service, honorary Life, honorary members anniversary certificate, a degree in honour of charter members, all members with 40 or 50 years or more). If Knights are invited to a meeting to receive an award, they should feel appreciated and honoured and may attend future meetings.
5. **Mentors Program** - Pair up Knights who attend regularly with new members or those who don't attend meetings and programs regularly.
6. **Lecturer's Program** - There should be a speaker to present a topic of interest to the knights either before or after the meeting. The council members could initiate ideas of interest at the beginning of the year and rank them from the first choice to the last choice. Based on these ideas, the lecturer would make arrangements for speakers at several of the meetings throughout the year. Advertise guest speakers in your council newsletter and the parish bulletin.
 - Some interesting topics could be:
 - Healthy Heart Diet, Nutritionist
 - Wills & Estates, lawyer
 - SERM – Principles of Wildlife Management, SERM officer
 - Operation of a major industry in the area, member of that organization
 - Pro-life speakers
 - Vocations speaker

- Interfaith forum with 3 or 4 ministers of different faiths giving their practices on a variety of topics
 - Health-related topic
 - Insurance promotion, K of C insurance rep
 - Ducks Unlimited speaker
 - Winter ice rescue/survival
 - Law enforcement topic of concern
 - Speaker from another organization (Lions, Regional Health Authority, Board of Education, etc.)
 - Drug/alcoholism topic
 - Internet awareness issues.
7. **Spouse Appreciation Evening** - Begin the meeting with mass at 5:30, supper at 6:00, a short program to show appreciation for our spouses, presentation of a rose by each knight to his spouse, and some light entertainment after the program.
 8. **Invite a Prospective Knight** - Each knight would invite a prospective knight to a meeting. All prospects would be made welcome and introduced at the meeting.
 9. **Reports At Meetings** - Most members who feel they have something to contribute will likely attend. Phone, well in advance, all those who will report at the meeting. The more people you phone to give a report, the more people you will have at the meeting. This could include correspondence that may need further information to present at a meeting before a decision can be made.
 10. **Emphasize Commitment & Responsibility** - When we joined the Knights of Columbus, attending meetings, paying dues and helping in service areas was an expectation. If each knight was to attend 6 out of 12 meetings (18 hours) and help with 4 projects (18 hours) he would contribute 36 hours of his time in 12 months. That would be approximately 36 out of 3600 hours or about 1% of his total time. Each knight could easily live up to these expectations. One of a knight's priorities should be his faith and service through the Knights of Columbus programs.
 11. **Thank you** - Place a thank you note in your council newsletter for each council project and a list of helpers after completion of the project.
 12. **Be Visible**
 - A. Council newsletter each month
 - B. Newspaper write-ups
 - C. Celebration of Knighthood Sunday
 - D. Regular recruiting of new members
 - E. Regular recognition of members
 - F. Council brochure
 - G. Council display board
 - H. Well rounded council program
 - I. Take photographs of events & post on display board
 - J. Regular emails to members
 - K. Knights in Action on State website: www.kofcsask.com
 13. **Yearly Major Project** – Decide on a project that could involve all members. Everyone will know that the knights do this project every year. (Fish Derby, Quad Rally, Youth Camp, Family Winter Carnival, etc)

14. **Assess Council Members Interests & Needs** – At least once a year, assess needs and interests either by a questionnaire or by discussion at a meeting (possibly May or June).
15. **Assess Parish Needs** – How can the knights best serve the needs of the parish? Is it parish maintenance, helping with the youth, or another area determined in consultation with the parish priest and members' surveys?
16. **Conduct a program for all knights** – This includes activities for those with families and for those whose families are grown up. There has to be something for all knights. Provide opportunities for all knights to serve and to grow in their faith. Knights join for four main reasons: leadership opportunities; to serve others; for social family fraternity and fraternal benefits.
17. **Regularly review benefits of being involved with the Knights of Columbus**
 - # 1267 – Did You Know flyer
 - # 2761 – Family Fraternal Benefits flyer
 - # 2773 – Spouse Fraternal Benefits flyer
18. **Personal Contact of Delinquent Members** – Provide personal contact to members who have missed several meetings in a row. Let them know that you miss them and get their feedback. Perhaps assign a name to each member who attends the meeting to phone someone and invite them to the next meeting. Invite them for coffee, have a chat with them and discuss and rectify any problems that may affect their meeting attendance.
19. **Conduct Productive Meetings**
 - A. Draw up a tentative agenda for the meeting and place it in the newsletter in advance of the meeting. Include any item under a new business that needs approval by motion at the meeting.
 - B. For discussion items, specify what result is expected from the outcome of the discussion. Attach a list of possibilities – come prepared. Assign a member to prepare information on different possibilities so members have all the facts.
 - C. Set an agenda time limit by allocating a reasonable length of time for covering each item. Stick to it.
 - D. Assign a member/s to make well thought out recommendations on an agenda topic in advance and to report on the “whys” at the meeting.
 - E. Provide an opportunity for members to express their views on operations.
 - F. Involve as many people as you can in your planning and preparing – delegate responsibility.
 - G. Provide an opportunity to build goodwill toward and stimulate interest in the Knights of Columbus.
 - H. Be sure all information is ready and complete (committee reports, financial statements, etc).
 - I. Make sure the officers all know their roles.
 - J. Provide the opportunity for some fun, relaxation and enjoyment.
 - K. Be supportive when knights take the initiative to chair a project or volunteer to help.
 - L. Don't dictate how to run a project – let the committee decide on items which are committee decisions; let the whole group decide on budget items and approval of committee reports.

Productive meetings will encourage future participation.

Unproductive meetings turn people off and discourage future attendance.

- 20. Collect the email addresses of all your members and communicate with them regularly and follow up with personal contact.**
- 21. Have some fun together. Invite all your members, their spouses and families to council events such as a family potluck, a family barbecue, family bowling, family curling or golf or a family spiritual retreat.**
- 22. Provide Birthday Cards to all your members either by handing them out in church or sending them to those who don't attend and in the card invite them to the next meeting or church. This would be a good project for one or two members of your council.**
- 23. Provide anniversary cards as well.**
- 24. Get well cards and visits to knights or family members who are hospitalized.**
- 25. Sacramental Gifts are provided to all parishioners and knights and their families in their sacramental and spiritual life.**
 - a. Roses to mothers of newborn babies**
 - b. Baptismal gifts to the parents**
 - c. Bibles or crosses to First Communicants**
 - d. Rosaries to Confirmation**
 - e. Bibles to Graduates**
 - f. Altar server certificates and candles to altar servers**
 - g. Free Barbecue for Catechism teachers**
 - h. Gifts to Seminarians on their Ordination**
 - i. Wedding Anniversary Certificates and gifts to Couples who celebrate 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 years or more of marriage**