



“Faith Community of Character” Process **(or Church, Synagogue, Temple, Mosque)** *For Enhancing Culture and Spiritual Growth*

The "Faith Community of Character" process entails working closely with the Character Council to enhance the culture of the church through a systematic, congregation-wide focus on character and integrity. A culture of character promotes ethics, excellence, caring, teamwork, and productivity. Through intentional ongoing focus, the Faith Community of Character process helps build a positive, professional culture, enabling the church members to grow in character and the community to more fully realize its vision.

The commitments of a congregation to be recognized as a “Faith Community of Character” by The Character Council of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky fall into three groups:

1. Commitments prior to the commencement by the congregation of encouraging each monthly character quality.
2. Commitments for monthly encouragement of congregation members.
3. Commitments for monthly encouragement of the external community.

Commitments Prior to Commencement of the Monthly Qualities

1. Senior spiritual leader commit to personally working to practice, model and encourage others to practice, the monthly character qualities, and intentionally encourage the other leaders to do likewise.
2. Sponsor a character awareness seminar for church leaders and staff about the character of God and character qualities found in scripture.
3. Distribute to congregational members in the newsletter or separately an article introducing the “Faith Community of Character” initiative.

The article covers topics including:

- the general community-wide initiative and the faith community participation.
- the nature of good character, its development, general benefits
- special benefits stemming from the faith (optional)
- ways practice of good character will be encouraged as a “Faith Community of Character.”

4. Create a plan for distributing *Achieving True Success* to each family as a gift or purchase.
5. Create a plan for providing each congregation member with a Character Pocket Guide.

Commitments for Monthly Encouragement of Congregation

Congregational Services

6. Senior spiritual leader devote 4 or more minutes of first monthly services to character quality. The goals of this influencer are to:
 - encourage practice of the monthly character quality based on motivations from the tenets of the faith
 - personally encourage the congregation to personally practice the character quality of the month and to encourage others to practice it
7. Include meaningful reference to the month's character quality in each regular sermon or homily throughout the month.
8. Devote at least 1 minute of announcement time in each service to promoting good character. The goal is to encourage practice of the monthly character quality, especially through testimony. This might be done through a personal testimony from the congregation or community, recognition of individuals for practice of good character qualities, skit, story from history, etc. It might be done live, through use of a video or audio, or other means.
9. Include in the bulletin for each regular service during the month an insert encouraging the character quality of the month, especially through personal application.
10. Provide opportunity in services at least once each month for self-evaluation (and optionally, accountability to another individual) in assessing how one is doing in practicing the character quality of the month. This might be accomplished, for example, by including in one of the character bulletin inserts a personal checkup list or form, and then having the spiritual leader during the congregational service call attention to it (maybe giving a few moments to complete the evaluation right then) and extend encouragement to all to keep practicing.

Religion Classes and Small Group Meetings of Congregation Members

11. Encourage teachers and leaders to devote at least five minutes of each religious or business class or meeting to encouraging the character quality of the month, especially through personal challenge. The goals are to heighten awareness, understanding and motivations for practicing the monthly character quality; to provide opportunity for self-evaluation; and to encourage re-commitment to practice the character quality regularly.

Other

12. Place posters highlighting the character quality of the month in strategic locations throughout the premises of the church, synagogue, temple or mosque.
13. Include an article in the newsletter featuring the character quality of the month.

Character Council

Contact Mary Russell at 513.467.0170 or mrussell@charactercincinnati.org

Commitments For Monthly Encouragement to External Community

14. Feature the monthly character quality on the congregation's marquees, website, and social media outlets.
15. Encourage each individual in the congregation to:
 - model the practice of the monthly quality to everyone throughout the day
 - encourage and recognize others in their practicing of the quality
 - encourage others to encourage their organizations to join the community-wide initiative
 - give copies of the Pocket Guide to friends, relatives, co-workers, suppliers, etc.
 - give copies of *Achieving True Success* as a gift.
16. Carry out a congregation-sponsored project or action plan monthly to intentionally encourage the practice of good character in the neighborhood.
For examples:
 - distribute coupons to residents in the neighborhood inviting them to join the congregation for an event and redeem the coupon for a copy of *Achieving True Success*
 - volunteer as character coaches in a local school or YMCA
 - adopt a smaller congregation, providing them with ideas and support for character initiatives, copies of *Achieving True Success* and other materials, etc.
 - distribute monthly character posters to neighborhood businesses, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, ministries, etc.
17. Pass on one or more informational items monthly to the Character Council that it can disseminate as means of encouraging the community, as appropriate.
For examples:
 - stories of activities undertaken to encourage the practice of monthly character qualities.
 - reports of outcomes and benefits being observed in the congregational life, in small groups, etc.
 - statistics on decrease in counseling requests, increase in volunteerism or giving, etc.
 - testimonials of people exhibiting good character, or trying to practice good character, or working with another to try to practice good character, etc.

SUGGESTED GOALS FOR MATERIALS FOR ASSISTING IN ENCOURAGING A CONGREGATION IN PRACTICING THE MONTHLY CHARACTER QUALITIES

1. Introductory Newsletter Article or Document.
Goal: Orient the congregational members to becoming a “Faith Community of Character”
(or Church, Synagogue, Temple, Mosque)
 - a. Overview of the general community-wide character initiative and participation of the Faith Community.
 - b. The nature of good character, its development, and its general benefits.
 - c. Scriptural view of the importance of practicing good character and its benefits.
 - d. The important role of a “Faith Community of Character” and how the practice of the monthly character qualities will be encouraged in the church.
2. Monthly Newsletter Article or Document.
Goal: Orient the members to the character quality of the month. (Centerpiece for the quality)
 - a. Definition of the character quality, and listing of the “I wills”.
 - b. Scriptural connections to the character quality. For examples, explanation of meaning, commandments, illustrations, motivations and benefits of practicing the quality.
 - c. The character quality:

in Scripture	in home	in church or synagogue
in nature	in workplace	in community
in history	in school	in the heart
3. Monthly 4-Minute Sermon or Homily.
Goal: Encourage the members to practice the character quality through appeal to Scripture and the moral authority and love of the spiritual leader.
4. Weekly Bulletin Insert.
Goal: Encourage the members to practice the character quality through personal reminders.
 - a. Application ideas and tips.
 - b. Reminders of benefits - prose, Scripture references, statements of important people, etc.
 - c. Self-evaluations and checkups.
 - d. Exhortations to review with God and re-commit to practicing.
5. Weekly 1-Minute Announcement.
Goal: Encourage the members to practice the character quality through testimonies of others.

Testimonies from:

Church history	Community, nation, world
Other history	Members of congregation
6. Monthly 5-Minute Presentation or Study for Groups and Classes.
Goal: Encourage the members to practice the character quality through personal challenge.
 - a. Brief reminder of the definition and “I wills” for the character quality.
 - b. Scriptural motivations for practicing the character quality. (e.g. Protestant - please God, promote intimacy with God, invest in something valuable in this life and the life to come.)
 - c. Each participant silently review with God application of the “I wills” in his/her life, asking God for wisdom in how they apply, asking His forgiveness for failures to practice in the past, and asking His strength to practice them in the future. Conclude by re-committing oneself to try to practice the character quality regularly.