

Case Studies in the Operating Rules of the Church

Goals

- Case studies aid as a review of information from the Orthodox Leadership Training Program
- Can be used for open discussion to set protocols for a Parish
- Use the case studies as a training tool for your Parish Leadership Team

What is a case study?

- An open-ended actual story
 - No Ending Given
 - Brings reality into classroom
- A difficult problem without an obvious solution
- Forces us into a real situation where we have to answer:
“What do we do now?”

How to use a case study

1. Read the entire case study narrative
2. Formulate a clear statement of the problem
3. Identify the issues at stake
4. Clarify facts as well as feelings
5. Consider the case study from different angles
6. Dig around for resources
7. Make some assertions

Background

All Saints Greek Orthodox Parish is a fictitious church. It is headed by the equally fictitious Fr. George.

The scenarios presented are in no way reflective of any Parish or Parish Priest or Parish Members in the Metropolis, but are used for discussion purposes only.

Case Study:

Who's Planning the Festival?

The Festival Chairman was disturbed—disturbed with himself. The end of the Festival planning meeting was near. He felt anxious; he guessed the other members did too. In the awkward silence, he wondered what to say.

Before he was assigned Festival Chairman, All Saints had a history of letting the Chairman make almost all the decisions for the Festival including planning and leading. The Council had generally communicated the boundaries, but the Chairman had led the way in everything. The new Festival Chairman came and encouraged members of the congregation to help plan and lead in the Festival.

He asked a dozen people to join him, some from the council and some not. He created a “Festival Committee” and held regular meetings to tell them his plans for the menu and to ask them their ideas for staging dance performances, overall setup and parking. Slowly the committee began offering ideas.

In the third session for planning, the group was getting a bit creative. They planned to add carnival rides as a new attraction and income stream. They also decided to rearrange the Festival layout to accommodate the rides. The Chairman now encouraged them: “This is good work. You are the owners of this plan.” But he could see frowns on some faces. One older member was plainly anxious: “I’m not quite sure about our roles here. Do we make the final decisions or do you?” Another member added, “Some of us feel we don’t have the experience to make these kinds of decisions.”

Before the Chairman could answer, one member suggested a more familiar layout with one or two rides from what was previously suggested. The whole group brightened to the idea and wanted the change. The Festival Chairman felt anxious, like something was slipping away, but nodded agreement. Was it loss of control that bothered him? Hadn't he said he wanted them to participate? Should he confess his anxiety? Who did have the final say, anyway? Was it the Chairman or the committee? One thing he knew—silence wasn't the answer.

Case Study 1 Discussion Questions

- Why do you suppose the committee felt uneasy? What view of leadership did they have?
- What was behind the Festival Chairman's anxiety? What view of leadership does he seem to have?
- If you were the Chairman in this situation, what would you say to the committee? What steps could be taken to resolve the situation?