

D I O C E S E
of NEW ULM

GUIDE FOR BILINGUAL COMMUNICATION
(complete version)

The following Guide for bilingual communication is intended to help the Diocese, Area Faith Communities, parishes, and other Catholic organizations to respect linguistic and cultural diversity. Below guidelines are given for written and oral communication. It is important to identify the linguistic context of your audience and choose the linguistic structure (monolingual, bilingual, parallel monolingual) that is appropriate.

Providing evangelization, catechesis and outreach in both languages, English and Spanish, represents an open acknowledgment of the Diocese's bilingual character and reflects the reality of the Area Faith Communities and parishes where there is a substantial Hispanic population. Offering bilingual services is simply responding to the Gospel call to bring all to the oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. It also ensures that all the faithful are reached through evangelization, catechesis, and outreach.

This stance will allow the diocese to:

- * reach a larger portion of the Catholic population;
- * increase membership and participation in parishes;
- * provide better services;
- * and access new sources of stewardship.

ADVANTAGES AND IMPACTS

- Multilingual evangelization, catechesis and outreach increase the potential audience and recipients.
- Bilingual communication demonstrates inclusion and cultural sensitivity.
- It is a good Christian practice to address people in a language they understand.
- Linguistic diversity is a valuable part of humanity's cultural heritage, and the use of the widest possible range of languages in the Church demonstrates respect and helps to protect cultural diversity.
- Using more than one language ensures that everyone has access to important information.
- Reflecting the linguistic and cultural reality of the parish/AFC/diocese empowers everyone to participate and have a stronger sense of belonging.

APPLYING THE GUIDELINES

Basic questions that help to assess the situation and decide on how and to what extent to implement the guidelines are:

- Who is the desired audience or recipients?
- What is the linguistic context of the audience? Is the minority community bilingual or monolingual?
- Is the linguistic inclusion meant to be symbolic or required for full involvement of the participants?
- Would a limited linguistic use be seen as “tokenism”?
- To what extent should the activity or liturgy be bilingual, have elements of Spanish or elements of English, or would there be a benefit to have separate components in different languages?
- What is the extent of feasibility?

The above criterion should be taken into consideration in written and oral communication. Guidelines are implemented to the extent it is feasible to do so. There are cost implications to producing materials and having activities in more than one language.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Information, advertisements and promotional material

- A bilingual format is used whenever full participation is the desired outcome.
- Brochures, pamphlets and all promotional material for general distribution are made available in both languages.
- When a publication is produced in one language only, serious consideration is given to providing a summary in the other language.
- Advertising is done in both English and Spanish.

Correspondence

- When initiating correspondence, the language preference of the individual to be addressed is determined and respected.
- Mail from members is answered in the language used in the original request.
- Language preference is indicated in the parish database.

Forms

- All forms used by parishioners are made available in English and Spanish, preferably in a bilingual format. If separate English and Spanish versions are produced, there is an indication that the form is available in the other language.

Newsletters, bulletins and publications

- Newsletters, bulletins, publications and other documents, such as policies and regulations, are made available in English and Spanish.
- Publications produced in separate versions indicate their availability in the other language.
- When a publication is produced in one language only, serious consideration is given to provide an abstract in the other language.

Website

- The content is available in English and Spanish, and most pages contain elements of text in both languages. It is unusual for the full text to be displayed in both languages at the same time.
- Website updates are made simultaneously in both languages.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Arrange for an interpreter when necessary.

Call and Reception centers

- Call centers and reception areas are staffed by individuals able to greet the public and to respond to requests in English and Spanish.

Pre-recorded telephone messages

- Voice mail messages are recorded in both languages.

Meetings, conferences and other events

- When holding meetings, conferences or other events, efforts are made to ensure that participants feel free to use the language of their choice.
- When holding a promotional activity or event, a bilingual image is projected. (for example, signage, publications and services are available in both languages)
- Welcome speeches at public and official events are given in both English and Spanish.
- Meetings and events are chaired bilingually and presenters are made aware of the language requirements of participants.
- Participants in meetings and activities are free to express themselves in the language of their choice.

Liturgy

- Diocesan celebrations contain elements of Spanish.
- Those present are invited to and enabled to participate.
- Those present are made to feel that they belong and are respected members of the assembly.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are many different communities and speakers with different needs. Some people are monolingual (English or Spanish) and others who are bilingual with varying degrees of proficiency. Emphasize the following aspects:

- Be aware that language can greatly affect the length of text, and that translations often tend to be longer than the original.
- Be consistent in the use of terminology. In addition to being a good literary style, it also makes translation easier.
- Avoid abbreviations, acronyms, idiomatic expressions, words that have multiple meanings, and slang.
- Ensure that content is appropriate for both languages.
- Recognize that humor is very culture dependent, and typically does not translate well to other languages.

- Be cautious with representations of animals, religious and mythological symbols, national emblems, colors, people (especially racial, cultural, or gender stereotypes), hand gestures, and body language, which may be misinterpreted or may offend users from other cultures.

EFFECTIVE PLANNING

To create an effective plan, consider the following:

- Anticipate the language needs of your membership/participants at special events, whether you are organizing a conference, an event or a meeting.
- Know your participants. Include a language preference question on the registration form. Ensure that your members/participants feel that their language requirements have been addressed.
- Prepare a checklist to ensure no item is forgotten and that the plan is executed respecting language and culture.
 - * Announcements or advertising
 - * Materials to be used
 - * Content of the activity
- Identify the services that your organization will be required to provide to meet the language needs of participants (for example: program content, reception, signage, documentation, advertising, media relations, contracts, food services and other onsite services).
- Endeavor to have both Spanish and English speaking presenters. Advise all presenters early in the process if they need to be prepared for a bilingual audience and that their materials are suitable for a bilingual audience.
- Budget early on for the provision of bilingual services.
- Remember that there are other important considerations, such as cultural differences, when planning an inclusive meeting or event.
- Have all translated materials reviewed by a qualified person.
- Arrange for an interpreter when necessary.

JOB POSITIONS

- Positions may state that knowledge of the language is preferred but not a requirement.
- Positions may require that the person is bilingual.
 - Linguistic requirements for designated bilingual positions and a linguistic evaluation process are established.
 - Targeted recruitment procedures are used to assist in the hiring of qualified bilingual personnel.

LANGUAGE TRAINING

- When developing training or professional development programs, second language training programs could be included.
- Incentives could be provided to employees who are willing to develop second language skills on their own time.