

# The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook



**Archdiocese of Seattle**

# Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook

Dear Gabriel Project Volunteers,

Welcome to a very special ministry and thank you for *answering the call*. You are about to embark on what will be a most beautiful, inspiring, and occasionally challenging experience.

In your role as a Gabriel Volunteer you will be offering emotional and spiritual support, friendship, material resources, and a great deal of love to pregnant mothers in need of support. This work may seem overwhelming - and it would be - if we were doing it alone. Remember, this is God's work and we have been chosen to carry it out through His grace. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you and trust Him to lead and support you. This project is a walk in faith for us as we bring hope and love to those who need it most.

This Volunteer Handbook is intended to help you better understand your role and address many of the concerns Gabriel clients may have.

Most importantly, pray for guidance to discern God's will and to have the perseverance to faithfully carry out His plan for you, the moms, and families you are helping.

## THE GABRIEL PROJECT

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This handbook has been adapted from the Volunteer Handbook of The Gabriel Project of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, portions of which were adapted from resources produced by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and Great Lakes Gabriel Projects. We sincerely appreciate the gift of their caring ministry and experience.

## **Our Message to Moms:**

*Your life is not the same.  
You're pregnant and may be  
feeling alone, frightened, and  
overwhelmed by new challenges.*

*Right now you need a friend you  
can depend on and trust. One  
who will walk beside you along  
your new journey.*

*You are concerned about your  
life and future and so too are we.*

*We are members of the churches  
in your city and neighborhood.*

*We are people who care about  
you and want to help you.*

*We offer you immediate,  
practical assistance with your  
pregnancy.*

*More than anything else we will  
embrace you as family and  
friend.*

*By employing our individual  
talents, collaborating with  
various ministries in the parish  
or diocese and utilizing  
community resources, we stand  
ready to provide you with the  
kinds of assistance that you need  
in caring for yourself and your  
child.*

*Beside friendship and emotional  
support, we can provide pastoral  
care and counseling as well as  
the more tangible help you are  
likely to need. We look forward  
to meeting with you and,  
together, assessing your specific  
needs.*

*The Gabriel Project, which is  
sponsored by the Archdiocese of  
Seattle, heartily welcomes you  
regardless of your faith  
background.*

## The Gabriel Project is Dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe



Mother and Patroness of the Unborn  
Star of the New Evangelization  
Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God!

In the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the Angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the Angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man? And the Angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

**And Mary said: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say." With that the Angel left her.**

Thereupon Mary set out, proceeding in haste into the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and cried out in a loud voice: "Blest are you among women and blest is the fruit of your womb. But who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby leapt in my womb for joy. Blest is she who trusted that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled." Luke 1:11-45

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# The Gabriel Project Policies and Procedures

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*“Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one...as we are one” (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.” Gaudium et Spes (24)*

**The Gabriel Project** is a Pro-Life movement offering parish-based pastoral care to women in a crisis pregnancy. Gabriel volunteers:

- Understand their apostolate as a work of **Evangelization**, meeting those who suffer where they are, helping them to come to the Church for help and support. The Volunteer brings Christ to Mom in her own person. The volunteer meets Christ in Mom's person.
- Illustrate and live out the **like-with-like** apostolate of the laity through an apostolate of friendship and of presence, relying on their own special gifts. *Apostolicam actulsitatem, Decree of the Apostolate of Lay People. Vatican II*
- Encourage **collaborative ministry** working in solidarity with all the other ministries and apostolates in the parish and the Archdiocese, i.e., parish social ministry, Catholic Community Services (CCS), etc.
- Are drawn **closer to God**, through acts of self giving to others and through a greater reliance on prayer and worship in their own lives.
- Offer the opportunity for **personal and sacramental reconciliation** and healing so needed by so many today. *Dives in Misericordia, John Paul II*
- Implement *The Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life* through this pastoral response to pregnant mothers in need and their unborn children.

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# The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook

SECTION <b>Introduction</b>	Number: <b>2.2</b>
SUBJECT <b>USCCB Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities</b>	Page: <b>1 of 3</b>

The Gabriel Project provides an excellent opportunity for a parish to put into practice the directives of our bishops in defending life. The following is taken from the **Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life** Copyright © 2001, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. All rights reserved.

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## **A Consistent Ethic of Life** (p. 2)

A wide spectrum of issues touches on the protection of human life and the promotion of human dignity. As Pope John Paul II has reminded us: "Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good" (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 87).

Among important issues involving the dignity of human life with which the Church is concerned, abortion necessarily plays a central role. Abortion, the direct killing of an innocent human being, is always gravely immoral (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 57); its victims are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family. It is imperative that those who are called to serve the least among us give urgent attention and priority to this issue of justice.

This focus and the Church's commitment to a consistent ethic of life complement one another. A consistent ethic of life, which explains the Church's teaching at the level of moral principle—far from diminishing concern for abortion and euthanasia or equating all issues touching on the dignity of human life—recognizes instead the distinctive character of each issue while giving each its proper place within a coherent moral vision. As bishops of the United States we have issued pastoral letters on war and peace, economic justice, and other social questions affecting the dignity of human life—and we have implemented programs for advancing the Church's witness in these areas through parishes, schools, and other Church institutions (e.g., *Communities of Salt and Light* [1994]; *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching* [1998]). Taken together, these diverse pastoral statements and practical programs constitute no mere assortment of unrelated initiatives but rather a consistent strategy in support of all human life in its various stages and circumstances.

To focus on the evil of deliberate killing in abortion and euthanasia is not to ignore the many other urgent conditions that demean human dignity and threaten human rights. Opposing abortion and euthanasia "does not excuse indifference to those who suffer from poverty, violence and injustice. Any politics of human life must work to resist the violence of war and the scandal of capital punishment. Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing and health care" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 23). We pray that Catholics will be advocates for the weak and the marginalized in all these areas. "But being 'right' in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life. Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the 'rightness' of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 23).

## **Parish Pro-Life Committee** (p. 36)

Actively promoting a renewed respect for human life is the responsibility of every Catholic. The parish pro-life committee assists in a special way by helping to make the parish a center of life, a place where parishioners understand the issues and the importance of meeting the needs of those who are most vulnerable—especially mothers and their unborn children, and those who are seriously ill or dying and their families. It may be a distinct committee, or it might be a subcommittee of another parish

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organization. Whatever its structure, its membership should include representatives of both adult and youth parish groups, members of organizations that represent persons with disabilities, persons of minority cultures, and those responsible for education and pastoral care.

The chairperson of the parish committee is appointed by the pastor, and it is important that the two be able to work well together. The chair recruits volunteers to help meet the needs the committee serves. Parish committees should be mindful of the need for renewal from time to time in regard to membership, talents, and interests.

The parish committee relies on the diocesan pro-life director for information and guidance. The committee should play a vital role in parish life and enjoy the strong support of priests and other key personnel. The committee should also dovetail its efforts from time to time with other programs of the parish. For example, in many parts of the country, parishes conduct programs where parishioners study and discuss the teachings of the faith. Members of the pro-life committee should take part in such programs and invite other program leaders to take part in pro-life initiatives.

The objectives of the parish pro-life committee are to

- coordinate parish implementation of the annual Respect Life Program, promoting it to agencies and organizations in the parishes, especially schools and religious education programs; and encourage parish discussion groups to use the program as a basis for their discussions
- promote and assist pregnancy counseling and comprehensive maternity support services, as well as post-abortion counseling and reconciliation programs, and make these well known in the parish and local community
- develop or adopt, where feasible, a parish-based ministry to pregnant women and their children
- encourage and support parishioners' involvement in services to help those who are chronically ill, disabled, or dying and their families
- sponsor programs of prayer in the parish to pray for mothers and their unborn children, for those who are dying, for those who are disabled, for prisoners on death row and those they have harmed, and indeed for all who are in need, that the culture of death that surrounds us may be replaced by a culture of life
- foster awareness of the need to restore legal protection to the lives of unborn children to the maximum degree possible and to safeguard in law the lives of those who are chronically ill, disabled, or dying
- keep parishioners informed of upcoming important legislation; and, at the direction of the diocesan pro-life director, organize letter-writing, postcard campaigns, or similar appropriate activities when important votes are expected

## **Pastoral Care (p. 20)**

Pastoral care encompasses a broad range of services provided with competence, compassion, and dignity. It includes spiritual assistance and essential material help, and may include supplementary services beyond those available in the community. Providing pastoral care to those in need is a primary way that the Church expresses its love for all God's children.

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## **Pregnancy Services (p. 20)**

Respect for human life compels us to reach out to those with special needs. With the support of the faith community, Catholic organizations and agencies provide pastoral services and care for pregnant women, especially those who are vulnerable to abortion and who would otherwise find it difficult or impossible to obtain high-quality medical care. Ideally such programs include

- factual and educational information on alternatives to abortion
- nutritional, prenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care for the mother, including information about the latest developments in prenatal and neonatal medicine
- nutritional and pediatric care for the child
- agency-sponsored adoption and foster care services to all who want them, as well as an educational effort presenting adoption in a positive light
- counseling and spiritual assistance that supports those facing difficulties related to pregnancy and parenting, including engaged or married couples who may have concerns about the health of their future offspring
- opportunities for teen and college-age parents to continue their education during pregnancy and after childbirth, including school policies that encourage and enable them to complete their high school education, and counseling and assistance encouraging continued undergraduate or graduate studies
- compassionate understanding, encouragement, and support for victims of rape and other forms of abuse and violence
- education in the virtue of chastity, as well as education in fertility awareness for young men and women, enabling them to take responsibility for their power to generate life
- expansion of natural family planning programs and education in their mission as responsible parents for married and engaged couples

Many of these services involve the dedicated efforts of both professionals and volunteers. Such services have been and will continue to be provided by church-sponsored health care and social service agencies. Collaboration with other private and public agencies and with volunteer groups and local communities, as well as efforts to obtain government assistance, are necessary extensions of the long-range effort. Parishes are also increasingly providing pregnancy assistance. Such services are sometimes available within the parish; at other times, the parish program links those needing help to local services.

Even when pregnancies do not involve particular challenges, encouragement and support should be given to couples who have conceived a child. In a culture that often gives negative messages regarding parenthood, it is important that our parishes celebrate the gift of new life.

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**The Gabriel Project** is a parish-based ministry to support pregnant mothers and their unborn children, conducted under the direction of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

In the Gospel of Luke, the Angel Gabriel told Mary the good news that a child would be born and that she was to be the Mother of our Savior. When she asked, "How can this be?" the angel told her not to be afraid for "nothing is impossible with God." The Gabriel Project announces the same comforting message to frightened pregnant mothers:

*Fear not, for God is with you! Nothing is impossible with God.*

## **The Role of the Parish**

The parish community announces that they see in the creation of each child a fresh expression of God's unfailing love and their commitment to offer assistance to pregnant mothers in need. They make their message known on a "Sign of Life" placed in front of their church along with an expression of outreach.

### **Pregnant? Need Help? – The Gabriel Project 888-926-ANGEL.**

When a call for help is received, the Telephone Volunteer completes an Intake form recording the caller's contact information and needs, then forwards the Intake to the Parish Coordinator at the nearest participating church to where the caller lives. The Parish Coordinator matches her with a trained parish volunteer, the Gabriel Angel for ongoing contact with the mother throughout her pregnancy and somewhat beyond. The Gabriel Angel contacts her assigned "Mom" to arrange an initial meeting to further assess her needs and establish a rapport.

The parish community responds with love by providing spiritual, emotional, and material support to help meet those needs. Through prayer and action the parish community assures Mom that she has their love and the love of Christ. If a Mom has been abandoned by family or her child's father, the parish community can lovingly help her overcome her sense of loss and loneliness.

## **Kinds of Assistance**

By employing their individual talents, collaborating with various ministries in the parish or diocese and utilizing community resources, parishioners stand ready to provide Mom with the kinds of assistance that she needs in caring for her child. These may include friendship and emotional support, pastoral care and counseling, transportation, prenatal care, baby items, education, employment, housing, adoption, and financial assistance.

The Gabriel Project is a marvelous way to show the community that your parish cares about pregnant mothers in need and that there is no reason for any mother within its boundaries to feel that she is helpless and alone.

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Upon becoming a Gabriel Project Volunteer, each person makes a commitment to the Moms we serve. They also acknowledge their commitment to faithfully uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church in serving both Mom and her unborn child.

They understand that while they are engaged in the work of *The Gabriel Project*, even when they are speaking and acting as individuals, they may be presumed to be representing their parish and the Archdiocese of Seattle in all they say and do.

Gabriel Project volunteers recognize that the Archdiocese's involvement and concerns do not come to an end when a client referral is received by the Parish Coordinator.

And they are fully aware that their participation in *The Gabriel Project* is a privilege which can be revoked at any time.

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**Pastors, Priest Administrators, Parochial Vicars and Pastoral Coordinators** have a good deal of flexibility in the extent to which they involve themselves in *The Gabriel Project*. For example, they may choose to take the initiative to bring the Gabriel Project into the parish as a way for parishioners to answer the US Bishops' call to provide Pastoral Care to pregnant women and couples.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, they may assess the initiative taken by the Pro-Life Committee or other parishioners and approve, delay, or turn down implementation.

Having made the decision to implement the Gabriel Project, they have the responsibility to sign the Volunteers' Commitment letter confirming that the volunteer is a participating member of the parish in good standing and that he is not aware of any impediment to her serving as Parish Coordinator or as a Gabriel Angel. They would also have ultimate responsibility for approving the purchase and installation of the Sign of Life and the distribution and display of Gabriel Project materials.

At their discretion, they can choose to participate in various other ways, such as:

- Pray for the mothers, babies, families and Angels of the project.
- Provide counseling and spiritual direction to Moms. (This may also be offered by other ministers in the parish.)
- Encourage participation in the work of the project.
- Advise Coordinators and Angels in their work with Moms and their families.
- Organize a Mass at which Gabriel Angels and the Parish Coordinator are commissioned
- Conduct a ceremony blessing the installed Sign of Life.

**Chaplains**, more than some others, may find themselves in the position of becoming aware of young Moms who may benefit from and be open to the services of the Gabriel Project. They may choose to make the Mom aware of the Gabriel Project and invite her to consider calling the toll-free 888-926-Angel helpline.

<sup>1</sup> *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life* © 2001USCCB Inc., pages 20-22.

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## **Archdiocesan Gabriel Project Coordinator (Archdiocesan Coordinator)**

The Gabriel Project Coordinator of the Archdiocese of Seattle oversees the organization, growth and compliance of the project within the Archdiocese. This includes:

- Promoting the project throughout the Archdiocese.
- Assisting parishes in becoming participants and conducting orientation sessions.
- Providing Helpline volunteers with up-to-date data on participating parishes.
- Maintaining an up-to-date list of all Parish Coordinators and Angels.
- Acknowledging receipt of all client referrals from the Helpline and determining if Parish Coordinators to whom client referrals are sent also acknowledge receipt.
- Determining if Parish Coordinators have contacted the client and if not, taking the necessary measures to assure the client is contacted and an assessment of her needs is made.
- Responding to Parish Coordinators' requests for assistance.
- Preparing and making available Gabriel Project literature and Internet resources.
- Providing parishes with sources for purchasing the outdoor Gabriel sign.
- Interacting with Parish Coordinators to provide and receive information and updates.

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It is the objective of the Gabriel Project to have the Gabriel phone line answered personally 24 hours a day, seven days a week by a trained volunteer who has also attended the Safe Environment training. When this isn't possible, calls must go to an answering machine or voicemail. Volunteers answer calls at the central location or on a cell phone through call forwarding.

Volunteers who have made a commitment to answer the Gabriel Project phone line are trained to respond to the range of calls that might come in, from requests for help, to those interested in obtaining an abortion, to general inquiries. It is important that volunteers meet their commitment to answer the phone line when scheduled and that they complete their responsibilities as outlined below.

The priorities for the Telephone Volunteer during the call are to:

1. Maintain a caring manner that communicates the real concern you have for the caller's well being
2. Get the caller's contact information in case you are disconnected
3. Assess whether or not the caller could benefit from being matched with a Gabriel Angel
4. Fill in as much of the Intake form as you can while still keeping it "conversational"

Telephone Volunteers are not to give out the personal phone numbers of Gabriel Project Coordinators or volunteers. When a call is for general information about the Gabriel Project, tell the caller that you will take a message and have the Archdiocesan Gabriel Project Coordinator get back to him or her. Forward these messages by e-mail to [gabrielcoordinatorseattle@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielcoordinatorseattle@gmail.com).

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Parish Gabriel Project Coordinators are called to be compassionate leaders who coordinate human and material resources. They inspire, motivate and encourage Angels and might become personally involved with some Moms.

Ideally there should be at least one assistant coordinator to perform the duties of the primary Coordinator whenever that person is unavailable (vacation, etc.). Even if there is no Assistant Coordinator in the parish, it is imperative that there be a backup contact person should the Telephone Volunteer or the Archdiocesan Coordinator be unable to make contact with the Parish Coordinator. The Parish Office Administrator should have a list of all Coordinators' and Angels' email addresses and telephone numbers.

Working at all times with approval and/or direction from the Pastor, the Parish Coordinator oversees the organization of the project within the parish. This includes:

- Initial setup of the project.
- Recruiting Angels.
- Assigning Angels to Moms.
- Helping Angels fulfill Mom's needs via the parish community and other resources.
- Overseeing Angels in their ministry.
- Communication of information to the parish community.
- Ongoing promotion of the project within the parish.
- Interacting with and responding to various requests from the Archdiocesan Coordinator.

## **Commitments**

Coordinators are committed to:

- Responding to each client referral with a sense of urgency.
- Matching each Mom with an Angel and following up on their interactions.
- Following protocols to keep the Archdiocesan Coordinator fully informed.

The Coordinators should fully understand the role, responsibilities and procedures of Angels. They should go on at least one visit to learn the process, but more importantly Coordinators are very valuable communicators at the heart of the project.

Periodically, the Coordinator should provide anecdotal information to the parish community by means as directed by the Pastor. People new to the parish or those who were previously unable to volunteer may become interested in actively participating. These updates also make the project come alive for the parishioners.

If there is a special need that cannot be fulfilled by the Angels, an announcement should be made to the parish community by means as directed by the Pastor to ask all the members of the parish for help.

By announcing the special needs of the Mom, the entire parish becomes aware that someone is in need and is being helped by them. Any announcement for special needs should also include a reminder to pray for Mom and her family. Coordinators can also organize prayer chains as needed.

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*At times, partnering with another parish might be practical or necessary.*

A powerful aspect of *The Gabriel Project* is that, on occasion, parishes can be linked together when a specific client's needs cannot all be met by one parish.

## **Dependability**

If a Coordinator is going on vacation, is overwhelmed with a family situation or for some reason cannot be available, the Assistant Coordinator(s) should be called upon to fill in so that there is no disruption of services. If there aren't any Assistant Coordinators or Angels that can fill in, the Archdiocesan Coordinator should be notified, who in turn can notify the Telephone volunteer.

## **Relationship of Parish Coordinator to Archdiocesan Coordinator**

The Parish Coordinator should keep the Archdiocesan Coordinator fully informed about the organization of the project within the parish. This includes:

- An up-to-date list of all Assistant Coordinators and Angels including contact info.
- Notification of periods of time when the Coordinator will be unavailable to receive referrals and who will be filling in during those periods.
- A history of all parish/client activity, including clients who were referred by means other than the Helpline.

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Angels are called to give the love of Christ to the mothers they help. Each Mom should have her own Angel so she can receive undivided care and attention. Very often it is the personal Christian witness of her Angel that inspires Mom to seek Christ in her own life.

- Angels befriend and minister to pregnant mothers throughout their pregnancies and somewhat beyond.
- Angels pray for Mom and encourage her at every stage of her journey.
- Angels keep the Coordinator informed about the well being of Mom and child.
- Angels ask the local and parish communities for specific items or services on behalf of Mom.

Experienced Angels find that the most difficult part of their role occurs when they cannot "fix" every problem for Mom. If we want Mom to learn to trust God, we have to begin by modeling that behavior. We might realize that the Mom and/or Dad have repeatedly made poor choices leading to their situations. This reality is difficult to accept and requires much prayer as well as trust in God.

## **We must understand the differences between our desires and our goals.**

- Our desire would be that all the Moms we work with will have all they need and should possess (two-parent families, holiness, chastity, mental health, physical health, emotional health, spiritual health, steady job, all bills paid, etc.).
- Our goal is to serve each Mom we meet with the love of Christ to the best of our ability. We work towards our goals (that is something we have control over), but we pray about our desires and leave those in God's hands (we do not have control over those things).

## **Commitments**

Angels are committed to:

- Replying to Mom promptly.
- Checking up on her regularly.
- Praying for her daily.
- Arranging for or overseeing services and responses to needs.
- Keeping all communications and information confidential.
- Being available when Mom needs a listening ear.
- Communicating with and keeping the Parish Coordinator informed.

## **Dependability**

If an Angel is going on vacation, is overwhelmed with a family situation or for some reason cannot be available as an Angel, the Parish Coordinator should be notified to assure that someone fills in so that there is no disruption of services.

## **Confidentiality**

The relationship between the Gabriel Angel and the Mom is one marked by sacred trust. The Angel must maintain the confidentiality of the Mom's sensitive, personal, medical and private information. The Mom's information is to be held in strict confidence and may only be disclosed if the Angel is required to do so by law or as otherwise provided in this Handbook.

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

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## **Spiritual Support**

Mom's pregnancy can be distressful if she is living a lifestyle at odds with God's commandments. Those who support her, in particular her Angel, have the privilege to guide her to seek God's will in her life. If Mom is Catholic, clergy in her parish can administer the sacraments and provide spiritual guidance. Gently invite her to confession. Offer to drive her and introduce her to a priest if she does not know one. Some negative influences in her life may prevent her from returning to full life within the Church, but don't let that stop you. Make the offer. God will do the rest.

If she is not Catholic, clergy of other faiths can be contacted. Having a stable "father figure" in her life can be extremely important to Mom at this time. A pastor might represent both God's protection of her and his love for her child.

Some Moms helped by the project will not know God or will not go to church on a regular basis. Praying and going to church are certainly not conditions of our help. However, we want the best for our sisters in Christ and it is natural and loving to invite them to come to church with us or to ask if we may pray with them. We can and should pray for the Moms we are helping, but we cannot force them to change their lifestyles or go to church. We are challenged to be Christ-like in our patience and unconditional love as we continue to pray for the Moms and for ourselves that we might know and do God's will. Our relationship with Mom gives us the opportunity to show her God's love and mercy.

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

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## **Assistant Angels**

Assistant Angels help on a more limited basis and might help several Moms with a particular need, such as preparing a meal for the family after Mom comes home from the hospital after delivering the baby. If a Mom needs daily transportation for a limited time, it is best to handle this need with several volunteers coordinated by one Angel. For instance, several volunteers can each select a day of the week and each volunteer either takes Mom to or from her destination. Some volunteers enjoy taking a Mom to lunch at a restaurant or they may welcome her to lunch in their home. Some volunteers contribute their talents by knitting blankets and others may babysit or do shopping for Mom. Whatever they do, all volunteers working to help Moms in need act as the Body of Christ and bring love and hope to Moms through their acts of kindness.

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One person, the Gabriel Project Coordinator, with a few volunteers will accept the task of getting the Gabriel Project started. They may be members of the Parish Pro-Life Committee.

After attending the Gabriel Project Training, they will form the parish Gabriel Project. It will take persistence and commitment for some time to get an active Gabriel Project firmly in place, but with reliance on God's help, it will happen.

Each parish Gabriel Project must have a coordinator and volunteers to do different tasks within the Gabriel Project. Each parish Gabriel Project will be unique in its character because of differences in resources available, number of volunteers, and demographics within the community.

## **1. Permission from Your Pastor**

Present the Gabriel Project to your pastor and seek his approval to proceed. Inform the parish council and/or finance council about the Gabriel Project. The Archdiocesan Gabriel Coordinator should be contacted for information and training.

## **2. Introduction to the Entire Parish - Gabriel Sunday**

Meet with your pastor to plan how the Gabriel Project will be presented to the parish. It is essential the whole parish know about the Gabriel Project.

- Pick a Sunday with readings which tie in with the Gabriel Project. October, which is Respect Life Month, January, March 25 the feast of the Annunciation, and/or May are good times to introduce the Gabriel Project.
- The Sunday before insert a flyer in the bulletin preparing the congregation for Gabriel Sunday.
- On Gabriel Sunday, have someone speak at all the Masses about the Gabriel Project®. The speaker may be the pastor or someone who is involved with the Gabriel Project® and is a good spokesperson.
- Include the Gabriel Project in the prayers of the faithful.
- Brochures with volunteer sign-up cards are made available in the pews or at a table near the entrance of the church where parishioners can sign up to volunteer or donate money if they desire. During the presentation, draw these materials to the attention of the congregation.
- Ask the congregation to pray about the area of work God is calling them to do with the Gabriel Project. Request the prayerful support of the entire parish for the Gabriel Project.
- On Gabriel Sunday or at another designated time, the pastor can bless the parish's Sign of Life.

## **3. Angel Training**

Prepare a list of the volunteers who come forward. All Gabriel Angels must attend an Archdiocesan sponsored training at the parish or at the Archdiocese and take the Safe Environment training before seeing Mom. This is imperative. The Archdiocesan Gabriel Project Coordinator oversees training.

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## 4. The Sign of Life and Other Necessary Materials

The Sign of Life is a 4' x 6' wooden freestanding sign with the image of the Madonna of the Streets and one of two approved messages of help in English and Spanish. The picture to the left represents one version. The sign serves as a witness to the entire community and advertises the church's willingness to help a pregnant mother in need. Contact the Archdiocesan Gabriel Project Coordinator for information on ordering the sign. Other materials such as prayer cards, brochures and bumper stickers will be offered at no expense to the parish. A Volunteer Handbook will be given to those who take the required training.

<b>THE GABRIEL PROJECT PREGNANT? NEED HELP?</b>	
	<p>WE, THE MEMBERS OF THIS CHURCH COMMUNITY, SEE IN THE BIRTH OF EACH BABY A FRESH EXPRESSION OF GOD'S UNFAILING LOVE. FOR THE LOVE OF GOD AND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF HIS CHILDREN, WE OFFER IMMEDIATE AND PRACTICAL HELP TO ANY WOMAN FACED WITH A CRISIS PREGNANCY.</p>
<b>THE GABRIEL PROJECT -888-926-ANGEL</b>	

## 5. Finances

The Gabriel Project will not be a financial burden on the parish, but it is important to let the pastor and finance council know of the financial needs of the Gabriel Project parishes. Could monies donated to the Gabriel Project be deposited in a separate account to which the Gabriel Coordinator has access?

- The main expense is the Sign of Life paid for by the parish
- Other materials and training are provided by the Archdiocese
- All the work of the Gabriel Project is done by volunteers
- Fundraising is optional but people generously give when asked

## 6. Monthly Support Meetings

Plan a monthly meeting following the procedures in 4.5 Gabriel Project Parish Meetings so that all the volunteers can get together and keep in close contact with one another for support, encouragement, accountability, spiritual enrichment, and continuing education. Use this time wisely and fruitfully. After each meeting everyone must leave with a new idea, new knowledge, and new inspiration or renewed motivation to continue as an Angel. Start each meeting in the presence of God. Plan to get together for a special Mass, the Rosary or Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, before your meetings.

## 7. Major Catholic Support Services

The Gabriel Project works in collaboration with other parish and Archdiocesan Agencies to provide the best of care, mostly free, for Mom. *Catholic Community Services* provides professional social service at the parish and helps Gabriel Moms obtain their benefits including Medicaid, WIC, etc. Among its many services, CCS usually has:

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- *Services to Pregnant Adolescents and their families.* These services are particularly helpful when working with minor children who are pregnant (under 18 yrs), where medical, psychological and legal difficulties require professional help.
- *Adoption, foster care, and post adoption services.* All adoptions must go through a reputable Catholic adoption agency if possible. CCS will work with the local Gabriel Project in providing workshops on this and other topics. **NEVER ARRANGE A PRIVATE ADOPTION FROM THE GABRIEL PROJECT.**

## 8. The Michaels

The Michaels are a group of men in the parish committed to helping Mom by supporting the Gabriel Angels. A woman volunteer should always accompany a Michael. All requests for Michael support are channeled through the Michael coordinator who maintains a roster of men available for

- meeting with the father-to-be or, in his absence, with the mother-to-be or both as a mentor,
- transportation to an appointment or other places with proof of up to date liability insurance,
- auto & household repairs,
- financial advice,
- assistance in finding employment, and
- giving masculine example and help.

## 9. Help from the Parish

Many parish volunteers and organizations want to help the Gabriel Project. Suggested tasks for these volunteers are:

- organizing the Annual Parish Baby Shower, collecting maternity and baby items or shopping for baby items at garage sales
- transportation to and from doctor's appointments. Some volunteers may want to reserve a day or morning once a week to take women to their destination. Accompanying Mom is very important as she may feel pressured to abort or contracept by the Medical Service.
- child care
- income tax preparation
- car and appliance repair
- meal preparation
- fundraising

## 10. Stewardship

You may get more items donated than you need at a particular time. Through parish donations, baby showers and bassinet Sundays the parish Gabriel Project will receive maternity clothes, baby clothes and

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baby items. Keep an inventory of items available. Items need to be culled for usability and safety especially items for a baby. Make sure they are in good repair, clean and usable. Baby cribs and car seats are of special concern and must meet federal standards. Are they safe for a small child? Someone who has storage space and time to keep track of items may want to be in charge in this area. A clean and secure place to store the items with easy access for Angels will be important. Some diocese use commercial storage facilities. All items must be given freely to Mom with no strings attached just as they have been donated to the Gabriel Project. However, as there is always a shortage of car seats and cribs, they can be lent to Mom. All items collected at each parish must be available as needed to other parish Gabriel Projects in the diocese.

## **11. Transportation**

From time to time, Moms may need transportation to an appointment or other place. Before an Angel or Volunteer transports Mom in their vehicle, they must be able to show proof of up to date liability insurance.

## **12. Commitment**

A Gabriel Angel is committed to

- replying to Mom promptly
- checking up on her regularly
- praying for her daily
- arranging for services and responses to needs
- keeping all communications and information confidential
- be available when Mom needs a listening ear
- communicating with the parish coordinator
- attending support meetings

If an Angel is going on vacation, is overwhelmed with a family situation or for some reason cannot be available as an Angel, she must notify the parish Gabriel Project Coordinator that she is temporarily unable to fulfill her commitment.

The Gabriel Project Coordinator is committed to

- knowing all the Angels
- matching each Mom with an Angel
- communicating training, meeting times and workshop times
- communicating with the pastor
- encouraging collaborative ministry
- following up with Angels concerning the Moms they are helping
- mailing in the Confidential Intake Forms

## **13. Commissioning of Volunteers and Angels**

Once you have volunteers committed and Angels trained they must be recognized in front of the church community with a commissioning ceremony during Mass.

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

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## **POLICY**

It is the objective of the Gabriel Project to have the Gabriel phone line answered personally 24 hours a day, seven days a week by a trained volunteer who has also attended the Safe Environment training. When this isn't possible, calls must go to an answering machine or voicemail. Volunteers answer calls at the central location or on a cell phone through call forwarding. It is important that volunteers meet their commitment to answer the phone line when scheduled and that they complete their responsibilities as outlined below.

Telephone Volunteers are not to give out the personal phone numbers of Gabriel Project volunteers. When a call is for general information about the Gabriel Project, tell the caller that you will take a message. Forward messages by e-mail to [gabrielcoordinatorseattle@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielcoordinatorseattle@gmail.com)

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Attend the location for the central phone or monitor the phone you will use when calls have been forwarded to you during your shift. Have pens and Intake forms available. Follow the instructions on the Telephone Volunteer schedule for setting or canceling Call Forwarding as indicated.
2. Check for calls which may have gone to voice mail or the answering machine following the procedures posted in the office.
3. When taking or returning a call, reassure the caller her information will be kept confidential, and maintain a conversational manner.
4. Record as much of the information required on the Intake Form as you can fully and completely.
5. You will find that you will record information on the form as you and the caller guide the conversation. Before you end the call, look over the blank spaces to see if there is other important information you need, e.g. contact information.
6. Based on Mom's address and zip code, check the list of participating parishes that will be sent to you periodically to identify the parish and Parish Gabriel Angel Coordinator closest to her.
7. Fax or e-mail the completed Intake Form to the Parish Gabriel Angel Coordinator in that parish to arrange for her to be matched with a Gabriel Angel from that parish.
8. If you are in the call center, file the original in the locked filing cabinet in the office. If you are at home, keep the originals in a secure file until you can hand them over to the Archdiocesan Gabriel Project Coordinator or the St. Stephen's Parish Gabriel Project Coordinator.
9. E-mail the Archdiocesan GP Coordinator at [gabrielcoordinatorseattle@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielcoordinatorseattle@gmail.com) (or copy on the e-mail to the Parish Gabriel Angel Coordinator) the following details: Initials of caller, date and time of call, name and parish of the Parish Gabriel Angel Coordinator to whom you sent the Intake form.
10. When your shift is finished, follow the instructions on the Telephone Volunteer schedule for setting or canceling Call Forwarding as indicated. Do not forward calls from your personal telephone.

God bless you for your commitment.

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## TELEPHONE SCRIPT SUGGESTION

*Hello. Thank you for calling 926 Angel, the Gabriel Project helpline. My name's \_\_\_\_\_. How can we help you? (Or, I am here to take your initial information to help you get the support you need through one of our parishes.)*

*Could I please have your name and phone number in case we get disconnected.*

*Is this a good number to call or leave messages?*

*Now, if I could ask you to answer some questions about your personal situation, I can see how we can best help you. Please be assured that we respect your privacy. Your information will be kept strictly confidential and only shared among those in the Gabriel Project committed to meeting your needs.*

### **What is this? Who are you? What do you do?**

*The Gabriel Project is a program of the Catholic Church which provides emotional, spiritual and practical help to women who find themselves in a difficult pregnancy.*

*We match our callers with a trained parish volunteer, the Gabriel Angel for ongoing contact with the mother throughout her pregnancy and somewhat beyond. Gabriel Angels are women who have taken the training and the time to be there for a mom in need, like a big sister or a second mother, someone to pray for and with her, to help her connect with the practical help she and her unborn child need. The Gabriel Angel contacts her assigned "Mom" to arrange an initial meeting to further assess her needs and establish a rapport.*

*The parish community responds with love by providing spiritual, emotional, and material support to help meet those needs. Through prayer and action the parish community assures Mom that she has their love and the love of Christ. If a Mom has been abandoned by family or her child's father, the parish community can lovingly help her overcome her sense of loss and loneliness.*

### **Do y'all do abortions?**

*We can't. Like almost all of our callers, we believe in God and know that God made them and loves them. They also know He doesn't make mistakes. But many of them feel they don't have any choice, that they can't have this baby at this time.*

*We find that they haven't been given accurate information about the risks of abortion and about the alternatives and help available, like the Gabriel Project. Does that sound like you? Do you feel you don't have any choice? Well I'm here to tell you that you do. It's not an accident that you called us. You made a good choice calling us – for you and for your baby. Let us help you. We're here to help you.*

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

SECTION <b>Procedures</b>	Number: <b>4.3</b>
SUBJECT <b>Parish Gabriel Angel Coordinator</b>	Page: <b>1 of 1</b>

## **POLICY**

A Gabriel Angel Coordinator for each parish participating in the Gabriel Project has the important role of pairing Moms with their own Gabriel Angel as well as being the liaison for the Gabriel Project with the clerical staff, lay staff, and other parish ministries. The Coordinator keeps track of which Angels are paired, which ones are awaiting an assignment and is sensitive to both the needs of the Mom and the characteristics of the available Angels to strive for the best match. The Parish Gabriel Angel Coordinator keeps the Archdiocesan Gabriel Project Coordinator informed of the availability of Angels, training needs, and the status of pairings.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Collect and review all documents required of volunteers.
2. Maintain files of qualified, trained Gabriel Angels and a record of which ones are paired and which ones are available.
3. Receive requests from the Telephone Volunteer and determine if there is a suitable Gabriel Angel available in the parish – a best match. It could be that an Angel is prepared to mentor more than one Mom. If all Angels are matched, advise the Archdiocesan Gabriel Project Coordinator.
4. Contact the available Angel to discuss the Mom and her situation as described on the Intake Form. Agree on whether or not this will be a good pairing and get a commitment from the Angel to proceed or contact another Gabriel Angel.
5. Follow up to ensure the Angels contact Moms in a timely manner and provide the emotional, spiritual, and material help they require to the extent that time and resources allow.
6. Schedule and run the Parish Gabriel Meetings as described in section 4.5.
7. Maintain the file of Intake Forms in a secure location in the parish.

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

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SUBJECT <b>Gabriel Angel</b>	Page: <b>1 of 3</b>

When taking an Angel assignment, make notes on the Angel Checklist (Appendix 5.4) about the Mom from the Intake Form. After meeting with the Parish Coordinator, say a prayer for guidance then call the Mom to introduce herself, clarify any questions about the information on the Intake Form, and to discuss their first meeting.

Angels will usually go to Mom's home to greet her, listen to her and assess her needs. Going into her home begins your relationship with the feeling of family and allows the visiting team to experience first-hand what Mom is going through. The following excerpt from The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Vincentian's Manual elaborates on this.

From the Society's beginning, the central and most basic activity of Conferences has been the visitation of the needy in their homes. This is the clearest symbol of our Vincentian charism, which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor. It symbolizes our Vincentian commitment to reach out to the needy, rather than require them to report to an outside service site. In the home, needy persons feel most free to confide their stories of struggle. In that family setting, Vincentians are asked to listen, offer humble advice, and render assistance. (Rule: Part I, Articles 1.2 and 1.7-1.12; Part III, Section 8)

In the modern world, there are certain situations when a home visit is not possible or advisable - for example, those involving homelessness, battering, or safety. Nevertheless, Vincentians should never excuse themselves lightly or regularly from the tradition of home visitation. Even when assistance is given in an emergency from the parish or other service site, Vincentians should follow up with a home visit.

From the beginning, Vincentian visitation to the needy was done in pairs for the protection both of the needy person and the members. The precedent was set by Christ Himself when He sent out the Apostles two by two (Mk 6:7). The Society wisely continues this tradition in the interest of safety, liability and propriety.

In some cases, Angels will first meet Mom at a location other than her home. For instance, if her parents do not yet know she is pregnant it would be more prudent not to go to her home.

An Angel should never go alone for this first meeting. The Angel with the Parish Coordinator or another Angel usually meet with the Mom and assess her needs against the information contained in the Intake Form.

## **Spiritual Preparation**

If we hope to bring Mom closer to the Lord, we should prepare ourselves spiritually to be his instruments. Angels must first and foremost be grounded in prayer. When Mary visited Elizabeth after the Annunciation, she took with her the greatest treasure she had, Jesus in her womb. The baby in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy! As we visit Mom, we must remember the greatest treasure we have to share with her is Christ Jesus. He calls us to be aware of his presence in our lives and to share the love, joy and peace that presence gives us.

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Prepare yourself by saying a prayer for Mom and her child before each visit. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the right words to help bring Christ into Mom's heart. Seek to be constantly guided by Him in all you do on her behalf. Be bold in your love for the Lord by sharing glimpses of Him through your words and actions. Set aside personal concerns and be totally attentive to how Mom is feeling and doing.

When visiting with Mom, listen. Let her tell her story, her situation, without input or interruption from you. Be an active, attentive listener. This will tell Mom how much you want to be there for her. The opportunity to give advice, suggestions, and/or comments will come later as you build trust and rapport with her. She will be able to do most of her own problem solving as she talks through her difficulties. Give her the support and encouragement she needs through the information and resources necessary to solve her own problems.

The Angel's initial conversation with Mom is as friend-to-friend. The Angel will ask how Mom feels physically, how things are in the family, and how her job or school is going. The Angel might also ask how the father of the baby, her friends and family feel about the baby. The idea is not simply to ask questions in a rapid-fire manner. The idea is to listen with your heart. Mom will recognize a real concern and love on the part of the Angels. If our love of God is shared with joy and hope, Mom will learn to trust God and have confidence in his providence.

The Angel might want to give Mom a little token of their new relationship. She might give the Mom a gift of a scripture verse, holy card, rosary or medal - even if the Mom is not Catholic. Angels will also ask if they may pray for and with her. Mom will probably be surprised at the offer, but she will also be genuinely touched by the kindness of the offer. Our prayer for her will mean more than anything tangible we might give her and she will begin to understand that our interest in her is as a child of God. Our work is to extend the healing hand of Christ to her and allow it to touch her life. Hopefully, she may experience a brief period of grace during our meeting and we will now share a very special bond. We might say "The Lord's Prayer" together (non-Catholics may not recognize the prayer if you call it the "Our Father").

It is perfectly acceptable to also give Mom a small personal non-religious gift at the first meeting. The point is to put an emphasis on her personally and let her know she is thought of and cared for. She will appreciate your thoughtfulness and might find it easier to open up to you when you are spending time to help her with her needs.

## Assessing Mom's Needs

The Client Intake Form is very important. It will help assess Mom's needs most objectively. Moms are often in trauma and they appreciate a professional approach to their situation. The Intake Form will also serve as an icebreaker and make Mom feel that we care enough to want to be thorough when listening to her. As the Angels listen to Mom, any information that has not yet been recorded on the Intake Form should be entered.

- Prioritize and list her most immediate and basic needs.
- Ask her specific questions: Is she insured? Seen a doctor? Obtained benefits (WIC, etc.)?
- Discuss with her the help she needs.
- If it is necessary to refer her to an appropriate agency, be sure to ask her to contact you again and if she doesn't, **be sure to contact her.** *You are her MENTOR.*

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**Remember, the Angel is a mentor and friend in need. The Gabriel Project is *not* a referral service. Keep in contact with Mom throughout her pregnancy.**

**Do what you can to be informed about the agency or organization to which you refer Mom. Both you and Mom should know what to expect and not to expect from them.**

**Remember that when you refer Mom for prenatal care, she'll need care *throughout* her pregnancy, not merely the first two trimesters. The time to plan for her third trimester prenatal care and a hospital at which she will give birth to her child should not be long postponed.**

## To Do List:

- Set some goals for Mom and yourself to accomplish before the next visit.
- Allow for a reasonable time to accomplish the tasks.
- Set a time for the next visit, then call and remind her a day or two in advance. *If you do not take the initiative to contact her between visits and encourage her, you may never hear from her again.*
- Let Mom know you are there for her and that she can call you when she needs to talk.

## Confidentiality

As an Angel you might discover information about Mom that could be detrimental to her if known by others. Mom's knowing that you will never discuss details of her history ensures her that she can freely talk to you.

In having access to information necessary for you to do your work, you acquire the responsibility to keep it secret. You must regard this as a sacred trust.

## When does it End?

New Angels often ask: "How long should I plan on having a relationship with the Mom I am helping?" The answer is as individual as each relationship. Many of the Moms we help are having their first baby and may want some assistance and encouragement - especially as they begin their new role as mothers.

Angels are actually sometimes with their Moms during labor and delivery. After sharing that experience, it would be unnatural to just leave the relationship. There will be a very special bond between Mom and Angel. Even if circumstances separate Mom and Angel by time or distance, many Moms come back to see their Angles and show them the child they helped her bring into the world. If the Angel knows the birthdates of Mom and baby, she can send a card to remind them that they are still being thought of and prayed for.

## See Appendix for:

- **Conversation and Listening Skills**
- **Angel Checklist**
- **Client Intake Form**

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

SECTION <b>Procedures</b>	Number: <b>4.5</b>
SUBJECT <b>Gabriel Project Parish Meetings</b>	Page: <b>1 of 1</b>

## **POLICY**

Parish Gabriel Project meetings chaired by the Parish Gabriel Coordinator should be held at least monthly. The content of meetings must be confidential. It is a condition of their ongoing participation in the Gabriel Project that all volunteers attend the meetings. Typically, meetings should not last longer than 1 hour and 15 minutes or an hour and a half.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Open the meeting with prayers related to the intentions of the Gabriel Project such as the prayers in the manual. (5 min.)
2. Recite Evening Prayers from the *Liturgy of the Hours* (15 min.)
3. Read part of the Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook and discuss (15 min.)
4. Report on Gabriel Events (20 min.)
5. Conduct intercessory prayers for the intentions of those present and any Gabriel Moms assigned to your parish (10 min.)

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

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SUBJECT <b>How to Organize a Parish Baby Shower</b>	Page: <b>1 of 1</b>

Many parishes now hold a shower each year to give parishioners an opportunity to donate maternity and baby items that would be useful for Gabriel Project Moms and Pregnancy Resource Centers. This is always a joyful event, positive and uplifting. It is one of the best ways to bring the respect for life message to the parish in a constructive and positive way.

- Consult your pastor.
- Display bulletin announcements and a flier in the weeks before Mother's Day or day of the shower.
- Include each group in the parish in the preparations, the school, the RE classes, the Ladies Guild, etc., and give each group specific tasks to do and times to attend at the tables.
- If you have a parish school, involve the children in your parish baby shower. They can make posters to advertise the shower and contribute small items.
- Contact the parish school religious education teachers and/or principal.
- Coordinate the shower with a week of Pro-Life educational activities at school.
- Request gently used as well as new items.
- Decorate the tables with pink and blue, balloons and bunting.
- Serve cake and punch after each Mass.
- Leave a crib in a prominent place for donations.
- Provide a bowl or basket for cash donations.

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**GABRIEL PROJECT INTAKE/PROFILE**

DAY: SU M TU W TH F SA DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM

Thank you for calling 926 ANGEL, the Gabriel Project helpline. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. How can I help you?

How did you hear about us / Where did you get our number (below)? Have you called us before? Y / N

Sign at: \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If you could answer some questions about your personal situation, I can see how we can best help you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Home # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_ May we call & leave messages \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Living with \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # if different \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ How long? \_\_\_\_\_ Health insurance with coverage? Y / N

Pregnancy confirmed Y / N How far along (or LMP) \_\_\_\_\_ Health concerns? \_\_\_\_\_

Seen Physician/Midwife Y / N Name \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Had you considered abortion Y / N Visited abortion center Y / N Which one? \_\_\_\_\_

Had a previous abortion Y / N Age at abortion \_\_\_\_\_ Regrets/Feelings \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you attend \_\_\_\_\_

Married \_\_\_ Single \_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_ Other children (names/ages) \_\_\_\_\_

First name of baby's father \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Supportive/Attitude \_\_\_\_\_

Parents aware of pregnancy? Y / N Supportive/Attitude \_\_\_\_\_

**NEEDS** (circle all that apply) Medicaid Food Baby clothes Toiletries Maternity clothes

Layette Car seat Carrier Diapers Stroller Formula Crib

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm going to forward your information to the Gabriel Coordinator who will match you up with your own Gabriel Angel. One of them will call. Do I have your permission to share your confidential information with them? \_\_\_\_\_

To Parish Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Parish \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt confirmed Y / N

Gabriel Angel assigned \_\_\_\_\_ Mom contacted \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Result \_\_\_\_\_

## ANGEL CHECKLIST

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Mom's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_

Mom's Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Alt. Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mom's Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Mom several days in advance to remind her of your next visit.

Review the manual as a refresher before visits with Mom.

Begin with a prayer each time you meet with Mom.

Inquire about Doctor's visits. Is she keeping current with her visits?

If there are siblings, inquire as to their well being.

Inquire about her husband/family members.

Make sure Mom is in contact with her insurance provider:

- Medical
- Medicaid
- Private
- None

Inquire about financial status. Has she been in contact with:

- WIC Benefits — Nutrition Program for Women
- Department of Human Services
- Food Stamp Program
- St. Vincent de Paul Society

Would she like to see a Priest for reconciliation/healing?

Make Coordinator aware of any unusual problems or issues (talk of abortion, deep depression, abuse, serious health issues).

Remind Mom that the hospital will not release the baby unless she has a proper car seat.

Brief documentation needs to be made for every visit and conversation on the intake form or an attachment. This should be given to the Parish Coordinator for the permanent record after Mom has her baby.

# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

SECTION <b>Appendix</b>	Number: <b>7.1</b>
SUBJECT <b>Conversation and Listening Skills</b>	Page: <b>1 of 3</b>

At the root of all successful conversation is treating Mom as you would wish to be treated yourself. As caring helpers we must understand that listening is more important than talking.

Conversation can be:

- The spoken word.
- Body posture and gesture.
- Voice tone and inflection.

Of these, the most telling is voice tone and inflection, then body posture and gesture and then the spoken word, yet we often tend to put more importance on the spoken word.

In a one on one relationship, we continuously communicate whether we speak or not. The effective Angel must become aware of the impact her tone of voice, inflection, body posture and gestures have on Mom. Angels must know how to evaluate non-verbal conversation from Mom to gain a better understanding of her situation.

Mom needs:

- To be dealt with as an individual rather than as a type, a category or a case.
- To express her feelings and thoughts, both negative and positive.
- To be accepted as a person of worth, with innate dignity regardless of any dependencies, weaknesses, faults or failures.
- A sympathetic understanding of and response to feelings and thoughts expressed.
- Not to be condemned for the difficulty in which she finds herself.
- To make her own choices and decisions concerning her own life. She needs help, not commands.
- To keep confidential information secret. She does not want to exchange her reputation for the help which she will receive.

A Mom in need wishes, and sometimes desperately needs, a pleasant and helpful welcome. Mom needs a good listener who will be understanding, empathetic, discreet, non-judgmental and non-patronizing.

Sympathy is required, but over identification with Mom on the Angel's part will do more harm than good. If the Angel's problems are too much to the forefront, she will be unable to help Mom. The Angel must be detached from her own difficulties so she can concentrate objectively on Mom's needs.

Remember, we are here to be faithful to God and to Mom, not to guarantee results. All results are in God's loving, merciful and providential hands; the Angel is His instrument.

## **Active Listening**

Active listening is just that; choosing to listen and understand what Mom is talking about. The Angel must listen at a number of levels to what is being overtly said and to what Mom is not saying. Slow down and allow Mom to express her thoughts and feelings and tell her story. If one has an attitude of unconditional love, one can listen more effectively and compassionately.

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An Angel should not feel obliged to come up with a solution every time Mom mentions a problem. In the initial stages of a visit, it is much more important to listen. Before Mom will hear you and pay attention to your advice, she needs to know you have heard and understood her. Only after you have a thorough understanding of Mom's situation can you help her work on solutions.

## **There are two ways to actively listen: Restatement & Rephrasing.**

The active listener acts as a mirror or sounding board, reflecting what Mom has said without adding one's own perceptions and responses. This part of communicating focuses on the content of factual information communicated to you by the Mom.

In restatement, the Angel repeats what the mom has said almost word for word. This is simple. When used properly it is very effective in helping Mom discuss her difficulties.

In rephrasing, the Angel summarizes what has been said in her own words. This is very helpful if Mom has given a lot of information or is upset and incoherent. The Angel can help clarify what has been said by paraphrasing the most important parts of what the mom has expressed.

It is important to use a tentative tone of voice when restating or rephrasing. This encourages the Mom to continue talking and allows her the freedom to correct any misperceptions of the volunteer.

## **Interpretive Listening**

Interpretive listening enables the Angel to understand the thoughts and feelings that underlie Mom's statements. This helps Mom to understand and explore what she is really feeling in a non-threatening environment.

The Angel needs to understand how Mom feels and thinks about her situation and about all the important people in her life and other relevant factors. The Angel must guard against making inaccurate assumptions, and against making comments or suggestions based on those assumptions. The desire to understand Mom's feelings demonstrates that we are sincerely interested in her, not merely in her feelings about her child.

The first step in interpretive listening is listening for feelings. The Angel listens carefully to the Mom's words, (including voice tone and inflection), and observes body posture and gestures to gather clues that answer the question of how she is feeling. Listening for feelings involves trying to identify what is going on below the surface of the conversation.

## **Asking Questions**

All questions must lead to a better understanding of Mom. Learn to recognize the different types of questions and their purpose.

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Close-ended questions are answered with a yes or no. They are very good for obtaining factual information, but not information on feelings, motivation etc. However, teenage Moms especially prefer this type of question because they are easily answered without going into details.

While questions allow Mom to talk about her reasons, including moral reasons, for acting a certain way. They can also imply judgment. If Mom becomes defensive, rephrase the question another way: What caused you to. . .? What made you decide to. . .? How did you come to...?

Rapid-fire are several questions in one sentence. They confuse Mom and are a poor communication technique. Never ask more than one question at a time.

Questions containing the answer are used to state opinions rather than to gain information. The Angel should never use a question to manipulate Mom into a preferred response.

Open-ended questions encourage Mom to talk about herself. They are based on something the Mom has said and are used to explore the situation in greater depth. They also provide a model for solving future problems.

Examples:

1. How do you feel about being pregnant?
2. What makes you feel that abortion is the best solution for you?
3. What were the circumstances that led up to his leaving you?

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

SECTION <b>Appendix</b>	Number: <b>7.2</b>
SUBJECT <b>Prayers</b>	Page: <b>1 of 2</b>

## GABRIEL ANGEL DAILY PRAYER

Dear Jesus,  
I come to you this morning in supplication,  
and ask, humbly to enter your Heart of Divine Love,  
with (mom's name) the mother you have  
bound to my life, and entrusted to my care,  
in your name.

Lord, I am not able to love her like you do,  
I am not able to provide for her like you can.  
I have nothing good to offer her but You,  
who alone are all good, and every blessing to her.

And so Good Shepherd,  
please protect her and deliver her from evil this day.  
Supply her every need this day, according to  
your merciful and kind providence, and bountiful generosity.

Let her experience your infinite tenderness  
and gentleness towards mothers and children.

Bind her to you with cords of love, and may  
her path today be fragrant with your loving kindness.  
And at the end of this day, as at the end of her life,  
Enfold her in your eternal embrace in peace.

And now Lord I bring (mom's name) specific needs to you,  
for your loving attention.

(Name any specific intentions)

Thank you, Lord for hearing my prayers.

Amen.

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# *The Gabriel Project Volunteer Handbook*

SECTION <b>Appendix</b>	Number: <b>7.2</b>
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## Prayer for Mother and Child

Heavenly Father,  
Who has given us the great gift of life,  
bless and guide all pregnant mothers  
that they might respect and cherish  
the gift of life growing within them.  
Help each mother to accept her child  
as an irreplaceable gift from you.  
Grant that all her needs be met.

Bless all children yet unborn.  
Watch over them as they grow and develop in the  
embrace of their mothers' wombs. Form them  
and shape them  
that they might be born healthy.  
Grant that they might be welcomed at birth with  
tender love and deep joy.  
We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen

## The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with  
thee; blessed art thou among women and  
blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us  
sinners, now and at the hour of  
our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary . . .

And the Word was made Flesh.

And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary . . .

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we  
may be made worthy of the promises of  
Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech thee O Lord, thy  
grace into our hearts that we, to whom the  
incarnation of Christ thy Son was made  
known by the message of an angel, may by  
his passion and cross, be brought to the  
glory of his resurrection, through the same  
Christ Our Lord.

Amen

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