

FEATURES OF AN ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR PARISH FINANCES

Many parishes have plans of one kind or another for their religious education, liturgy, adult education, etc. But in these times, there is a growing demand for a plans for communicating the mission and needs of the church to its parishioners. If the marketing professionals are correct, it takes 6 to 8 impressions for us before we act on a message or announcement. That means that our parishes need to think strategically about how effectively they message the financial realities that govern their future.

This is an example of what such a plan might look like, offered here not to simply copy, but to use as a resource to craft a unique plan specific to each parish.

ONGOING STRATEGIES

An important underlying marketing theme that supports all communications is that the parishioner/donor is the center and focus of parish communications, not the parish itself.

- All Masses, baptisms, first communions and confirmations live-streamed and promoted and placed on parish web site and Facebook.
- All liturgical schedules and practices announced and/or updated in Parish Bulletin/E-bulletin, Facebook page, web-site page.
- Thank you cards or letters to donors should go out within 5 business days of receipt of a gift.
- Outreach to parishioners who are shut-ins or in facilities, by face-to-face contact, phone calls or emails as appropriate.

EXAMPLE OF A DRAFT SCHEDULE

A) Frequency: Weekly

Vehicles: Parish Bulletin/E-bulletin, Facebook page, web-site page, and other social media like Twitter and Instagram.

Content includes:

- ❖ Report on prior weekend's offertory, segregating electronic giving, and reporting on "% to goals"- donors and dollars, as applicable.
- ❖ Report on any special gifts (from named donors, and anonymous)
- ❖ Report on progress with any capital campaign or major gifts campaign, Annual Commitment, 90-Day campaign and Catholic Appeal results to-date
- ❖ Link to information on electronic giving.
- ❖ Request for financial support

B) Frequency: Monthly

Vehicles: Parish Bulletin/E-bulletin, optional-Facebook page, web-site page, email routes including Flocknotes or Constant Comment-type routes, as well as other social media like Twitter and Instagram.

FEATURES OF AN ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR PARISH FINANCES

Content includes:

- ❖ Report on sacramental #s, hospital visits, home visits, including all Eucharistic Visits
- ❖ When appropriate announce Catholic Appeal calendar.
- ❖ Link to information on electronic giving.
- ❖ Information on envelope donation system
- ❖ Thank you to all donors, specific major donors, and all key volunteer leaders
- ❖ Request for financial support

Vehicles: From the pulpit

- ❖ All updates on current campaigns including capital campaign or major gifts campaign, Annual Commitment, 90-Day campaign, and Catholic Appeal results to-date. Request for financial support.

C) Frequency: Quarterly

Vehicles: Parish Bulletin/E-bulletin, optional-Facebook page, web-site page, from the pulpit, email routes including Flocknotes or Constant Comment type routes, as well as other social media like Twitter and Instagram.

Content includes:

- ❖ Report on Parish finances including year-to-date actual, year-to-date budget, variance +/-
- ❖ Report on parish major deferred maintenance and emergency needs for repairs/replacements
- ❖ Thank you to all donors, specific major donors, and all key volunteer leaders
- ❖ Possible brief witness talk from a major donor/volunteer
- ❖ Link to information on electronic giving.
- ❖ Information on envelope donation system
- ❖ Request for financial support

D) Frequency: Annual

Vehicles: Parish Bulletin/E-bulletin insert, Facebook page, web-site page, from the pulpit, email routes including Flocknotes, Constant Comment, as well as other social media like Twitter and Instagram.

Content includes:

Address from the pastor on the financial state of the parish including:

- ❖ All sacramental #s, graduates of religious ed programs, adult ed programs, hospital visits, home visits, including all Eucharistic Visits, scripture studies.
- ❖ Annual comparison of year-to-date actuals with budget actuals
- ❖ Summary of next year's budget, w link to details

FEATURES OF AN ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR PARISH FINANCES

- ❖ Thank you to all donors, specific major donors, and all key volunteer leaders
- ❖ Possible brief witness talk/letter from a major donor/volunteer
- ❖ Link to information on electronic giving.
- ❖ Information on envelope donation system
- ❖ Announcement of the calendar of special collections for the year
- ❖ Request for financial support

E) **Frequency:** Intermittent- preferably monthly

Vehicles: local press outlets, The Pilot

Content includes: Human interest stories on:

- ❖ Launching or completing major campaigns/ Progress towards a specific campaign
- ❖ Special projects including programs that care for the poor, assistance to disadvantaged.
- ❖ School-Youth projects, religious ed. projects, scouting merit badges etc.
- ❖ Guest speakers at the parish
- ❖ Parish participation in city/town, statewide, national or international projects
- ❖ New or retiring clergy, staff changes
- ❖ Major donors/donations

F) **Frequency:** Intermittent- preferably monthly

Vehicles: Live in person, video or Zoom: “Ask the Pastor” – fireside chats

Content includes:

- ❖ Launching or completing major campaigns/ Progress towards a specific campaign
- ❖ Special projects including care of the poor, assistance to disadvantaged
- ❖ School-Youth projects, religious ed. projects, scouting merit badges etc.
- ❖ Guest speakers at the parish
- ❖ Parish participation in city/town, statewide, national, or international projects
- ❖ New or retiring clergy, staff changes
- ❖ Major donors/donations
- ❖ Changes in liturgical practice or offerings
- ❖ Parish calendar of events
- ❖ Request for financial support