

January 2019



A Christian Steward is:

- one who receives God's gifts gratefully
- cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner
- shares them in justice and love with others
- returns them with increase to the Lord

# WISDOM

from ICSC strategic partners

This month's contributions come from the following ICSC Strategic Partners:



FUNDRAISING

DIOCESAN



Our Sunday Visitor

Each month ICSC sends you practical information, whitepapers, and tips, as well as other insightful information from our Strategic Partners to assist you with your responsibility as stewards of the Church. We are very grateful to our Strategic Partners for their partnership and commitment to ICSC, and their professional wisdom is a wonderful gift to ICSC members.

In this edition ICSC provides for you:

- \* how to identify and engage impactful donors courtesy of **CCS**.
- \* three tips for keeping your message relevant presented by **Diocesan**.
- \* the secret to engaging millennials in the life of your parish offered by **LPi**.
- \* ideas to deepen the prayer life of your community for 2019 compliments of **Our Sunday Visitor**.

For additional information and resources from our strategic partners visit the ICSC website at: [ICSC](http://www.catholicstewardship.com)

*ICSC promotes and supports Catholic teaching on stewardship by providing education and resources for dioceses, parishes, and institutions of the Roman Catholic Church.*



# Identifying and Engaging Impactful Donors

By Tim Dockery, Vice President, CCS — January 2019



**T**ransformational gifts can positively impact a parish's mission and its community for generations to come. They can spark a fundraising campaign to new heights, and can help build momentum to achieve aspirational goals. Understanding how to go about both identifying and growing your relationships with these donors are the most important keys to success.

## Overcoming Common Challenges

Parish leaders can often feel apprehensive about how to approach these relationships. But, by simply becoming more informed about who your donors are and how they may want to contribute in the future, you can begin to ease any discomfort about discussing their potential contributions with them. Chances are, through open and honest conversations with these donors, your goals to help others in your community will be aligned. They will also understand the role they can play in making these goals a reality.

## Taking a Closer Look

Understanding who your potentially impactful parishioners are is an important first step. One way to begin is to conduct a review of the past three years of individual offertory contributions from your parish. Then, make a list of your top 10 or 20 financial supporters during this time period. Once your list is complete, make note of your current relationships with these donors. Ask yourself, how well do we know these families? Make note of who could benefit from further outreach.

The next step is to identify other families who you may perceive to have significant financial resources but whose offertory support may not reflect their potential capacity. Some indicators of strong financial potential can be estimated from occupations. Once you have compiled a list of families that are either currently giving large amounts or, based on perceived capacity, might be amenable to increasing their support, rank them as to whether you know them well, know them in passing, or have not met them at all.

## Developing Strategies

- *Families you know well:* Look to how engaged they are in the life of the parish. Are they on councils, engaged in ministries, or involved in other parish-based groups? If not, consider meeting with them to explore other ways their gifts could be used to help the parish. This is an opportunity to share with them your vision for the parish and to learn their own thoughts and vision for where the parish is headed.
- *Families you know in passing:* Consider inviting them out to a meal or for coffee. This will give you an opportunity to come to know them better and to understand how they view the parish. It will also be helpful to find out where they are in regard to their faith journey.
- *Potentially impactful families you don't know:* Consider asking other families in the parish with whom you have established a good relationship if they know them and can facilitate an introduction. From there, you can apply the same conversation as you did for those you know in passing.

## The Importance of Stewardship

Remember that successful philanthropy is a relationship, not a transaction. Just as you do with other families you get to know, learn details about them and show that you appreciate them. Once you have identified families with extraordinary financial resources and start implementing a strategy, you can begin inviting them on the journey of fulfilling the vision of the parish and the Church.

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# 3 Tips For Keeping Your Message Relevant

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One of the taglines we have decided on as a company for 2018 is that the Catholic message is always relevant. The Catholic message does not go out of style or become archaic because it is timeless. It is important to make sure that our parish and diocese communications reflect the timelessness of the Good News. Now is a great time to make sure your parish communications are up to date and relevant with just three simple steps.

1

## USE THE MOVING RULE

If you have ever moved you have heard the old saying that if you haven't looked at it in three months then it is time to toss it. It is the same with communications. Take a look through your bulletin, website, app, or social media. If you have not changed a certain announcement in the past three months then chances are your audience have lost interest. Switch it up and add something new to re-engage interest levels.

2

## THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

It's easy for your audience to get caught in announcement hypnosis. We live in a world where everyone is trying to gain the attention of others. This information overload makes it easy for your audience to count you as irrelevant if you present your information the same every time. If it is always in the same spot of the bulletin, switch it up. Maybe add something to your app announcements that you wouldn't typically put there. Be creative and don't let the thought that it won't work distract you from great ideas.

3

## USE YOUR ANALYTICS

Most communication channels will give you analytics. As you mix up your methods and add new content, don't forget to gauge how effective it is by looking at your analytics. Numbers don't lie. If you send out a message or put a post on Facebook and your views are elevated, then keep going with that plan. If your analytics are showing you that what you are doing is not reaching your audience, then it's time to think outside the box again. You can never do enough testing when it comes to how your audience likes to receive information.

Stick with these three simple rules and you will be sure to increase the quality of your communications and announcements in the new year. Make this the year that the Gospel message reaches more ears with its relevance. Happy New Year!



## HOW TO ENGAGE MILLENNIALS IN THE LIFE OF YOUR PARISH

It's no secret that millennials are somewhat of a mystery to older generations. Last count at 80 million, millennials (born roughly between 1980 and 2000) represent the largest age group in American history. They stand out for their digital use of smart phones and social media, and use words like "selfie," "shade," and "woke" as adjectives. So, how can a group of that caliber find its place in a Church 2,000 years in the making?

The millennial generation is hungry for meaning, purpose, and authenticity — especially when it comes to their faith. They are used to seeking out opportunities to challenge their lives and, as such, look at the Sunday Mass experience through the same lens.

According to a Pew Research poll, 41 percent of millennials believe that religion is "very important," but only 26 percent attend Mass "at least once a week." So there is a large disconnect. How can we as a parish community invite them into a deeper relationship with the Lord?

While the millennial generation may not always be largely represented in your parish, they are out there in the community, looking for a way to live their faith in an authentic way. A majority of them are actively searching for ways to become involved in making a positive difference within their circle of influence. As a parish, the task of bringing them in and utilizing their talents is one such way they can make a difference.

Is your parish located within a young community or near a university campus? If so, consider a

nonspiritual event to bring these young adults to the "front porch" of the Church. Hold a parish-sponsored happy hour at a local establishment (be sure to mention that non-alcoholic drinks are also available!), coffee tasting, pottery painting, or meet up at a local outdoor concert. An informal meet-up is a great way to remind them not only that the Church is there for them, but also needs them.

So maybe one Sunday, you notice a few younger faces in the pews. A young college-aged man with a backpack sitting near the side aisle. A family of four with twins, bravely seated in the front pew. A thirty-something group of singles, chattering. They heard your invitation, moved beyond the "front porch," and came right into the living room — now what?

This is an opportunity for everyone (from the priest and pastoral associate to the religious education teacher, usher, and even just a regular Mass-goer) to set the tone: that your faith community is one of warmth and inclusivity. Let them know that they can come to the parish for not only the essential sacraments, but also for spiritual guidance, fun social events, community volunteering, or just a place to sit with the Lord during Eucharistic Adoration.

Engage millennials by giving them a role to play and ownership of some of parish ministry. Whether that be asking if they'd be greeters once a month, help coordinate a parish event, implement and run an Instagram page, or just give input on the homily every once in a while, opportunities are there. All of these can help them find a long-term place in your parish community.





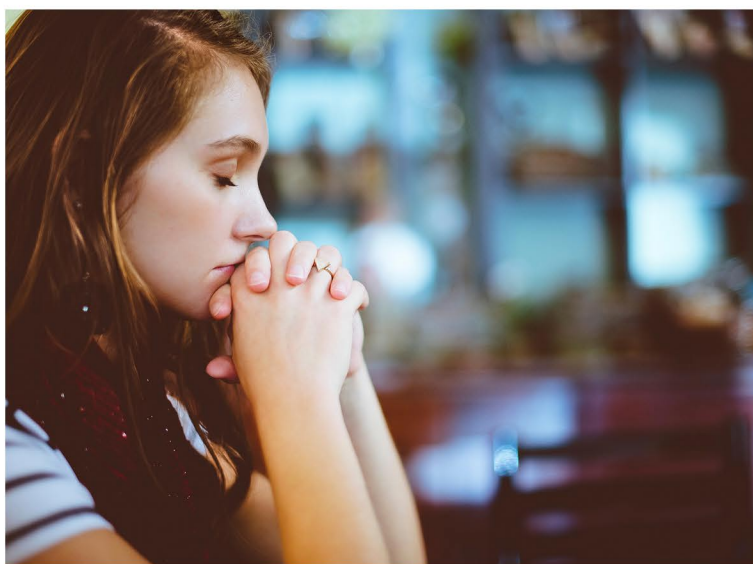
# Prayer ideas for 2019

Katie Herzing, Parish Coach

Prayer is the first pillar of Stewardship because without a relationship with the Lord, nothing else makes sense. So what could you do this year to deepen the prayer life of your community? We have a few ideas!

**1. Encourage Families to pray together and ask them to make a commitment.** How? One of our parishes created a magnetic board with an image of Our Lady of Fatima and a Rosary on it in their gathering space. Each week the Rosary is 'cleared' and families are asked to place a rose magnet on the bead and commit to praying the Rosary as a family one time throughout the week. Children love moving the magnets, and the whole community sees a physical representation of how they are coming together in prayer that week!

**2. Have a Parish-Wide Holy Hour during the week.** Whether your parish has perpetual adoration, a day of exposition, or none at all, this is a great idea for the whole community to come together. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there" says the Lord. Encourage your parishioners to sit in the quiet, have a short reflection, or sing some beautiful praise and worship songs together. There is power in prayer and power in being together. Lent is the perfect time to begin!



**3. Revive the Sacrament of Confession at our parish.** Some parishes have 30 minutes a week in the middle of the day on Saturday for Confession . . . and they wonder why people aren't lining up to receive the mercy of the Sacrament! Evaluate the times you have for confession. Are they enough? Are they convenient? Do people know about them? Some ideas:

**a. Offer Confession at times that are convenient for working people.**

After 6pm, on Sundays, before and/or after Daily Mass, in the morning before work, during lunch if you're near businesses or downtown, definitely for longer than 20 minutes a week!

**b. Provide child care for parents** who want to avail themselves to the sacrament but have a wiggly child they need to bring with them. Yes, mom and dad could go to Confession on opposite weeks – but isn't regular confession, together, beneficial for a married couple?

**c. Preach about Confession.** Why does it matter? How do you go? (Many of our parishioners haven't been since 1st Communion or Confirmation or that one time in their 20s.) What should you do?

**d. Provide an Examination of Conscience** to help people learn how to form and then examine their conscience well. There are hundreds of these online!

**4. Create an easy way for parishioners to share prayer intentions.**

Our company has a prayer intention list where people can simply email their prayer intention over and the whole community receives it. The first time I had something to share, I was overwhelmed with the response. What if our parishes had the same thing? How great would it be if we could share our intentions and receive comments back from fellow parishioners that we were being held in prayer throughout the day? There are many ways to do this with a variety of digital products!

Whatever you do for Stewardship this year, make sure the pillar of Prayer has a strong foundation. Want more great ideas like this delivered right to your inbox a couple times a month? Join me at <http://transformyourparish.com> for great ideas to create a vision plan to promote stewardship at your parish!