

February 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:



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 brings you:

- * six hacks for creating engaging emails offered by **Blackbaud**.
- * four trends in Catholic philanthropy that may surprise you compliments of **GP Catholic Services**.
- * three pre-campaign planning keys that will ensure a successful campaign provided by **Greater Mission**.
- * five simple ways to empower your parishioners for service presented by **Pushpay**.

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

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

TIP SHEET

Digital Life Hacks For Organizations of Faith

Six Hacks for Creating Engaging Emails

Here are our top tips.

1 Stand Out

Email is still the most important channel for online fundraising success. That means your supporters are already getting a lot of emails. Go the extra mile to ensure that your messages are relevant with content they'll find interesting and important.

2 Plan Ahead

Tune in to the types of emails you should send out. Is your audience being bombarded by monthly newsletters, special event updates, and fundraising solicitations? Create a communications calendar so you know what you're sending and can appropriately space out messages.

3 Be Relevant

Set up a targeted email series that speaks to each of your target audiences—supporters, donors, or volunteers—in a unique way. Provide information or updates that appeal to each audience, and always include a strong call to action.

4 Go Mobile

The data is clear. More emails are opened on mobile devices every day. We're now in a mobile-first era, so make sure your emails are as beautiful and functional on mobile devices as they are on a computer screen. Think: big buttons, responsive images, and less copy.

5 Build Profiles

If it's donations you're after, ask your supporters to quickly update their data in your next email newsletter. With this simple, non-intrusive ask, you can clean up your database and build stronger constituent profiles to better engage supporters in the future.

6 Succeed With Subject Lines

Don't overlook the significance of an email subject line. This is key to getting your audience to open your messages. Take the time to test a variety of subject lines—from straight to funny to intriguing—and see which ones perform best for you.

Understanding How Catholics Give

Four trends in Catholic philanthropy that may surprise you

1. Mass attendance is not fully correlated with giving

Though Mass attendance does have impact on likelihood of giving, don't overlook those who attend infrequently.

✚ **Consider targeted appeals** to these members of the faithful. Resource appropriately, measure your results, and benchmark year over year.

✚ **Develop empathy**, remembering that for some people, attending Mass a few times a year represents an increase from previous years. Your stewardship efforts can further strengthen this relationship.

✚ **Find joy in the wins**. Celebrate when an infrequent Mass attendee makes a gift! Send a handwritten thank you note or make a personal phone call.

If someone attends Mass once a week or more, they're very likely to be a member of a household that regularly gives to its parish. However, don't discount infrequent Mass attendees. There is a one-in-five chance that they are a member of a household that regularly gives to its parish.

2. A narrative focused on mission has greater impact than one focused on scarcity

How we talk about money and mission matters, and it is likely to inspire more donors to give, and to give more.

✚ **Model and encourage active spiritual engagement** with personal, parish, and diocesan finances.

✚ **Foster a collaborative culture** where ownership of the mission of the parish and diocese naturally leads to opportunities to give.

✚ **Frame asks** as invitations for the faithful to participate in living out the mission of the Church, rather than lists of bills to be paid.

Nearly half of Catholics report that their parishes and dioceses articulate appeals focused on scarcity.

3. The more local the need, the better

Catholics are more than twice as likely to consider the needs of their parish and the poor as giving priorities than they are the needs of their diocese.

✚ **Emphasize the ways a gift will benefit the parish** first and the poor second when making an ask or planning an appeal.

✚ **Remind your congregation** that parishes don't individually educate seminarians or care for retired priests, but that this is done collectively for the benefit of all in the diocese.

✚ **Don't make assumptions**. Take care not to surmise that every recipient of an appeal is equally informed on the details of the workings of their diocese in relation to a parish.

Catholics list supporting their local parish and giving to the poor among their top reasons for making a gift.

4. A personal, customized approach is the best method

The more familiar the solicitor, the greater likelihood a Catholic will make a gift. A personal ask is always the best approach.

✚ **Consider creating a parish or diocesan development committee** if you do not have one.

✚ **Recruit parishioners** to make asks alongside the pastor.

✚ **Provide joint development training** for both parishioners and pastors alike.

Seventy-three percent of Catholics say they would be "somewhat" or "very" likely to respond to a family member or friend who asked for a financial gift to the Church.

GP Catholic Services, a division of Graham-Pelton Consulting, is a leading fundraising consulting firm serving the Catholic Church. Specializing in designing and managing fundraising campaigns for dioceses, schools, parishes, and religious orders, we offer decades of fundraising and development experience with a powerful focus on the Catholic Church.

Campaign Pregame Planning

Three Keys that will ensure success

A successful campaign requires a great game plan and the pre-campaign planning process has three critical elements to help you achieve your true potential.

ONE: Build a Clear and Compelling Case for Support

Engage leaders and key constituents to determine what to include in your project or projects to be funded that will make the greatest ministry impact. Be as specific as you can be about what it is to be done, how it is to be done, when and why it is to be done. Paint a clear picture for prospective donors about the outcomes to be achieved. Be clear about how much it will cost and the total funding plan that might include initial savings to use and long-term debt. Increasingly, donors demand information that is clear and they deserve to know how their funds will be stewarded in a way that makes an impact for mission in which they own a share. A good planning process will lead to a strong case for support that will inspire great giving and a successful campaign.

TWO: Study Your Capacity to Determine How Much Can Be Raised

Prior to a campaign, a thorough study of giving history should be conducted along with an analysis of previous engagement and involvement. Additional wealth and external charitable giving research should be conducted to expand the pool of leadership donors and lift request levels to be in line with donor capacity. This is especially important when past giving levels are not on par with the true potential that people have to give. A thorough vetting of local knowledge regarding who can possibly make leadership gifts to a campaign completes the picture. The giving study, confidential research process and gathering of local intel will result in a proposed goal and a gift plan scenario. Sometimes a base goal and challenge goal can be established. The gift plan scenario will detail how many gifts are needed at each level to succeed and becomes a very critical aspect of the pre-campaign planning process.

THREE: Conduct a Feasibility Study

A well thought out and executed Feasibility Study will help you confirm your capacity and determine how much you can raise. It will also help you refine your Case for Support, enabling you to make adjustments, address concerns, and craft campaign messages that will hit home with your donors. Importantly, a Feasibility Study will also enable you to pre-solicit donors, raising their sights to what kind of pledge levels are needed to ensure the success of the campaign. The Feasibility Study is the final important step in the pre-campaign planning process that will go a long way to ensuring your success.

The Greater Mission team serves the Church. We are dedicated to providing campaign, consulting and contract staffing solutions to the Church and faith-based ministries. Working closely with local leaders and staff, we are humbled and honored to serve this sacred mission.

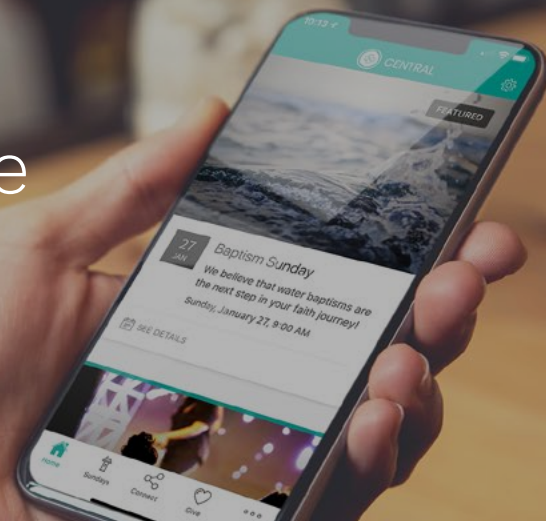


Greater Mission

*Inspiring Faithful Charity;
Fulfilling Church Potential.*

5 Simple Ways to Empower Your Parishioners for Service

Many parishes struggle with this. They're filled with families that deeply love the Church—which is great. But many people don't practically contribute to the work of their church because they don't believe they have anything to offer. And it's because many Catholics have grown up believing that only priests and other “really holy” people can do God's work. Many see their talents—the ones they use in their jobs and in their hobbies—as entirely secular, with little spiritual benefit. Of course, that couldn't be further from the truth.



How do leaders in the church make serving a more meaningful experience for parishioners? Here are a few tips for diversifying engagement opportunities in your parish:

1. **Create a process/class to help members discover their gifts or charisms, and develop them.** The good news is that today you'll find many options to help with this. Spiritual gift assessments and tests come in many forms. Some are free, others come with a small cost. Develop a process that helps your parish develop their gifts, not just use them.
2. **Have a “Come and Try Day” for parishioners to use their gifts and talents for different ministry efforts.** Like the “Come and See” retreats offered by many religious parishes, your parish can host a “Come and Try” ministry day or weekend that gives people the opportunity to discern through practice what ministry God might be calling them to join. Spiritual gift assessments can never tell you with 100 percent accuracy where a person can contribute most. Most people find their vocation to ministry by trial and error. Give volunteers permission to transition out of roles that don't fit them.
3. **Get technology that makes it easy to take next steps.** Every time you urge engagement from the faithful, try to provide digital opportunities as well. Effective use of technology will point people toward engagement and service opportunities and also toward your local parish. But not just any church tech—excellent church technology can help your church increase participation among parishioners and help them take natural next steps of faith.
4. **Think of creative ways to thank everyone who serves in your parish.** People like to be thanked. When your church develops a culture of gratitude toward those who are using their gifts, your parishioners will be encouraged to dive deeper into service.
5. **Create easy entry points for ministry and missions projects.** Some ministry efforts will require considerable training. You want small group leaders, lay counselors, and your other volunteers to feel properly trained and equipped when they begin serving.

But it doesn't just end there. Churches have to go the extra mile to create strong, flourishing parishes by teaching stewardship, leading the way with technology, and measuring engagement through a number of helpful metrics. Be sure to lean on the many sharp minds on your leadership team to help steer your church toward lasting ministry success.