

March 2020



ENCOUNTER!
Meeting Jesus
on Higher Ground.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of
heaven (Matt. 5:3).*

WISDOM

from ICSC strategic partners

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

ACS Technologies.



DIOCESAN



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:

- * seven ways to ease the wants of your parish courtesy of **ACS Technologies.**
- * five easy steps to follow before planning a parish campaign presented by **CCS.**
- * three tips to crafting meaningful messages that connect with parishioners and accomplish the mission for your parish or diocese from **Diocesan.**
- * welcoming ideas for your parish Easter guests compliments of **OSV.**
- * the Lenten Member Discount Rate - available until Easter! We invite you to join us at the ICSC Anaheim Conference September 27 to 30 to hear new ideas, innovations and strategies from our strategic partners and your peers!

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

7 THINGS ALL PARISHES WANT



We all have wants and needs. Parishes are no different. Meeting the wants is the hard part so we've developed 7 ways to ease the wants of your parish.

1. Get Them To Show Up

Church can't happen if people don't show up. People can't show up if they don't know you exist. Marketing, branding, and advertising can play a huge role in this. Once you bring them into your parish, let them know that they matter and care. Yes, we want to get people in the doors but we also want them to stay to see what Christ has in store for them.

2. Give Them A Great Experience

Create good experiences of God's presence, His Word, His love, and His power. Make the buildings look nice, the hymns sound good, and the messages meaningful to connect people with God's truth and feel welcomed. You want to make things clean and safe. Remember first impressions are everything!

3. Get Them To Come Back

Christianity is not a one-time event. It's a life lived with Christ in community with others. If people aren't coming back, they grow stagnate and remain immature in their faith. If they come back, we trust that Christ's Spirit will both work through us to reach them and move within them to change their hearts.

4. Get Money To Keep Going

Money makes things happen. It is a tool, not the goal. Jesus used money to fund His ministry the same way we use money to fund ours. Handle giving with care because it's a delicate issue. Remember to do things right. Ambiguity or misuse of finances will drive people away. In addition, share your vision. When you're excited about what God is doing and talking with others about it, they will give to the Church.

5. Get Them To Grow - Discipleship

Jesus said to make disciples not to build a crowd. Discipleship takes time. It takes years to learn how to live as members of God's Kingdom because it's values and principals are not like earthly ones. You should engage, establish, equip and empower your parishioners.

6. Get People Involved

This is done through an assimilation process. Share your parish's history, values, structure and vision. Help them understand the Church's beliefs by sharing essential Christian doctrine and disciplines. Lead them to discover their gifting a purpose by encouraging them to volunteer. You want to match people with ministries that maximize their potential.

7. Get Them Involved in the Community

The Gospel has roots in your parish when it bears fruit in your community. You want to instill a vision for service in your parishioners. Create a balanced church culture that creates service opportunities for your people. You want to partner with organizations and encourage small groups to choose their own projects.

Want to learn more about the wants of your parish? Get the full version of this guide [HERE](#).



Five Easy Steps Before Planning a Parish Campaign



By Carl Cervi, CCS Fundraising — 2020

Campaigns rarely fail in the middle or at the end. Success typically hinges on proper preparation prior to launching a major fundraising initiative. With increased competition for the philanthropic dollar, make sure to utilize the following five planning steps before moving forward.

1) Assessing the Accuracy of Parishioner Information

Before taking any steps forward with your campaign plan or case for support, it is absolutely essential to know the accuracy of your parishioner records. To ensure that your database is dependable, consider the following questions:

- How many parishioner email addresses and phone numbers do we currently have?
- Do we have reliable and consistent parishioner giving information?
- When was the last time our parish conducted a census?

2) Activating Your Advocates: Volunteers

One common denominator of successful parish campaigns is a strong volunteer infrastructure in place that includes every aspect of an existing ministry. Organize all ministry groups and their members into groups where they will be most effective. Convene volunteers early and often through gatherings to communicate next steps and maintain momentum before the campaign begins.

3) Honing Your Case for Support

While grand visions are essential for inspiring donors, it is also important to focus on specifics in your case for support. Necessary details include the following:

- How much will every aspect of your case cost?
- Is the parish set up to acknowledge and process a large volume of gifts over a multi-year period?
- If your case calls for mostly capital needs, what is the precise construction timeline?

The best case for support allows you to have answers to any questions that parishioners may ask. If you can produce a detailed list of items, costs, and projected timelines, you are one step closer to creating a robust case.

4) Solidifying Approvals

Involving your arch/diocese before you begin work on your campaign is essential. Every arch/diocese has a different campaign approval process. This is also a great opportunity to test how your newly-created case for support resonates with audiences. If your arch/diocese has questions or is uncertain about any aspect of your case, the chances are your parishioners may have similar concerns.

5) Improving Your Online Communications

Your digital communications plan should be consistent and backed by a comprehensive outreach strategy. Successful digital communications strategies provide steady outreach to parishioners, and make the process of online giving simple. Before embarking on a campaign, consider how you want to communicate and who will execute this plan.

What to Do Today

If you are considering a campaign, meet with your leadership to begin discussions about what the pressing needs of your parish are, and how you hope to accomplish these goals. Build a consensus around priorities so you can start your campaign planning on the right foot.

Send Messages that Accomplish the Mission

The ability to craft meaningful messages is simpler than you think. Connecting with your parishioners is an essential step to creating your messages. Below are three tips to crafting meaningful messages that connect with parishioners and accomplish the mission for your parish or diocese.

1

LISTEN TO PAPA

“It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal.” Pope Francis, 50th World Communication Day.

Pope Francis knows that, whatever the medium, successful communication must speak to the heart. Let’s learn from him: speak to what weighs on the hearts of your parishioners and they will pay attention. Rich content builds relationships. Become a trusted source of help and inspiration to your parishioners; they will respond to these messages.

2

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Each Catholic is in a different part of the faith journey. Stewardship flows from discipleship, and disciples are made by speaking to people’s hearts, no matter where they are on the journey of faith. Getting to know individuals in your parish will help you craft meaningful messages.

3

MIX “WHAT MATTERS” WITH “WHAT’S HAPPENING”

Parishes need to communicate both calendar events and the deeper truths of the Gospel. However, if you have to choose between the two, choose “what matters,” and make sure “what’s happening” is easily found on your parish website, bulletin, parish calendar, etc.

Here is an example: a parish needs to start a nursery. Start sending messages about how the parish recognizes the challenges of parents with small children. Then, let people know about the need for a nursery and for volunteers. Encourage those who do not need a nursery to pray for families that do. Finally, announce the availability of the nursery in a manner that promotes service, prayerful support and a caring parish community.



IS YOUR PARISH READY FOR EASTER GUESTS?

BY KATIE HERZING, OSV SENIOR PARISH COACH

As we enter the Lenten Season this year, I wanted to talk about preparing for Easter guests. We are coming up on one of the most important Liturgical Seasons, the Triduum and Easter. This also happens to be one of the days of the year when your parish welcomes the most guests. Are you ready? Here are some things you can do to prepare:

Ensure there are places for guests to park and sit. We all know Catholics have their “regular pew” and fiercely protect it. Are your parishioners prepared to ‘move-in’ to let guests easily sit down? Do they fill pews from the middle to the end already? Prepare ‘regulars’ to be extra hospitable to guests coming for Easter Mass.

What’s Next? Our guests who are either in from out of town or who visit us sparingly throughout the year were drawn to Mass on Easter for a reason. What are you inviting them to after Mass? Be sure to advertise for a few upcoming fellowship events, faith formation, and family events in this week’s bulletin. Maybe even open the bulletin with a welcome letter listing these activities.

Welcome Envelopes in the pews are a great way to invite people to register at the parish, request more information, or give a donation.

Advertise Easter Mass Times early and often. Most parishes have a different schedule for the Triduum and Easter so make sure everyone knows. Put it on your website homepage, the page with your Mass times, and the page where you have directions. My home parish creates a large banner that hangs on the street in front of the Church. Some parishes create Facebook Events for each Liturgy and event during the Triduum and invite their followers. This puts these special events right on their personal calendar and notifies them via Facebook app notifications.

If your parish has an overflow area for Mass, ensure that people can both see and hear the Mass. Print worship aids with the music and the readings so they can fully participate. Printable Gospel Weeklies for children are also a great idea. Don’t let ‘overflow’ be an ‘afterthought.’ Some parishes even have simultaneous Masses. For example, Mass in the Church begins at 9:30 am and Mass in the overflow begins at 9:45 am. This way everyone is present in the room where the Mass is happening. If your facility and clergy allow for this, consider it this year.

Too many times we miss the opportunity to really welcome guests and those who visit us sporadically throughout the year. Don’t miss the opportunities to welcome new people into your parish this Easter!!

Read more about any of these ideas, and more, at [transformyourparish.com](https://www.transformyourparish.com).

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The Sermon on the Mount | Fra Angelico, fresco, c.1436, Florence, Italy