

**A GUIDE FOR THE
LAY WITNESS PRESENTER**



2019 Catholic Charity Appeal

Diocese of Providence

Celebrating our 94th Anniversary

1925 – 2019

Why have a lay witness?

The in-pew method of solicitation can be very effective in soliciting a large percentage of the congregation on a single weekend. It is likely that most of the people who attend Mass on the in-pew weekend will contribute to the Catholic Charity Appeal. It is also likely, in spite of your best efforts to communicate through written appeals, letters, brochures and newsletters that many have either not read the material or have not decided on making their pledge. This is a great opportunity to reach these parishioners. It provides simultaneous motivation to all who are in attendance, and requests immediate action while the matter is still fresh in their minds. The use of a lay witness is an effective means of increasing participation. Remember that people give to people.

Who should be asked to make the lay witness presentation?

- An energetic and enthusiastic speaker
- A long-standing active parishioner
- A contributor to the Catholic Charity Appeal
- A member of the Parish Council, Finance Committee or a parish commission
- A lector, Eucharistic Minister or catechist

What are you asked to do as a lay witness presenter?

- 1.) Meet with your pastor and parish chairperson to review your role as a lay presenter and ask what suggestions they have for your comments.
- 2.) Ask how the pastor will introduce you at each Mass on the in-pew weekend. The ideal way is to have the pastor introduce the lay presenter at each Mass.
- 3.) Determine the best way to coordinate the in-pew collection with the head usher at each Mass.
- 4.) Arrange with the pastor for an opportunity to practice from the pulpit in the church before your actual presentation.
- 5.) The lay witness talk should not take the place of the celebrant's talk on the Appeal.

What are some basic hints for developing your talk?

- 1.) Be conscious of your appearance.
- 2.) Jot down and outline your thoughts.
- 3.) Write out the outline using double spacing and large print.
- 4.) Real people stories and experiences work better than statistics.
- 5.) Remember that you are a performer out there – The outcome you are seeking is 100% response.
- 6.) Try to keep your talk less than five minutes in duration.
- 7.) Speak from the heart - Strive to deliver the talk in a sincere, enthusiastic and friendly manner.
- 8.) Emphasize the opportunity donors have to give out of compassion, concerns or gratitude for their own blessings.
- 9.) Think for a moment. What motivates a person to give?
- 10.) Conclude with a brief word mentioning how stewardship enables us to return, with deep and sincere appreciation, a portion of our gifts of time, talent and treasure to God.
- 11.) Practice, practice, practice! Practice your talk aloud in front of a mirror. Deliver it to your spouse, family or friend and ask for their critique.

What are some points to consider when making your presentation?

- 1.) Include a “thank you” in your talk. Thank your fellow parishioners for their past support of the Appeal.
- 2.) Explain that 92 cents out of every dollar contributed to the Appeal goes to programs to help people in need in our diocese.
- 3.) Remember that you need to speak very clearly and slowly to give your listeners time to follow the process with you.
- 4.) In your talk, tell the parishioners that you have pledged your support to the annual Appeal. This sign of your leadership is an important way to teach by providing an example of Christian stewardship.
- 5.) Be confident, enthusiastic and emotional while speaking from your heart. Enjoy the experience.
- 6.) **Be sure to make a request for a specific monthly sacrifice based on the ability of the average person to give.**
- 7.) Your job isn’t so much to teach or to explain – It’s to move people to act. Don’t be ashamed to ask.
- 8.) Tell stories that demonstrate and describe the many needs (see sample scripts included within this guide).
- 9.) What you do with your talk will have a direct impact on how people will respond to the Appeal. Your words will make a difference.

What are some recommendations regarding In-pew solicitation?

- 1.) The in-pew solicitation should be conducted immediately after the celebrant's homily.
- 2.) Begin the in-pew instructions immediately after you complete your comments. This should be a separate collection and not part of the offertory collection.
- 3.) Explain the theme of this year's Catholic Charity Appeal.
- 4.) Be sure to explain the three options of making a gift to the Catholic Charity Appeal. Encourage people to pledge – People who pledge generally find that they can afford a larger gift since the payments are spread over the entire year.
- 5.) Ask those parishioners who have given in the past to consider “stepping up” their gift to this year's Appeal.
- 6.) Be sure to encourage people to complete the envelope in church. Do not encourage them to take the envelopes home.
- 7.) Comment on the importance of the Appeal as a statement of how we can come together to meet the needs of the people of the Diocese of Providence.
- 8.) Close your presentation with a strong finish. Consider a prayer, scripture reference or a personal experience.
- 9.) Remember, what you do with your talk can have a direct impact on how people will respond to this year's Appeal.

A Sample Script of Specific Instructions for In-pew Solicitation

With your help, we will now implement the in-pew solicitation for the Catholic Charity Appeal. I am going to proceed slowly and I ask for your patience as we do this together as a parish family.

This year, even more parishes have opted to use this method of solicitation. Our giving together as a parish is a sign of our commitment as a member of the Holy Catholic family in Christ.

I won't presume to ask you how much to give. We only ask that we attain 100% parish participation. For some of you, participation may only be filling out the envelope indicating that you are unable to give to the Catholic Charity Appeal this year. Please be as generous as you can when you decide on your gift.

(Use only during second in-pew weekend)

Some of you may have already made your contribution last week or through the mail. If this is the case, we ask that you now pray for the success of the Catholic Charity Appeal.

Having said this, let us now begin.

In each pew, you will find a supply of in-pew envelopes along with pencils/pens. If you are sitting at the ends of the pew, please make sure that every parishioner sitting in your pew has what he or she needs.

Clearly print your name, address and telephone number and e-mail address, if you have one, in the appropriate spaces. Please note that your gift will be credited to this parish unless you check the box indicating that you are visiting this parish and would like your gift credited to the parish where you are registered. I ask that you check the appropriate box if you have already given through the mail.

Pause 20 seconds

Next, please consider the amount of your gift.

Slow down

Please note that you can make a gift by choosing one of three options. The first option is to make a pledge with some portion of this amount paid today with the balance billed in accordance with the terms you specify.

Pause 20 seconds

The second option is to make a pledge with no deposit today and spread the payments across the terms you specify.

Pause 20 seconds

We ask that you consider making a pledge versus making a one-time cash gift. If you make a pledge, the Stewardship & Development Office will send you a reminder of the balance due based upon the payment schedule you have selected. If you would prefer to make a regular monthly gift by using a credit card or through direct debit, please visit our secure website at www.providencediocese.org. Please remember to check the box on the inside flap of the in-pew envelope to indicate a credit card or direct debit gift.

Pause 20 seconds

The third option is to make a one-time cash gift that will be paid today by cash or check. Make check payable to Catholic Charity Appeal.

Pause 20 seconds

We now ask that you enclose your cash or check and seal the envelope.

Pause 20 seconds

The ushers will now collect your envelopes. On behalf of the thousands of Rhode Islanders in our diocese who benefit from your generosity, I thank you for your patience and for sharing the many blessings bestowed upon you.

Sample Lay Witness Remarks

Sample Script # 1:

Good evening / good morning! I have been asked by Father (pastor's name) to speak to you briefly today about the annual Catholic Charity Appeal. Since the Catholic Charity Appeal was established by Bishop William Hickey in 1925, the Diocese of Providence, through its parishes, schools, ministries and programs has enjoyed a long history of service and support for the many needs of the people of Rhode Island.

It is very important to reach out beyond our individual parish boundaries and realize that a donation to the Catholic Charity Appeal will help address the needs of our entire diocesan family. The funds raised through our Catholic Charity Appeal help to support our numerous diocesan ministries which provide for the physical, educational and the spiritual needs of thousands of Rhode Island families every year. Specifically, Catholic Youth Organizations (CYO) and summer camps such as Mother of Hope provide a safe environment for inner city children.

The Social Ministry programs of the Diocese of Providence serve tens of thousands of people each year including the elderly who may need special assistance in their daily lives. In addition, those people in dire need of temporary assistance with their rent payments and other living expenses turn to Project Hope for help. Your continuing support and generosity provides financial assistance to 34 diocesan elementary schools and nine high schools as well as Bishop McVinney Regional School, which is located in the inner city of Providence. As a result of your continuing support to the Catholic Charity Appeal, more than 35,000 people of all age groups are able to participate in a number of religious education programs. Your continued generosity will provide comfort and assistance to the person suffering from AIDS, the sick and elderly, the physically and mentally challenged and the hungry and homeless.

All that we have is a gift from God. As Christians, we are called upon to be stewards or managers of the many gifts we have received from a gracious and loving God. We are reminded that we are accountable to God for the use of all things. Therefore, we must share our God given gifts of time, talent and treasure. As Disciples of Christ, we have been called to Stewardship and have responded to Jesus' invitation to "Come follow me." We have a mission as Stewards to be caretakers of all God's gifts.

As you consider your contribution to this year's Catholic Charity Appeal, remember that your gift of treasure is your answer to Jesus' call to discipleship by serving the needs of the less fortunate. When we give of our treasure, it is beneficial in promoting good spiritual health of the individual, family and community because it enables us to give thanks and return to God the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us. When considering an amount to contribute, please reflect on your many blessings and good fortunes. As Catholics, we should make a conscious effort to give from our first fruits. That is, we should give from our substance and not from our surplus. By giving of our substance, we offer a sacrifice which leads to a conversion of our heart and mind.

Please consider increasing your gift by taking advantage of a pledge plan. By making a pledge, it becomes a convenient and less painful way to spread smaller payments over a period of time which will enable you to share more with those in need. Historically, donors contribute at least six times more money by making payments over time rather than a one-time cash gift.

In closing, as you reflect on your contribution to this year's Catholic Charity Appeal, please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your generosity which will provide hope to those who sometimes view their lives as hopeless. If I may quote the New Testament, Matthew, chapter 25, verse 40, "The king will answer them: 'I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.'" Thank you.

Sample Script # 2:

Good Evening/Morning, for those of you who don't know me my name is (your name) and I am a parishioner here at (name of parish). I would like to speak to you this weekend about the Annual Catholic Charity Appeal being conducted in our parish. In a few minutes pledge envelopes will be distributed and we will all have the opportunity to make a gift to this year's Appeal. However, before we do this I just wanted to take a moment to share with you some thoughts about what the Appeal is really all about.

Upon reflection, most of us can truthfully say that we have been blessed by God with many wonderful gifts. Our families, our homes, our work and the many freedoms we enjoy in our nation are all evidence of this point. And while most of us are certainly not wealthy, we have been, in some small measure beyond the bills, the braces and tuition, been graced with many blessings. The problem is that some among us, maybe even here in our own parish, struggle a bit more to see these blessings.

Each day in our diocese people in need turn to the Church for help and support. Some are hungry, some are homeless, some are sick, and some are even imprisoned by pain, anger or fear. These are all familiar phrases to us, as they are real life examples of Scripture passages we have heard many times here at Mass. Jesus said, "the poor will always be with you" and He certainly was right. In addition to the poor however, there are other people who turn to the Church for help in other ways. These people ask for our Church's help to bring Christ to others just as powerfully. These people help in working with our youth, or receive help with a solid Catholic education, or family counseling, or building stronger parish religious education programs. All of these things are what we help to provide when we give to the Catholic Charity Appeal.

By working together we can bring Christ's message out into the world. We as a family of faith can help bring a little light and a little hope to thousands of people each year by supporting the Appeal. As you fill out your envelope, just take a moment to thank God for all He has done for you and be as generous as you can.

Please consider a pledge of \$_____ (consider your parish average gift amount from last year's Appeal).

Whatever you can do, you will be doing it for those who really need you, members of our one family in Christ.

That's why I support this Appeal and I hope you will too. Thank you and God bless.

“My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active.” (1 John 3:18)

“There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit.”
(1 Corinthians 12:4)

“Remember, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:21)

“I am the vine, you are the branches.” (John 15:5)

“Let everything you do be done in love.” (1 Corinthians 16:14)

“And there is no limit to the blessings which God can send you – He will make sure that you will always have all you need for yourselves in every possible circumstance, and still have something to spare for all sorts of good works.”

(2 Corinthians 9:8-9)

“Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other.” (Romans 12:4-6)

“This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

Parables Relating to Stewardship

Parable

Bible Passage

The Two Debtors	Luke 7: 41-43
The Hidden Treasure	Matthew 13:44
The Costly Pearl	Matthew 13: 45-46
The Unmerciful Servant	Matthew 18: 23-25
The Good Samaritan	Luke 10: 29-37
The Friend at Midnight	Luke 11: 5-8
The Rich Fool	Luke 12: 16-21
The Barren Fig Tree	Luke 12 6-9
The Tower Builder	Luke 14: 28-30
The King Contemplating a Campaign	Luke 14: 31-33
The Lost Sheep	Luke 15: 3 – 7
The Lost Coin	Luke 15: 8-10
The Prodigal Son	Luke 15: 11-32
The Unjust Steward	Luke 16: 1-9
The Rich Man and Lazarus	Luke 16: 19-31
The Unjust Judge	Luke 18: 1-8
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	Luke 18: 9-14
The Generous Employer	Matthew 20: 1-16
The Wicked Tenants	Mark 12:1-12 Matthew 21: 33-46 Luke 20: 9-19
The Servant Entrusted With Supervision	Matthew 24: 45-51 Luke 12: 42-48
The Talents	Matthew 25: 14-30 Luke 19: 12-27
Sheep and Goats	Matthew 25: 31-46

**If you would like more information about the Catholic Charity Appeal,
please call the Office of Stewardship & Development at 277-2121.**