

Diocese of Marquette

How to Advance Parish Stewardship: Ideas for Building a Virtual Community

The focus for building a virtual community is keeping parishes healthy, spiritually and financially, and keeping parishioners engaged in the life of the parish.

Communications

1. Communicate frequently!
2. Use multiple platforms to send messages. Layer the same message in multiple channels, for maximum results. Reach people where they are at – on their cellphones, on Facebook, at their mailbox.
 - a. Email (weekly)
 - b. Phone Calls (monthly)
 - c. Website (weekly updates)
 - d. US Mail (send parish-wide mail sparingly)
 - e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc. (daily)
 - f. Zoom meetings (weekly or monthly)
 - g. Videos (iPhone works well!) the more the better; keep them short and powerful.
3. Leverage communications between parishioners. Ask people to share your message with at least 5 others.
4. Send regular parish newsletters to all parishioners. Weekly is not too often! Embed a “donate” button that links to parish online giving.

Digital Presence

1. If livestreaming Mass, don't skip over the “passing the basket” part! Invite parishioners to continue regular offertory online or offline.
2. Weekly emails to entire parishioner base.
3. Coffee with the Pastor once/week via Zoom. Schedule a time, send the Zoom link, invite parishioners to join you! Begin & end with prayer, check in to see how people are doing, provide a spiritual message, and have a Q&A time with participants.
4. Lead people to the parish website. Embed digital links to important items within all parish digital communications. For example, get more people to view your parish bulletin by embedding a direct link to it in email and social media posts.

Improve Parish Systems

1. Build your parishioner email and cell phone list. Enter the data into your parish data base or email platform. Organize a call list to gather emails and cell phones for those parishioners that you do not have current data for.
2. Sign up for Flocknote and input parishioner emails and cell phone #s ASAP.

Financial

1. Keep people informed about the fiscal health of the parish.
2. Publish parish budget.
3. Make a secure lock box at the parish for parishioners to drop off their weekly envelope. Check it regularly!
4. Promote online giving.
5. Make sure every piece of digital communication includes a “Donate” button with embedded link to online giving.
6. Call your offertory envelope company & ask them to include a “Mail Back Envelope” in the next set.
7. Insert a return envelope to the parish in a mailing to all parishioners, along with a pastoral update message that includes an ask.

Gratitude

1. Personally thank people who are giving
 - a. their TIME
 - b. their TALENTS
 - c. their FINANCIAL GIFTS

We are here to help you! Please contact us if we may be of assistance.

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