

Lay Witness Resource Guide



2019 Catholic Charity Appeal

Diocese of Providence

Celebrating our 94th Anniversary

1925 – 2019

Do I Need to Have A Lay Witness Presenter?

It is highly recommended. The use of a lay witness is an effective means of increasing participation. Remember that people give to people. The lay witness presentation provides parishioners with a peer to peer example of why the Catholic Charity Appeal is an important responsibility shared by all members of the diocese. A witness brings into focus, through the sharing of personal examples, how and why support for the Appeal is vital to continue the work of the diocese.

The in-pew method of solicitation can be very effective in soliciting a large percentage of the congregation on a single weekend. We recommend having two in-pew weekends. The first weekend should include a lay witness presentation. The second in-pew weekend will be an opportunity for those who were unable to make a gift during the previous weekend Masses.

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. Inviting a lay witness to speak to the congregation provides unparalleled motivation to participate in the Appeal at that particular moment.

The focus of the Catholic Charity Appeal is serving Christ by serving others. As caretakers of God's gifts, we have been entrusted with what the Lord has provided each of us. As part of that responsibility, it is up to us to provide the means by which the Gospel message of Jesus Christ can be witnessed through the ministries of social justice, Catholic education, religious ministries and spiritual development. The goal of the lay witness should be to share with peers why support of the Appeal is important to you and others.

When recruiting a parishioner to deliver a lay witness presentation, be sure to select someone who is an energetic and enthusiastic speaker. It should also be someone who is a long-standing active parishioner and also a contributor to the Catholic Charity Appeal. This person should feel comfortable with speaking in front of a large audience.

Therefore, we have provided you with yet another resource in the event that you cannot recruit someone for this very important role in promoting the Catholic Charity Appeal. Please refer to the enclosed Lay Witness Speaker Directory as well as some key dates, specifically the two recommended in-pew weekends, for the 2014 Catholic Charity Appeal.

Sample Script of Specific Instructions for the 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 Bishop's Partnership in Charity. 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.

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 or quarterly 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 Fund. Or, follow the instructions on the form attached to the in-pew envelope to make a one-time credit card or direct debit gift.

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.

"Here at St. Vincent de Paul in Coventry we have a lay witness give a five minute presentation each year encouraging greater participation in CCA pledges and gifts. This is done on the first Sunday of our "in pew appeal." I think these presentations are very significant, personal and effective. They help the parishioners understand that other parishioners in the pews, not just the pastor, are sold on the importance of supporting our Diocesan CCA. The lay witness helps us reach our goal!"

Father Michael A. Kelley
Pastor
Saint Agatha and Precious Blood Parishes in Woonsocket

"Lay Witness speakers are a very beneficial resource for parishes. This year, two speakers from the diocese helped kick off our campaign. Their sharing was a great inspiration, and put a human face on what our participation in the annual appeal can achieve in the lives of many needy people. If you want a fresh and meaningful approach to the annual appeal, the Lay Witnesses will be a great help."

Father Jay A. Finelli
Pastor
Holy Ghost Parish in Tiverton

"A word from someone connected to the Catholic Charity endeavor always helps to validate not only the work but also the target of where the CCA money goes. It is no small thing today to know that. The brochure is fine but the hearing of a "voice" from the CCA sector gives the Bishop's request a certain honesty and comfort. I once heard the statement made by a bishop in a diocese far, far away that "sheep talk to the sheep better than the shepherd does."

Father Kenneth Suibielski
Pastor
Saint Claire Parish in Misquamicut

"One of the values of the lay witness presentation is that it subtly underlines the fact that charity is the a duty of all people not only priests and religious. To hear that a person's life has been changed due to his or her self-giving can certainly cause others to reflect upon their own lives and responsibilities. That a lay man or woman can speak of his or her recognition that all that we have is God-given and that we are mere custodians is quite thought provoking."

Father Stephen P. Amaral
Pastor
Our Lady of Czenstochowa Parish in Coventry

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