



Sharing our Blessings

THE INCREASED OFFERTORY INITIATIVE FOR
THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

Parish Program Manual
Section II

Sample Letters and Case for Support

Revised 6/1/10

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The following letters and case for support texts are intended to exemplify the types of communications that will be developed for each parish. Each document should take into account local styles and formats.

Announcement Letter

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT LETTER – PARISH LETTERHEAD

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Salutation),

Over the next two months, you will be hearing more about a new program at (Parish) Parish. This initiative asks us all to examine the role that Christian stewardship plays in our daily lives and our relationships, not just with our parish, but with the universal Catholic Church as well. We will be encouraged to give back a just portion of ourselves and our gifts to further the work of God's kingdom.

The intention of *Sharing Our Blessings*, the Increased Offertory Initiative for the Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester, is to look within our hearts and find what place stewardship plays in our lives and challenge ourselves to do even more to meet the needs of the Church.

In the coming weeks all parishioners will be asked to review their financial support of the parish. Depending on your circumstances you are asked to increase your support in proportion to your means. It is only when all donate a fair share that all will be able to assist the parish in its mission to teach, serve, worship and reach out to establish a fair and just world

We have identified several key areas of need that the parish hopes to address through increasing our regular gifts to the parish:

- X
- X
- X

Our present giving will not allow us to address these needs. The enclosed brochure describes the initiative for increased giving which will be undertaken in each parish in the diocese, and explains our parish needs in further detail. We are building toward (Date), which is Commitment Weekend at our parish. All parishioners will be asked to make their decisions by that day.

On behalf of the entire parish, I want to thank you for the contributions you continually provide to the parish. While I do not know if you are capable of increasing your generous level of giving, I do know that you will give it prayerful consideration.

Thank you again for all you have done in the past for our parish and please know I will continue to keep your family in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Pastor

Case for Support

How *Sharing Our Blessings* will Benefit our Parish

Since XXXX, our parish has endeavored to serve the spiritual and temporal needs of a diverse Parish family. For nearly XX years clergy, religious, and laity have helped establish a legacy that each parishioner benefits from today. However, nothing remains the same forever. Just like your family home, parish buildings constructed decades ago are in constant need of repairs and upgrades. And just like your family, our parish is constantly growing and changing. Though we have accomplished much over recent years, our shortfall in regular proportionate giving has limited our funding to current ministries and a few capital repairs, such as _____ and _____. Stewardship giving is the key to enhancing our financial stability and growth.

“Stewardship is a Way of Life”

As disciples of Jesus, we acknowledge all that we are and have are gifts from God. Each of us must nurture these blessings, not only for ourselves, but also for strengthening his Church and ministries to others. Faced with ever increasing needs for ministry and service, we now begin a new chapter in our stewardship journey as a Parish. The (Parish) family is undertaking an increased offertory initiative entitled *Sharing Our Blessings*. Every parish in the Diocese of Worcester will join in this Parish-based increased giving effort.

This initiative will permit (Parish) to take a major leap forward as we continue to prepare our ministries and buildings for service for future generations. Each parishioner will be asked to consider a sustained increase in regular offertory giving. As St. Peter exhorts each of us in his epistle, “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another...” Please consider how your proportionate sacrificial increase and prudent use of his blessings will permit our Parish to tackle the needs below:

- X
- X
- X

Once again like our founding mothers and fathers who looked to the future to provide for us, it is our responsibility not only to provide for our own needs but also the needs of our children and grandchildren who will come after us.

In order to meet these challenges we look to each of our parishioners to prayerfully consider a proportionate increase in their regular support of our parish: a share of the generous blessings that God continues to bestow on each of us.

As we look to the benefits, which will be returned to thousands, let us not lose sight that working together we can proclaim God’s message with pride.

How Sharing Our Blessings will Benefit our Parish

Parish Case for Support Here

Determining Your Commitment

Through Sharing Our Blessings, each parishioner will be asked to consider a specific increase in his or her giving to the parish offertory. We hope those parishioners who are in a position to do so will increase their support.

Our request is made in the expectation of increasing regular gifts to the parish and that such increases by each of us will have an immediate and tremendous impact on the vitality of our parish life.

There is no simple guideline that applies to everyone on how much to give; for each family any given amount represents a different sacrifice. What we seek is a prayerfully considered commitment to give in proportion to your ability to give and to give in appreciation for the gifts you have received from God.

Parish Picture Here



Parish Name and Picture Here

"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your produce." - Proverbs 3:9

Promoting Strong Parishes

The parishes of the Diocese of Worcester are active and vital parts of the Catholic Church's ministry and are a great gift of God to help us share our faith.

As a center of our Christian life, our parish is the place where we worship, where we hear God's Word, where we experience God's love, where we are nourished to live our mission in the world, where we find fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, where we baptize and educate our children, where we see them grow closer to God through Eucharist, Penance, Confirmation and Matrimony, and where we seek consolation as we bury our beloved dead.

In spite of difficult times, those who preceded us sacrificed to build the parishes we enjoy. Now it is our time to step forward to keep our parishes strong.



What Constitutes a Strong Parish?

- The people in leadership have a shared sense of mission
Its people are actively involved and committed to the work of God
There is a vibrant worshipping community with full and active participation
There is sufficient financial support to provide for our maintenance and growth

How is the Offertory Used?

For years, parishes have relied on the generosity of their parishioners to fund:

- Liturgies & Ministries
Staff Salaries & Benefits
Utilities, Upkeep & Maintenance
Insurance & Diocesan Obligations

Parishes also sponsor youth sports teams, provide for those in need, promote social justice programs, and do countless other projects in their communities.

How Will This Effort Help?

Through Sharing Our Blessings, we aim to invite parishioners to consider how the parish accomplishes all it does with limited resources and to imagine the potential that exists if every parishioner could make a faith commitment to increase and sustain his or her financial support.

What is Being Asked of us?

During this increased offertory initiative, we should all examine how truly fortunate we are as members of God's family. In response and in gratitude we are asked to make financial commitments representing our 'return' to God.

For too long, pastors and parishioners have avoided the conversation about the true costs of running a parish.

Part of the reason we have avoided the conversation is that for generations, parishes have benefited from an abundance of priests and religious vocations. Parishes today must strive to hire professional staff and offer fair compensation. It simply costs much more money now to maintain a strong and vibrant parish.

In 2010, every parish in the Diocese of Worcester will join in a common purpose: to change the way we think about our donations and to plan for a brighter future in each of our faith communities by gradually increasing and sustaining our levels of support.

By conducting Sharing Our Blessings, parishes will realize immediate increases in their offertory income and will be able to plan accordingly.

Christ's Teachings on Giving

Almost half of the parables of Jesus include references to stewardship and money. Jesus preached being a good steward and the Bible interprets this as giving back to God the first fruits of our labors.

How Christians have chosen to apply 'first fruits' over the years is, of course, very different. The message is clear, however: Everything we have is a gift from God and we are asked to return a portion of those gifts in gratitude for all we have.

Today, let us begin an examination of our personal blessings.

Stewardship giving is a conscious way of supporting the weekly collection through annual planning. It means that we take some time every year to consider seriously our donations in support of our parish's annual budget and make a sustainable commitment.

"Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities, discipleship and stewardship, then make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord" - U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

Request Letters

SAMPLE REOUEST LETTER TO LEAD DONORS – CAMPAIGN LETTERHEAD



THE INCREASED OFFERTORY INITIATIVE FOR
THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Salutation),

Last week I wrote to you announcing *Sharing Our Blessings*, an increased offertory initiative, and the ways in which this endeavor will assist (Parish) Parish. I know you have thought and prayed about our current situation and how you can help your parish address these needs. Thank you for your concern.

Enclosed you will find a gift plan card with suggested increases to your regular giving. I know you have been one of the most faithful and generous contributors to our parish and I am grateful for your sacrifices. If you are able to increase your regular contribution, I would personally be most grateful. In any case, please know that what you have done for the parish in the past, and continue to do in the future, does not go unnoticed. Should you be inclined to increase your giving, please return the form by Commitment Weekend, (Date).

It is my hope that *Sharing Our Blessing* will strengthen the already healthy and generous relationship you have with your parish. Let me also remind you that giving comes in many forms, and opportunities to practice Christian stewardship present themselves every day. I pray that you will be challenged by this request and respond with a generous increase in your regular contribution.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Pastor

Please tear off the form below and return it in the collection

<<Name>>

<<Address>>

<<City, ST ZIP>>

My/our CURRENT regular giving is \$_____ (per ___ Week ___ Month ___ Quarter ___ Year).

In response to *Sharing Our Blessings* and for the special needs of my/our parish, my/our NEW regular giving is \$_____

I would like to sign up for electronic giving. Please send me information to get started.

SAMPLE REOUEST LETTER TO ENVELOPE USERS AND REGULAR DONORS –
CAMPAIGN LETTERHEAD



THE INCREASED OFFERTORY INITIATIVE FOR
THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Salutation),

Last week I wrote to you announcing *Sharing Our Blessings*, an increased offertory initiative, and the ways in which this endeavor will assist (Parish) Parish. I know you have thought and prayed about our current situation and how you can help your parish address these needs. Thank you for your concern.

Enclosed you will find a gift plan card with suggested increases to your regular giving. These are significant and we would not undertake such a program if our needs were not equally significant. After you discuss your current situation with your family, please indicate your gift increase on the Commitment Form which is attached below and return the form by Commitment Weekend, (Date).

It is my hope that *Sharing Our Blessings* will strengthen an already healthy and generous relationship you have with our parish. Let me also remind you that giving comes in many forms, and opportunities to practice Christian stewardship present themselves every day. I pray that you will be challenged by this request and respond with a substantial increase in your regular contribution.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Pastor

Please tear off the form below and return it in the collection

<<Name>>

<<Address>>

<<City, ST ZIP>>

My/our CURRENT regular giving is \$ _____
(per ___ Week ___ Month ___ Quarter ___ Year).

In response to *Sharing Our Blessings*
and for the special needs of my/our parish,
my/our NEW regular giving is \$ _____

I would like to sign up for electronic giving.
Please send me information to get started.



THE INCREASED OFFERTORY INITIATIVE FOR
THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Salutation),

Last week I wrote to you announcing *Sharing Our Blessings*, an increased offertory initiative, and the ways in which this endeavor will assist (Parish) Parish. I know you have thought and prayed about our current situation and how you can help your parish address these needs. Thank you for your concern.

It has been some time since you regularly used the parish offertory envelopes, though I know, from the collection of loose cash each week that some parishioners do contribute without using the envelopes. If you do contribute to the parish in this way, I would ask that you consider using the offertory envelopes and indicate an appropriate increase to your regular contribution.

If you are not currently supporting the parish on a regular basis, I would also encourage you to join us in this effort. If you would like to discuss your personal situation and how you can recommit yourself to the church, I am always available to meet with you. Please call me at your convenience.

The enclosed gift plan card offers you several options to consider. Upon your decision, please indicate your gift intentions on the Commitment Form which is attached below and return the form by Commitment Weekend, (Date).

It is my hope that *Sharing Our Blessings* will assist you in initiating a regular schedule of contributions. Let me also remind you that giving comes in many forms, and opportunities to practice Christian stewardship present themselves every day.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Pastor

Please tear off the form below and return it in the collection

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<City, ST ZIP>>

My/our CURRENT regular giving is \$ _____
(per ___ Week ___ Month ___ Quarter ___ Year).

In response to *Sharing Our Blessings*
and for the special needs of my/our parish,
my/our NEW regular giving is \$ _____

I would like to sign up for electronic giving.
Please send me information to get started.

SAMPLE GIFT CHART CARD (INCLUDED WITH REQUEST MAILING)

SIDE 1

Sharing Our Blessings offers every family the opportunity to respond to the needs of their parish.

The suggestions below are based simply on your current level of support and the parish’s need for additional funds. It is our hope and belief that many if not all of us in the parish could significantly increase our regular gifts.

Ultimately, what we seek and need is a carefully considered regular contribution from you and everyone in the parish - a gift in proportion to your ability to give and your appreciation of our parish’s efforts on behalf of yourself and your family. For each family a different level of giving represents a ‘sacrifice.’

If your regular giving is now:	Please consider increasing your regular giving to:
\$15	\$21-25
\$14	\$20-24
\$13	\$19-23
\$12	\$18-22
\$11	\$17-21
\$10	\$15-19
\$9	\$14-18
\$8	\$11-15

SIDE 2

Tithe Chart - Yearly Income

According to this chart, what percent of your income are you giving to the parish each year?

	1%	2%	3%	5%	7%	9%	10%
\$5,000	\$50	\$100	\$150	\$250	\$350	\$450	\$500
\$10,000	\$100	\$200	\$300	\$500	\$700	\$900	\$1,000
\$15,000	\$150	\$300	\$450	\$750	\$1,050	\$1,350	\$1,500
\$20,000	\$200	\$400	\$600	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$1,800	\$2,000
\$25,000	\$250	\$500	\$750	\$1,250	\$1,750	\$2,250	\$2,500
\$35,000	\$350	\$700	\$1,050	\$1,750	\$2,450	\$3,150	\$3,500
\$45,000	\$450	\$900	\$1,350	\$2,250	\$3,150	\$4,050	\$4,500
\$55,000	\$550	\$1,100	\$1,650	\$2,750	\$3,850	\$4,950	\$5,500
\$65,000	\$650	\$1,300	\$1,950	\$3,250	\$4,550	\$5,850	\$6,500
\$75,000	\$750	\$1,500	\$2,250	\$3,750	\$5,250	\$6,750	\$7,500
\$90,000	\$900	\$1,800	\$2,700	\$4,500	\$6,300	\$8,100	\$9,000
\$110,000	\$1,100	\$2,200	\$3,300	\$5,500	\$7,700	\$9,900	\$11,000
\$130,000	\$1,300	\$2,600	\$3,900	\$6,500	\$9,100	\$11,700	\$13,000
\$150,000	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$7,500	\$10,500	\$13,500	\$15,000
\$180,000	\$1,800	\$3,600	\$5,400	\$9,000	\$12,600	\$16,200	\$18,000
\$200,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$10,000	\$14,000	\$18,000	\$20,000

Follow-up Letter

SAMPLE LETTER TO NON-RESPONDENTS – CAMPAIGN LETTERHEAD



THE INCREASED OFFERTORY INITIATIVE FOR
THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Salutation),

As you know, our parish has been engaged in an increased offertory program. Through this appeal, we hope to raise the regular offertory of the parish by a minimum of 25% while educating all parishioners about the responsibility of being a good steward.

I hope you will consider making a commitment to *Sharing Our Blessings* as it will benefit the health and well being of our parish. It is through the involvement of ALL our parishioners that we can take a significant step toward addressing our case needs.

Please complete the form below and return to me in the enclosed confidential envelope. Your commitment matters to me and I would personally be most appreciative if you joined us in this effort.

Thank you for your commitment to (Parish).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Pastor

Please tear off the form below and return it in the collection

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<City, ST ZIP>>

My/our CURRENT regular giving is \$ _____
(per ___ Week ___ Month ___ Quarter ___ Year).

In response to *Sharing Our Blessings*
and for the special needs of my/our parish,
my/our NEW regular giving is \$ _____

I would like to sign up for electronic giving.
Please send me information to get started.

Acknowledgement Letters

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER – PARISH LETTERHEAD

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Salutation),

Thank you for your prayerful response to the *Sharing Our Blessings* program. Your decision to increase your level of giving is a gift and a blessing to our faith community. It will enable the parish to strengthen our goals and with hope to move into the future. None of this is possible without the sacrificial support of many parishioners like you.

More important than paying our bills and maintaining our property, our most imperative goal is to engage more parishioners in the daily life of the parish. If you are not already involved in one of our ministries, please consider offering your services. I hope that you will continue to be part of helping us define and deliver important new ministries.

On behalf of all the members of (Parish), thank you for responding to our needs. Please know that you and your family remain in our prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Pastor

SAMPLE LETTER TO REFUSALS – PARISH LETTERHEAD

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Salutation),

Thank you for your prayerful response to the *Sharing Our Blessings* program. We appreciate your consideration. Even though you are not able to increase your financial support at this time, we are grateful for all you have done and will continue to do to make (Parish) a vital faith community.

More important than paying our bills and maintaining our property, our most imperative goal is to engage more parishioners in the daily life of the parish. If you are not already involved in one of our ministries, please consider offering your services. I hope that you will continue to be part of helping us define and deliver important new ministries.

None of this would be possible without the prayerful support of everyone. We know that your prayers will continue to guide and strengthen us in the future. On behalf of all the members of (Parish), thank you for your support and encouragement. Please know that you and your family remain in our prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Pastor