

# **In-Pew Solicitation Step-by-Step**

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## **What is an In-Pew Solicitation?**

This process is recommended for obtaining donations from a large portion of your parish at one time. This method of inviting participation requests a response by parishioners in church following an informational and motivating lay witness presentation. If implemented thoroughly and properly, this practice increases both the number of donors and the dollars contributed.

## **How to make your In-Pew Solicitation successful:**

1. Be sure that parishioners have at least two weeks advance notice before they are asked for their gifts. This way they will come to church prepared to make a pledge or cash donation.
2. Posters should be displayed in appropriate visible locations. Utilize special bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements and Prayers of the Faithful to inform people of the upcoming Appeal and its benefits to those in need.
3. Recruit a lay witness. The use of a lay witness is an effective way of increasing participation. Select those among your parishioners who are energetic and enthusiastic speakers. Remember that people give to people.
4. One week prior to your in-pew weekends, remind and encourage parishioners to read the Annual Pastoral Appeal Brochure that was mailed to them.
5. On In-Pew weekends, place In-Pew envelopes and pens at the end of the pews, (be sure to straighten and replenish the supply before each Mass).
6. After the celebrant gives a brief homily, a lay witness shares briefly his/her experience regarding the Annual Pastoral Appeal.
7. Either the celebrant or the lay witness should then give step-by-step instructions on how to fill out the In-Pew envelope, encouraging the pledge option. Be sure to offer a parish average gift amount as part of the instruction. Urge the parishioners to complete the envelopes in church.
8. At this time your parishioners should be prepared to make their donations. Allow two to three minutes for the parishioners to make their contributions.
9. The ushers or special collectors should now collect the completed envelopes.
10. As with all methods of solicitation, the follow-up is a necessary and vital element of success to the Appeal.

# In-Pew Solicitation Helpful Hints

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All perspective donors (your parishioners) should be alerted in advance that the parish will be undertaking this practice of inviting participation, as well as specific dates and times. Parishioners should be notified of in-pew donation opportunities through specific announcements in the parish bulletin, pulpit announcements, as well as at the end of Mass prior to those weekends. Posters should be visibly placed in the church vestibule, gathering center, hall or school. The announcement in church enables parishioners to reflect about their gift during the coming week and prepares them to make a decision when the week of the in-pew solicitation takes place.

An in-pew invitation can be easily included in the weekly Mass without disruption to the celebration of the Liturgy. After the celebrant gives a brief homily, a lay witness shares his/her experience regarding the Annual Pastoral Appeal.

## *Here are some helpful hints:*

- Four or five lay volunteers are needed at each Mass to distribute envelopes and pens in each pew and to replenish them at the end of each solicitation
- It's best if your lay witness is a volunteer, parish appeal chairperson, a person who has first-hand knowledge of a specific ministry or a parishioner moved by the Holy Spirit and witness to charity. (This lay witness does not have to be the same person at each Mass, but, there is some benefit to the continuity of the message, especially if delivered well.)
- The Pastor or lay volunteer should indicate a suggested amount (for example, the average gift amount from your last year's Appeal) and begin instructing parishioners on how to fill out the envelope. Remember to provide an explanation on the ways to give, (pledge, pledge with payment, one-time gifts). Remind donors that pledging will allow them to increase their gift without changing their budget too much and provides an easy payment plan
- Parishioners should fill out their names, gift amount, gift duration (pledge or one-time gift) or if they are still thinking about their gift
- Those making a payment should enclose it and seal the envelope. Making checks payable to the Annual Pastoral Appeal
- Envelopes are then gathered by passing them to the end of the pew where the ushers collect them by hand
- Be sure that all envelopes sent to the Campaign Processing Office are stamped with your parish name

## **In-Pew Solicitation Modified for Hispanic Communities**

When expecting participation from our Hispanic cultures in sacrificial giving, careful consideration and education must be considered. For many in our Hispanic Communities a pledge is a new way to think about supporting the Church. When presenting this option in an in-pew Solicitation and offering a gift level, it is important to express equal sacrifice, not equal gift amount.

*Below are several suggestions for adopting the In-Pew Solicitation for our Hispanic Communities, using the Spanish In-Pew envelopes.*

- **Implement weekly payments:** Ask parishioners to consider a total amount to give and indicate that amount in the area where the total gift and payment suggestions are located. Explain that this offers them the option of considering a total gift that they may pay over 5 weeks. Then take up a special collection over a period of 5 weeks, keeping track of names and amounts

Ex: Purchase colored envelopes OR number a series of envelopes (1 of 5, 2 of 5, etc.); have them put their name and address on the envelope and ask them to bring the envelopes to Mass with their gift each week

- **Monthly payments:** Ask parishioners to consider a total amount to give and indicate that amount in the area where the total gift and payment suggestions are located. Explain that this offers them the option of considering a total gift that they may pay over 5 months. Ask the donors to submit monthly payments to the parish until the entire amount is paid. Then choose a Sunday during the month, (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday...whichever is accommodating to the parish), and announce when the Special Collection for these envelopes will take place. At this time the parish can submit these envelopes to Campaign Processing in the normal procedure
- **Community gift:** The parish offers a pledge for the Hispanic Community and takes up collections throughout the year and submits payments toward the amount pledged. (This would require a pledge card to be filled out on behalf of the Community.)