

COURAGEOUS *Communications*

Helping Parishes to Proclaim, Invite & Encounter



COURAGEOUSLY
Living the Gospel

TO ENGAGE means to occupy, attract, or involve someone's interest or attention. This is what we are called to do with the Gospel! We are called to engage others in the Sacramental life and a life of spirituality and service that leads us closer to Christ and deeper in faith. As our sacred purpose for **Courageously Living the Gospel** states,

“*We are a joyful community of Disciples, proclaiming the Good News and inviting all to encounter the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.*”

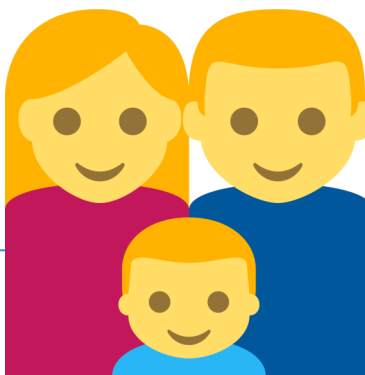
In order to engage your community, let's look at six communication strategies that can help inspire, inform and invite people to become more involved with your mission/ ministry/parish.

6 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

1 Personal Approach for Impact

Looking for the biggest impact? Get personal!

To really get someone's attention, meet them face-to-face. Non-verbal gestures (such as smiling), tone, eye contact and vocal fluctuations really help deliver your message in a powerful way. However, that's only one piece of the puzzle. Other tools of communication will keep someone inspired and informed for the long-run and provide frequency of messaging which is important for recall and action. Plus, one-on-one communication is not always practical.



2 Emailing for Consistency

Emailing is a direct and intentional notification. According to Forbes, the average person checks their email about 15 times per day. Instead of junk mails, send **hope mail**. These are messages that contain information, inspiration and invitation about topics we care about. Flocknote is a great tool for emailing that lets you send text messages, post to social media and to your website at the same time!

3 Texting for Urgency

Text messaging has an average 94% open rate. While texting is generally a personal space, it's the best space to communicate time sensitive and urgent information. If people sign up to receive updates and reminders via text, it means they are open to your notifications. However, always be intentional and only provide information as needed, otherwise your subscribers may opt-out. Flocknote is also a great tool for text messaging.

4 Web Updates for Context

The web is your online presence. Websites today need to be beautiful

and functional. It's the first place people will often visit before entering your church. Keep useful information such as Mass times and contact info easy to find. Also, use your website to share blog posts (or news items) about what is happening or has happened at your parish. These can also be called "Praise Reports." Send out links to these stories as part of your regular email communication. Share these stories in your bulletin as well.



5 Parish Screens & Bulletins for Stability

Parish screens and bulletins are effective to a point. They only reach people who are at Mass every Sunday and arrive early enough to view the screens and the people who choose to pick up/take home the bulletin. To help engage your parishioners with these tools, keep your designs beautiful and clean and brand your communication with colors, fonts and design elements that tie in to your website and email communications.

6 Direct Mail for Special Occasions

Direct mail is still special. Yes, many people receive junk mail, but your mail will be **hope mail!** Inspire, inform and invite your community with a personal message from your pastor about major events and liturgies via direct mail. Your parishioners will feel honored to have received a special message from your pastor.



6 WAYS TO IMPLEMENT YOUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

1 Collect contact information for your registered parishioners and visitors

This can be done in the following ways:

Registration Cards: Collect home address, email and cell phone numbers and ask people how they would like to receive updates about the parish.

Pew Cards: Have attractive cards in the pews that invite people to connect with you. Some people might not be ready to register at your parish but they might like to know what the parish is about and what it has to offer. By receiving regular updates, they will hopefully be inspired to join!

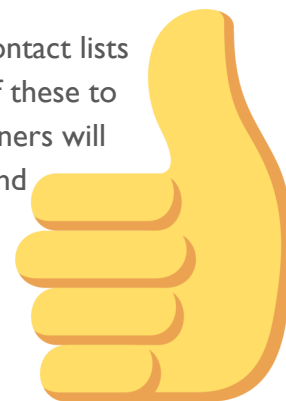
Sample Pew Card:



Website: Have a sign up on your website so visitors know that you want to stay connected. Web visitors can be asked to sign up for email or text message updates. They will appreciate that you have made it so easy to stay in touch! Here is an example of a parish webpage that details ways for parishioners to stay informed and inspired: <https://stlaurence.org/parish-communications>

Sign Up Sunday: Dedicate two or three Sundays a year for signing up people to receive your email and text messaging updates. People will be able to sign up by texting a short code (five numbers) or by visiting your webpage. The main point is to do the sign up after Communion or before announcements so that your congregation can do this together.

Contact Lists: Do you have contact lists for various ministries? Add all of these to your central list so that parishioners will receive news about the parish and about specific ministries they care about.



2 Create groups and assign admins to manage communications

Each ministry should have a communications liaison who keeps members informed. This liaison can be assigned the role of administrator in a Flocknote group to be able to send emails and text messages to members as needed. This administrator can only view their own contacts/members. All of the ministry groups and the people who have subscribed to your Flocknote network represent the “everyone” group in Flocknote. Only a super-administrator can communicate with this group. Examples of Flocknote groups could include: Faith Formation Parents, Youth Ministry Participants and Parents, Parish News Subscribers, Employees, Respect Life Ministry Participants, etc.

Example of how groups are managed on Flocknote:

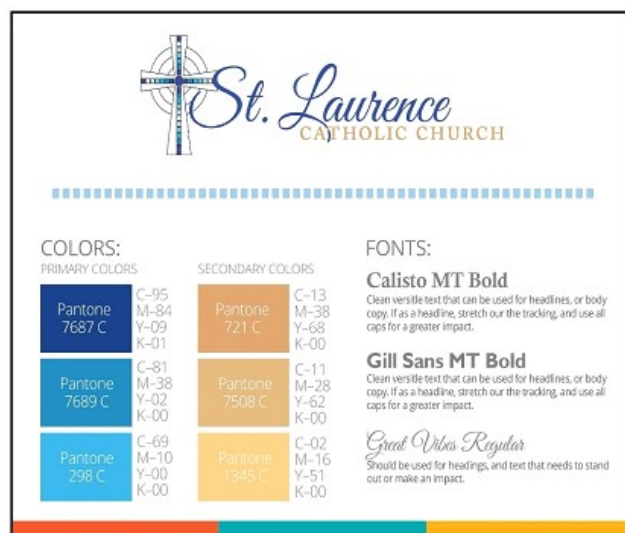


3 Develop a brand for all of your communications

A consistent brand is important – consistency in how we communicate, the tools we use, the messages we deliver and the visual appeal of the materials we create is critical to our parish brand. Our brand is how people visually identify our parish and in turn generates an emotional reaction from the people we serve. A brand includes a specific color combination,

logo, fonts and key words. Share this information with all of your group communication liaisons so the emails, graphics, and advertisements will all have a similar look to help people associate them with your parish. To reinforce your brand, always include the parish logo and the parish website address in your communications.

Example of Branding Guide by LPI



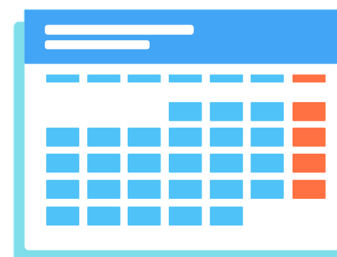
ATTRACT | Artistic Tools

“Graphic Standards” – basic advice, LPI plug
Modern, vibrant covers & clip art

4 Develop a scheduling calendar

All communication liaisons should plan out what they need to communicate to their members. This planning calendar will help them to know when to send emails and text messages. Help all parish ministries understand your parish protocols for communications by developing guidelines such as these: www.stmmdwc.org/useful-resources/parish-communications-guidelines/

See sample calendar on the next page.



BULLETIN PLANNER - 2017

2/27/18

| 2017 | Events | Cover | Page 3 Letter | Flyer #1 (AFF) | Flyer #2 | Flyer #3 | Flyer #4 |
|--------|---|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1-Jan | Solemnity of Mary | Solemnity of Mary | Good News Reflection | Jeff Cavins flyer | PASTORS CHALLENGE | Formed.org flyer | Come and See flyer |
| 8-Jan | Epiphany | Epiphany | Good News Reflection | Come and See | PASTORS CHALLENGE | New Parishioners list | Family Service flyer |
| 15-Jan | Baptism of the Lord | Respect for Life | Respect for Life | Choice Wine | Respect for Life | Santo Nino flyer | Family Night flyer |
| 22-Jan | SLCS 25th Anniversary | SLCS 25th Anniversary | School Letter | Curtis Martin SuperBowl | School photos/flyer | School photos/flyer | Reconstruction Project |
| 29-Jan | DSF, Catholic Schools Week | Beatitudes | Good News Reflection | Curtis Martin SuperBowl | HOW brochure | HOW brochure | Reconstruction Project |
| 5-Feb | Scout Sunday | St. Laurence Scouts | Troop 828 Letter | Disciples on Journey | HOW brochure | HOW brochure | CDR Worship Night |
| 12-Feb | World Marriage Day | Disciples on Journey | Disciples on Journey | Disciples on Journey | HOW brochure | HOW brochure | Rays of Enlightenment |
| 19-Feb | | Heart of Worship | Heart of Worship | Disciples on Journey | HOW brochure | HOW brochure | Family Service flyer |
| 26-Feb | HOW, Ash Weds | ENGAGE: Connect/Talk | WHAT: Connect/Talk | AFF series Shawn Carney | Lent CONNECT | Lent at St. Laurence | Rays of Enlightenment |
| 5-Mar | Lent | Lent at St. Laurence | Good News Reflection | Spring Speaker Series | Lent at St. Laurence | CONNECT: Start Talking | CDR Night flyer |
| 12-Mar | Lent, SPRING BREAK | Transfiguration | Good News Reflection | AFF series Debbie Jones | CDR Night flyer | CONNECT: Start Talking | Dynamo Flyer |
| 19-Mar | Lent | Woman at the Well | Good News Reflection | AFF series Debbie Jones | 40 Days for Life | PASTORS CHALLENGE | Viet Lenton Retreat flyer |
| 26-Mar | Lent | Blind Man | Good News Reflection | AFF series Debbie Jones | Pastoral Council Letter | PASTORS CHALLENGE | Formed.org |
| 2-Apr | Lent | Lazarus | Holy Week Schedule | AFF series Debbie Jones | SLCS Auction | Let's Start Talking | Mens Conference flyer |
| 9-Apr | Palm Sunday | Passion of the Lord | Holy Week Schedule | Come and See | ACTS Retreats | Let's Start Talking | New Parishioners List |
| 16-Apr | EASTER SUNDAY | Easter Sunday | Fr. Drew Letter | Come and See | ACTS Retreats | Engaged Church Update | Fatima Anniversary |
| 23-Apr | Divine Mercy Sunday | Divine Mercy Sunday | Divine Mercy Message | AFF series Fatima | CDR Night flyer | Engaged Church Update | In the Heart of Home flyer |
| 30-Apr | | ACTS Retreats | ACTS Retreats | AFF series Fatima | Child Abuse Month flyer | CDR Night flyer | Mens Conference flyer |
| 7-May | | Good Shepherd | Good News Reflection | Summer Intensive course | Fatima Anniversary | CDR Night flyer | Spiritual Survey Results |
| 14-May | Mothers Day | ENGAGE: Love/Thanks | WHAT: Love/Thanks | Formed.org | Catechist Thank You 1 | Catechist Thank You 2 | Explore Vocations Retreat |
| 21-May | | Womens Retreat | Womens Retreat | Fr Goring - New Pentecost | Women Retreat brochure | LOVE: Why Important | Holy Spirit Workshop |
| 28-May | ASCENSION, Memorial Day, Parish Baby Shower | Ascension | Good News Reflection | Fr Goring - New Pentecost | Holy Spirit Workshop | PASTORS CHALLENGE | Summer Parish Library |
| 4-Jun | PENTECOST | Pentecost | Good News Reflection | Marriage Night - Dr. Rees | PASTORS CHALLENGE | ACTS Flyer (tentative) | Family Night flyer |
| 11-Jun | Holy Trinity | Summer Service Projects | Summer Service Letter | Marriage Night - Dr. Rees | FTCM flyer | FTCM flyer | PASTORS CHALLENGE |
| 18-Jun | CORPUS CHRISTI, Fathers Day, Fortnight for Freedom | Corpus Christi | Good News Reflection | Marriage Night - Dr. Rees | PASTORS CHALLENGE | Fortnight for Freedom | Life Awareness Vocations |
| 25-Jun | Staubenville | Be Bold (gospel) | Good News Reflection | current threats to religious fr | Fortnight for Freedom | Fortnight for Freedom | Summer Youth Ministry |
| 2-Jul | Independence Day | Fortnight for Freedom | Fortnight Prayer | FORMED JULY FLYER | Stewardship Conference | Stewardship Conference | What Age Cell Phone |
| 9-Jul | | SCM Shoe Drive | Shoe Drive Letter | New Evangelization | Stewardship Conference | Stewardship Conference | Family Night flyer |
| 16-Jul | | Parable of Sower | Good News Reflection | Apologetics | Stewardship Conference | Stewardship Conference | Family Night flyer |
| 23-Jul | | Parable of Weeds | Good News Reflection | Apologetics | New Parishioners List | New Parishioner Form | Family Night flyer |
| 30-Jul | | Kingdom of God | Good News Reflection | Night w/Steve Bollman | Women's Retreat | Divine Mercy Study | ROA |
| 6-Aug | St. Laurence Feast (AUG 10) | Transfiguration | Good News Reflection | Evangelization | ROA | Family Night flyer | Divine Mercy Study |
| 13-Aug | Assumption (AUG 15) | Parish Theme | Turn Back Soul to Rest | Night w/Steve Bollman | Re-Membering Church | Arise Night of Worship | Family Night flyer |

5 Develop a Communications Ministry

Does your parish have talented photographers, writers, videographers and designers? You will never know unless you ask! We encourage you to start a Communications Ministry that is devoted to inspiring, informing and inviting your parishioners to become more engaged at your parish.

Examples:

www.stjoanhershey.org/communications-ministry.html

www.holyspirit-indy.org/communication_ministry

www.smcchurch.org/communications-ministry

www.stehc.org/parish-communications-ministries

www.standrewcatholic.org/commun

Sample Description for a Communication Ministry

The Communications Ministry serves the parish through various electronic and written communication tools. Our volunteers help with the preparation of the weekly bulletin, develop and maintain the parish website through the use of photos, written word and video and create weekly email/e-blasts. This ministry is essential in providing up-to-date information to our parishioners. We have a great opportunity to be "sowers of the seed." the Word of the Lord!

Volunteers are always welcome to assist, particularly if you have a communications or marketing background and are bilingual.



Sample Volunteer Descriptions

Publications

We are seeking volunteers who are proficient in Microsoft Word, Publisher, and/or PowerPoint that would like to assist in the creation of the weekly bulletin, bi-monthly parish newsletter, and/or other communications such as slideshows.

Website

Put your web design and/or graphic design skills to use by helping the varied ministries of our parish promote and publicize their activities on our parish website.

Photo/Video

We seek individuals who have an interest and willingness to photograph/videotape important parish events. You will need to provide your own equipment.

Sample Announcement to Promote Communications Ministry

We are launching a new Communications Ministry to support the parish and the ministries within our parish. This ministry will consist of 10-15 people that will work to continually improve parish-wide communications through all available channels and increase the engagement of parishioners.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain social media sites
- Facilitate updates to parish website
- Edit video homilies
- Publication of a monthly e-newsletter and a printed semi-annual newsletter
- Promote parish and parish ministry events
- Assist with marketing and public relation efforts of the parish
- Research and develop best communication applications & platforms
- Gather and communicate feedback from parishioners

Qualifications:

Ideal members will have experience in one or more of the following: Public Relations, Social Media, Marketing, Graphic Design, Writing, Photography, Public Speaking, Event Promotion, Publication of Materials, Website Maintenance.

Visit the Diocesan Online Communications Guide for tips on bulletin design, writing, branding and other great resources.

www.dosp.org/communications-guide




ADDITIONAL INFO

Email Guidelines

Be sure you have received permission to email your parishioners. This can be done when they register for your parish, at a meeting or at another gathering.



Emails to more than 30 people can be viewed as SPAM and can result in your email server being blacklisted. It is important to use a service such as Flocknote when sending emails to large distribution lists. Flocknote is in compliance with CAN-SPAM Act, which governs best practices for emailing.

-  Email is for the explicit use of ministry and parish related issues. Please do not email chain letters, urban legends, forwarded emails, etc.
-  We have been entrusted with our parishioners' data and should keep it confidential within the confines of our ministry. Do not forward addresses or names of people in your ministry to other sources.
-  Email is not to be used for solicitation for business purposes. If you would like to advertise your company or professional services to your parish community please do so through the bulletin ad section.



When notices or schedules are sent to minors through email or text, their parent or guardian must also be copied. It is the responsibility of the ministry leader to collect parent email addresses and monitor correspondence to be sure parents receive notification at the same time a minor notification is sent. Flocknote makes this easy :)



'Blind Carbon Copy' (BCC) is to be used when sending messages to multiple recipients. Flocknote never shows recipients email address and does not show the sender's email address or cell phone number.

DESIGN TIPS

Newsletters, flyers, brochures, fact sheets, infographics, banners, posters and annual reports are additional printed materials that can be effective tools for communication.

It is helpful to enlist the assistance of a professional graphic designer for the creation of these materials. However, if budget constraints are an issue, a low-cost alternative is Canva.com, an online platform that provides design templates and stock images. If you need assistance with Canva, contact communicate@dosp.org.



Is your material well-designed with consistent fonts, colors, styles and does it follow the four basic principles of design: contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity? (For more information read "The Non-Designer's Design Book.")



Does the material include information that a visitor, as well as a long-time parishioner, would find useful and easy to understand (i.e. no obscure acronyms)?



Does the material have strong imagery and catchy headlines to draw the readers to the content?



Do you incorporate high-quality photography of events, people and places around your parish or school or stock photos to attract attention? Build a "stock" library of photos from your parish sacred art and events.



WRITING TIPS:

- All communications should answer essential questions such as Who, What, When, Where, Why and How (call to action). It's also important to include the benefits of participation, such as: connect with fellow parishes, grow closer to Christ or have fun!
- Use active voice.
- The tone and attitude should affirm the dignity of each person.
- Write interesting and relevant headlines.
- Keep it short and to the point.
- Use bullet points, short sentences, and short paragraphs.
- Since you often can't offer great detail in print, you can suggest a reading list or invite readers to check your website for more information.

Resources for Parishes and Schools are available at: www.dosp.org/communications/resources-2/ and include:

- Policies & Guidelines
- Social Communications Policy
- Feature Film Promotion Guidelines
- Photo Usage Guidelines
- Diocesan Calendar Guidelines
- Media Release Form – English / Spanish



The Diocese of St. Petersburg has partnered with Flocknote to make strategic emailing and text messaging more affordable and effective for parishes. Visit www.dosp.org/flocknote for more info.