

HELLO? HI!

We recommend that the parish priest, parish staff or other person coordinating the phone blitz identify 3-4 volunteers who would be willing to make phone calls to parishioners based upon the parish database or contact list.

One method of identifying those parishioners who may no longer be regularly attending weekly Mass is to check the sign-up sheets for the Saturday Vigil Mass and Sunday Masses against the aforementioned list or database of parishioners. This should help your team pinpoint the individuals and families you are seeking to reach by this initiative and welcome back to Mass.

Some parishes may wish to call all parishioners with the general invitation to gather at Pentecost for Mass (and a planned parish gathering following the Mass, if one is planned), or simply to check on their wellbeing and to gain a sense as to whether they are still attending Masses in the parish.

As for volunteers to drive this phone blitz, carefully choose those whom you recognise are: available, warm in manner, comfortable in conversation with others (including strangers), and familiar with parish life, the times of parish Masses and activities being promoted.

COME AND I WILL GIVE YOU LIFE JOHN 10:10

PARISH PHONE BLITZ

The following is a guide for how to charitably invite parishioners who may no longer be attending Sunday Mass regularly to come home to receive the grace and love offered in the Holy Eucharist.

Here are a few guidelines as to how volunteers might charitably conduct such a conversation once it has been clarified which parishioners might be welcomed back in particular:

1. "Hello, this is (full name), a fellow parishioner from (name of parish)."
2. Ask genuinely: "How are you?" and listen with empathy.
3. Explain the reason for your call: "Fr (N) has asked me to call as he had not seen you for a while and just wanted to touch base and see that everything was ok?"
4. Allow a time for response, and just listen.
5. You might acknowledge the challenging time it has been for so many during the COVID-19 pandemic and note with them "Some people haven't yet come back to Mass because they think there isn't enough room, or they are concerned about safety issues around COVID. We just want to let you know that we are cleaning the church thoroughly, there is plenty of room now and we are able to bring the Eucharist to those who are unable to come to Mass at this time."
6. You should also keep in mind that this call is about touching base with your parishioners and may not be the time or effective to discuss the demands of the Sunday Obligation, nor whether or not attending Mass is safe enough for their health. Rather, this is simply an opportunity to invite them back and connect with them personally as a member of the community reaching out to its people.
7. Ensure you have the parish Mass times with you, and any other relevant events on the parish calendar handy to communicate with them.
8. Conclude by reminding them that they are always welcome, and that you and your parish priest would be glad and excited to see them again soon.



“NOW THE WHOLE GROUP OF THOSE WHO BELIEVED WERE OF ONE HEART AND SOUL.”

ACTS 4:32

RE-ENERGISING WELCOME EFFORTS

- Form a Welcome and Hospitality Team to have a warm presence at entrances and exits of church doors at Mass. Some Welcome and Hospitality Teams hand people a bulletin, but the most important thing is to build community by greeting people warmly (*Go Make Disciples*, p137)
- Many elderly parishioners use public transport to come to Mass. Some may not have returned to Mass due to a concern about using public transport. Organising transport for the elderly could be a way to reconnect the elderly to the parish and alleviate any anxiety around travel. Depending on the demographic of the community, a new ministry - reaching out to the elderly in the local community - could evolve from such a need (*Go Make Disciples*, p139)

INVITATION TO PARISH EVENTS

During the COVID-19 pandemic many people experienced deep isolation. Hence, many may be more open to an invitation to a local community event.

- Invite people to small groups and other offerings within the parish such as Alpha or Bible study groups (*Go Make Disciples*, p135)
- Offer a monthly or quarterly 'newcomer gathering' or 'welcoming coffee hour' following Mass, which parishioners are encouraged to attend and invite family and friends (*Go Make Disciples*, p136)
- Host a parish BBQ after the evening or morning Mass as an informal, welcoming place for parishioners to invite family and friends (*Go Make Disciples*, p136)
- Hold other community building events such as formation sessions for parents regarding the challenges and issues of raising children, a multicultural fiesta, a women's or men's gathering.
- Consider having a parish open day at which a BBQ, or tea and coffee can be offered, along with tours of the parish church and grounds and an invitation to other church offerings. Such an initiative can be facilitated in conjunction with connecting schools (*Go Make Disciples*, p149)

