

Increased Offertory Program

OVERVIEW

By:

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In response to the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our parishes Sunday Offertory collections were deeply affected. We gather here today, understanding that many of you can relate to the struggles we all faced. Adding to the complexity, church attendance fluctuated as the pandemic persisted.

During these trying times, our diocese received numerous requests for assistance. While there are excellent professional programs available, and you will have the opportunity to meet many of them this week. I know many of them personally and they are great. Our problem was we are a Mission Diocese, and our parishes were financially strained and couldn't afford external help. Therefore, my office stepped up to become the primary point of contact for parishes in need.



What initially began as a simple initiative gradually evolved over several months. Just when I believed we had a stable program, other parishes came forward with valuable suggestions for improvement. Fast forward two years, and we've developed a comprehensive nine-week program that continues to evolve.

The Increased Offertory Program is tailored to assist parishes in boosting their weekly collections. Please note, this program doesn't replace existing stewardship initiatives, nor does it serve as a substitute for a parish capital campaign. Instead, its primary focus is on addressing a parish's immediate budgetary needs and highlighting the crucial role of financial support in meeting those needs.



HERE'S AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT THE PROGRAM ENCOMPASSES:

1. Five Letters

- The first letter provides an explanation of the program's purpose and necessity.
- The second letter introduces Lay Witness speakers who share their deep commitment to our church at weekend Masses. They emphasize the significance of generosity, and a brochure is included to offer more information.
- The third letter, sent during the fifth week of the program, contains the commitment letter and commitment card.
- The fourth letter serves as a thank-you note for those who have returned their commitment cards.
- The fifth letter is a sample message intended for those who haven't yet returned their commitment cards.



2. Petitions for Prayers of the Faithful

As we embark on this program together, we recognize the importance of spiritual support. Specific petitions for the Prayers of the Faithful during Mass are included to keep our intentions at the forefront. This way, we unite in prayer for the program's success and the well-being of our parishioners.

3. Calling Scripts for Volunteers

Our dedicated calling committee plays a vital role in the program's success. To assist these volunteers, we've provided calling scripts that guide them through the process. These scripts not only serve as reminders for parishioners to return their commitment cards but also encourage open communication and the collection of any prayer requests from parishioners.



4. Generosity Guide Brochure

To aid in the discernment of increasing giving, we've included a Generosity Guide brochure. This resource provides valuable insights and practical tips for those considering more generous contributions. It's a helpful tool for individuals and families as they contemplate their commitment to the parish.

5. Three Bulletin Inserts

Effective communication is essential for the program's success. To streamline this aspect, we've prepared three bulletin inserts that you can customize to suit your parish's unique needs. Whether you choose to edit them or use them as-is, these inserts provide a convenient way to keep your parishioners informed and engaged.



6. Editable Commitment Card

Recognizing the uniqueness of each parish, we've included an editable Commitment Card. This flexibility allows you to tailor it to your specific parish requirements. This card serves as a tangible commitment to support your parish's financial needs.

7. Setup of Committees to Help

Prayer Team

You can have groups to pray for the success of the program, appoint someone to make sure the petitions are added each week, and you may also add prayer cards to the pews if you wish.

Print Team

Have a group of volunteers that will help print and mail the printed materials. Along with a group to place the bulletin inserts in your weekly bulletins.

Communication Team

Set up volunteers that will make sure information goes into the bulletin and social media.



8. Follow-up Team

This phase involves a volunteer skilled in using Excel or a staff person. This is where you enter the commitment cards that are returned into the spreadsheet. Someone from the finance committee keeps the parish informed on how the cards are coming in and provides an updated report.

9. Calling Team

Split up the names of individuals who have not returned their commitment card and have the calling team call each household that has not returned the card. This ends up being a wonderful call, and people enjoy talking to you. You also ask if they have anyone, they would like the parish to pray for.



10. Week One

Start with a soft roll out, informing the parish next weekend we will have a presentation on the “state of the parish”. Let them know you are going to start an Increased Offertory Program. Details will be presented next weekend.



11. Week Two

State of the Parish

- Begin with an overview of the parish's current financial status.
- Celebration of achievements and growth.
- Mention any recent challenges, such as financial strains or maintenance needs.

Progress and Plans

- Share past successes and milestones.
- Outline plans and upcoming projects.



11. Week Two

Strengths of Our Parish

- Emphasize the strengths and unique qualities that define our parish.
- A loving and supportive community.
- Active participation in faith-based activities.
- Commitment to serving others.

Challenges We Face

- Acknowledge the challenges ahead.
- Financial constraints, if any.
- Ongoing maintenance needs.
- The impact of external factors.



11. Week Two

Ministries and Programs

- Shine a light on the crucial ministries and programs within our parish.
- Share stories and testimonials illustrating their impact on our community.
- Highlight the role of these ministries in nurturing our faith and togetherness.

The Link Between Offertory and Ministry

- Clarify the essential connection between Sunday collections and parish sustainability.
- Explain that every contribution directly supports our ministries, programs, and daily operations.
- Illustrate how each dollar given contributes to our mission and outreach.



11. Week Two

Why the Parish Needs to Participate in the Increased Offertory Program

- Emphasize the urgency and importance of active participation.
- Highlight how increased offertory will directly address challenges and move our parish forward.
- Ensure all parishioners understand their critical role in securing our future.

Budget Overview

- Briefly mention significant budget items.
- Show how funds are allocated to support various aspects of our parish.
- Suggest the availability of a detailed budget summary as a bulletin insert or in the pews for transparency.



11. Week Two

Closing Thoughts

- Express heartfelt gratitude for the community's past support.
- Inspire unity and solidarity in embracing the Increased Offertory Program.
- Conclude with the goal is for our parish's continued growth and carrying out the Mission of Jesus Christ.
 - ◆ Mail 1st Letter



12. Weekend Three

Lay Witness Talk Our Commitment to Helping Others

- Start by briefly highlighting our parish's commitment to serving others.
- Mention one or two impactful ministries as examples.
- Show how these ministries reflect our parish's values and mission.

Financial Needs and Goals

- Transition to discussing the financial needs and goals of our parish.
- Parish Pastoral or Finance Council a knowledgeable individual of the parish.
- Emphasize the parish's sincere desire to better serve our members and the community.



12. Weekend Three

The Parish's Vision

- Articulate the vision for our parish's future.
- "Our parish strives to help everyone grow in their faith and relationship with God."
- Clarify that while we would prefer not to focus on finances, it's a necessary part of ensuring our mission thrives.

Responsibility to Support Ministries

- Acknowledge the responsibility we must support our ministries.
- Mention the importance of keeping the parish in good shape and meeting financial obligations.
- Explain the significance of paying our bills to maintain our services.



12. Weekend Three

Gratitude and Generosity

- Remind the congregation to be grateful for God's blessings.
- Emphasize the importance of responding with generosity.
- Highlight the willingness of our parishioners to give back.

The Appeal for Additional Funds

- Explain the need for additional funds and why we are addressing this.
- Mention specific areas where additional funds are required.
- Describe projects or programs that the parish wishes to undertake but cannot afford with the current budget.



12. Weekend Three

Closing Remarks

- Express gratitude for the parishioners' support and understanding.
- Encourage open dialogue and questions.
- Reiterate that our collective efforts will enable our parish to continue growing and serving.



13. Weekend Four

Personalized Letters

- Every registered family will receive a personalized letter during the fourth week.
- This personal touch reflects our deep appreciation for each family's contributions and reinforces our sense of community.

Increased Offertory Brochure

- Along with the letter, families will find a Giving Guide Brochure.
- This brochure serves as a helpful guide, explaining the importance of increased support.

Sample Letters and Documents

- We've included sample letters and documents in the booklet.
- These are examples you can edit to fit your parish's need.



13. Weekend Four

Prayerful Discernment

- We encourage every household to engage in prayerful discernment.
- Reflect on the blessings from God and consider how you can increase your Sunday Offertory in alignment with these blessings.

Being Watchful

- Please keep an eye out for the letter and Increased Offertory Brochure coming in the mail.
- The brochure provides real examples of increases and the percentages associated with them.

Setting an Example

- Remember, our parish community looks up to its members as role models.
- By increasing your offertory support, you set an example for others to follow.



13. Weekend Four

Benefits of Increased Support

- Increasing Sunday Offertory enables our parish to maintain and enhance its ministries, programs, insurance, maintenance and upkeep to our church.
- It strengthens our ability to serve the community and fulfill our mission.



14. Week Five

Third Letter with Commitment Card

- In addition to the initial personalized letters and the Brochure, we want to inform everyone that you will soon receive a third letter in the mail.
- This letter will be sent directly from the pastor or parish council and will contain a crucial element of our initiative: the Commitment Card.

Prayerful Discernment for Increased Giving

- We kindly request that each one of you takes this opportunity to engage in prayerful discernment.
- Reflect on your blessings and consider what is possible for you, either as an individual or as a family, in terms of increased giving.



14. Week Five

- This Commitment Card is a tangible way for you to express your commitment to the parish and its mission. Your thoughtful consideration and prayerful discernment will guide you in filling out this card with the amount you feel called to contribute.
- This process of discernment and commitment will be instrumental in our efforts to secure the financial stability and sustainability of our parish. Thank you for your dedication and generosity as we continue to strengthen our faith community together.



15. Week Six

Introduction

- Welcome to Increased Offertory Commitment Sunday, a pivotal moment in our journey to strengthen our parish's financial foundation.
- If you have in-pew cards, then you will need to have enough cards printed and placed in pews with pencils.
- Today, each parish will have its unique approach to collecting the response cards during Mass, building on what has worked in the past for similar pledge opportunities.

Individual Discernment

- Each family must determine what is an appropriate and reasonable level of offertory support.
- This decision is deeply personal and cannot be made by anyone else. It's an act of faith and self-reflection.



15. Week Six

The Impact of Choosing Generosity

- When we choose generosity, we invest in God's promise to bless us and practically support all families in our parish.
- For those already giving regularly, consider reviewing your level of support and discern whether an increase is possible.

The Power of Money and Faith

- Money holds significant influence in our lives and in the life of the Church.
- When we choose generosity, it can profoundly impact our faith life and our ability to fulfill our mission.

Expressing Thanks

- We extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your support and commitment.
- Your generosity makes a meaningful difference in our parish community.



15. Week Six

Continuing with Mass

- Thank you for your active participation and dedication to our parish's mission.
- Increased Offertory Commitment Sunday represents a crucial step forward in our mission to strengthen our faith community and ensure the financial well-being of our parish. Your support and commitment are greatly valued.



16. Week Seven

Sorting and Recording Commitment Cards

- The first step in our follow-up process is to sort the commitment cards that have been mailed, dropped off, or collected from weekend Masses.
- Print out our parish roster and mark off names as they respond.
- Enter the commitment cards in the IOP Excel Spreadsheet.

Consistent Follow-Up for Four Weeks

- It's essential to maintain consistency in our follow-up efforts.

Thank You Letters for All Respondents

- We must send thank-you letters to everyone who returns their commitment cards, regardless of the amount committed.
- This includes those who indicated no increase. Expressing gratitude for their participation is essential.



16. Week Seven

Continued Reminders for Increased Offertory Cards

- We need to continue reminding our parish members to return their Increased Offertory Cards.
- Let them know that follow-up letters and calls will be made to remind everyone of the importance of their support.

Follow-Up Letters

- Follow-up letters should be sent to all parish families who have not yet responded.
- These letters should convey a gentle reminder of the significance of their decision to the parish's well-being.

Conclusion

- The follow-up committee plays a pivotal role in the success of our Increased Offertory Program.
- Your dedication to these follow-up activities will help us achieve our financial goals and strengthen our parish community.
- Thank you for your commitment and ongoing efforts to ensure the prosperity of our parish.



17. Week Eight

Introduction

- Discuss the important role of our Calling Committee in ensuring the success of our Increased Offertory Program.
- The committee's primary responsibility is to make phone calls to those who did not return their commitment cards.

Gentle Reminders and Importance of Their Decision

- When making these phone calls, it's crucial to convey a gentle reminder of the significance of their decision to our parish.
- Let them know that their support is vital to our parish's well-being.

Personalized Approach

- During these calls, it's essential to introduce yourself and clarify that you are calling on behalf of the parish.
- Take a moment to inquire about how they are doing and whether they have any prayer requests.



17. Week Eight

Empathy and Compassion

- Be prepared for any response; sometimes, it may be joyful news, while other times, they may share difficult personal experiences.
- If they do have a prayer request, assure them that it will be passed on to Father for prayers.
- We have a calling script prepared in the booklet.

Timely Communication

- After the Increased Offertory Program concludes, it's important to communicate the results promptly.
- A summary of the program's outcome should be included in the parish bulletin and discussed from the pulpit.



17. Week Eight

Documentation and Reporting

- The summary should include essential details such as the number of steps taken by the parish, the anticipated increase in the offertory, and the number of families returning commitment cards.

Community Engagement

- This process not only strengthens our financial foundation but also fosters a sense of community.
- It shows that we care about each member's involvement and well-being.
- The Calling Committee plays a vital role in our parish's financial health and community engagement.
- Thank you for your commitment to the parish and the Increased Offertory Program.



18. Week Nine

Highlighting the Commitment

- Finance Committee member come forward and give an update to the parish.
- Our Increased Offertory Program was a significant undertaking, and the dedication and effort put forth by our parishioners have been outstanding.

Acknowledging Everyone's Role

- It's essential to recognize that each member of our parish community played a part in this success, whether it was through participation, support, or leadership.

Demonstrating Transparency

- Creating a follow-up report showcases transparency in our financial matters and our commitment to being accountable to our members.



18. Week Nine

Expressing Gratitude

- The report is not just about numbers; it's an opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude for the generosity, hard work, and commitment demonstrated by our parishioners.

Highlighting Achievements

- In the report, we will highlight key achievements, such as the number of commitment cards returned, the anticipated increase in offertory, and the overall success of the program.
- If you have some new givers for first time giving, no names but you can point out you had ____ number of new givers.

Showcasing Impact

- We will also showcase how this increased support will directly impact our parish's ability to fulfill its mission and serve the community effectively.
- Your commitment has made a significant difference in our parish, and we look forward to a bright and prosperous future together. Thank you for a job well done!



These enhancements to our Increased Offertory Program demonstrate our commitment to providing a comprehensive and adaptable resource for parishes. Our goal is to foster a sense of unity, purpose, and generosity within our communities. Together, we continue to shine a light on enhanced generosity, ensuring the strength and sustainability of our beloved parishes.

Here are a few recent results:

IOP Completed

Parish	First Year Increase	Percentage	Five Year Increase
St. Joseph & Paul	\$219,200	33%	\$1,096,000
Our Lady of Lourdes	\$150,900	21%	\$ 754,500
Blessed Sacrament	\$ 38,300		
St. Joseph-CC	\$ 30,230	29%	\$ 151,150
St. Peter-Stanley	\$ 17,500	25%	\$ 87,500
	\$456,130		\$2,089,150

IOP Coming Soon

Parish	Month
Christ the King-Madisonville	October 2023
St. Stephens Cathedral	November 2023
St. Peter & Paul-Hopkinsville	January 2024

