



## *A Parish Guide for Phone Visitation Outreach*



## **A Parish Guide to Phone Visitation Outreach**

### **Timeline**

The team must first decide when the phone calls will be made in the parish.

It is best to make the calls within a two week period.

#### **☐ Two months before phone calls begin:**

- Determine what households will be contacted by phone
- Begin to ask people to consider volunteering
- Set up meeting date to inform and train callers
- Begin to develop and gather materials for phone caller's packet
- Personalize letter to be sent to parishioners who will receive a phone call

#### **☐ One month before actual phone calls:**

- Finalize phone volunteers
- Send letter to all parishioners who will be receiving a phone call
- Finalize materials for packets and print prayer cards
- Put notice in bulletin

#### **☐ Two weeks before phone calls:**

- Information and training session for phone visitors
- Distribute packets to each phone visitor
- Put second notice in bulletin



**☐ Weekend before phone calls:**

- At weekend liturgies:
  - ◊ Distribute *Parishioner's Prayer Card* at all Masses
  - ◊ Put third notice in bulletin
  - ◊ Bless phone volunteers

**☐ The two weeks of the phone calls:**

- Phone calls will take place
- Put notices in bulletin (one each weekend)

**☐ First week after the completion of the phone calls:**

- All packets are returned
- Core Team addresses the *Action Steps After Phone Visits are Complete*
- Give forms to the person who will key information into computer
- Put a notice in the bulletin thanking volunteers and sharing results of visit

**☐ Two weeks after the completion of the visits**

- Gather and celebrate with all of the phone visitors

## Invite Parishioners to be Phone Visitors

### **Number of visitors needed:**

- Each person should be asked to do about 20 calls. Therefore, if you want to reach 400 households you will need 20 volunteers.

### **Before you ask anyone:**

- Believe in the benefits of this outreach
- Be enthusiastic
- Be knowledgeable of the process

### **Look for people who:**

- Are alive in their faith
- Are sensitive to the needs of others
- Have good listening skills
- Will respect confidentiality

### **Key points to stress when inviting:**

- This is a limited time commitment
- They will have approx. 20 homes to call over a period of 2 weeks
- They make the phone calls when it is convenient to their schedule
- If the person does not answer the phone, callers are asked to call again at a different time. If the person still cannot be reached, materials are mailed to the household.
- Training will be provided

## **☐ Where to “find” phone caller volunteers:**

- Choose parishioners who will be great “ambassadors of Christ.” A personal invitation is the most effective approach. Here are some possible ways to invite people for the phone ministry:
  - ◇ Ask each core team person who invite 5 people
  - ◇ Go to the heads of each organization and request that they each obtain 5 volunteers from their organization
  - ◇ If you have an existing Stewardship Committee, Outreach Team or Welcoming Committee ask them to be part of this outreach
  - ◇ Announce the need for volunteers at the end of Mass and have cards in the pew where they can sign up to learn more about it.

## **Actions Steps After Calls are Complete**

### **☐ Review parish record forms**

#### **• Follow up on individual needs**

For example:

- ◇ List people interested in learning more about RCIA and give names to RCIA coordinator
- ◇ List those interested in receiving First Communion or Confirmation and give names to DRE
- ◇ List the names of the infirmed who would like to receive communion and give to Pastor

- **Update records on computer**

Give Parish Record Forms to the person who will be keying the information into the computer.

- **Prayer Petitions**

- Gather all of the prayer request lists:

- ◇ Include them in the *Prayers of the Faithful* for a month. Ex.: “We pray for all of the intentions that were requested during our *Phone Visitation*”
- ◇ Give to your prayer group and request that they pray for these intentions
- ◇ Give a few to each shut-in who would be open to praying for the needs of these parishioners

- **Parish Ideas**

Gather all of the sheets with the parish ideas. List them and indicate if there are duplicate suggestions. Share the list with Pastor, Pastoral staff, Pastoral Council and others who can address them.

- **Bulletin Update**

Put a notice in the bulletin publicly thanking those who volunteered in this ministry. Indicate that all suggestions will be heard and discussed. Keep the parish informed on any suggestions that merit action.

- **Gather and celebrate**

Invite all of the volunteers to come together for prayer, refreshments and an opportunity to share their experience. (Do not share anything of a confidential nature).

## Prepare Materials

### **For each caller:**

- Parish record form (1 for each call)
- Booklet: *Caller's Guide for Phoning* (received at training)
- *Caller's Prayer*
- Sheet to record Prayer Petitions and Parish Ideas
- Stamps, envelopes, parish stationary
- Red pen to make additions and/or corrections to Parish Record Forms
- *Sorry You Weren't Home* letter
- Evaluation form for caller
- Other . . .

### **Material to mail (optional):**

- Parish Bulletin
- Invitation to social
- Tri-fold on parish activities
- Other materials . . .

### **Order (optional):**

- Pamphlets (Leaflets) \*

e.g. *Annulments, Top 10 Reasons to Come Back to Church, How to Get More Out of the Mass.*

\***Pamphlets**—Our Sunday Visitor (800-348-2440); [www.osv.com/pamphlets](http://www.osv.com/pamphlets). Sample of topics: *Top 10 Reasons to Come Back to Church, How to Get More Out of the Mass, Top Ten Questions Catholics Are Asked*; and more. (type in "pamphlets")

\***Leaflets**—Liguori Publications (800-325-9521); [www.liguori.org/searchproducts.cfm](http://www.liguori.org/searchproducts.cfm). Some leaflets are in Spanish. Sample of topics: *Annulments, Family Prayers for Lent, Confession*, and more. (type in "leaflets")

## Script for Caller

- Have all materials close at hand.
- Pray before making call.
- Smile when talking (the person can “feel” your presence.)

### ☐ Introductions:

- Hello, my name is . . . from (name of parish.)
- I am calling on behalf of (pastor’s name). You should have received a letter from him stating that the parish is contacting parishioners over the (time span, e.g. “next two weeks”) to: (give reason for call: update parish records, receive your input on ways to improve the parish, invite you to . . . , hear prayer requests, etc.)
- Would you have a few minutes?

If the person does not have time to talk, ask the person when you could call back. (Do not leave it up to the person to call you back.)

### ☐ Update Parish Record Form:

- If you don’t mind I would like to confirm the information we have on our parish record form.

Go over the information on the form. Clarify spelling even if it seems like a simple name. If the person wants to check some of the information with another person who is not home, note it on the card and finish this part of the call at another time.



☐ Pastoral Suggestions: (record comments)

- An important part of this call is to receive your input on ways to make our parish a more vibrant community. I would like to ask you a couple questions:
  1. Do you have any ideas on how we might improve the parish? (e.g. strengthening of a youth group, social events, outreach to singles, babysitting service, justice outreach)
  2. Do you have any suggestions on ways that the parish could help people deepen their faith? (e.g. bible study, bereavement committee, welcoming committee, programs to strengthen families)
  3. Our parish strives to be a community of prayer. Are there any needs that you would like us to pray for? (record prayer request)

☐ Invitation to Parish Activity:

- You may have some upcoming parish event/program/talk you could invite the person to attend; e.g. adult faith Formation speakers, bible study, parish picnic, holiday party, etc. Try to remove obstacles that would prevent the person from coming. (need transportation, child care, fear of not knowing anyone—assure them that you will be there and will look for them.)

**Question on Mass Attendance**

If the caller feels comfortable, this question could be asked:

“Do you have the opportunity to attend Mass on a regular basis?” If not, “is there anything we can do to encourage you to come more often?”

☐ Ending Phone Conversation:

- I would like to send you some information and materials in the mail.

Mail parish handouts and any other materials appropriate to that house, e.g.  
*Annulments, Top 10 Reasons to Come Back to Church, How to Get More Out of  
the Mass.*

- Thank you for your time and God bless you.

If you feel comfortable, leave the person with your name and phone number in case they  
have additional concerns or thoughts.

## Possible Scenarios

<p>Why are you calling me?</p>	<p>Over (name specific time period) our parish is calling every house in this section of the parish to (give reason for visit: update parish records, invite to a parish social, hear ideas to improve parish, etc.)</p>
<p>I am no longer a practicing Catholic.</p>	<p>I am sorry to hear that. For whatever reason you left the Church, I hope you will give us another try. (Give good points of the Parish)</p>
<p>I am angry at the Church because . . .</p>	<p>While divine, the Church is a human institution as well. It is unfortunate that we cause pain to one another. In the name of the Church I apologize and hope that you will give us another chance.</p>
<p>I am too busy at this time to talk . . .</p>	<p>I certainly understand, when would it be more convenient to call back?</p>
<p>I am too busy at this time to attend Mass regularly . . .</p>	<p>I can only imagine how hectic your life must be with all that you have on your plate, I don't want to add anything to your plate but to offer some balance in your schedule. (Mention various Mass times, value of Mass, etc.)</p>

Used with permission, Sr. Louise Alff, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

For more information and questions, contact the Office of Adult Formation  
610-289-8900 x221 or [aff@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:aff@allentowndiocese.org)