

When they come, what makes them stay?

Practical Suggestions for
Ash Wednesday and Lent



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Ash Wednesday, Lent and beyond . . .

Effective outreach will only happen with the support of the entire parish community. The parishioners need to be recognized, supported and empowered to reach out effectively.

- ❑ **REMIND PARISHIONERS OF THEIR ROLE AS EVANGELIZERS:**
 - “All of us know someone who is away from the Church.”
 - “We need to help one another in reaching out”
 - “On Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and Easter we have a number of visitors at our parish services. Some of them are inactive Catholics. Let us use our gift of hospitality to reach out and make the ‘stranger’ feel welcomed.”
 - “Make these holy days special days for someone else.”



Ask the parishioners to consider this situation.

My daughter is away from the Church. She calls me and says:

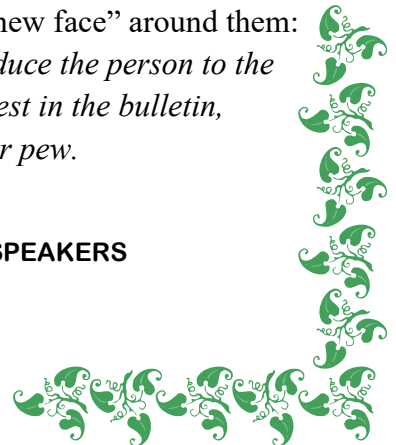
“I know you will be surprised but I have decided to consider going back to Church. I have checked the local parish and found out the times for Masses on Ash Wednesday.”

What do I hope she will find at that liturgy, in that Church, which will encourage her to return to that parish the following Sunday?

Now encourage them to begin praying for all those who will be visiting our parish so that they will find in our community, a place to call home.

- ❑ **INVOLVE THE PARISHIONERS**
 - On postcards have information for Ash Wednesday, Lenten Events, Reconciliation times, Palm Sunday and Easter Masses. (Encourage every parishioner to take the postcards and put information on social media sites.
 - Encourage the parishioners to accompany someone to the liturgy or parish event. (don’t just invite someone, accompany them.)
 - Invite parishioners to sit in the middle of pew. It says to others: “Come and celebrate with me.”
 - Practice with the parishioners how to act when they see a “new face” around them: *Introduce yourself, welcome the person to the parish, introduce the person to the celebration and your friends, point out some points of interest in the bulletin, encourage the person to return and invite them to sit in your pew.*

- ❑ **PREPARE MATERIALS, SET UP PROGRAMS, INVITE WITNESS SPEAKERS**



Ash Wednesday, Lent and beyond . . .

❑ **MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY: An Essential Ministry of the Christian Community**

On Ash Wednesday have ministers at all entrances so everyone is greeted. Engage people of all ages to greet. Wear name tags with first name very visible.

Before the service:

- Say: “Welcome to . . . name of parish”
- Hold doors open (inner and outer doors)
- Hand out materials
- Assist with seating

After the service:

- Resume your post and thank people for coming
- Hand out appropriate information



❑ **INTRODUCTION AT MASS BY COMMENTATOR:**

“Welcome to our Ash Wednesday (Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday) Liturgy and a special welcome to our guests. If you are searching for a spiritual home please consider our parish. There are guest cards in every pew. Please fill one out and place it in the collection basket or give to one of the ushers. Again, we thank all of you for coming. Before we begin, let us turn and greet one another.”

Optional: Invite guests to stand and thank them for coming.

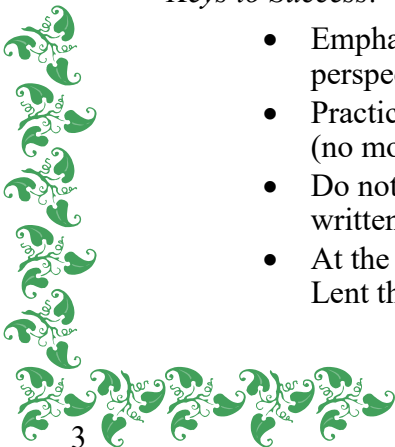
❑ **WITNESS SPEAKER FOR ASH WEDNESDAY:**

Why have a witness speaker? On Ash Wednesday there are many people who come to Church who would be considered “inactive” Catholics. Receiving ashes still connects them to the Church. It would be a powerful sign if someone spoke during the service about their own journey of faith. Perhaps someone who had been away from the Church and has now returned. Their three minute witness might encourage a nominal Catholic to begin once again this Lent.

Time: Only three minutes. Check with celebrant for the appropriate time before or at the conclusion of the Liturgy.

Keys to Success:

- Emphasize that it is a WITNESS talk not a sermon. Speak from the “I” perspective.
- Practice in front of others for constructive criticism, to time the witness talk (no more than 3 minutes) and to practice on the microphone.
- Do not read the witness talk but have eye contact. (but be sure the talk is written down, don’t “wing it”.)
- At the end of the witness challenging the listeners to spiritually grow during Lent through Mass attendance, Parish events, more personal prayer time, etc.





Suggested Witness Talk

“Hello, my name is _____. Doesn’t Ash Wednesday come around fast! We have barely put away our Christmas decorations when Lent is upon us. This day (Ash Wednesday) is always a wake-up call for me. You see. . .”

Personal witness – *“I left the Church...struggled with personal issues...just drifted away... lost track of my values...etc.”* (Give one personal experience that may speak to the hearts of the listeners. Emphasize the importance of the Mass in getting through the crisis.)

“Yet, regardless of how far I moved from the Church, there was something within me that wanted me to come back and begin again. I am grateful for the season of Lent and I am grateful for the weekly gift of the Mass. My prayer for myself and for you is that we enter into this holy season with a desire to change our hearts and be open to God’s love. Let us allow this liturgy and all of our Lenten services strengthen and guide us in our relationships, our homes and in our own hearts.”

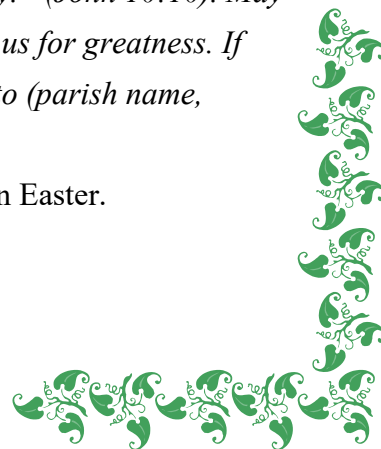
□ END OF MASS ANNOUNCEMENT

“As you leave today’s liturgy we have a gift for all of you as a way to help you continue reflecting on your Lenten journey.

Possible gifts for the whole congregation:

- Ash Wednesday—cross, stone, nail, cocoon, caterpillar, heart, booklet on Lenten prayers, reflections for each day, burlap crosses with parish events listed on it
- Attractive flyer inviting them to the various parish Lenten and Holy Week programs and services.
- Palm Sunday – Palms, schedule of Holy Week services
- Easter Sunday – colored egg, butterfly, flower, Easter candle, Holy Water
- A bag of seeds with a message that reads: *Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10). May these seeds be a reminder of the potential within all of us for greatness. If you are not part of any faith community we invite you to (parish name, address, phone, times of Masses).*

This would be especially appropriate to hand out on Easter.



Possible Handouts

bookmark

Lord, you care for us with unconditional love.


Give us the sight to see those areas of our life that are not in harmony with your love.

Give us the desire to turn back to you.

Give us the strength to change our hearts.

During this Holy Season of Lent may we be reborn to lead a new life.

Amen.



If you are not part of any faith community we invite you to:

Name of Parish

Address (location)
Phone

Times of:

Daily Mass
Weekend Mass
Reconciliation

Other (adoration, stations of the cross)

"What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord, that we might see."
Matthew 20:33

Welcome to (.....) Parish

Please indicate if there is anything we can do for you. Drop in the collection basket or hand to an usher after the service.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I am looking for a Parish Home.

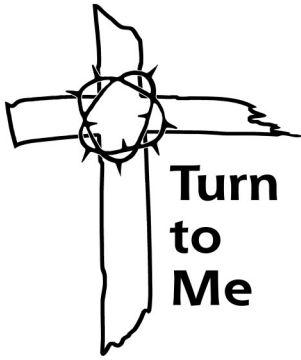
I would like to return to the Church.

I would like to know more about Catholicism.


Please pray for _____

Other: _____

Pew Cards



Cut this section off and place in the front window of your home as a witness to your faith and a reminder to others.



Are you looking for a Spiritual Home?

St. Louise Catholic Church invites you to journey with us this Lent and Easter

Distribution of Ashes: (date)
7:00 AM, 9:00 AM, Noon, 3:00 PM, 7:00 PM

Weekend Masses
Saturday: 5:00 PM; Sunday: 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:30 AM, 5:30 PM

Lenten Schedule
Stations of the Cross: Every Tues., 7:00 PM; Lenten Talk: *The Gospel of John*, Mon., (date), 7:00 PM. Penance Service: (date), 7:00 PM

Easter Schedule: Sat., (date), Sun., (date)
Easter Vigil: 8:00 PM; Sunday: 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 12:30 PM

Contact Information

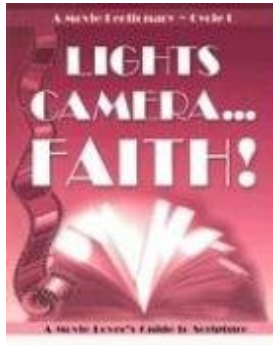
Parish Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____
Email: _____
Website: _____



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Parish Postcard



OFFER A NIGHT AT THE MOVIE. Pray and share the Sunday's Scripture in a unique manner. LIGHTS, CAMERA...FAITH! A Movie Lover's Guide to Scripture, Cycle C. Malone, Peter and Pacatte, Rose. This book is designed to help us appreciate the gospel stories using movies. The method is to take a popular movie story and to create a dialogue between the movie and the Gospel. The movie's selection is chosen because its theme can illuminate the Gospel. Some of the movies are: About Schmidt, Good Will Hunting, Chariots of Fire, The Green Mile, On the Waterfront, A Few Good Men, and more. On Amazon, used books are very cheap. (This one is \$4.00) This book is one of the series for Cycle A, B and C.

Resources

BURLAP CROSS

Burlap by the yard
Purchased at JoAnn Fabrics - \$2.99 / yard
Burlap pieces are 3 1/4" x 4 1/2"
Used Avery name badge label # 5395 (2 1/3" x 3 3/8") to print parish information.

PAMPHLETS Our Sunday Visitor (800-348-2440)

www.osv.com/pamphlets

- Top 10 Reasons to Come Back to Church P1
- How to Get More Out of the Mass P124
- Top Ten Questions Catholics Are Asked P9
- And more . . .

