

PARISH PHONE CALL SCRIPT



Contacting parishioners to connect them with practical and spiritual resources is an important way to accompany parishioners when you cannot meet regularly in person. Below is a script template for you to edit and customize for your parish.



1. Introduce yourself

"Hi, my name is _____. I'm a parishioner at _____ Parish. May I speak to (name of contact)?"

► Parishioner answers, go to #2

► Relative/Roommate answers, ask to leave a message:

"Father _____ wants our parish community to remain connected to each other during this difficult time, so we're calling all our registered parishioners to hear how everyone is doing and to share how our parish can stay connected during this time. Can you leave a message for _____ to call me back? My number is (____) ____ - _____."

► No answer, leave voicemail:

"Hi, my name is _____. I'm a parishioner at _____ Parish. Father _____ wants our parish community to stay connected to each other as social distancing continues, so we are calling all our registered parishioners to hear how everyone is doing and to share how our parish can support you during this time. Please call me back at your convenience at (____) ____ - _____."

2. Ask about their experience

"Father _____ wants our parish community to stay connected to each other as social distancing continues, so we're calling all our registered parishioners to hear how everyone is doing and to share how our parish can support you and stay spiritually close to you during this time.

- How is your family doing? How have you been impacted by COVID and social distancing? *Listen with empathy, relate by sharing your own experience, and write down practical supports needed. Note major personal or family events, e.g. job loss, grave illness, or new additions, in case follow up is needed.

3. Ask about Mass

"We know that some people aren't able to safely return to Mass but wanted to ask: have you been able to come back to Mass?"

► Yes "What has been your experience at Mass? Have you felt safe? Is there anything you would recommend the parish do differently?"

► No "As you know, the obligation to attend Mass is still lifted since not everyone is able to return. The parish is also ensuring that everyone wears masks and practices social distancing while inside and that all the pews and common spaces are sanitized after all Masses.

- "Would you be interested in someone from the parish bringing you communion outside on your front steps and to pray with you?"
*Note: yes or no.

4. Ask about practical needs

"We also wanted to ask, at a practical level: is there anything our parish can do to support you at this time? Is there anyone you know, even outside the parish, who is in need at this time?" *List a few of the services your parish can offer i.e. food support through the parish pantry.

► Yes, there is something I need

- *Note their need or request with as much detail as possible.

► Yes, someone else is in need "Is it ok for us to contact them?"

- Yes "May I take down their phone number so we can reach out to them?"
- No "May I leave the parish contact information with you to pass along to them?"

► No, there is nothing I need at this time

5. Collect a Current Email

"Father _____ also wants to make sure we have a current email address for you so the parish can share updated information about Mass and parish activities. Can you share your email address?"

- ▶ Yes *Collect email address and read it back to them to ensure it is correct
- ▶ No "No problem! You can always visit the parish website for updated information." Provide the website address.

6. Share Prayer

"Before I go, do you have any specific prayer intentions we can add to our parish prayer list? Is there a friend or loved one whom we can pray for?" *Note their prayer intention and ask.

"Can we pray together for (name their intention) and for you and your family now?"

- ▶ Yes *Offer the prayer below
- ▶ No

Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the blessings of this day. In a special way, I would like to pray for (parishioner's name) and all their loved ones and intentions. Help us to always remember that you are with us in times of joy and in times of sadness.

We join with Cardinal Gregory who has encouraged us to pray the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

7. CLOSING

"Thank you. It was nice to talk with you today. We don't know how long social distancing may last but I hope we can be all together as a parish soon. Have a great rest of your day and God bless."

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Consider the following before your calls:

1. Before each call, say a prayer for the person and ask the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation.
2. Do not read from the script, use it as a template to help guide the conversation naturally.
3. The primary goal of the call is to listen to parishioners and let them know the parish cares for them personally.
4. Sometimes a call can feel like an interruption. If the person is being terse, ask if there is a better time to call back.
5. No information is better than the wrong information. If you are not sure of an answer let the person know you will find out and get back with them, instead of guessing or giving an opinion.
6. Know your limits. If the conversation turns toward spiritual or emotional counseling let them know that you're not the best person to talk to and encourage them to reach out to the pastor.
7. Establish a system for collecting call notes and who will follow up if needed (e.g. choose one email for individual call notes to be sent to, set up an online form or sheet, etc.)
8. Finish documenting or submitting notes of your previous call before making a new call.
9. Know what practical resources your parish is able to offer. Such as information about local food distribution, short term financial assistance, etc.
10. Know what spiritual resources your parish is able to offer. Such as live-streamed prayer, opportunity to set up a phone call to talk with a priest or deacon, online small groups, etc.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. "What steps is the parish taking to ensure the safety of parishioners at Mass?"

(to be completed by the parish)

2. "How long will the obligation to attend Sunday Mass be dispensed?"

We don't know exactly but anticipate that Cardinal Gregory will not lift the dispensation until those who are vulnerable and have serious health conditions are safely able to be in public.

3. "What do I do if I know someone who is sick and in need of the Sacraments?"

Anyone who has an emergency need for the Sacrament of the Sick should contact _____ to get in touch with Father _____.

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR PARISHES TO CONSIDER ADDING:

Ask about getting involved in parish ministries

*"In addition to Mass, the parish is offering _____. Would you be interested in participating in _____ either in person or online?" *List the parish events or ministries at your parish that are active in person or online. Make note of what ministries they mention.*

Ask about online giving

"Father _____ has been so grateful to the parishioners who have continued to donate to the parish during this time so that we can continue to serve those in need in our community and provide pastoral care. Do you have online giving set up?"

► **Yes** "thank you for doing that."

► **No** "Would you like more information on setting up online donations?"

- **Yes** "Great! You can sign up on the parish website but I will also ask the parish office to send you an email with the information on how to sign up"
- **No** "No problem! We are grateful for parishioners tithing in whatever way is best for them."

Other optional questions or information to share:

- Ask about collecting names of loved ones in November for the parish Book of Remembrance
- Share Advent parish activities e.g. Parish mission, concert, day of reflection, etc.
- Share information on donations and service opportunities during Advent and Christmas e.g. food or clothing collection, angel tree, etc.
- Share Christmas Mass times and any steps to RSVP