

Invitation by letter

If a face-to-face invitation is new to your community, or if you suspect there would be significant resistance to a face-to-face and peer-to-peer conversation, you can begin the first year with a **letter** (and hint that in a subsequent program you will be making a face-to-face and peer-to-peer invitation for support).

A leadership letter, also called “direct mail,” has been a good starting point for many parishes and a fallback for others. Letters do affect giving, or you wouldn’t be receiving them from many charitable organizations, including churches.

In the end, the important thing is to issue the invitation.

Find the right kind of letter for *your* parish

A single letter

Each member of the community receives a letter written by the Giving Team leaders (clergy and/or lay people) inviting them to support the ministry of the parish. The objective is to write an inspiring letter that is also personal—for example, hand-sign each one and include a specific note of encouragement.

The letter *always* begins with thanks and gratitude, tells the story of the impact of generosity (not the need to pay the heating bill), and contains additional information and decision-making tools, such as the narrative budget and an intention card with a reply envelope.

Multiple letters

In this approach, each member of the community receives a letter written by one of a number of parish leaders. Each person in the congregation receives a letter and an invitation from someone they are like to particularly respect or admire. Each leader writes their “Why I give” story, speaking personally of their reasons for giving and supporting God’s mission. This introductory section is followed by a common text with more information.

Each of these letters *always* begins with thanks and gratitude, tells the story of the impact of generosity (not the need to pay the heating bill), and contains additional information and decision-making tools, such as the narrative budget and an intention card with a reply envelope.

Take the letter as an opportunity

Whichever option you choose, a letter is an opportunity to

- offer gratitude for the specific generosity of the person and that of other members of the parish
- tell the story of the parish and how it makes a difference in the lives of individuals in your parish and your community.
- mutually share how people think and feel about the ministry of the parish
- affirm past and present involvement and a chance to discover new gifts, talents, and needs
- renew participation in the mission of the parish and how they grow as followers of Jesus

Five reasons for inviting every person annually

1. To model the regular and consistent spiritual practice of giving
2. To provide an opportunity to inform everyone about the ministry we undertake and how it changes lives
3. To open an opportunity to listen to people in our community
4. To create the basis for all other giving—legacy and major project giving
5. To model the regular and consistent spiritual practice of giving (Yes, this is worth repeating!)