

## Regarding Lay Witnesses

### Why have a lay witness?

Inviting the ICA Chairperson (or another lay witness) to speak to the congregation provides increased motivation to participate in the Appeal. The use of a lay witness is an effective means of increasing participation, identifying with a fellow parishioner, and hearing a different perspective on the importance of supporting the funded ministries. It often is said that “**people give to people.**” The lay witness presentation provides parishioners with a peer-to-peer example of why the Idaho Catholic Appeal is an important responsibility shared by all members of the Diocese.

### Who should be asked to make the lay witness presentation?

- ❖ Generally, this is the role of the ICA Chairperson if you have one. In any case, the speaker should be the following:
  - An active parishioner
  - An energetic and enthusiastic speaker
  - A contributor to the Idaho Catholic Appeal
  - A member of the parish council, finance council, or a parish committee

### Outline for Lay Presenter Talk

*Note: It is not absolutely necessary to use every item on the list below, nor is it important to use them in the order presented. Circumstances and attitudes in your parish should determine what you need to say to insure a successful campaign.*

1. Introduce yourself and your association with parish.
2. Indicate how long you have been in your parish.
3. Describe your personal parish and diocesan volunteer involvement.
4. Announce the overall Idaho Catholic Appeal goal for the diocese and for your parish; stress 100% participation for your parish.
5. If your parish reached its previous year’s goal, acknowledge this accomplishment and thank the parishioners. If your parish did not make its previous goal, acknowledge other positive aspects such as participation percentage, volunteer efforts, etc.
6. Tell why you give to the Idaho Catholic Appeal. Relate a personal story of why you give, and some examples of what your gift does and how it helps other people.
7. Explain how the Idaho Catholic Appeal directly and indirectly benefits your parish through the many programs and services funded by the Appeal (see list of **What it Funds** in the manual or ask parish staff for suggestions).
8. Tell how your parish and the diocese are partners in faith by working together to strengthen the Catholic Church throughout the State of Idaho.
9. Complete the talk by making the “ask.” Urge people to join you, when they are asked, to make a generous pledge to this year’s Idaho Catholic Appeal.
10. Practice, practice, practice! Rehearse your talk, and deliver it to your spouse, family, or friend, and ask for their critique. Try to keep your talk less than five minutes in duration. Smile—and don’t be afraid to be humorous!

## Sample Lay Presenter Talk #1

Good morning (evening), my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a member of (name) parish and also involved with (list your parish activities). Our pastor/Parish Life Director (name) has asked me to speak to you today regarding (parish name) involvement in the Idaho Catholic Appeal, also known as the ICA. Having accepted (his/her) invitation to do this, I have had the opportunity to learn a lot about the ICA and our parish. Two key questions came to mind as I was preparing my talk:

**First: Why do we need the Idaho Catholic Appeal? Can't we do the same things in our own parish through our own ministries?**

The answer to this first question comes easily: No, we cannot! Not as efficiently or as effectively. While we have hardworking, talented staff and volunteers in our parish who give their stewardship of time and talent unselfishly, we cannot provide, nor can we duplicate, the efforts of the hundreds of volunteers and full-time staffs of dedicated people who provide diocesan services.

By having the diocese coordinate these activities through various funded ministries and agencies, staffed with professionals, we eliminate much duplication. And we provide stable, long-term programs for the entire diocese—both for large parishes and for smaller parishes and missions that otherwise could not possibly afford or support these services.

Our own responsibility to God and to our parish is to be good stewards, committed to pledge our treasure to help pay for the diocesan ministries' good works, and to volunteer our time and talent to diocesan-funded activities wherever and whenever possible.

**The second question is: What does the ICA do with our contributions?**

Our pledges to the Idaho Catholic Appeal are distributed to more than 20 ministries. Directors of these offices prepare detailed budgets involving costs, personnel and other resources. Each budget is

carefully reviewed and refined in the light of the needs of the people of our diocese, as well as estimates of fundraising capabilities and the area economy.

Let me share with you just a few of the ways the ICA serves us all:

The teaching of our young people begins in the Catholic home and is supported by the ministries of our diocesan Church. A significant percentage of every ICA dollar is used for the religious education of our children as well as for our adults:

- The **Catholic Schools Office** provides educational direction for 14 Catholic schools across the state serving over 3,000 students.
- Thousands of young people and adults across our state are part of religious education programs in our parishes. The catechetical leaders of these programs are formed and assisted by the **Catechesis Office**. They also provide spiritual guidance and leadership training for hundreds of teenagers and young adults in our diocese including the annual Idaho Catholic Youth Convention.
- **Campus Ministries** provides outreach programs for hundreds of students in the universities within our diocese.
- **Catholic Charities** helps thousands of people each year through its many programs and services, including emergency services for families, counseling individuals and families in crisis, parenting classes, and other specialized services for people in need.
- **The Seminarian and Vocations Program** trains and forms men for the priesthood, so that are prepared to serve the faithful of the Diocese of Boise.

Your single pledge to this year's ICA helps to fund these and many other diocesan programs and services.

Our Parish ICA goal this year is (\$amount). If we surpass 110% of our goal, we will receive a 100 percent rebate of the excess which we can then use for our own needs right here at (name of parish). The people of our parish have a history of great generosity. If you have been a regular supporter of the ICA in the past, please continue your generosity. If possible, please increase your pledge this year. (Add, if appropriate:) I have increased my own pledge by (mention a percent amount if you are comfortable doing so).

If you have not supported the Idaho Catholic Appeal in the past, for whatever reason, please reconsider and make a pledge to this year's campaign—we need your help. We want our 2015 Idaho Catholic Appeal to be the best ever.

Today, you have the opportunity to make your pledge if you have not already done so using the pledge envelopes located in the pews. On Behalf of (pastor/PLD's name) and the thousands of our fellow Catholics throughout Idaho who will be served by your generosity, please give careful consideration to pledging as much as you can. And thank you for giving me a few minutes of your time this (morning/evening).

## **Sample Lay Presenter Talk #2**

I'm going to take a few minutes of your time to urge your participation in this year's Idaho Catholic Appeal, also known as the ICA. The ICA is the major source of funding for many of the good works being done by the Catholic Church throughout Idaho.

As Catholics, we are called upon once a year to share God's gifts with our brothers and sisters, especially those less fortunate than us, through our pledges to this special parish campaign. Your pledge is part of our parish's share of the responsibility to support the many ministries, services and programs that benefit our parishes, schools, and other diocesan institutions.

To most Catholics, the "Diocese" is perceived as a distant, remote entity loosely linked to their parish community. The common expression "What does the diocese do for me or for my parish?" indicates a general lack of understanding of the strong connection between parishes and the diocese.

As you already know, (name) parish is part of a greater church community called the Diocese of Boise. All parishes rely heavily on diocesan programs and services for many things, both spiritual and temporal. An immediate example is the presence of a priest here. It's the diocese which trains and educates priests, and nurtures and promotes the priesthood and other vocations. In addition, diocesan ministries such as Catholic Charities, Office of Catechesis, Catholic Schools Office, Multicultural Ministries, and Deacon & Lay Ministries – among several others – provide countless vital programs and services which individual parishes and schools are unable to provide by themselves.

But just as we rely on diocesan services, so do diocesan offices rely on us to provide the funds needed for these programs and services. Those funds are raised annually by means of the Idaho Catholic Appeal—the ICA.

I give to the ICA because (add personal experiences here). I give to the ICA so that people in our parish and throughout the diocese can be trained and receive materials necessary to step into church leadership roles as the priest shortage grows more critical. I give to the ICA so that Catholic college students can have an active Catholic campus ministry program available for them. I give to the ICA so that Catholic Charities can help so many people who have physical and emotional problems. I give to the ICA so that people experiencing marital difficulties can receive Christ's healing touch through the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal Office. These are just a few of the many reasons why the ICA is a priority on my charitable giving list.

It may be difficult for some of us to accept that everything we have, and everything we have accomplished, is the result of God's gifts to us. Yet, as we survey all the things we are, and all the things we have—our families, our community, our jobs, our health, our parish, and our material possessions—we must be every mindful that these are all gifts from God. The ICA is an annual opportunity to give some of God's gifts back to help spread God's work in our parish throughout Idaho and beyond.

We are not an isolated Church; we are not an isolated faith community. We are, rather, part of a greater Church, a greater vision reflected and defined by Christ. Our parish and our diocese are partners in faith. Please open your hearts to the needs of our greater faith community and make a generous pledge the Idaho Catholic Appeal. I'm sure God will be pleased by your kindness and will not be outdone in generosity.

### **Sample Lay Presenter Talk #3**

There is something about me that you may not be aware of. I am a mind reader! Let me demonstrate. Right now, you are thinking, “Good grief! Here’s a lay person. It must be time for the Idaho Catholic Appeal and he/she is going to ask me for my money again.” Right? Well, you couldn’t be more wrong. I am not the one asking for your money. I am speaking for the many, many people who are unable to be here to talk to you for themselves.

This is not (your name), standing here—I am many people. I am a young college student away from home for the first time. I am lonely and very homesick. I am looking for help and support and above all guidance. I am so glad that they have a campus ministry where I can find these things. Thank you for your support.

I am a catechist. I need help and suggestions for planning my programs so that your children will be able to better understand and live their faith. The Diocese provides excellent training and resources through the Catechesis Office to help me and the other catechists. Thank you for your support.

I’m in the seminary. I think that God is calling me to the priesthood. It is a wonderful blessing to be able to study theology and to work on a pastoral ministry project. I pray for those who are providing for me during this time of preparation. I look forward to the day that I can serve you in ordained ministry. Thank you for your support.

I am a single mother who has just been laid off. My child and I are cold and hungry. I go to Catholic Charities to find some help. They advise me, they help me, they point me to new directions in life. They will walk with me and my boy until I get my feet back on the ground. Thank you for your support.

We are an engaged couple. Our pastor sent us to a pre-cana program at Nazareth Retreat Center. Trained couples lead us and many others in discovering each other and examining our relationship. It is a wonderful experience. Thank you for your support.

So you see, I am many people with many needs. We are not just statistics; we are people you know; people who need your help. So we are the ones doing the asking.

Just in case you were wondering, now I'm (your name) again. Of all the wonderful ministries that are supported by the Idaho Catholic Appeal, let's focus our collective attention for a moment on the youth of the church—their needs, aspirations, hopes and dreams. What is our response to them? How are we providing for their faith development and spiritual formation?

There is a saying that goes like this: The question is not if our youth are being evangelized. They are. The problem is who is doing it? Is it the rock bands, TV reality stars? Is it Facebook and computer games? Is it the social media? Is it the peer group that is at best agnostic, at worst anti-Christian?

We might ask ourselves what can we do against what seems to be such formidable opponents? I've struggled with this question, and for me, I think that the first thing we can do is to start by praying. Pray for our youth. But also pray that our own faith is alive, authentic and life-giving. Pray that our faith is not just something that is put on just on Sunday, but will continue through the rest of the week. Pray that the example I give is really reflecting the loving Jesus Christ, the true hope of the world.

Secondly, if our faith is not just a Sunday external, but an alive seven-day-a-week reality, then we need to make sure our priorities are in order. One of those priorities has to be our Church. I have to ask myself, am I supporting it to an appropriate level so it is alive and active seven-days-a-week?

Are there enough of my sacrifices of time, talents, and treasure so that meaningful ministries, qualified leaders and teachers are there for our youth and for everyone else?

This is why I am making a pledge this year to the ICA. I am pledging to pray for the diocesan ministries, especially those that are dedicated to the youth. (My wife and) I have adopted the eventual goal of reaching the tithe as a measure for our gift-giving. We are striving to give 5% of our income to the parish, 1% to this diocesan appeal, and 4% to other worthy causes. We are going to offer these prayers and gifts in thanksgiving and sacrifice to the Lord in gratitude for all the blessings that he has bestowed on us (especially our own children).

When you consider your response to this request, please remember the many people who, through me, spoke earlier to you in this talk. Remember their stories and ask yourself, what can I do? I invite you to consider pledging your prayers and 1% of your income to the Idaho Catholic Appeal. By doing so, you will be helping our youth to develop into mature disciples and you will be demonstrating that God is first in your life. Thank you in advance for all you already do for the diocese and for this parish.