Catholics Come Home
Resource Packet
Ideas for Parishioners and Returnees

Prepared by Department of Evangelization and Worship
November 2009
# Catholics Come Home (CCH) Resource Packet
## Ideas for Current Parishioners and Returnees

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How to Inform Parishioners About the Commercials

Use all three steps so everyone is aware that the commercials are coming. Why does “everyone” need to know? Because the only way that this will work - that people will come home to our faith and stay - is if the Holy Spirit works through each and every one of us. Why all three steps? Because these days, different people need different channels of information.

#1 Show the commercials! Show them at all weekend Masses Jan. 17 and 24

- The DVD of the commercials can be shown during the homily or after Communion.
- For parishes that cannot set up a projector in their worship space, set up a DVD player and TV in the gathering area(s) with the commercials running continuously before and after Mass all during January. Make sure you invite and then remind parishioners to look at the commercials before or after Mass sometime during the month of January.
- Each parish Pastor and Pastoral Council chairperson received a DVD of the commercials in English and Spanish in Sept. (An additional copy can be obtained for $3 by contacting Leah at 920-272-8281.)
- Bishop’s Appeal begins February 7, so we recommend showing the commercials during all Masses January 17 and 24. This way, active parishioners will be aware of what is coming, they will not confuse CCH with Bishop’s Appeal and most importantly, they will have time to prayerfully reflect on how they might help their friends, family and parish community to be welcomed home.

#2 Use your other Parish information channels, including:

- Parish Bulletins
- Parish Newsletters
- Parish Web site
- Hanging signs/flyers
- Small flyer to have at the end of every pew
- Notices to go home with children in rel. educ. and in parish school

#3 Urge parish staff, Pastoral Council members and other key parishioners to mention the CCH commercials when interacting with parishioners during January and February

- Include it as an announcement during every parish committee meeting in January and early February, from social concerns to spiritual enrichment committees
- Include announcements in January/February faith formation with adults, RCIA, children, youth groups and within specific ministry gatherings, like bereavement group or book club.
- When staff and council members chat with others over coffee and donuts after Mass, have them ask parishioners an open-ended question to get them to share (ex. “What do you think about the commercials?”, “What do you think about the church inviting people back to Mass?”)
What to Say When Informing Parishioners

Three Talking Points for Mass and Parish Meetings:
1. Three television commercials professionally produced and market tested will air regularly and frequently on all Green Bay affiliate stations during Lent 2010 beginning the Friday before Ash Wednesday. The average person will see the commercials at least 14 times.

2. Counties without Green Bay affiliate stations will also see the commercials, via DirectTV and Dish Network. Telemundo and Univision will also air the commercials in Spanish.

3. Previous use of these commercials proves that inactive Catholics will call, email, and/or show up for Mass at the parish. The question is not IF inactive Catholics will come to parish Mass, the question is “What does our parish want to do to encourage folks to come back a SECOND TIME and beyond?”

Potential Pulpit Announcement when airing the commercials:
As Catholics we are all called to build up the body of Christ by living and sharing the Good News with one another. We leave Mass renewed by our Lord in the Eucharist to be living signs to others about God’s goodness and love for each one of us. In recent times, many have fallen away from their faith, and we respond by lovingly inviting our friends, family and co-workers back to the Catholic faith. To help in these efforts, the Diocese of Green Bay will be part of a Catholics Come Home commercial campaign, and advertisements will air during Lent on all local channels. Here is a sample of what those who live in the Diocese of Green Bay will see.

We encourage each of you to live and share your Catholic faith, and respond to this campaign by welcoming all those who may return to their faith this holy season. In the words of St. Paul, “Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you.” Romans 15:7. More information can be found in the bulletin and we will be offering ____________ or contact ____________ for more information. We lovingly invite all those who have fallen away to come home, to find healing, answers and support. There is always a place for you here.

Sample Announcements for Bulletin, Newsletters, etc….
NOTE: Similar to Compass announcements, the Pastor’s Bulk in December will include multiple graphic and written options for inclusion in parish communications. All options will also be available electronically from the diocesan Web site.

This Lent, the Diocese of Green Bay will be part of a Catholics Come Home commercial campaign, and advertisements will air during Lent on all local channels. We encourage each of you to invite 1-2 people you know who may not be practicing their faith or may have never encountered Jesus Christ to join us for this holy season. Our parish will be offering gift bags, flyers, etc for those who are returning home or who want to learn more about the Catholic faith. We lovingly invite all those who have fallen away to come home, to find healing, answers and support. There is always a place for you here.

Beyond Informing Parishioners: Conversion, Enthusiasm and Sharing the Faith

The commercials are likely to have 3 effects on the average, active Catholic:

1. Catholic pride and enthusiasm increases. The commercials affirm Catholicism and all components of our faith. Seeing our faith depicted favorably in the popular media helps Catholics feel good about their faith, bolstering self-esteem and good will.

2. They feel more comfortable talking about Catholicism. The commercials will be noticed by virtually everyone in Northeast Wisconsin and they are likely to get people talking. Just like non-football fans (is there such a thing? Lol, laughing out loud) still chat about unusual Superbowl outcomes, so too will everyone be talking about the commercials. One caveat here: people will talk about the commercials, but not necessarily about their faith. We’ll have to help our typical Catholic take that step.

3. They become more interested in learning about their faith, growing closer to God and to others. Whereas returning Catholics do not immediately flock to adult faith formation (AFF) opportunities, active parishioners do. Why? Active Catholics have been going to Mass every Sunday for years and years of their lives. However, the commercials often foster a new awareness in active Catholics that there is much more to know about their faith.

Fostering Conversion: Building on Enthusiasm & Desire for Catechesis

Have a favorite AFF program? Always been wanting to try “X program” in your parish? Now is the time to schedule it! Just before the commercials air, during Lent, and summer of 2010 will be a unique time for faith formation in the parish. Some of the topics of particular interest to Catholics in light of CCH:

- Understanding the Mass
- Scripture, Tradition and role of the Magisterium
- Role of Eucharist for Catholic Faith
- Role of Reconciliation for Catholic Faith
- Why Catholics Have Annulments
- Prayer in the Catholic Tradition
- How to Read and Understand the Bible

Recommendation for faith formation on these topics: Parishioners are likely to come to one stand-alone session as opposed to a multi-session “program.” Even if you offer sessions on multiple topics in light of CCH, we recommend you offer each session as a unique, one-time opportunity. Offering the same session on different dates and times also helps them know this is a topic in which they ought to try to participate.
Helping Catholics Share Their Faith: Evangelization 101

Catholics feel more comfortable sharing their faith after the following takes place:

**First, they must find their own answers to these questions:**
1. Why do I go to Mass?
2. Why am I Catholic?
3. What do I know about Jesus?

While every single Mass exposes Catholics to answers to these questions, they must be given the opportunity, space and encouragement to answer these questions for themselves. Until they can articulate this in their own words and based on their own life experiences and faith journey, the typical Catholic is unlikely to talk to anyone (not even family, friends or co-workers) about their faith.

**Second, they must be assured that they do know enough about the faith to talk to others.**

If asked, the typical Catholic will say they feel uncomfortable talking to others about their faith because they don’t feel like they know enough about Catholicism. They don’t feel “qualified” like the priests and staff who receive formal training.

To counter this misconception, Catholics need to be told in a variety of venues and with a variety of methods that the most important part of our faith to share with others is what they know extremely well – the Creed. The acronym G.A.S.P. can even teach them an easy way to talk about the basic story of our faith:

**G = God**
Everyone has some idea of God they can share. God who created everything. God who said I AM WHO AM.

**A = Actual Sin**
Without focusing on various doctrines of sin, everyone knows and can share how they personally have done “stuff” that they wish they had not done and wishes they had done some things they did not do. We all have actual experience with our less-than-best-self, regardless of the language a person feels comfortable using to describe this.

**S = Savior**
As we help people articulate what they know about Jesus, (see above) they become more comfortable speaking about this core part of our faith. Most people have a special affinity for 1-2 aspects of the Jesus event, whether that is the incarnation, Jesus’ life and ministry, his passion and death, or the resurrection. Help people identify what part of the Jesus event they really love, and they will be more comfortable talking about our Savior.

**P = People of Pentecost**
The story does not end at the resurrection. We believe that God resides within and between us, that we all must journey together, as church, as community, as People of Pentecost, towards the end of time and life eternal. Once Catholics are reminded of “P” they can talk about this too.
Third, they must have opportunities to practice.

We don’t allow doctors to get their license until they get lots and lots and lots of practice in their specialty area. We don’t expect parents to know the best way to get their newborn to stop crying without lots of opportunities to learn from experience. Similarly, how can we expect Catholics to feel comfortable talking about their faith if we don’t give them chances to practice doing this?

How can Catholics practice talking about their faith? Assuming that that they have done steps one and two above, ask people to start with small and safe situations, practice these on multiple occasions until they feel comfortable and then build to “riskier” situations of approaching a friend, family or co-worker after the commercials air or being approached by someone who knows they are Catholic.

Safer situations include but are not limited to: coming to church and practice sharing What they Know about Jesus (for example) with someone else at church; sharing Why they Go to Mass for 10 minutes with their family at home before the next Sunday Mass; calling a friend on the phone and asking to practice sharing with them for 10 minutes about Why they are Catholic.

Any practice opportunity needs advance preparation on the part of parish staff or volunteers – you cannot simply ask people to go home and talk to family about the Catholic faith without giving them very concrete, user-friendly guidelines.

Pulling it all together:

Ways to Offer “Evangelization 101” Prior to CCH Commercials Airing

- Have parishioners attend a regional workshop. (See next page for details.)
- Schedule a Diocesan-trained representative to offer a workshop for your parishioners. Contact Leah at lgabrielson@gbdioc.org or 920-272-8281 after December 4 if you’d like a list of trained representatives and guidelines for hosting a session at your parish.
- Parish Staff can host a workshop at your parish. Contact Leah at lgabrielson@gbdioc.org or 920-272-8281 after December 11 if you’d like a session outline your parish can use in its entirety or adapt for use as you host your own workshop(s) on this topic.
Evangelization 101:
Formation for Parishioners in light of CCH

The average person is likely to see the Catholics Come Home (CCH) commercials 14 times. 14 times! That is enough to get your attention! When the commercials air, it is vital that all parishioners, the active Catholics in Northeast Wisconsin, are ready. Ready for what?

Ready for a co-worker who knows they are Catholic to approach us at the water cooler and ask us questions. Ready to introduce ourselves and open ourselves more to others during Mass. Perhaps even ready to invite a loved one back to the faith.

What if you’ve never really talked much about your faith?
How do you prepare to answer questions about why you are Catholic?
How do greeters, ushers and front-line volunteers prepare for CCH?
This workshop will help!

When: 6:30-8:30pm.
Where:

| Jan. 12  | Bishop Wycislo Center, Gr B. |
| Jan. 14  | St. Raphael, Oshkosh         |
| Jan. 21  | St. Francis, Manitowoc       |
| Jan. 26  | St. Paul, Combined Locks     |

Who: We recommend that every parishioner who wants to be ready to talk to others about faith (friends, family, co-workers) after the commercials air come join us. We’ll also offer a special track for parish volunteers who serve in the ministry of first impressions (greeters, ushers, volunteer receptionists, SCRIP sales volunteers, etc….)

What: This workshop is designed for Catholic parishioners and will include two tracks:
Parishioner Track: This track will help average Catholics to feel more comfortable talking about their Catholic faith to friends and loved ones after the commercials begin.
Volunteer Track: This track is designed for parishioners who answer the phones, are ushers, greeters, who sit in the Narthex and sell SCRIP….anyone who is involved in helping the parish to make a good first impression!

Cost: FREE!!

Register now at EvangWorship@gbdioc.org or 920-272-8281

This workshop funded by the Evangelization Endowment of Advancing the Mission
Profile of Inactive Catholics and the Path to Active Participation

Profile of Inactive Catholics most likely to respond to CCH commercials:

- They identify themselves as Catholic and they do not see themselves as inactive. They don’t understand why Mass is important and why belonging to a parish community is important, but they don’t consider themselves as “inactive Catholics.”
- At least 90% of them became inactive because of social stresses. Life got too hectic and busy, they had to work on Sundays, they got involved with sports for themselves or for their children or they just fell out of the intentional habit of coming to Mass on Sundays. In a nutshell, they did not have a significant relationship with Jesus and with his community such that attending Mass was not as important to them as other options.
- They are not angry with the church. People who identify themselves as “recovering Catholics” or who will forcefully and sometimes argumentatively speak against the Catholic Church are not likely to be moved by the commercials.
- They do not feel the church has harmed them so they are not in need of pastoral healing per se. If asked, they can quickly come up with a reason(s) why they left, such as being upset by the sex abuse scandal or by the mergers and linkages in our area. However, this explanation is not why they left, but a further justification for their actions. (Indeed, CARA’s 2003 study found that nearly 85% of inactive Catholics did so before the sex abuse scandal.)
- A small minority of inactive Catholics will have some past hurts connected with the church and will need compassionate and trained pastoral ministers to work with them. After airing the CCH commercials in the Diocese of Phoenix, 7% of diocesan contacts had marriage issues and 3% had issues regarding homosexuality. An “annulment fair” in the Diocese of Corpus Christi was attended by over 100 people in one afternoon. (Estimates were that 5000-7000 people returned during their Lent 2009 campaign.)

Demographic Profile of those most likely to respond to CCH commercials:

- Both male and female, between the ages of 20 and 50
- Young adults (age 18-35ish) may be married or not
- Many returnees will have children and the children will be of all age groups
- Many returnees will be Hispanic who hope the church is more welcoming to them now
- Some returnees will be “religious ed parents” who do not come to Mass, but bring their children to Catholic school or Catholic religious education programs.
- Some returnees will be individuals who were initially upset about a parish closing, linkage or merger. If they are still really emotional about this, they are not likely to respond to the commercials; returnees tend feel neutral or positive about the church
Moving to Full Participation – Three Stages

While these stages tend to be sequential, two or more stages can nonetheless be active simultaneously. There is no way of knowing how long (or if) a person will take to move through these stages. That will depend on God and on the person. We may never know our role in this process, only that God will work through us if we so agree.

1. **Stage One: Welcome.** When they return, inactive Catholics need to feel welcomed, as though they are already part of an open, genuine, vibrant, happy parish community. People often decide within 5-7 minutes of coming to a church whether they intend to return, so a parish community cannot be too warm and effusive towards everyone around them from the moment people turn into the parking lot. See the September CCH Resource Packet, Welcoming 101 and Radical Christian Hospitality pdfs available at the diocesan website for ideas on strengthening the welcome process in your parish. (Go to gbdioc.org and select “Read More” for the Catholics Come Home section. On the next page, select resources link for parish leaders and volunteers.)

2. **Stage Two: Connect.** 85% of people who come to a church for the second time end up becoming members. However, one major factor distinguishes those who are still active six months later from those who are not. People who are still active report an average of 7 friends in the community, seven people they can call/rely on to discuss spiritual matters and other life issues. Those who are no longer active report an average of only 2 friends in the community.

   In addition to connecting returning Catholics to other people in the parish, returnees also need to be connected to the sacramental, pastoral and catechetical aspects of our faith. Whether it is two weeks or two months later, returnees will eventually share with others in the parish their need to receive Reconciliation, for their child to receive First Communion, or their interest in learning more about the Bible. The key for parish staff to remember here is that individuals will surface their needs at their own pace based on their specific life journey (even if they don’t articulate it as an need, for example, for Reconciliation) and these needs complement rather than supplement their need for social integration into the parish community.

3. **Stage Three: Commit.** Remember the first time someone invited you to share some of your talents with the parish? Remember how you felt the first time you realized that you thought you were helping the parish do X, but really you were getting more out of it than what you could ever possibly give? Remember how participating and serving in the parish opened you up to God, to your faith and to other people? Well, returning Catholics will never know this feeling until you ask them to share, to serve, to give of themselves. Discipleship is a journey. Stewardship is a journey. They both begin with invitations.
Returning Catholics and the Weight Watchers Model

Balancing the need for individual attention and desire for anonymity

Weight Watchers meetings work for so many people because as soon as you walk in the door, you know you will not be judged, you will be accepted no matter how well you are losing weight and you know everyone is there for the same reason. In this environment, people do not mind identifying themselves even though they would normally prefer anonymity. Weight Watchers knows how to balance a desire for anonymity with the need for individual attention. What lessons can today’s parish can learn from Weight Watchers?

Larger parishes: Catholic parishes with more than a few hundred units are generally very well suited to providing the anonymity that most people desire. But, how well do we provide the individual attention that people also need? For better or worse, today’s returning Catholics want to feel like they got something out of Mass and that there is something the parish can do for them before they will ever consider becoming a parish member and long before most of them will ever approach the pastoral staff to introduce themselves. This section presents some ideas of how you might help the returnees to feel special, like honored guests, while not singling them out such that they feel embarrassed and that all eyes are focused on them.

Smaller parishes: What about smaller and/or rural parishes where “everybody knows everybody?” Although everyone may know where Jane attended second grade, who her first boyfriend was and that she twists her hair when she is nervous, it is unlikely that the broader community knows what in life gives Jane her greatest joy and what troubles her heart more than anything else in this world. Christian communities are about providing the space where we can be human with one another, where it is safe to let God and others touch that which matters most to us, both the joyful and the painful. Whereas larger parishes may need to figure out ways to provide individual attention while not overstepping the desire for anonymity, smaller parishes may need to do the opposite: help returnees feel like they are part of the group, part of the community that is gathered and not simply an individual who has not gone to Mass the past six years.

Every parish will ultimately need to decide for itself the best way to balance the need each of us has to be able to come to Mass and participate communally and relatively anonymously in the liturgy with the need to be touched by God and by other human beings, uniquely and individually. We hope some of the ideas presented in the next section serve as a spark for you!
Fifteen Ways to Help Returnees Feel Special

1. Give them the free CCH supplement being provided to all parishes for Lent (see pg 14)

2. Have a pew card available that welcomes guests and invites them to whatever you are doing especially for guests during Lent. We do not recommend the Creative Communications pew cards that have an 8-item check list ranging from “We are visiting” to “I am going to the hospital.” Keep it simple and aimed at the sole purpose of welcoming guests. We do not recommend you provide envelopes in pews as this gives the message that you care more about their money than anything else while they sit there.

3. Create a “Guest Gift Bag.” This can be as simple or as elaborate and expensive as you like. The gift bag should include at least these five items:
   1) Something besides a parish bulletin that identifies your parish, like a pen, a medallion of your parish’s patron saint, a sticker with parish name on the side of the gift bag, or a magnet with parish name and Mass times. To save money, this item could be a small craft or even a bakery item created by parishioners;
   2) Handwritten note thanking guest for coming and giving them a contact person and number of a parishioner. Ex. Note could say “Dear Friend, Thank you for joining us at St. Mary’s parish today. We hope you will come back. If you have any questions or comments, would you give us a call? We would love to hear from you. Sincerely,… ”; 3) Something uniquely Catholic that the person would like to have, like a Lenten booklet different from the rest of the parish or a little wooden communion cup. Avoid stereotypical Catholic items like saint’s cards and rosaries; 4) An educational pamphlet, like “Ten Reasons for Going to Mass” by Catholic Update, or “How to Observe Lent as a Catholic” by Our Sunday Visitor or “Bendiciones familiares para la Cuaresma” by Ligouri Publications. Feel free to write your own if your parish needs to conserve funds. A complete list of good pamphlets for returning Catholics can be obtained by emailing Leah at lgabrielson@gbdioc.org; 5) An item for families or for children, preferably something uniquely Catholic, like the pamphlet “Family Prayer Traditions for Lent” by Ligouri Press or a cross Bubble bottle from Autom.com; To save money, this item could also be created as a craft item by parishioners.

   NOTE: Both CreativeCommunications.com and Autom.com have very cheap giveaways for your parish to consider. Feel free to contact Kristina with requests or suggestions!

4. Mail a thank-you and welcome note card to the homes of guests. A sample card from New Vision Greetings is enclosed in this packet. How do you get their address? A pew card (either the same as 2. above or a separate item) can ask for their address, but make sure you give them assurances you will only use the card to thank them for being guests.
5. Provide **extra copies of the Compass** in your church for guests to take. Provide guests with information on obtaining a 3-month trial offer of the Compass. (See page 14.)

6. Have brochures of **information on Spanish Masses** available at your parish. Hispanic guests need to be welcomed to your Mass, but they also need info on where they might celebrate the Mass in Spanish. Carlos Hernandez of the Hispanic Ministry Office of the Diocese of Green Bay is providing the latest available information in a December Pastor’s Bulk. Please copy this brochure and have it available at each of your parish exits all during Lent.

7. **Create nametags** for every parishioner if your parish is small enough. This can be done cheaply as a parish project before Lent. Include nametags that say “Guest” for those who might join you.

   **Larger parishes** can place felt-tip pens and sticker nametags in the pews and ask parishioners to write their first names only on the nametag. This practice should begin in January before Lent if parishioners are going to be familiar and in the habit of doing this before guests return.

8. **Designate parish staff or special volunteers** who can be approached by guests before or after Mass. Announce during Mass and include in the parish bulletin who these individuals are. For example, “If you are a guest, please see anyone wearing a purple St. Mary’s lapel pin to receive a free gift bag and to answer any questions you might have.”

9. **Enforce the five-minute rule.** As you invite parishioners and guests to visit after Mass (perhaps over coffee and donuts) ask/remind them that for the first five minutes after Mass, no one is allowed to take care of any parish business. The five-minute rule puts everyone on a level playing field of having to talk to others about communal, social items instead of church business, which makes inactive Catholics feel awkward and out of place. This practice should begin in January before Lent if parishioners are going to be familiar and in the habit of doing this before guests return in Lent.

10. During Lent, **ask parishioners to briefly share** why they are Catholic, why they go to Mass or something about Jesus that is special to them. This can be included as a 3-minute meditation after Communion or can be written and included in the weekly parish bulletins, parish website, guest gift bags, etc. .

11. **Create a parking lot ministry** in January that continues into Lent. Invite parishioners to leave the best parking spaces (up front and close to the entrances) for guests and to park
further back in the church lot. Have parking lot ministers come out to greet guests and elderly parishioners who park in the spaces up front and accompany them inside.

12. **Expand your Greeter Ministry.** Make sure greeters look people in the eye, smile, say “hello” and “welcome” to every single person who comes through the door. If someone looks new, unfamiliar, confused/lost, make sure the greeters introduce themselves by first name to the person and ask them if they can help them find a good seat for Mass. Returning Catholics will expect virtually all greeters to be senior, white males. Surprise them by having greeters at every entrance who do not fit this stereotype. Families and children should especially be encouraged to join this ministry – it is something easy and fun that does not ask a major time commitment of them!

13. Enact the **Rule of Three**, the **Ten-Foot Rule** and the **Just Say Hi Rule**.

   **Rule of Three** – Before Mass starts, every person must introduce him/herself by first name only to three people sitting near them. First name only will help avoid confusion and make it easier to remember people over time. This should be done at the beginning of every Mass starting in January because people often sit in a similar section of church from week to week. Over time, people will learn first names and even more about others.

   **Ten-Foot Rule** and **Just Say Hi Rule** - If you are within 10 feet of someone you do not know, “just say hi” to them. Begin with parishioners in January and have them doing this every week thereafter. With time it gets easier and more fun for everyone involved.

14. **Invite Guests to Come Back.** Small, personal touches make all the difference in the world. Make sure announcements during Mass include an invitation for guests to come back to the parish next week. Ask greeters and ushers to smile, look people in the eye and say “we hope to see you next week” when they give out a parish bulletin. Encourage parish staff, key volunteers, or all of your active parishioners to extend this small courtesy to those they encounter, especially towards those they do not consider parish friends.

15. **Start in Advent!** Though the commercials will not begin until the Friday before Lent, the Advent and Christmas season almost always includes family members and guests who are not usually present during other Sunday liturgies. Enact some small steps in Advent and see how they go in anticipation of what you will do in Lent. At the very least, invite parish staff and key volunteers to keep their eyes open during Advent for how guests/inactive Catholics might be experiencing your parish.

   **What’s still to come?**

   - **Resources on Enhancing Liturgy** during Lent and beyond, including music ideas for each week of Lent and potential General Intercessions.
   - Suggestions for **Returnees’ Sacramental needs**, including photo-copy ready brochures on how to go to Reconciliation, info on Annulments, and a full-script Communal Penance Service
   - Suggestions for **Returnees’ Pastoral and Catechetical needs**.
Compass Insert