

INDEX CARD INITIATIVE

A great way to engage parishioners to identify, pray for, and personally engage those who are not currently coming to Mass.

Description:

How do we reach out to and identify the estimated 30-60% of parishioners who have not come back to Mass? It is simple—ask the members of your community!

At an appropriate time during each Mass, hand out index cards with pens. Invite people to look around at those who are present and write down the names of 3 people whom they notice are not there. Perhaps it is someone they have not seen for a while (Note: there can be many potential reasons for someone's absence). Encourage those present to keep that index card with them throughout the next week and to pray often for each person on their list. Consider a multi-week focus on mission and outreach!

In the following week(s), consider having parishioners pull out their cards at the Prayers of the Faithful. Help and encourage them, in a way that is natural, to personally reach out to one or more of the three people for which they have been praying:

- Reach out and simply share that you have missed seeing them at Mass.
- Engage in conversation as a friend and get to know how they are doing. Seek to engage and to listen... Get to know their needs or concerns and help as you are able.
- Explain the index card initiative and say: "God has placed you on my heart and I want you to know that I have been praying for you... Is there anything specific that I can pray for?"
- Invite them back to Mass.

Even if only one-third of people took this initiative to heart, you could drastically increase Mass attendance and deeply impact so many. Be sure to have effective hospitality implemented so that parishioners feel welcome upon return.