



## Tip Sheet for Parish Vitality Video Shorts

These twelve video shorts have been designed for parishes to help them increase parishioner engagement. Some of the videos are humorous while others are emotionally moving. All are written through the lens of stewardship with the goal to help parishes invite people to get more deeply involved in parish life.

The videos can be used year-round in parish communications, such as on websites, linked to parish bulletins, in your announcements, e-blasts, and in social media outlets such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc. The following write-ups are only suggested examples. There are no limitations on how (or where) to use these videos, so feel free to be creative!

If you would enjoy receiving some professional guidance from industry experts on how to write inspiring parish communications, we created a webinar to help you titled, "**Stellar Communications that Get Your Parish Noticed**". To watch the webinar, click here <https://bit.ly/3JGdDSu> and then scroll down to the "Parish Vitality Webinar Series I" section. It is the first webinar on the list.

### The 12 video shorts are:

1. Our Parish, A Gift from God
2. The Joy of Parish Events
3. Stewardship Sunday
4. Dear Harry
5. Red Mitts
6. Oasis
7. Reopening
8. Your Stewardship Enriches Parish Life
9. Your Stewardship Enriches My Priestly Ministry
10. Thank You for Your Gift of Stewardship
11. Welcome Back

12. Small Steps (*coming soon!*)

### **Video Description and Write-Up Examples:**

- 1. Our Parish, A Gift from God:** Designed to reawaken our love of the sacraments with beauty, "Our Parish, A Gift from God" tells the story of how the sacraments touch every aspect of our lives, helping us in our lifelong journey to become saints. Consider sharing this video to help promote your formation related events and activities.

#1 Write-Up example for a parish bulletin, website or YouTube channel: Over two thousand years ago Jesus personally founded the Sacraments. They are a precious gift from God, each unique in the spiritual gifts it offers as it invisibly communicates grace to our soul, helping us on our lifelong journey to become saints. Want to learn more about how the Sacraments enrich parish life? Click here for an inspiring four-minute video: (insert link here).

If you want to learn more about the Catholic faith - whether you are a cradle Catholic, new to the faith, or just curious about it - visit our website to learn more about the beauty of the Catholic faith at: (insert parish or other website link here).

- 2. The Joy of Parish Events:** Lights! Camera! Action! Written though the eyes of a child who is set loose by his parish with a video camera, this video shares the humorous story of a child who enthusiastically makes a homemade video that invites fellow parishioners to attend upcoming parish events. Consider using this quirky little video to help promote your own parish events!

#1 Write-up example for a parish bulletin (Coffee Sunday): On January 7, we will be hosting a “Be Your Own Barista” coffee Sunday following the 11am Mass in the parish hall. Do not drink coffee? Not a problem! We will also be showcasing the finest imported teas from President's Choice and Tetley. Still not convinced? There will also be delectable treats for both the health conscious and not-so-health conscious. Got kids? Bring them! Our Youth Group will keep them busy with fun activities while you unwind with good conversation. *Hope to see you there!*

P.S. We have a lot of great events planned for you this year, so stay tuned. To help get you warmed up, check out this fun little video titled, “The Joy of Parish Events”: (insert link to video here).

#2 Write-up example for a parish bulletin (Parish Ministry Fair): Have you ever considered sharing your God-given time and talent with your parish community by volunteering in a parish ministry? Consider this your invitation! On September 24, we will be hosting a Parish Ministry Fair following the 10am Mass in the parish hall. At the fair, we will have booths set-up with ministry coordinators who can answer your questions. Have questions now? Please contact Mary at the parish office. We hope you will prayerfully consider attending the fair...Your parish needs you! 😊

P.S. We have a lot of great things planned for the parish community this year and need great people like you to help bring them to life. To help get you warmed up for the upcoming fair, check out this fun little video titled, “The Joy of Parish Events”: (insert link to video here). Thank you and God bless!

- 3. Stewardship Sunday:** Stewardship Sunday occurs annually in the Archdiocese of Toronto on the 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary time, normally falling on the third Sunday in September. As Stewardship

Sunday occurs around three weeks before Thanksgiving, this video can help you to leverage the generosity of the season by inviting people to become more engaged in parish life. "Stewardship Sunday" beautifully shares the concept of "deep stewardship" while encouraging your parishioners to prayerfully consider sharing their time and talent with your parish community.

#1 Write-Up example for a parish bulletin:

Next week is Stewardship Sunday! God has given all of us unique gifts for the building up of the kingdom of God in our parish communities. The most important gift God has given us is our very lives, the time we have in this world. Another great gift God has given us are talents. Fruitfully using them and encouraging others to do the same with theirs, for the benefit of all. Joy in life comes from using our time and talent well, in service to God and our neighbour.

In the spirit of deep stewardship, please remember your pastor and parish community in your prayers. To learn more about the spirituality of deep stewardship, we invite you to watch this three-minute video: (insert link here).

Note to the parish: If you are hosting any parish related events in the fall, consider linking their promotion to Stewardship Sunday. As Stewardship Sunday occurs around three weeks before Thanksgiving, you can leverage the generosity of the Thanksgiving season with an invitation to become more deeply engaged in parish life.

- 4. Dear Harry:** Shares the heartwarming story of how simple acts of kindness can have a profound impact on someone's life. This video brings to life a moving letter that was received by a parish priest. Emotional and authentic, "Dear Harry" is a testament to the

transformational power of hospitality in parish life. "Dear Harry" will gently encourage your parishioners to grow in their hospitality and share their time and talent for the enrichment of all.

Write-Up example for a parish bulletin or website: Simple acts of kindness can change lives forever. Click the link below to watch an inspiring two-minute video titled, "Dear Harry". This short video, based on a true story, brings to life a moving letter that was received by a parish priest. Emotional and authentic, "Dear Harry" it is a testament to the transformational power of hospitality in parish life. "Dear Harry" can help remind us that through our acts of kindness, many of us have unknowingly entertained angels (Hebrews 13:1-2). To watch "Dear Harry", click here: (insert link here).

P.S. A note from Fr. John, your pastor: Our parish is thinking of starting up a hospitality ministry, but we need volunteers. After watching "Dear Harry", if you feel God is calling you to change lives by sharing your God-given time and talent in this important ministry, please contact Mary at the parish office for more information. Thank you and God bless.

- 5. Red Mitts:** Little things done with love can make a big difference. Based on a true story, "Red Mitts" shares the story of how a kind visitor on a cold winter day forever changed the life of a young girl, who in turn went on to change the lives of others. It is a testament to the fact that, as Christians, whenever we choose to be the hands of Christ for people in need, beautiful things can happen. Consider sharing this video in the season of Advent to inspire your parishioners to share their God-given time and talent with your parish community.

Write-Up example for parish announcements: Advent begins next week. During the joy of the season, it is good for us as a parish community to remember those people for whom the cold weather brings added hardship. In light of this, we are organizing a winter

clothing and food drive for The Good Shepherd. Please be generous in your support! If you can volunteer to help sort contributions or make important deliveries, please consult this week's bulletin for more information on how you can change lives by volunteering your God-given time and talent to this important parish endeavor. Thank you.

- 6. Oasis:** On your Mark! Get set! Go! The modern world demands that we move ever faster, delivering what is required of us at increasingly breakneck speeds. While this fast-paced video will speak to anyone who never has enough hours in the day, "Oasis" may appeal in particular to young professionals who need a spiritual break during their workday. If your parish is open during the day and you would like to attract more Millennials...this video may be for you!

Write-up for a Parish Instagram account: StMarysChurch: Need a spiritual lift during your workday? Visit us. The Lord is waiting!

- 7. Reopening:** Some of our elderly parishioners have not yet returned in-person. Some people may have grown accustomed to watching Mass on TV, others may have experienced a life change during COVID, moved, and have not yet reconnected into a new parish. Others may have an understandable fear of getting sick. "Reopening" was created with these parishioners in mind. "Reopening" offers them a gentle invitation to consider visiting a parish during the day for some quiet time in prayer as their first step towards an in-person return to parish life.

Write-up for a Parish website or e-bulletin: Are you elderly and have not yet returned to in-person Mass or parish events? Perhaps a life change occurred for you during the pandemic that has delaying things. If you would like to begin slowly transitioning back to

in-person events, but would like to take it slow, we invite you to visit the parish during the day to spend some quiet time with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

We have put up some prayer requests from Fr. Paul and some of our parishioners on the bulletin board in the foyer for you to pray for. As you consider our invitation, the Archdiocese has created this pleasant one minute video with you in mind called, "Reopening". To watch it, click here: (insert link here). Hope to see you soon. Take care. All the best and God bless!

- 8. Your Stewardship Enriches Parish Life:** The first of three pastor testimonial videos, "Your Stewardship Enriches Parish Life" affirms to existing volunteers that their gifts of time and talent makes a difference. For people who are not currently volunteering (but have been silently contemplating doing so) this video could be the gentle nudge that helps them find the courage to respond to your invitation.
  
- 9. Your Stewardship Enriches My Priestly Ministry:** For the second of three pastor testimonial videos, we invited some pastors to share how parishioner involvement in parish life has enriched their priestly ministry. When sharing this video, consider adding a message from your own parish pastor relating how the unique gifts the laity enhances parish life.
  
- 10. Thank You for Your Gift of Stewardship:** Gratitude is an important part of stewardship. This third and final video in the pastor testimonials thanks parishioners for sharing their time and talent with the parish community. Gratitude can go a long way in strengthening a person in their ministry...Especially on those days when energy levels may be a bit low. A simple thank you can go a long way!

**A Thought on the Pastor Testimonial Videos:** Pastors cannot be everywhere all at once. To connect with as many people from your parish community as possible, consider creating your own pastor video shorts with a special message from your pastor and then e-blast them out. It is incredibly easy to do. You can use your cell phone or a software platform such as Microsoft Teams or Loom to record it.

There are quite a few tutorials on YouTube on how to record a video using Microsoft Teams, Loom, etc. Loom is especially simple and is free to use if your video message is under five minutes. Loom can be found here: <https://www.loom.com/> Here is a sample tutorial on Loom: <https://bit.ly/3HDR2U1>

If you need a library to store your videos, you can sign up for a free Google Drive or Dropbox account to store them and create the links to share them.

Helpful hints:

#1 Do not worry about making the video look professional. The more "low tech" the video is, the more it feels authentic, like a personal message from you.

#2 Consider opening with something like, "Some of my brother priests have recorded a video saying how much it means to them when people share their God-given time and talent with their parish community. The link is below. I would like to add to their insights by sharing my own thoughts and saying that whenever you...(add your affirming message here)."

#3 Have a fear of technology? Recruit some young people from your parish to help (or perhaps tap a youth group, if you have one.) Young people tend to be quite proficient with technology.

**11. Welcome Back:** Originally released in 2022, "Welcome Back" put into motion the inspiration for this video series as it tells the story of parish closure and reopening. If you still have a number of



parishioners who have not yet returned to in-person Mass and parish events, "Welcome Back" may be a good video for you to share.

Write-up for a parish Facebook post or website: Still not back to in-person Mass or parish events yet? We are looking forward to welcoming you to Church. As per this short video, your parish community awaits! (insert video link here).

**12. Small Steps:** *This video is coming soon...Stay tuned for the video and write-up!*

## **Closing thoughts**

If you would like to make your own Parish Vitality Video Shorts, we have created a webinar titled, "**Amazing Videos on a Shoestring Budget**" to help you do just that! This webinar teaches insider secrets on how to create professional-looking videos "on the cheap". It also unpacks a unique storytelling model you can use to create compelling short videos for your parish website. This webinar was the model we used to make all of these 12 video shorts!

To watch the webinar, "Amazing Videos on a Shoestring Budget" go to [www.archtoronto.org/stewardship](http://www.archtoronto.org/stewardship), click on the "Parish Vitality" tab and then scroll down to "Parish Vitality Webinar Series I". The webinar is the second one down on the list.

When watching this webinar, keep in mind that the people with the editing skills you may want to help you are likely sitting in your pews. For example, for some of the videos we made for this series ("Dear Harry", for example) a representative from a parish youth

group helped us with the project. We gave them a modest stipend for their editing work.

In closing, if you have an interesting idea for a video short you think parishes would find useful, please email us your idea. We would love to hear from you!

Questions?

Contact us at:

Office of Formation for Discipleship

Email: [formation@archtoronto.org](mailto:formation@archtoronto.org) or call 416-934-3400 ext. 523

For more resources, visit the stewardship website at:

[www.archtoronto.org/stewardship](http://www.archtoronto.org/stewardship)

Thank you and God bless!