

The Blitz

Named after a football defensive game strategy, “the blitz” method of conducting the UPCSA has been used successfully by American Martyrs in Kingsford for many years. It borrows a few concepts from the popular fall sport. Namely, teamwork (pastor, parish secretary and team of parishioners with a well thought-out game plan); and a strategy that proceeds at high speed (the appeal is conducted in just two weekends, and follow-up with those not responding happens immediately.) The workers’ meeting is the tailgate party. Over pizza and beverages, the UPCSA Committee provides workers with the names of parish families that have not yet returned pledge cards for personal follow up, and the meeting ends in time to get home to watch the Packers on television!

HOW TO CONDUCT “THE BLITZ”

Mid-August UPCSA materials received and reviewed with Pastor. Contact and confirm UPCSA Parish Chairpersons & UPCSA Committee, which is normally the President of the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council, plus six other members, together with the Pastor. This team reviews the parish list and telephones the workers to get them to come to the Workers Meeting on Sunday evening on weekend #2 (explained below). Each year a few new workers should be recruited.

Early to Mid-September UPCSA Committee meets to assign names from the parish roster to each committee member to call and invite to the Workers Meeting. The number of workers needed depends on the number of anticipated follow-up calls to be made. Ideally, one worker for every two follow-up calls to be made. At this time, assignments can also be made to collect pledge cards after each of the Masses on Weekend #2 (ideally 4 or 5 for each Mass.)

WEEKEND #1

Pledge Cards Distributed Pastor speaks briefly from the pulpit at Mass after communion. (2-3 minutes only) He tells a joke about money to get people laughing (for example, “Good news – we’ve made our parish UPCSA goal! Bad news – the money is still in your pockets!) He highlights one or two things that UPCSA funds and gives a personal witness (for example, “I wouldn’t be a priest if it wasn’t for UPCSA and the diocese supporting my seminarian education.”) He tells the people that all monies raised over the parish goal come back to the parish, and may mention a specific parish need or project that the overage (the amount raised over goal) will be applied to. Finally, he informs the people that UPCSA pledge cards are to be picked up after Mass in the back of church and returned the next weekend at the coffee socials following Mass. Everyone is asked to return a pledge card.

Envelopes containing pledge card, letter from Pastor and brochure are put in the back of church in alpha order for parishioners to pick up after Mass.

Monday Envelopes still in the back of church get mailed first thing Monday morning.

WEEKEND #2

Pledge Cards
Returned

This is combined with a coffee social after all weekend Masses. At the end of Mass, the pastor invites all to attend coffee social and to return their pledge card to one of the workers. The aroma of hot, homemade cinnamon/pecan rolls helps to entice people to attend the social. Four or five UPCSAs Committee members or workers are needed per Mass to help to collect the pledge cards. All pledge cards that are returned are crossed off the parish roster, including those that are not giving any money.

Sunday
afternoon

Parish secretary meets with Pastor to determine who has not yet returned a pledge card. To organize this process, the secretary prepares an index card for every registered family that can be used every year. A mailing label with name and address is affixed to the card and the phone number is added. There is one card for every family. Cards are arranged in alpha order. For every family that has returned a pledge card, the index card is removed from the pile. The pastor and secretary review the remaining cards. Some names may be confidentially removed due to special circumstances, or set aside for the pastor to contact personally. The remaining index cards are ready to be assigned for follow-up.

Sunday Evening
Workers Meeting

All workers must sign in and are provided with a sheet of paper to write on. Pizza and beverages are served first. Notes are kept on how many people attend the Workers Meeting and how many pizzas to order. After pizza, Council members read the names from the index cards, one by one, and workers are asked to volunteer to take at least 2 names for follow up. Workers are coached to take people they know or work with, and to make a personal telephone call, reminding the person to return their pledge card the next weekend. The worker takes the index card, writes the name and telephone number on their blank sheet of paper, and returns the index card to the council member. The index cards are recycled for the next year. Workers are asked to take their list of names and make their follow-up calls within one week. They are to return their sheet to the parish office to confirm that the follow-up calls have been made. Many of the workers make the follow-up telephone calls that evening.

NEXT 2-3
WEEKENDS

Thank those who have responded. Report in the parish bulletin the number of families that have pledged to UPCSAs and the total amount raised. Continue to encourage 100% participation. May display the Thermometer of Parish Campaign Progress (from the UPCSAs Leadership Manual) in a visible place and update it regularly.

Notes:

- Thank you letters are prepared for the pastor's signature for all pledges of \$100.00 or more. Letters are segmented with a slightly different message for those who gave \$100-\$499 and for those who gave \$500 or more.
- It will take several years to develop "The Blitz" into a robust and effective strategy; stay the course! Aim to increase participation level – pledge card returned from every family.
- This is not a hard sell.
- Emphasize that this is the "Yoopers" appeal – U.P. Catholics (not the bishop's appeal; not a parish appeal, although the parish does benefit!)
- The appeal will be successful when parishioners are active and involved in the life of the parish, when the pastor is present and leads the parish community, when the UPCSAs committee is empowered, and when the appeal is presented in a positive manner.