**Tips for Preparing a Useful Church Bulletin**

A **bulletin** (Webster defines it as “a brief public notice”) says a great deal about a Church, its ministries, and its spirituality. In fact, it’s the most widely read brochure a parish publishes. Yet, few parishes seem to recognize their bulletin’s significance, and as a result, put little effort into its preparation.

A careful look at the many ways in which bulletins are used and reused may change the attitude. Bulletins are delivered **as a family letter to shut-ins**, retained **by visitors as a souvenir**, exchanged **by church members as a calling card**, passed to **neighbors as an invitation**, and reread by members during the week as **a summary and reminder**.

**Bulletin Cover**

**Picture:** Some Churches have a picture of the Church building on their covers, others give what is probably a more complete image by picturing both the people and the building.

**Church logo:** You can choose to keep the bulletin cover very simple, only including the Church logo, name, address and phone number.

**Content of the Bulletin**

1. **Prayer requests:** Churches can promote prayer throughout the week by providing members with a separate list of prayer needs or a daily prayer guide.

1. **Calendar of the upcoming weeks:** This listing should be on one page so it can be tacked on the family bulletin board or taped on the refrigerator for reference throughout the week.
2. **Welcome to new parishioners and visitors**
3. **Advance notice of the readings for the following week**
4. **A list of church staff members**

*The ideas below can also be used in your bulletin or reserved for your parish newsletter:*

1. **A list of the ministries of the church**
2. **Parishioner birthdays and anniversaries**
3. **Baptisms, weddings, funerals**
4. **Thank you’s *from* parishioners *to* the church**

**Principles to follow when considering the appearance and readability of a bulletin:**

1. **Simple**: It should be laid out clearly and simply. The use of different type sizes and appropriate use of italic and bold print, can make a bulletin appealing to the eye and easy to read.
2. **Short:** A bulletin, by definition, is a brief document.
	1. People seldom read long announcements
	2. Information that applies to only 2 or 3 members (ex. “The Ladies Trio will practice at 4:00 this afternoon”) should be omitted.
	3. Do not repeat a ministry activity listed in the calendar in the announcement section.
	4. Any announcements that can wait until the church’s newsletter should be placed there.
3. **Spacious:** The content should be “broken” by white space to make it readable. For example, if one page is dedicated to prayer needs and one week those needs don’t completely fill the page, add a space with a border to break up the additional information.
4. **Sensitive:**
	1. Ask permission to place a person’s name on the prayer list.
	2. Be sensitive to visitors. For example, the announcement, “The K of C will meet in the catechism room after Mass today” means little to a visitor. Instead, say, “Those involved or interested in joining the Knights of Columbus are invited to meet in Room 101 this morning at 10:30.”
5. **Superior Quality:** Consumers have come to expect excellence so you want to produce a bulletin that you are eager to distribute and they are eager to receive.

Information from Bulletin Bored: Tips for preparing a useful church bulletin by Douglas Kamstra