

## The Seven Times Communication Exercise

**Subject:** Changes to the language of the Mass

**Time Period:** One year

**Purpose:** To offer parish leaders three scenarios of seven times communicating what, why, when and how.

### Scenario One

Appropriate for parishes that are smaller, have little or no staff, are clustered with other parishes, and have a relatively stable population.

1 year out: Initial communication. An announcement as part of Sunday Mass that tells parishioners that the language changes are coming, and then points them to a bulletin insert for initial information. Also give them the USCCB website so those who are interested can go and read the changes themselves. Perhaps provide written material on the Mass in general (like Catholic Updates or other short articles.) Free bulletin inserts are available from LTP.

10 months out: Second communication. Again, announce as part of Sunday Mass that there are changes coming to the language we use during Mass. Announce the date they will begin being used. Follow up with a second bulletin insert, this one explaining the reasons why this is happening and refers people to the USCCB website for the actual changes to the people's parts. Another handout about the Mass will help people put this into context. Explanations of the "why" are available on the USCCB website and are permitted to be copied and distributed in bulletins.

8 months out: Third communication. Again, a Sunday Mass announcement that is a bit longer this time. Announce the "what" and explain the "why's" orally. Refer people to a bulletin insert that gives them the changes to the people's parts and a brief explanation why. Choose materials for the gathered session and choose and train leaders for the gathered session.

6 months out: Fourth communication is in two parts. The first repeats the oral announcement done above. The second part is a gathering for parish leadership (liturgy committee, liturgical ministers, catechists, volunteer staff, parish council and finance council people). Choose material to use for this gathered session (LTP, USCCB, OCP, RENEW, and many others will offer materials for gatherings). Purpose: to walk them through the changes and give them plenty of time to speak them aloud and ask questions. Be prepared also with simple theological explanations of Incarnated and Consubstantial. If there is budget, you might wish to bring someone in for this gathered session especially if there is not time to plan it.

4 months out: Fifth communication is a gathered meeting open to the parish. Here the “what”, the “why”, and the plan for rolling all this out happens. Music settings are introduced, texts are prayed, and plenty of time is given for Q&A. Parishioners will need to know the roll out plan here and it will be very important to let them know what will be available to aid them.

2 months out: Sixth communication is a mailing to all registered households that again introduces the what, they why and the how of this for the parish. This mailing could include a longer piece like the Catholic Update or other articles being written to support this roll out. It should also include the USCCB website and your parish website if, on it, you are placing information to help parishioners know about and understand this event.

One month out: Seventh communication is a combination—a homily about the sacredness of the Eucharist and how language, chant and other music helps communicate that, an announcement of the changes to the language and the Sunday on which this will happen, a written piece in the bulletin or a bulletin insert, a web page announcement and information sent home through religious education and Christian initiation.

The week before: Introduce the method you will use for worship support, invite people to print out the texts and begin to pray with them, and if you have not done this already, introduce the new musical setting for Advent. Orally assure folks of the support that will be available for friends and guests at Christmas masses.

## **Scenario Two**

Appropriate for parishes that are medium sized, may have some full or part-time staff but do not have a systematic plan in place for ministerial formation/adult formation. Reasonably stable population.

1 year out: Initial communication. An announcement as part of Sunday Mass that tells parishioners that the language changes are coming, and then points them to a bulletin insert for initial information. Also give them the USCCB website so those who are interested can go and read the changes themselves. Perhaps provide written material on the Mass in general (like Catholic Updates or other short articles.) All staff should begin forming themselves by acquiring materials, reading and putting discussion of these changes on staff meeting agendas. Free bulletin inserts are available from LTP.

10 months out: Second communication. Again, announce as part of Sunday Mass that there are changes coming to the language we use during Mass. Announce the date they will begin being used. Have staff available after Masses to talk with folks about this. Staff should be ready to explain the why of this in face-to-face conversation. Follow up with a second bulletin insert, this one explaining the reasons why this is happening and refers people to the USCCB website for the “what.” Another handout about the Mass will help people put this into context.

Explanations of the “why” are available on the USCCB website and are permitted to be copied and distributed in bulletins.

8 months out: Third communication. Again, a Sunday Mass announcement that is a bit longer this time. Announce the “what” and explain the why’s orally. Refer people to a bulletin insert that gives them the changes to the people’s parts and a brief explanation why. Choose materials for the gathered session and choose and train leaders for the gathered session. Staff should be preparing sessions for catechists, for Christian initiation and for parental elements of sacramental preparation that are specific to those ministries and flow from the general meeting happening 6 months out.

6 months out: Fourth communication is in two parts. The first repeats the oral announcement done above. The second part is a gathering for parish leadership (liturgy committee, liturgical ministers, catechists, volunteer staff, parish council and finance council people). Choose material to use for this gathered session (LTP, USCCB, OCP, RENEW, and many others will offer materials for gatherings). Purpose: to walk them through the changes and give them plenty of time to speak them aloud and ask questions. Be prepared also with simple theological explanations of Incarnated and Consubstantial. If there is budget, you might wish to bring someone in for this gathered session especially if there is not time to plan it. Staff should make sure they are clear on the theology behind the use of “incarnated” and “consubstantial” and are prepared to assist catechists with this knowledge.

4 months out: Fifth communication is a gathered meeting open to the parish. Here the what, the why, and the plan for rolling all this out happens. Music settings are introduced, texts are prayed, and plenty of time is given for Q&A. Parishioners will need to know the roll out plan here and it will be very important to let them know what will be available to aid them. Here is where staff will need to have the plan in place in terms of worship aids, how first communion and confirmation preparation is being handled, what is happening in Christian initiation and how Catholics who attend Mass intermittently or only at Christmas and Easter will be assisted.

2 months out: Sixth communication is a mailing to all registered households that again introduces the what, the why and the how of this for the parish. This mailing could include a longer piece like the Catholic Update or other articles being written to support this roll out. It should also include the USCCB website and your parish website if, on it, you are placing information to help parishioners know and understand. Staff may also want to host a session where folks are given a chance to talk about their reactions to the changes, to hear the chants and musical settings and to pray with the texts.

One month out: Seventh communication is a combination—a homily about the sacredness of the Eucharist and how language, chant and other music helps communicate that, an announcement of the changes to the language and the Sunday on which this will happen, a written piece in the bulletin or a bulletin insert, a web page announcement and information sent home through religious education and Christian initiation. The staff should be writing the

informational letters that are being sent home through religious education/sacramental preparation/Christian initiation.

The week before: Introduce the method you will use for worship support, invite people to print out the texts and begin to pray with them, and if you have not done this already, introduce the new musical setting for Advent. Orally assure folks of the support that will be available for friends and guests at Christmas masses.

### **Scenario Three**

Appropriate for large parishes with multiple staff members, adequate or generous budgets and existing adult formation plans for the year. Presumption is that there is greater turnover in a larger parish.

1 year out: Initial communication. An announcement as part of Sunday Mass that tells parishioners that the language changes are coming, and then points them to a bulletin insert for initial information. Also give them the USCCB website so those who are interested can go and read the changes themselves. Perhaps provide written material on the Mass in general (like Catholic Updates or other short articles.) Begin incorporating a look at the Mass in general into adult formation activities. Plan during what adult formation activities the changes to the Roman Missal will be introduced. Choose materials and facilitators. Free bulletin inserts are available from LTP.

10 months out: Second communication. Again, announce as part of Sunday Mass that there are changes coming to the language we use during Mass. Announce the date they will begin being used. Follow up with a second bulletin insert, this one explaining the reasons why this is happening and referring people to the USCCB website for the “what.” Host an adult formation gathering based on the bulletin insert that allows people to both ask questions and react/respond to the changes. Be prepared to lead the change by enabling understanding of the “why”, by listening well to resistance, and by making sure that the staff’s attitude and approach is one of seeking the wisdom within these changes, i.e., giving them a chance to work. Explanations of the “why” are available on the USCCB website and are permitted to be copied and distributed in bulletins.

8 months out: Third communication. Again, a Sunday Mass announcement that is a bit longer this time. This could be given by the worship director or the DRE, in conjunction with the pastor and ideally would include an invitation to conversation circles happening after Mass. Announce the “what” and explain the why’s orally. Refer people to a bulletin insert that gives them the changes to the people’s parts and a brief explanation why. Choose materials for the gathered session and choose and train leaders for the gathered session. Staff should determine if this gathered session replaces regularly scheduled adult formation or is in addition to those events.

6 months out: Fourth communication is in two parts. The first repeats the oral announcement done above. The second part is a gathering for parish leadership (liturgy committee, liturgical ministers, catechists, volunteer staff, parish council and finance council people). Choose material to use for this gathered session (LTP, USCCB, OCP, RENEW, and many others will offer materials for gatherings). Purpose: to walk them through the changes and give them plenty of time to speak them aloud and ask questions. Be prepared also with simple theological explanations of Incarnated and Consubstantial. If there is budget, you might wish to bring someone in for this gathered session. Again, staff will assist in targeting leadership to attend, and with designing, developing and delivering the event.

4 months out: Fifth communication is a gathered meeting open to the parish. Here the what, the why, and the plan for rolling all this out happens. Music settings are introduced, texts are prayed, and plenty of time is given for Q&A. Parishioners will need to know the roll out plan here and it will be very important to let them know what will be available to aid them. This should be hosted by the pastor but facilitated by various parish leaders. Parishioners will feel more secure with these changes if they see parish leadership working in concert, with a plan and with materials to support the plan.

2 months out: Sixth communication is a mailing to all registered households that again introduces the what, the why and the how of this for the parish. This mailing could include a longer piece like the Catholic Update or other articles being written to support this roll out. It should also include the USCCB website and staff should have materials to place on the parish website to assist parishioners in knowing and understanding the changes.

One month out: Seventh communication is a combination—a homily about the sacredness of the Eucharist and how language, chant and other music helps communicate that, an announcement of the changes to the language and the Sunday on which this will happen, a written piece in the bulletin or a bulletin insert, a web page announcement and information sent home through religious education and Christian initiation. Staff should have a coordinated message as well as a tone of anticipation, eagerness and hopefulness within their communication.

The week before: Introduce the method you will use for worship support, invite people to print out the texts and begin to pray with them, and if you have not done this already, introduce the new musical setting for Advent. Orally assure folks of the support that will be available for friends and guests at Christmas masses. Use the web for these tools and the assurance. Staff might choose to develop a worship aid that can be downloaded for guests and visitors so that they can be introduced to the changes before they come for Christmas mass.

*ConSpirita Consulting Network, LLC. stands ready to assist you with the implementation of the Roman Missal. In addition to this free resource, see our website [www.ConSpirita.com](http://www.ConSpirita.com) for a list of questions to assist your planning, and for a description of three 2-hour modules you can mix and match should you wish to bring in outside voices to assist you.*

©Deborah W. Stollery 2010