

Ongoing Formation Opportunity: Compelling Preaching Initiative

Program Overview

Through this initiative, participants will ultimately be able to engage in a short-term educational opportunity that Catholic Extension will help fund. This opportunity is flexible and will be determined by the participant with the assistance of Catholic Extension based on the findings from the first part of this program, which involves examining their preaching and allowing their congregation/audience to provide anonymous feedback and insights. This feedback is not meant to tell participants “what” to preach, but rather “how” to better communicate the message of the Gospel and engage with their audience. This will be done by providing participants with technology-driven data that will offer actionable insights to improve preaching and general effectiveness in communications.

In today’s technology-driven world, information is the greatest tool at one’s disposal to make strategic decisions, to communicate with impact, to understand an audience’s reaction and to reach new people. More than ever, it is incumbent upon preachers to know their audiences and adapt their approach to allow people to best receive and internalize information. Technology can provide insight to preachers on their audience’s ability to hear and understand the intended messages of the sermon/presentation.

For Parishes

The participant’s parish will not only benefit from a more effective preacher, but it will be eligible to receive a **\$1,000 incentive** award for its enthusiastic participation in the data collection period (6 sermons).

For Participants

After assessing their congregation’s feedback, each participant is eligible for up to **\$10,000** in scholarship funds to pursue an ongoing formation opportunity of their choice.

Requirements

- Participants must have an established congregation/audience to whom they regularly speak/preach
- One participant per parish/community
- A **partnership agreement must be signed** by each participant
- Willingness to provide constructive feedback during this pilot phase of the initiative

Timeline

Selected participants will commit to one “active” year participating in this three-step program, with the option to utilize resources for at least one additional year. The time commitment includes up to

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five one-hour Zoom meetings with Catholic Extension (flexible scheduling), the administration of at least six Building Faith | Inspiring Hope | Igniting Change

presentations and corresponding surveys, and an ongoing opportunity with flexible start times and time commitments:

1. **Collect Data:** Participant will work with Catholic Extension to create mobile technology tools for the participant's congregation(s)/audience(s) to use. These tools will enable participant to create a profile of the sermon/presentation to then collect input and reactions from congregations and other audiences to that specific sermon/presentation. The data collection will require the following:
 - Participant will meet with Catholic Extension via scheduled one-hour Zoom meeting for training on survey administration and utilization of data collection tools.
 - The participant will administer a minimum of six sermons/presentations to their congregation(s)/audience(s) with corresponding surveys (about 3 months):
 - The participant will announce his/her participation in this initiative to his/her congregation(s)/audience(s).
 - The participant will complete a profile form for the sermon/presentation to be done.
 - Congregants will access a survey on the sermon/presentation through a QR code that can be scanned by a smart phone. The survey will allow congregants to offer feedback in real time or immediately following the preaching, to capture feedback while fresh in people's memory.
 - The survey question will be available in English and in Spanish.
 - The participant will receive summary results 1-2 days after delivery of the sermon/presentation (i.e., Monday or Tuesday)
 - An incentive program will be created to encourage participation and drive data collection.
 - Surveying period closes
2. **Analyze Data:** Once the data for the participant has been sufficiently collected, Catholic Extension will meet with them formally to share the results and identify common trends or patterns in the feedback. This will help explore what themes, styles, approaches, ideas and concepts are landing, and which ones are not.
 - Participant will meet with Catholic Extension via scheduled one-hour Zoom meeting to discuss data analysis and plan for any changes.
 - **Note:** The participant will have access to a data dashboard to view summary feedback in real-time throughout this initiative.
3. **Act:** Once this data is collected and its analysis is in hand, the participant will be encouraged to develop a plan of ongoing formation that aligns with and responds to the feedback they received. The participant will then be able to request financial support from Catholic Extension to pursue this educational opportunity.

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Building Faith | Inspiring Hope | Igniting Change • Participant will meet with Catholic Extension via scheduled one-hour Zoom meeting to discuss updated data and potential formation opportunities.

- Participant begins formation opportunity.

- Participants will conduct a follow-up survey period with the community and a final analysis will be done.
- A final one-hour Zoom meeting will be scheduled to discuss results.

Reporting

As part of the pilot phase, participants are expected to provide feedback on the initiative both informally for the duration as well as through a formal report submitted online to Catholic Extension at the completion.