



the art of crafting an

Effective Ask Letter

for Holiday Giving

A blank page can be intimidating.

Whether you're writing a sermon, putting together a direct mail letter, or reaching out via email, it can be difficult to find the perfect words that capture your message, as well as the attention of the recipient.

This is especially true when crafting an effective ask for holiday giving (and there is an art to it!).

To help you make the most of your Year-End Giving Campaign, we review the steps, from the greeting to the signature, of crafting a letter that is effective when asking for donations during the holiday season.



Use an eye-catching subject line

Your greeting is like a warm smile because it gives people that first impression. Unfortunately, it can be challenging to get people to see that welcoming greeting in their inbox.

Because people get an average of 122 emails per day, the subject line must be eye-catching. Trust that it's easy to get lost in all of that noise when it comes to email (even when people are expecting to hear from you).

Be clear and relevant in your subject line so that no one has to guess what the email is about.

A proven tip to get 5% more opens and 17% more clicks to your tithing link is to include the recipient's name in the subject line. It personalizes the message from the get-go, and people are drawn to hearing their name and seeing it in print.

Help people remember why they care

Remember – you don't have to convince people that they care – you need to help them remember why.

Here are a couple of ways to achieve this is:

1. Include the reader in how the donation improves their lives within the community as well as the church.

For example, if your church wants to buy a new van for short-term mission trips, list the activities the van will take you to such as helping hurricane victims rebuild homes or to take volunteers to work at a local shelter.

2. Tell a heartfelt story that draws emotion to the purpose behind giving.

People donate with their hearts before their heads, and by sharing a story that is near and dear to you and the church, you'll set an inspiring scene and add a deepened purpose behind giving.

Brevity is your friend

The average person spends between 15-20 seconds reading an email. And while that seems fast, you can absolutely get your message across in that amount of time.

The basic structure of an effective ask email should be:

The Greeting,

- Engaging story or information about the church
- Problem and solution you are trying to solve
- The ask
- How to tithe (online, check, in church)
- Thank you for your time and past donations

Closing, Signature

P.S.

According to a survey, about 20 lines of text in an email letter is the ideal size.

If you choose to use images within the email, make sure you correctly embed them, so they are easy to view.

Remember, images should be a pleasing part of the letter and not a distraction. Of course, you don't need images for a successful ask letter!



Don't forget to include how to donate!

As we said above, be sure you include the link in the ask letter so that people know how to take the next steps.

If you are mailing the letter, provide a self-addressed stamped envelope, as well as how to access your church's website and mobile giving app.

Use a personalized signature

Don't just type out the name of the signer, even in an email. Make sure the signature is authentic because this adds a personal touch that can be difficult to get with emails.

Add a P.S.

The first place people look when reading letters is oddly at the end. This is because the eyes go to see who the sender is before digging into the content.

The P.S. is often the second part of the email that is read, and it is a good place to write a line or two reiterating the purpose of the ask, and to remind people how to donate.

Follow up with a thank you note

Finally, once the donation has been made, follow up with a thank you note. While generosity is a humble gesture, it is one that should be recognized.

According to a 2015 study, 41% of people said they decided to give again at a later date, or increase their donation, after receiving a thank you note within 2 weeks of the donation.

However, the quality of the note did make an impact on the donor's decision. For best results, include specific details about how their giving made a positive impact on the church and community.

By following the tips above, you shouldn't have any problems seeing exceptional results when you send out ask letters during the holiday season.

To get an even closer look at the best practices, here is an example of a basic ask letter for faith-based organizations and churches.

Basic Ask Letter Sample:

Dear [Church Member],

We hope this letter finds you well during the holiday season! Our church has had a blessed year, and we welcome for you to join us for our [special event] in December!

Our members have engaged in many activities in 2017 from mission trips to help families rebuild homes after natural disasters to volunteering at youth-centers in the local community, and none of this would have been possible without you.

This year, we are raising money to expand our community outreach efforts, and we hope to build an additional room for our growing Sunday School class and Mother's Day Out program.

To help us achieve our mission, we are reaching out to those that share our values to donate to our cause so that we can continue our positive work in the community. Our mission is to raise [dollar amount] to enable us to pay a contractor and buy the necessary materials and furnishings for the additional rooms. We are trying to raise the money by December 31st, so we can begin construction in January.

You can conveniently donate by writing a check and mailing it to our address listed below, by visiting [link to donation page on website], or during a Sunday service. We will be more than happy to provide you with a tax receipt for your generous donation.

We deeply appreciate your support and the past donations you have made. We look forward to growing our church and making the community a better place for everyone.

**With warmest regards,
Pastor's Signature
Church Name**

P.S. Don't forget about our [Church Event such as Christmas Play] where we will have kiosks and envelopes available for giving. However, you can conveniently give any time throughout the week at [link to website].

