



Become a 100% Voting Faith Community



Voting is a habit: if you vote once you are more likely to vote in the next primary and the following election each year. Before this habit can form though, we have to begin thinking of ourselves as voters. On Election Day, we cast our ballot alone behind a curtain or in a booth, but our identity as a voter is formed among our friends, family, and community. We're more likely to act on our shared identity as voters if we are encouraged by and accountable to each other.

A faith community can be a source of support for voters. Pope Francis says in *Joy of the Gospel* that the local faith community "possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community" (*Joy of the Gospel* 28). Your faith community may have untapped resources to support voters that are just waiting to be unleashed.

By voting, we help answer Pope Francis's prayer:

“ I beg the Lord to **grant us more politicians** who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor! ”

— *Joy of the Gospel* 205

GETTING STARTED

Engage your faith community from the outset in your plans for a "100% voting faith community." Bring this guide to your faith community's decision-makers and get their commitment to set a 100% voting goal. Pledging to set a goal to be a 100% Voting Faith Community means:

- Every eligible member of your faith community is registered to vote.
- Every registered voter in your faith community votes early or gets to the polls on Election Day.
- Every person in your faith community who is ineligible to vote due to age, citizenship status, or criminal record is invited to actively participate in the democratic process.

Be sure to make it clear the goal is not get a specific party or candidate elected. The goal is to engage everyone to be active in our democracy.

When your faith community makes a decision to set a 100% voting goal, NETWORK will:

- provide resources to challenge and support your community in the journey toward becoming 100% voting, including:
 - **I AM A VOTER** pledge cards for your pews
 - online voter registration tools
 - nonpartisan online voter education resources
- celebrate your faith community's commitment recognizing you on our website
- send you a "Commitment to Being a 100% Voting Faith Community" certificate that you can post.



TOOLS FOR MAKING THE DECISION TO BECOME A 100% VOTING FAITH COMMUNITY

Working within your faith community's decision-makers, evaluate the challenges and strengths you have to work toward a goal of 100% voting.

Identify Community Challenges: Example Questions

1. Are faith community members aware there is an upcoming election?
2. Are there many unregistered voters in your community?
3. Are there voters who are unable to vote in-person because of age or a medical condition?
4. Is technology a barrier for some to get registered or find out their voting location?
5. Are members of your community disillusioned about whether their vote counts?
6. Do your faith community members think of participation in our democracy as a virtue and responsibility?

“ I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots — and not simply the appearances — of the evils in our world! ”

— Joy of the Gospel (205)

Identify Strengths: Example Questions

1. Is there a group of members who are dedicated to voting every election that could help motivate non-voters by building a personal connection?
2. Is there a youth group that can be engaged to help others deal with technological hurdles to getting registered or getting an absentee ballot?
3. Can any group that might not be able to vote (such as a youth group or new immigrants group) meet on Election Night to help with childcare or rides to the polls?
4. Does the faith community own a vehicle that could be used to drive groups of people to the polls?
5. Does the faith community own a computer lab where online voter registration can be done onsite?
6. Does the faith community have a directory that could be used for voter reminder calls before Election Day?

These are just prompts to get you thinking. Each faith community will have its own gifts and challenges as it pursues 100% voting goal. On page three, see a suggested timeline for making your faith community 100% voting. Consider whether this timeline could be do-able for you.



As you think things through, you might decide 100% voting is too difficult a goal. The tactics on the timeline below will be useful for your community to engage in voter outreach regardless of whether you decide to set the 100% goal.



If your community makes a decision to become 100% voting, please help us celebrate your choice. Let us know at networklobby.org/100percent.

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Note: This timeline is meant to be an aid/guideline. Please adjust according to your community's needs.

AUG 1–OCT 4

(95–31 days to Election Day)

- Consider making an official community commitment to become 100% voting through your decision-making body. Wide-spread, official buy-in will help achieve your goal. Let us know at networklobby.org/100percent.
- Research local deadlines and rules for voter registration, absentee ballots, and early voting. On behalf of your faith community, sift through information and take note of the key things your community must know.
- Form a group of volunteers to assist in planning and executing the “100% Voting” goal.
- Determine specific voter needs in your congregation.
- Order “I AM A VOTER” pledge cards from NETWORK at networklobby.org/pledgecards.
- Organize strategy meetings with “100% Voting” team.
 - Present major local voting deadlines and rules to strategy team.
 - Plan “I AM A VOTER” pledge drives, and follow up/reminders with pledgees as the election approaches.
 - Plan voter registration drives in tandem with and/or in addition to “I AM A VOTER” pledge drives.
 - Plan pulpit announcements, prayer cards, bulletin publications (print or electronic), social media, or person-to-person outreach strategies to engage and inform members.
 - Devise plans to assist faith community members with early voting and on Election Day with things like transportation (some call this “Souls to the Polls”) or childcare.
- Execute voter registration drives and “I AM A VOTER” pledge drives.
 - These can take place at more than just Sunday services depending on your state’s laws for voter registration
- Send “I AM A VOTER” pledge cards to NETWORK upon completion of your pledge drive(s). NETWORK will put contact information into an Excel spreadsheet and send it back to you so you can begin your follow-up strategy.

OCT 5–NOV 3

(30–1 days to Election Day)

- Begin “Souls to the Polls” after mass/worship if there are early voting opportunities available in your municipality.
- Begin to include a prayer intention for a 100% voting community during your service. Also include short voting reminders during announcements at the end of services.
- Work with the priest or pastor (if you are not that person) to encourage reflection on civic engagement themes appropriate to your faith tradition. For Catholics, this might include reflecting on “voting as a civic sacrament”, and Catholic Social Teaching themes of “rights and responsibilities” as well as “family, community, and participation.”
- Engage non-voters to take part in the process however they can to support the 100% voting pledge.

ELECTION DAY

(November 4, 2014)

- VOTE, and equip others to vote.
- Thank everyone.
- Invite volunteers to evaluate their work and consider mobilizing again in 2016.

