

VOLUNTEER MANUAL

Mary's Meals USA

Ambassador Parish Toolkit

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Mary's Meals USA Parish Engagement Toolkit

Sharing Hope. Nourishing Futures. Inspiring Generosity.

"Share our story. Inspire hope. Invite others to join our mission."

1. Welcome

Thank you for saying yes. As a Mary's Meals volunteer you are an ambassador for our mission, carrying a simple and hopeful story into parish communities across the country.

The simple promise of a daily meal draws children into the classroom where they can gain an education.

Thank you for bringing hope to children around the world. Your willingness to give your time and share your faith is an extraordinary gift.

At Mary's Meals, we believe that a daily meal served in a place of education can change a child's life. It encourages children to attend school and opens the door to a brighter future. None of this would be possible without dedicated supporters like you who choose to share this simple but powerful mission with others.

This toolkit has been created to help you feel confident and prepared. Inside you'll find practical guidance, presentation tips, frequently asked questions, and resources to support your parish visit.

On behalf of everyone at Mary's Meals USA, thank you for being part of this movement. We are grateful for your partnership and will be praying for you as you help inspire others to join us in feeding hungry children.

With gratitude,

Liz Schriener
Director of Advancement

Parish Invitation Letter

Dear Father [Surname],

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of Mary's Meals to ask whether you might consider inviting one of our volunteers to visit your parish and briefly share the mission of Mary's Meals with your parish community.

Mary's Meals is a global school feeding charity that provides one daily meal to children in some of the world's poorest communities. For many children, this meal is the reason they are able to attend school, giving them the opportunity to receive an education and build a brighter future.

We would be grateful for the opportunity to show a short, inspiring film and offer a brief presentation at a time that best suits your parish. We are always happy to work within your preferred format and schedule, whether after Communion, following the final blessing, or after Mass.

Our aim is simply to share a message of hope, explain the impact of this life-changing work, and invite parishioners to learn more about how they can support children through prayer, awareness, volunteering, or financial giving if they feel called to do so.

We understand the many demands on parish life and are grateful for your consideration. If you feel this could be appropriate for your parish, we would be delighted to discuss a suitable date and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your ministry and for all you do to serve your parish community.

With gratitude,

[Name]

Mary's Meals Volunteer

[Phone]

[Email]

Parish Visit Checklist

Work through each stage in order. Nothing replaces a calm, well-prepared arrival.

Two to four weeks before

- ☐ Confirm date
- ☐ Confirm Mass times
- ☐ Ask when you will speak
- ☐ Confirm presentation length
- ☐ Confirm film length
- ☐ Confirm AV equipment
- ☐ Confirm screen/projector
- ☐ Confirm internet availability
- ☐ Ask about parking
- ☐ Confirm donation arrangements
- ☐ Ask if bulletin notice can be included
- ☐ Ask if parish social media can promote the visit

One week before

- ☐ Review presentation
- ☐ Watch film
- ☐ Print brochures
- ☐ Print donation forms
- ☐ Print QR code signs
- ☐ Charge laptop
- ☐ Pack cables
- ☐ Bring extension cord
- ☐ Bring HDMI adapter
- ☐ Pack sign-up sheets
- ☐ Bring pens

Day before

- ☐ Reconfirm arrival time
- ☐ Check weather
- ☐ Pray for the parish community

Day of visit — arrive 45–60 minutes early

- ☐ Meet: pastor
- ☐ Meet: parish office
- ☐ Meet: sacristan
- ☐ Meet: music director (if appropriate)
- ☐ Meet: AV volunteer
- ☐ Test: audio
- ☐ Test: video
- ☐ Test: microphone
- ☐ Test: lighting
- ☐ Set up: information table
- ☐ Set up: brochures
- ☐ Set up: donation materials
- ☐ Set up: sign-up sheet
- ☐ Set up: QR codes

After Mass

- ☐ Thank the priest.
- ☐ Answer questions.
- ☐ Meet parishioners.
- ☐ Record any follow-up requests.
- ☐ Leave area tidy.

Film Presentation Guide

The film carries the story. Your job is to frame it and to leave space afterwards.

<https://www.marysmealsusa.org/our-story/books-and-films>

Before

Confirm the film length with the parish, test audio and video, and introduce the film in one or two warm sentences.

During

Step aside, watch with the congregation, and let the story speak for itself.

After

Pause. Thank them. Share one short personal reflection, then invite questions and a response.

Send the thank-you letter to the pastor, pass follow-up requests to Mary's Meals USA, and share the bulletin notice with the parish office.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many children does Mary's Meals serve?

Mary's Meals serves school meals to millions of children every school day across multiple countries where poverty and hunger prevent children from accessing education.

Where does Mary's Meals work?

Mary's Meals partners with communities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and parts of Eastern Europe. We are serving 16 countries.

Why school meals?

A daily meal encourages children to attend school consistently, improving both nutrition and educational opportunities.

Does Mary's Meals build schools?

No. Our focus is providing school meals. We partner with schools and local communities already serving children.

How are meals prepared?

Meals are prepared locally using ingredients sourced as close as possible to where they are served. Parents and community volunteers often cook and serve the meals, helping strengthen local ownership and sustainability.

How is Mary's Meals funded?

Mary's Meals is supported by individuals, churches, schools, businesses, foundations, and community groups whose generosity makes the program possible.

Can I sponsor a specific child?

Mary's Meals supports entire school communities rather than sponsoring individual children. This community-based approach helps ensure every child attending a participating school receives the same opportunity.

Can I volunteer?

Yes. Volunteers support Mary's Meals through parish engagement, fundraising, schools, events. <https://www.marysmealsusa.org/get-involved/ambassador-resource-hub>

What happens to donations?

Donations support school feeding programs and the work needed to sustain and expand them responsibly. Mary's Meals is committed to careful stewardship and transparency.

Appendix

Volunteer packing list

- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Charger
- ☐ HDMI cable
- ☐ USB drive
- ☐ Extension cord
- ☐ Power strip
- ☐ Clicker/remote
- ☐ Printed presentation
- ☐ Brochures
- ☐ Donation forms
- ☐ QR code signs
- ☐ Name badge
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Clipboard
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Thank-you cards

Emergency plan — if technology fails

- Continue without the film.
 - Share your personal story.
 - Invite questions.
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