



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Edmonton Diocesan Council

Communications Standing Committee

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TIPS FOR CREATING A PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Why Publish a Newsletter?

For many different reasons, many members do not attend Council meetings. Yet we know that our Councils are very busy serving in our parishes, communities, diocese, provinces and across Canada! We produce newsletters to keep our members informed of League activities.



If you think about it, there is so much information to share that it is practically impossible to cover everything in meetings and still have time for some fun and socializing.

A member that is kept informed will surely be more committed to the League and its works.

Newsletters help Councils communicate important messages not only to members but to the parish community as well. It is an important tool for promoting the League.

Tips for Creating a Newsletter

Layout:

- Appearance is critical. Many people will not read a disorganized newsletter even if the content is excellent.
- Pick a layout for your newsletter that becomes your template for future newsletters. A standard layout is quickly recognized and appreciated by readers.
- Create a name tag at the top of the first page. It should identify who you are - parish name, town, province, email. You should use the League logo and include the month/year of the newsletter.
- Using columns really helps to organize the newsletter. It will also make it look more professional. It can be two or three columns.



Headlines

- Headlines are used to tell the reader at a glance the topic of a story. If you have sub-headlines, always make the main headline bigger than the sub-headlines.

Illustrations/Pictures/White Space:

- Use pictures that relate to news items.
- White space is OK! It makes for an airier and easier to read newsletter. Use white space to separate items and emphasize where one article ends and another begins.
- Photos and paintings are difficult to reproduce using photocopying technology. When possible, use line art similar to what is in this document.
- Using lots of colour isn't that important if the newsletter is to be printed in black and white.
- For excellent Catholic clipart, visit: www.cruzblanca.org/hermanoleon/byn/index.htm. Here is an example - Jesus on the Road to Emmaus.



Fonts:

The font used for your newsletter has an impact on readers. Some fonts are hard to read and others can be boring. For example, **Arial** is a fairly standard font, but when used on a whole page it can look very daunting. On the other hand, **Century Gothic** leaves more white space on the page, so it is a good alternative but it takes more space.

Times New Roman is a standard font, but it is boring. A "script" style font is very difficult to read but can be useful in titles.

Font size is also important. Choose a size that is appropriate for all readers. Depending on the font, 11 or 12 point is often sufficient.

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Tips for Creating a Parish Council Newsletter

Using different fonts in your newsletter creates a nice effect. For example, using one font for headlines and sub-headlines and another font for the body of your articles can be very nice. However, too many fonts will make the newsletter look busy and messy.

Generally, 2 or 3 different fonts is the most one should use.

Content:



The content of your newsletter depends on the audience. In your case, you are addressing CWL members as well potential members and your parish community.

Tell them about your council and what it does. It is a good time to brag a bit!

Keep a file on hand where you collect articles for your next newsletter.

Here are examples of information that you might include:

- A report on our council's recent activities.
- Invitation to upcoming Council events.
- Treasurer's report.
- Standing Committee Reports
- News on members, for example, welcome to new members, birthdays, anniversaries, births, deaths...
- Important CWL dates (National, Provincial, Diocese, and Parish council meetings and conventions).
- Message that needs to get out, for example, a reminder to pay membership dues or a message from National.
- Articles on the League, for example, on our national theme (Companions on the Journey) or on a resolution.
- A suitable prayer, possibly based on the liturgical year or the needs in our council, our parish, the world...
- A book review, a suggested music CD that you would recommend to CWL members.



- Encourage members to submit CWL related news.
- A humour corner is a good way to end your newsletter. It leaves the reader on a happy note.

Dos and Don'ts

- When making an announcement, always check for the six Ws: who, what, where, when, how and why!
- To make articles interesting, keep them *short* and to the point!
- Use **Bolding** and Underline to catch attention. Use them selectively and sparingly as they lose their effect if not used properly. Rarely would you combine the two together.
- Use bullets to organize list.
- Avoid using filler that is not related to council business. After all, it is a CWL newsletter.
- Newsletters generally don't exceed 4 to 6 pages. Beyond that, it becomes a magazine and a new layout should be considered.

Editing:

Give yourself adequate time to create your newsletter. The more times you review it, the better it will be.

Always ask someone to read your newsletter before taking it to the printer. It's almost guaranteed that a mistake will be found.

A good editor will also make suggestions on how to improve something that is already excellent!

Distribution:

- Hand-out newsletters at meetings and after masses.
- Don't forget your Spiritual Advisor.
- Make sure that every last member receives her newsletter.
- Budget for postage costs.
- Leave a few newsletters for the parish community to read.
- Give newsletters to potential new members
- Send a copy to your Zone Coordinator and your Diocesan Communications Chairperson.



GOOD LUCK!