

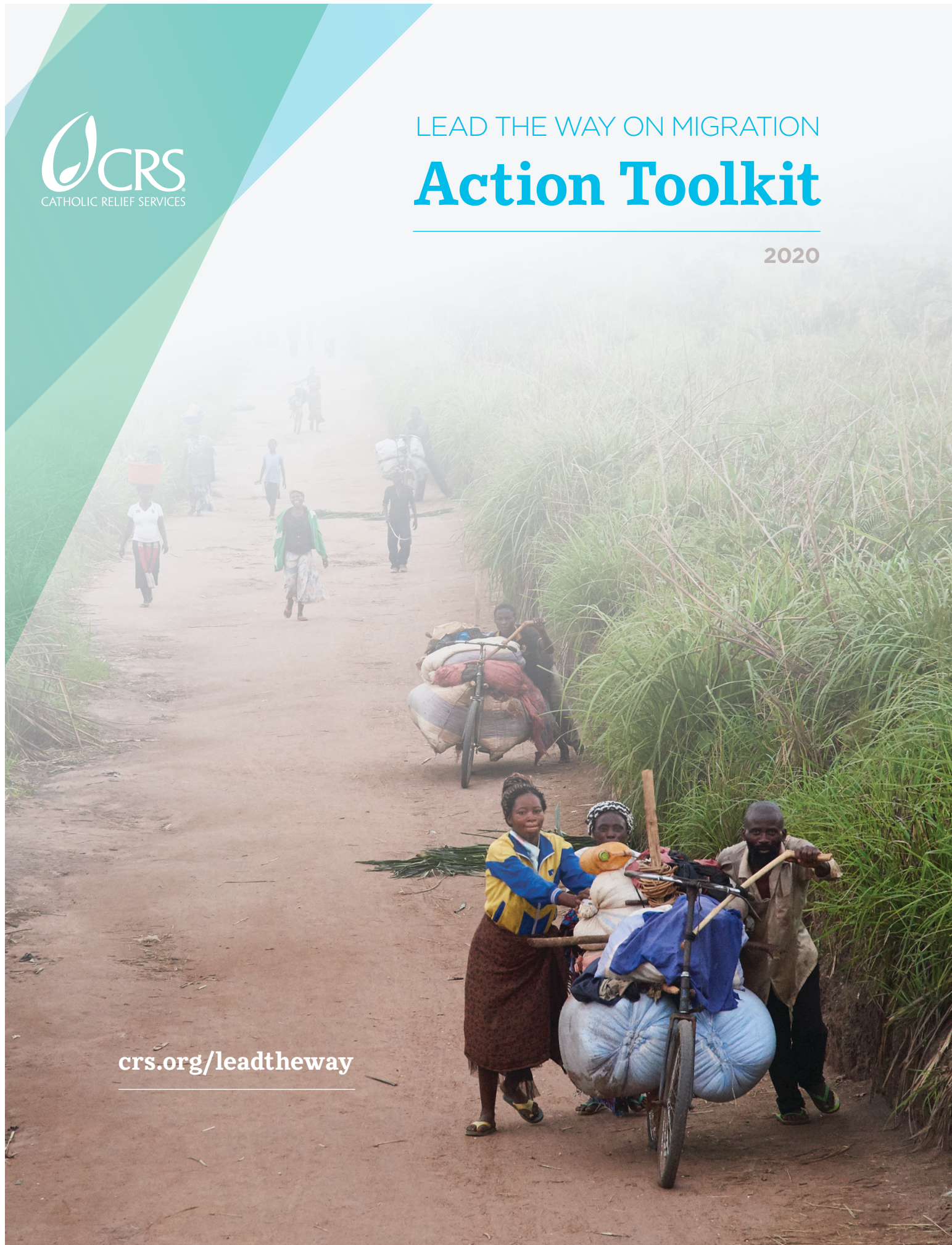


LEAD THE WAY ON MIGRATION

# Action Toolkit

2020

[crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway)





Dear Friend of CRS,

Migration is one of the greatest and most challenging humanitarian crises of our time. Over and over—on the news, across social media and from families and friends—we hear stories that illustrate in stark details the suffering of migrants across the globe. We recognize this anguish in our world, and yet we can also feel paralyzed by the enormity of it. What should we do? What can we do?

This toolkit for supporting migrants and refugees is your first step. In it, you'll find ways to engage those in power—and those in your community—in meaningful ways that will make a difference for the most vulnerable families around the world.

Use these tools to make your voice heard and inspire others to act:

- An overview of the migration crisis, with critical facts and current efforts.
- Templates for letters to government officials.
- Social media tips.
- Opportunities to support the immediate needs of migrants and refugees while we work to address systemic changes.
- Prayers for personal and group reflection.

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## Front cover

Having been forced from their homes in the wake of conflict, many villagers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo still live in makeshift shelters.

Photo by Sam Phelps for CRS

At Catholic Relief Services, our shared vision is that all people reach their full God-given human potential in just and peaceful societies that respect the dignity of every person. In the midst of suffering, CRS leads the way by bringing the hope and light of Jesus Christ to millions of people around the world. But we do not and cannot do this work alone.

We need prophetic voices—*voices like yours*—who have encountered Christ in the face of the poor and seek to lead the way for justice and the common good for all people on the move from and within their homelands. In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis urges us to **“dare to be different, to point to ideals other than those of this world, testifying to the beauty of generosity, service, ... the pursuit of justice and the common good and love for the poor.”** He challenges us to *lead the way* to that world, to *believe* that such a world is possible and to *act* to make it a reality today.

Thank you for leading the way. Thank you for taking the first step to put faith into action through prayer, through support and through advocacy.



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## PRAYER FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

*Almighty God,*

*Millions of our brothers and sisters are on the move around the world,  
Not by choice, but by desperation.*

*We encounter their stories in the news  
And their faces in members of our own communities.*

*We pray that we may lead the way to bring about God's vision  
of peace and justice to all,  
And hope and love to those on the move near and far.*

*For those forced to flee violence,  
We pray they find safety.*

*For those seeking economic opportunity,  
We pray they find secure livelihoods.*

*For those trying to support and protect their families,  
We pray they find communities to embrace them.*

*For those searching for peace and hope,  
We pray that we may be bearers of  
The Good News.*

*We are called to be prophetic advocates in this world.  
To call out injustice and be heralds of Truth and Love.  
We pray that all migrants, refugees and displaced persons  
May find safe and loving communities  
And the opportunity to thrive.  
And we pray that we may have the courage to stand and act  
In defense of human dignity for all our brothers and sisters in need.*

*Mary, Queen of Peace, **pray for us.***

**Amen**



## LEAD THE WAY: **Support Migrants and Refugees**

***The story of humanity is a story of God's people on the move.*** The Israelites escaping Egypt. The Holy Family fleeing Herod. Again and again, Scripture recounts moments of forced migration. Today, God's human family faces a similar reality. An unprecedented number of people are currently displaced.

In 2017, the number of migrants worldwide reached 258 million. Roughly 70 million people have been forcibly displaced, including more than 22 million refugees who have crossed international borders, 3 million asylum seekers, and over 40 million internally displaced persons still within their own countries.

The Church believes that people have the right to find opportunities in their home countries and that they have the right to migrate when conditions in their country of origin preclude them from providing for the safety and wellbeing of their families.

***For more than 75 years, CRS has led the way in supporting the needs of migrants and refugees.***

Our work assists refugees worldwide and implements programs in agriculture, health, education, peacebuilding and livelihoods to address the root causes of forced migration.

***If you believe in the possibility of a better, more just world,*** join with us in turning this belief into reality.

***Leading the way begins now.***

- Advocate on issues impacting those on the move and make their voices heard to those in power.
- Donate and raise funds to help sustain the work we do in support of migrants and refugees.
- Inspire and mobilize others around these issues, which are at the heart of our mission.

***Now is our time to lead the way in support of migrants and refugees.*** As a Church. As a country.

As a community of God's people. Join us today. Where will you lead?

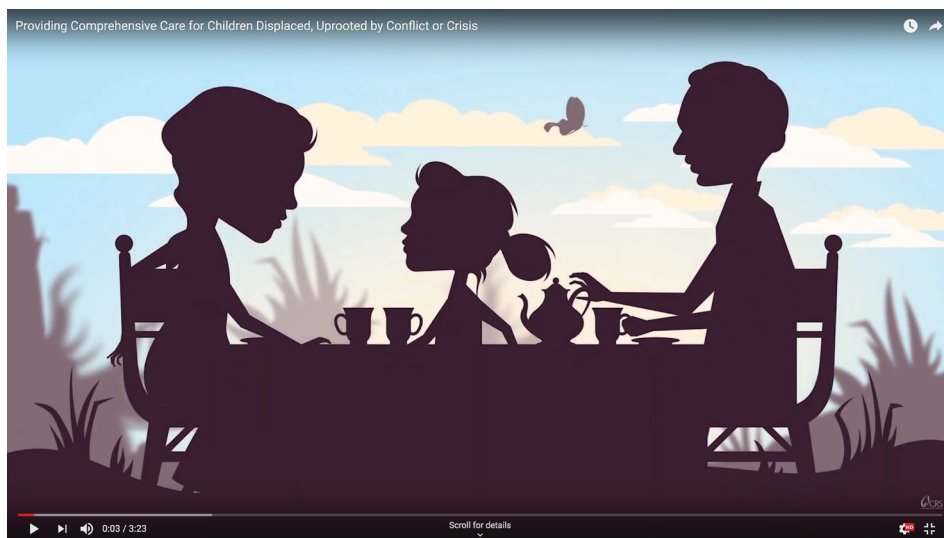
# Watch and Reflect

Migration is a complex issue with long-term consequences. Children make up half of the world's refugees and experience severe trauma as a result of being displaced. They can also suffer lasting physical, emotional and cognitive development issues. By implementing a child-centered and comprehensive approach, CRS leads the way in responding to the needs of children who are uprooted and affected by conflict. CRS and our partners believe in children's resilience. Together, we are building a foundation for their healing, stability and growth that will help children become healthy, productive adults.

## Watch this video

on how CRS provides comprehensive care for children who are displaced or uprooted by conflict or crisis.

[https://youtu.be/G3w\\_SRqAS-o](https://youtu.be/G3w_SRqAS-o)



We want to empower you to lead the way in your community to affect positive change on the world's biggest issues—particularly the migration and refugee crisis.

***In what ways can you bring awareness to—and take action with—your community to make an impact on this issue?***

# What Can I Do?

We can lead the way by putting faith into action through two concrete actions that are distinct yet complementary: advocacy and fundraising.

## WHY ADVOCATE?

Part of leading the way means looking at the bigger picture and imagining what can—and should—be. In this, we are challenged to address structural issues in our world that prevent individuals and communities from thriving. Advocacy is one important way to do this.

Advocacy is the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal. It includes various strategies that influence decision making at local, national and international levels. Advocacy is generally organized around the resolution of a problem. It can include using multimedia to form public opinion, educate decision makers, organize public events, research issues and create coalitions.

Effective advocacy requires an understanding of the problem, analysis of the political environment and a proposal for its solution. Advocacy encompasses the education and mobilization of citizens so they can become involved in developing and promoting policies.

Advocacy is one of the most effective ways to ease human suffering and confront global poverty for the long term. When an unjust policy or system is changed because of our advocacy efforts, millions of people win.

## WHY DONATE OR FUNDRAISE?

Our efforts to build the world we believe God desires requires bold, imaginative thinking about the future and a clear, empathetic understanding of the present. That means we are called to meet the needs of people right now.

Charitable works are the ways in which we provide support for emergencies and immediate assistance for those in need. For example, we are called to provide immediate relief to migrants and refugees who are forced to flee their country of origin. We also provide educational support, job training and agricultural support—providing families with the assistance they need to stay in their home country, if possible. All of these meet immediate needs through charitable works.

Your financial support—through a direct donation or through joining us in one of our community fundraising opportunities—helps us meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable while building a world where communities everywhere have what they need to thrive. We actively work for systemic changes through advocacy, and support the needs of those trapped by the systems we are working to change through charitable works.



# How Do I Fundraise With CRS?

We have created an online fundraising platform—[crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise](https://crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise)—that helps you raise money to feed the hungry, heal the sick and respond to emergencies around the world. You can make a life-changing difference in three easy steps:

- **Create a page.** Set up a personal fundraising page at: [crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise](https://crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise). It's easy and takes only minutes!
- **Show your commitment.** Choose your fundraising goal and make the first donation to show your family and friends that you are passionate and committed to the work of CRS.
- **Spread the word.** Share your fundraiser with friends, family, coworkers and across social media! You'll be able to watch your compassion grow into generosity that saves lives around the world.

We can't all go overseas to help the most vulnerable—but you can use your skills and talents to raise money in a way that's fun and effective.

## QUICK TIPS TO START YOUR FIRST FUNDRAISER

**1. Start early.** It's never too early to begin planning your fundraiser or event. Whether it's one week or one month, consider these questions when thinking about how you want to raise money for CRS:

- **What** kind of fundraiser do you want to have? A memorial fundraiser to honor a loved one? Donations instead of birthday gifts? Running a race to support CRS? Choose what works for you.
- **Why** are you passionate about CRS? What inspires you about our mission? What causes do you care about the most? Identifying what you care about and why, and being able to communicate it, will give other people a reason to care and get involved. Your fundraiser will help CRS where it is needed most—but sharing your “why” helps connect your passion to your fundraiser!
- **Who** can you contact for support? Start thinking about who you know and how they might be able to help you reach your goal—by making a donation, helping you plan or by sharing your campaign with their network. You can get more strategic about who—and how—to ask later, but start brainstorming early.
- **Where, when and how?** If you're hosting an event, start thinking about logistics. Do you need to reserve a venue? Will you serve food or refreshments? Will there be any costs associated with the event?



Nicola Filippo Rosso for CRS



## Can I really make a difference?

You have the power to help create change in the world. You can raise money with friends, family and co-workers to impact lives overseas.

When you support our work around the world, you help feed hungry families, protect vulnerable children, help farmers grow better crops and provide health care and clean water to remote communities.

**2. Set a goal.** How much do you want to raise for CRS? \$100, \$1,000, \$5,000? Be ambitious but realistic. You can always adjust your goals as you go.

**3. Don't be afraid to ask for help.**

Once you launch your fundraiser, you'll be asking people to share it on social media. You may also want to ask for help before you launch your campaign. If you're planning an event, put together a small committee of people who can help you strategize and assist with tasks. If you're planning something small, ask a friend or two for feedback on your plan. You don't have to go it alone!

**4. Spread the word.**

Share information about your fundraiser on social media, by email, phone calls or in-person. Get the word out!

- **Don't be shy.** Most people make annual charitable donations—so keep in mind that you're not asking people to *become* givers—you're giving them an option to give!
- **Create your potential supporter list wisely.** Who shares your passion for CRS and its mission to help the poor and vulnerable overseas? Your fellow parishioners? Your book club? Parents at your kids' schools? Your family? Be strategic about who you ask—and what you ask for. You might feel more comfortable asking closer connections to give more. If you know someone is not in a position to give financially, you can ask them to support you by sharing your campaign or event with their network.

- **Use social media.** Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Use social media to launch your campaign and share updates with your friends. Social media is a great way to reach people in your network.

**5. Inspire your supporters.**

The key to creating excitement about your campaign or event is giving people a reason to become involved. In your messaging, share stories about the people CRS serves and the impact your financial support can have on their lives. Statistics and numbers are important, but stories and photos make it personal. Include why you're passionate about CRS on your personal fundraising page and in your messaging. By sharing your passion and our stories, your event will build its own momentum.

**6. Recognize and thank your supporters.**

It's important to acknowledge the generous donors who contribute to your campaign. Send a personal thank you email or handwritten note after each contribution—within two or three days, if possible. You can also recognize your supporters using social media or email updates. Post an update to Twitter each time you get a donation or send a weekly email naming everyone who has contributed to your campaign. Showing your gratitude will increase the likelihood of people supporting you in the future.



# Meet With Your Member of Congress

**Research shows that nothing is more impactful than in-person meetings with your member of Congress.**

Constituent meetings offer a valuable opportunity to develop relationships and be in conversation with members of Congress and their staff. Meetings are a powerful way for staff and members of Congress to hear why you care about the issue and how you and your community are advocating for it. Meetings also give you the opportunity to ask your member of Congress to support your position.

Use the steps below to schedule and conduct an effective meeting with your member.

## **Step 1 / *Preparation***

Familiarize yourself with your member's position on the issues.

Contact the office 4 to 6 weeks before the desired meeting date to schedule your meeting. Offer multiple dates and times. Once it is scheduled, call or email a few days before to confirm.

Gather as a group beforehand to review relevant materials and assign meeting roles. Decide who will introduce the group, present the issue, ask for the member's support, share a personal story and take notes.

## **Step 2 / *Meeting***

### **INTRODUCE YOURSELF**

It's important to identify who you are and who you represent. As a constituent who represents an organization and other constituents in your district, your voice matters.

### **WORK AS A TEAM**

Follow the plan you set and stay on topic with your issue, but remain flexible. Your meeting is an opportunity for powerful storytelling and to share why this issue is important to you and other constituents in your community. Remember: not everyone needs to speak. Execute your plan in a way that is comfortable and makes sense.

### **MAKE THE ASK**

When you have finished sharing about the issue, ask if your member will support you! Listen carefully and ask for clarification if you get a vague response.



Philip Laubner/CRS

### Step 3 / *Follow up*

#### Join us

by texting **LEAD NOW**  
to **306-44** to get the  
latest CRS advocacy  
news and alerts.

#### DEBRIEF

As a group, review: What did you hear?  
What are the next steps? How did you  
do? As a team? As individuals? What  
could you do better or differently  
next time?

#### THANK YOUR MEMBER

Send a thank you note or email to your  
member's office within one week of  
your meeting. Not only is this proper  
etiquette, but it helps to develop your  
relationship with that office and to share  
any follow up information.

**Celebrate your group's accomplishment in taking  
part in the most effective way to impact policy  
and your member of Congress. Your voice makes  
a difference!**



A partnership between the United States Conference  
of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services



# Write a Letter to Your Member of Congress

Personalized communications are effective ways to engage your members of Congress and influence their policy decisions. Use these tips to draft an impactful letter.

## Step 1 / *Credential yourself*

Identify yourself as a constituent and list the organization that you represent or are a member of.

## Step 2 / *Keep it short*

Be concise. Limit your letter to one page if possible. Name the issue you're concerned about. What do you want your member to do? Why do you care about it?

## Step 3 / *Be yourself*

Be sure to state why this issue matters to you: Is your faith calling you to respond to this issue? Have you traveled or met someone impacted by this issue? Including a personal story makes your letter more compelling and helps it stand out.

## Step 4 / *Ask*

What do you want your legislator to do? Be clear and specific; for example,

*"Vote yes in support of bill  
[name and number of bill]."*

## OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

- Use the appropriate address and salutation. See the sample letter.
- Be polite. Like most of us, members of Congress will respond better to positive communication.
- Write legibly if writing your letter by hand.
- Proofread your letter for typos and other mistakes.
- Check the member's website and social media accounts to see where he or she stands on the issue.

## MAILING YOUR LETTER

Because of security procedures on Capitol Hill, we recommend that you mail your letter to your member's district office. You can easily find out your legislators' district office locations by visiting their websites, or [house.gov](https://www.house.gov) and [senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov).



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## SAMPLE LETTER

### PARAGRAPH 1

*Identify yourself, the issue and why this issue is important to you.*

The Honorable Jane Q. Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives (or U.S. Senate)  
Full Street Address  
Continued Street Address  
City, State and ZIP Code

### PARAGRAPH 2

*Credential yourself—who or what do you represent?*

Dear Representative (or Senator) Smith,

My name is Maria, and I am writing because I am concerned about poverty and violence affecting our brothers and sisters overseas. My family and I were once refugees fleeing violence, and I know that innocent people suffer the most in times of war.

I am a parishioner at St. Anthony de Padua Church in San Antonio, Texas, where I participate in various ministries to help local families in need.

### PARAGRAPH 3

*Make the ask—what do you want your member to do?*

I ask you to support continued humanitarian assistance to suffering people, by supporting robust funding for international humanitarian accounts.

This is an issue that's very important to others in my parish as well. We look forward to hearing back from you on this issue. Please know that Catholic Relief Services and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops can be a resource to you as you work on this issue in Congress.

Thank you for your attention to these issues. As a concerned citizen and a committed Catholic, I believe that we have an obligation to those who are suffering, whether they are our neighbors here at home, or our neighbors overseas.

Sincerely (or another closing remark),

Your Name

Your Return Address

*This is how the member's office can determine that you're a constituent.*



# Tips for Using Social Media

**Social media is a creative and easy way to put your faith into action.**

Did you know that your members of Congress use social media too? It's one of the ways they gather feedback from constituents like you. And since it's considered constituent communication, you can be confident that your voice will be heard.

You can share messages, videos and photos to raise awareness and educate others about global poverty. And you can take action to shape policies that protect our vulnerable brothers and sisters around the world.

1. Identify your members of Congress and learn where your members stand on issues that are important to you.
2. Use your social media platforms to raise your voice and engage your members of Congress. Ask about your member's position, ask for the passage of a bill, or thank your member for taking action on your issue. Be sure to tag your member—and **@CatholicRelief** (for Twitter) or **@CatholicReliefServices** (for Facebook/Instagram)—in the post.

3. Get a Facebook constituent badge.

A constituent badge appears next to your name when you interact on Facebook with your member of Congress. You can turn the badge on or off in Town Hall ([facebook.com/townhall](https://facebook.com/townhall)).

4. If you're speaking out about a piece of legislation that's moving through Congress over a period of time, consider posting a weekly comment.

5. Ask your friends, family and followers to comment and share, too!

Have you recently met with your member or member's staff? Post a photo, share about your meeting and tag your member, thanking them for meeting with you.





**Thank you for leading the way with us as we tackle the biggest humanitarian crisis of our time—migration. With your help, we are supporting thousands of people who have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety and opportunity. Your efforts are a stepping stone to accomplishing even greater change for our brothers and sisters on the move around the world.**

**Continue to lead the way with us by visiting [crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway).**

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