



Parish Voter Registration Toolkit

Before Your Event

1. Ask Permission Of The Pastor

Meet with your pastor and thoroughly discuss the plans for the nonpartisan drive. Solicit ideas from him on how to make it successful. If appropriate, obtain the approval of the parish council.

2. Promote Your Event

- Publicize the voter registration drive in the bulletin, through Flocknote, and in the announcements at Mass two weeks and again one week prior to the drive. Camera-ready bulletin quotes are available at www.faithfulcitizenship.org.
- Put fliers and/or posters at the back of the church, in the hall, and share on church social media.
- Ask the pastor to include a message in the homily about the Church's teaching on civic responsibility on the weekend preceding your registration drive and/or the weekend preceding the election. Ideas for homilists are available at www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

3. Gather Your Supplies

- Phones, tablets, or computers – charged and bookmarked with registertovote.ca.gov
- A table and chairs
- Snacks for volunteers – water, granola bars
- Sign-up sheets and pens for folks who would like to get involved and volunteer at future events
- Posters, banners, and signs that say "Register to Vote Here"



4. Make sure Wifi is Available

An online voter registration tool requires an internet connection. It's mobile-friendly, so you can use cell phones, but having a few devices— ideally, tablets—connected to the Internet with the Secretary of State's voter registration site (registertovote.ca.gov) is ideal.

5. Choose Your Location

Make sure to cover all the highest foot traffic areas at your parish – especially in the vestibule and outside the highest traffic doors at your church.

6. Recruit volunteers.

Volunteers can help with registration after each Mass on the weekend you have chosen. Be clear about how many volunteers you need (ideally, one for every exit after each Saturday and Sunday liturgy). You may want to ask a men's or women's club, the social concerns committee, or other parish organizations to help identify volunteers. Be sure to have Spanish-speaking volunteers and Spanish language forms if appropriate for your parish. Also, to avoid the appearance of partisanship, make sure your volunteers include members of all major political parties.

7. Keep It Nonpartisan!

Absolutely no comments or suggestions can be made about how a person should register or how a person should vote in the election.

- No endorsements or opposition – No materials related to candidates, issues or political parties should be distributed during voter registration. Do not endorse or oppose candidates, political parties, or groups of candidates, or take any action that reasonably could be construed as endorsement, opposition or exhibiting bias for or against a candidate or party.



- Wear neutral clothing and use neutral banners – wear shirts without words or designs, and make sure the signs, banners and info is just about voter registration. This includes: no voter guides, no Respect Life or Immigration brochures on the table (or next to or behind the table), no wearing Knights of Columbus or Justice and Peace Action t-shirts, no banners for Environmental Justice, just voter registration.
- Remember your why - While it is important to be clear about what we can't do, the most important thing to focus on is what we can do. In a democracy, loving our neighbor and caring for the least among us means supporting leaders and policies that promote the common good and protect society's most vulnerable members. Helping Catholics to recognize and act on this dimension of their faith is an essential task for parish leaders.

8. Train your volunteers.

- Explain how to register voters. Everyone should ask: “Are you registered to vote at your current address?” If the person walking by says yes, ask them if they are sure that they have registered since the last time they moved.
- Know the eligibility requirements. In order to register to vote, a person must be:
 - o A United States citizen and a resident of California
 - o 18 years old or older on Election Day (or 16 or 17 years old for pre-registration)
 - o Not currently serving a state or federal prison term for the conviction of a felony and
 - o Not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.

For more FAQ’s visit the Secretary of State’s website:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/frequently-asked-questions>

- Explain how to wrap up a person’s registration process: “Thanks for registering to vote! If you have any further questions, you can visit the Secretary of State’s website.”



During Your Event

1. Be Engaging

Make sure that you have all hands on deck – stand up and engage with people, don't just sit behind your table. Circulate through the area you're set up in and make it easy for passersby to engage with you.

Tip: When you start talking to someone, hand them a tablet/device right away. Many people will instinctively begin to fill out the form!

2. Stay Nonpartisan

You must register anyone who wants to vote, regardless of their political preference.

3. Remain Hopeful

An average volunteer registers 3-5 voters an hour at a heavily trafficked place. Sometimes less. *Not only is that perfectly okay, it is a huge deal!* Let your volunteers know this, especially if they feel like they "only got four people to register." Because of their hard work, four new people can vote. That is huge. People fight wars and die for that right, and you just gave it to someone.



Voter Registration Script

Hi, my name is _____ and we're doing voter registration. Are you currently registered to vote?

IF YES – That's great! Have you moved or changed your name since the last time you voted?

IF YES, I'VE MOVED/CHANGED NAME – I can help you update your voter registration right now! It will only take a minute, and it will ensure that you're able to vote on Election Day.

IF NO – Let's get you registered! It's quick and easy. Can I help sign you up now and make sure your voice is heard this election?

IF YES – Great! Let's get started. You can use my phone/tablet/computer to fill out the form, or if you have your own, you can register on your own device.

IF NO – Okay! If you change your mind, you can always register at registertovote.ca.gov. Have a great day.

IF THEY HAVE A QUESTION – See the answers to frequently asked voting questions on the next page.

CLOSING – Thanks for registering to vote! Remember to verify your voter registration status within the next few weeks to make sure that you're on the voter rolls.



Answer to Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I register? You can't vote if you don't register, and most states have voter registration deadlines that occur long before Election Day. So even if you haven't decided whom you're voting for or even *if* you're voting, you should register now so you will be able to vote on Election Day.

Why should I vote? Great question! There are many reasons why a person votes and yours may be different from anyone else's, but voting is an essential part of our democracy. We elect representatives to enact laws on our behalf and the only way to voice who represents you is to cast a ballot. Also, many issues come up on the ballot that you are allowed to directly vote on like how much you pay in taxes, where they put a landfill/build a stadium, and much more.

I don't like the major candidates, so I'm not going to vote. You should still vote! There are other important local, state and federal elections to vote for. You don't need to choose a candidate for president or governor to vote in other key races.

When do I vote? Elections happen all the time. You know the big one: the presidential election every four years. There are midterms elections, too, and even more happening at the state, county and city level.

I don't believe in voting. Not everyone sees the value of voting, but our faith encourages us to vote on the issues we care about and to think about how casting a ballot might help to promote the common good. As Saint John Paul II once said, "every person has a right and duty to participate in public life."

Which address do I use? Use the address where you reside and intend to vote.

Who's on the ballot? Ballots vary by location. Be sure to check out the Secretary of State website to view a sample ballot or contact your local officials for more information.

Does my vote even count? Yes! It may sound cliché but every vote matters. Think of it this way: the only vote that doesn't matter is the one that was never cast. Make your voice heard – don't let other voters decide the election results for you!

How can I check my voter registration status? Contact your county elections office or your state election official. They can confirm if you are registered and at which address.

Can I register to vote at my college or university address? Yes. Even if you are already registered at home, we encourage you to register at school. You are much more likely to vote.



Can I register to vote using a P.O. Box as my address? No, you must provide a valid place of residence as your address on your voter registration application.

My address has changed. Do I need to re-register? Yes. Each part of the state has its own unique candidates and measures on the ballot. Simply fill out a new application form, and re-register at your new address.

I want to vote, but I will not be in my home precinct on Election Day. Can I still vote? Absolutely. Go to registertovote.ca.gov for details on getting an absentee ballot from your state.

If I register to vote, am I going to be called for jury duty? Juror lists are created from a variety of state databases, including lists of taxpayers and drivers – so if you have a driver’s license or pay taxes, you are still on the state’s list of eligible jurors. Don’t give up your right to vote to avoid jury duty!

I do not have a permanent residence because I am homeless. Can I still register and vote? Yes, you are still eligible to register and vote. You may use the address of where you sleep as the place of residence on your voter registration application.

Where do I vote? Where you vote depends on where you live. Your state elections office should have precinct locations posted online in advance of Election Day.

Modified from [Rock The Vote Voter Registration Toolkit](#) and [USCCB Voter Education and Voter Registration](#)