



Prayer, Renewal & Action on Immigration **Sample Press Materials**

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NOTE: Both of these documents are models that should be adapted to your specific event and local context. The media advisory (page 1) should be sent to media outlets 2-3 days before your event. Its purpose is to interest the reporters in coming to cover your event. The press release (page 2-3) is passed out at the event or emailed out immediately following. The release provides quotes from the speakers and is an aid to reporters writing a story about your prayer vigil. For assistance in contacting your local press outlets, please contact Patty Kupfer at America's Voice, 202-463-8602 x310.

1. Sample Media Advisory

For Immediate release:
[DATE]

Contact: [Name]
[CONTACT PHONE #]

Prayer Vigil to Call for Immigration Renewal & Action *[CITY] Faith and Community Leaders Host Vigil to Call on New Administration and Members of Congress to Show Moral Courage on Immigration Reform*

[CITY, STATE] – [DAY OF WEEK], [DATE] faith leaders will join community leaders and residents at [LOCATION] in a prayer vigil for the protection of immigrant families and the leadership of President Obama and Members of Congress to enact humane immigration reform. [SPEAKER NAMES] will reflect on their concern with the direction the country is moving on immigration and the potential for faith leaders to be a force of renewal and reconciliation.

The vigil is part of a nationwide movement, ***Prayer, Renewal and Action on Immigration***, in over [EVENT #] cities to highlight the growing movement of faith communities working to bring humanity and compassion into the public dialogue on immigration. Immigrant families and workers are living in a state of fear, constantly worrying about the next raid that would rip parents and children apart, or how the increasing anti-immigrant sentiment will impact their families. Now is the time to restore dignity and respect to all families and communities.

WHAT: Prayer vigil calling on new Administration to demonstrate moral courage on immigration reform

WHO: [SPEAKER NAME AND TITLES]

WHEN: [DATE/TIME]

WHERE: [NUMBER] PASSCODE:

More than a hundred prayer vigils are taking place in [# of CITIES] across the country as part of a growing national movement of faith acting on the pressing moral issue of immigration in America. People of faith are calling on President Obama and Members of Congress to show the moral courage needed to lead on immigration.

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2. Sample Press Release

For Immediate release:
[DATE]

Contact: [Contact Name]
[CONTACT PHONE #]

Prayer Vigil for Immigration Renewal & Action Unites [CITY] Community

[CITY] Faith and Community Leaders Call on New Administration and Members of Congress to Show Moral Courage on Immigration Reform

[CITY, STATE] – Today, faith leaders and residents gathered at [LOCATION] for a prayer vigil calling on President Obama and Members of Congress to enact humane immigration reform. The vigil is part of a nationwide movement, *Prayer, Renewal & Action on Immigration*, in over [EVENT #] cities to demonstrate the growing support by faith communities to bring humanity and compassion into the public dialogue on immigration. [SPEAKER NAMES] prayed and reflected on their concern with the direction the country is moving immigration and the potential for faith leaders to be a force of renewal and reconciliation.

“Faith leaders are in a unique position to serve as a bridge between different communities struggling to come together on this difficult issue,” said [FAITH LEADER]. “It is why we are standing here today as part of a growing national movement to renew America’s best ideals and values, not our worst instincts. We value immigrants as human beings and honor their God-given dignity, and urge leaders to address the immigration crisis with that in mind.”

“All faith traditions share a common mandate to welcome and care for all members of our community and love our neighbors as ourselves,” said [FAITH LEADER]. “As people of faith, we must keep that in the forefront of our minds as we approach the complex issue of immigration. We call on President Obama and Members of Congress to demonstrate moral courage to pass immigration policies that uphold the moral fabric of our nation, and protect the dignity and human rights of all people and restore the rule of law.”

Immigrant families and workers are living in a state of fear, constantly worrying about the next raid that would rip parents and children apart, or how the increasing anti-immigrant sentiment will impact their families. Faith and community leaders alike in [CITY] can no longer idly sit by and watch these families be torn apart by dehumanizing policies and rhetoric. “As leaders in [CITY], we experience firsthand the effects of increased raids, deportations and extremist anti-immigrant sentiment,” said [COMMUNITY LEADER]. “Raids instill fear and destroy families, and anti-immigrant rhetoric tears apart communities – it must stop. Now is the time to restore dignity and respect to all families and communities.”

More than a hundred prayer vigils are taking place in [# of CITIES] across the country as part of a growing national movement of faith acting on the pressing moral issue of immigration in America. People of faith are calling on President Obama and Members of Congress to show the moral courage needed to lead on immigration.

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3. Sample Op-ed

The immigration debate may have quieted recently on the national stage, but it is still playing out intensely here in [CITY]. As the economy continues to worsen, history has shown the divisions and the widespread blame of immigrants will only continue plague our community. As a faith leader, I am deeply concerned about the direction our country is moving on immigration. People of faith can no longer sit by and watch immigrant families be torn apart or stay silent as dehumanizing rhetoric invades our community. And I'm not alone – across the country, hundreds of faith groups are taking a stand. [IF LOCATION IS ALSO HOLDING A PRAYER VIGIL, INCLUDE DETAILS HERE]

Immigrant families are living in a state of fear, as a result of destructive, ineffective raids and anti-immigrant rhetoric. People are afraid to send their children to school, go to the grocery store, talk to the police during an emergency or even answer a knock at the door, regardless of the nature of their immigration status. This is a situation that simply cannot continue.

Faith leaders must be a force of renewal and reconciliation. Compassion for the foreigner is tradition embedded in all our Western faith traditions – for example, the Bible teaches us that in welcoming the stranger, we welcome Jesus (Matthew 25:34-40). These scriptural calls provide a lens as to how we as faithful Americans must approach the complex issue of immigration. We must stand up for immigrants in our community who are caught in the web of unworkable laws and easy targets of extremists who paint them as less than human. There are no easy answers to this complex problem, but we must look to our core values when tackling the immigration issue.

Like all of us in _____, the immigrants in our community are hard workers and value their families above all. We must give them a chance to come out of the shadows and become legal, contributing members of our society. This is not only the right thing to do morally, it is also good policy. After registering with the government, immigrants will become part of the system, eliminating the underground labor market and contributing to America's tax base. We also must ensure that our immigration system is honest and responsive to our economic reality in both good times and bad.

Immigration reform isn't a faceless process – it affects our neighbors, members of our congregations, parents working to provide for their families, and innocent children. Our scriptures teach us that all people are made in the image of God, including immigrants. We must renew our nation's best ideals and stand up for our best values, not our worst instincts. It

is the responsibility of the faith community to bring humanity and compassion back into the public dialogue on immigration.

No one doubts last November's election was a mandate for change. But perhaps as importantly, it was also a mandate for unity, a historic call to move beyond the politics of division that pit us one against another. I join with people of faith across the country to urge the President and Congress to demonstrate the moral courage to pass immigration policies that will uphold the moral fabric of our nation, protect the dignity and human rights of all people and restore the rule of law. That would be a true marker of change.

4. Sample Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As a member of the faith community in [CITY], I am deeply concerned about the direction our country is moving on immigration. Immigrant families and workers are living in a state of fear due to increased raids, deportations and anti-immigrant sentiments. Now is the time to bring humanity and compassion into the public dialogue on immigration.

All faith traditions share a common mandate to welcome and care for all members of our community and love our neighbors as we do ourselves. This principle must serve as a foundation as we seek to address the complex issue of immigration. We can no longer allow dehumanizing policies and rhetoric to tear apart our community.

I encourage all in the faith community to join hundreds of others around the country in praying for the renewal and reconciliation of our communities. Prayer vigils are taking place in cities across the nation as part of a growing national movement of faith acting on the pressing moral issue of immigration. Please join me at [LOCATION] on [DATE] to lift your voice in the recognition of the dignity of all members of our community.

Dear Editor,

The recent elections were no doubt a mandate for change. Americans made it clear that they want to move beyond the politics of division and take a stand for unity. Faith communities and leaders in [CITY] and nationwide will come together this week to call on our political leaders to

hold true to their campaign promises and reform that restores dignity and respect to our immigration system.

Now more than ever, we need politics that uphold our core values. We cannot listen to anti-immigrant voices who try to strip immigrants of their humanity and Americans recognize that we need real solutions to fix immigration system and make our communities stronger.

Please join members of the [CITY] faith community as we stand up with the rest of the country to call on the President and Congress to pass immigration policies that will uphold the moral fabric of our nation.

Dear Editor,

Now is the time to heed the callings of scripture as we begin to tackle the complex issue of immigration. We are taught that all people are made in the image of God and to love our neighbors as we do ourselves, and to uphold humanity and equality throughout our community. We must value immigrants as human beings and honor their God-given dignity.

Immigration policies that keep families together have always been a cornerstone of American policies. Renewing our nation's best ideals and values, instead of our worst instincts, has never been more important. This is a moment where we must stand up for immigration policies that keep families together.

Hundreds of faith and community leaders are coming together nationwide to stand up for the foreigner among us and bring compassion back into the public dialogue. This [DAY], I will be joining the residents of [CITY] to make my voice heard and urge renewal and reconciliation. I encourage you to join us.