

Faithful Census Weekend

Get Out the Count in Your Congregation!

March 27th-29th

UPDATE: *Because of the COVID-19 virus, we recognize that many houses of worship are cancelling their worship services or broadcasting their service online. We've updated this toolkit to account for these changes and encourage everyone to still lift up the census during remote worship and to raise awareness. Remember to communicate to your community to respond as soon as possible (before May) and that it has never been easier to respond to the 2020 Census, whether online, over the phone or by mail-- all without a census taker coming to their home.*

Join communities of faith across the country March 27-29 in lifting up the 2020 Census. As **trusted messengers** in the community, faith leaders have a unique position to encourage census participation. Faith leaders can powerfully communicate the message that responding to the 2020 Census is an **act of faith** that shows your love for your neighbor because an accurate count ensures access to quality schools, hospitals, roads and services that make a difference in people's lives. They can also affirm the **God-given dignity of each person**. Bringing the Census into worship provides a space for reflection on the values that call us to be counted and share with your community the importance of the census.

Let us know you're in! [Sign up here](#) to let us know you'll bring up the 2020 Census with your congregation digitally or on social media during Faithful Census Weekend and to receive updates and materials!

Congregational Announcements and Social Media

Congregational announcements and social media posts are simple and effective ways to spread the word that the 2020 Census has begun! Post and share announcements multiple times now through Faithful Census Weekend. You can also continue through April to encourage your community to self-respond online, the phone, or mail.

IDEAS

- Post about the census on personal and congregational social media accounts
 - Use the hashtags #FaithfulCensus, #2020Census, #JuntosContamos
- Place a message in the congregation's e-newsletter
 - Include the [online portal link](#) and [phone number](#) to respond during self-response phase (before May)



RESOURCES

- 1 min. Census 101 Video ([Eng](#) / [Esp](#))
- Census 101 Presentation ([Eng](#) / [Esp](#) / [Kor](#))
- [Faith in Public Graphics](#)
- [NALEO Digital Toolkit](#) (graphics included)

SAMPLE e-NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

Our faith teaches that every person has God-given dignity. Therefore everyone deserves to be counted in the 2020 Census. When everyone in our community is counted, we get the federal funds we need for our schools, hospitals, roads, and other essential programs like Head Start, food assistance, and affordable housing. Responding to the 2020 Census has never been easier because you can choose to respond online, by phone, or mail-- and it just takes 10 minutes to respond for your entire household. Be on the lookout for an invitation from the Census Bureau or respond today at 2020census.gov. Remember that your personal information is kept confidential by federal law. By completing the Census and encouraging our friends and family to do so, we claim our rightful political representation in Congress and fulfill our responsibility to our neighbors and to future generations. The Census only happens once every 10 years — this is our opportunity to declare that we are here and we count!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Post a video of yourself to inform your community that the census has begun and encourage everyone to participate. As a trusted messenger, your encouragement can make a big difference! You could say something like this:

I wanted to share with everyone that the 2020 Census is here and encourage you to respond. When you fill out the census, you're helping to bring affordable healthcare, housing, and more to our community. It also helps determine how many books and computers our kid's school can afford and if there's bus routes where we need them. Just 10 minutes can change the next 10 years. You can respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or mail. Be sure to respond before May so a census taker won't have to come to your home. And remember that your response is confidential by law. As a person of faith, I believe that everyone counts and should be counted. Visit 2020census.gov to respond now.

Sample social media posts:

- As a person of faith, I'm participating in the #2020Census out of love for my neighbors because my community deserves well funded schools, hospitals, roads, and transportation. Join me at 2020Census.gov. Together we can ensure a #FaithfulCensus
- Responding to the #2020Census has never been easier-- online, by phone, or mail. It takes just 10 minutes and impacts the next 10 years of funding for our communities' healthcare, schools, access to public transportation, and more. This is our one shot! Respond and learn more at <http://2020Census.gov>
- This weekend, I'm committed to lifting up the #2020Census with my congregation because I believe every person is made in the image of God and deserves to be counted. Participating in the census helps determine how many books and computers our kids' school can afford, whether our elders can afford heating in the winter, and if there's bus routes where we need them. Responding to the census is an act of love of our neighbors. Join me in ensuring a #FaithfulCensus. Visit 2020Census.gov to respond and learn more.
- Did you know your information shared in the #2020Census is confidential by law and determines funding for your schools, hospitals, roads, and more for the next 10 years? It's easy to respond online, by phone, or mail. Check out this one minute video to learn more: <https://www.faithinpubliclife.org/census-wbv>
- When I respond to the #2020Census, I'm not just it for myself or my family but for my entire community. When we are all counted, we get the resources and representation we deserve to help our community thrive. I'm committed to a #FaithfulCensus. Learn more and join me at 2020Census.gov
- The results of the #2020Census will be used to determine the number of seats in our children's classrooms and beds in our hospitals for the next decade. That's why we need to be sure to count every person living in our households on April 1 (even your babies!) so we have a #FaithfulCensus.

INTEGRATING CENSUS INTO WORSHIP

IDEAS

- Preach on the Census to encourage participation during virtual worship services
 - Draw on faith themes of dignity and community to census
 - Connect to relevant scripture
 - Include important dates and information on how to respond
- Include a prayer for a faithful census
 - Post a litany on dignity and the census
 - Use our guide to let your community that we all count
- Include flyers in your e-bulletins: ([Eng](#) / [Esp](#) / [Kor](#))

Sermon Guide

DIGNITY

- We believe that all people, regardless of race, religion, or immigration status, are made in God's image. Our God-given dignity demands recognition.
- What we declare when we answer the Census is that we are here, and we are part of "we the people" and we refuse to be excluded.
- *Fear not*, is the most often repeated phrase in Hebrew and Christian scripture--repeated 365 times. Do not be afraid to state your presence.
- Originally, the Census counted every white man, woman and child as a full person, counted enslaved people of African descent as 3/4 of a person, and didn't count Native Americans at all. We have an opportunity to reclaim the census as a tool for dignity, justice, and equity.

COMMUNITY

- When you count yourself, you are also making sure your neighbor's child has a seat in their classroom and their mother has access to medical care. We must work together and do everything in our power to make sure that everyone in our local communities are counted so we all can get the resources we deserve.
- The 2020 Census' impact on our communities is profound. It shapes everything from whether we have fair political representation in Congress to whether our roads, hospitals, schools and fire departments have the funding they need to support our health and well-being.
- You count in this country. Your work and your contribution to the common good and common ground, moves beyond the walls of where we worship. Your voice matters. Your communities, your schools, your children need you to be counted to receive the right economic apportionment.

DEMOCRACY

- A full, accurate count lays the foundation for a healthy democracy and communities where families thrive and flourish. By completing the Census and encouraging our communities to do so, we claim our rightful representation and fulfill our responsibility to our neighbors and future generations.
- It is important to be counted in the Census because it is economic empowerment and political empowerment. As spiritual and moral people, to participate in our democracy is to be counted.
- The truth is that being counted contributes to the strengthening of democracy. If we are undercounted, they are taking away our voices from our democracy and our rights.

Litany On Dignity

Reader: God, you tell us that we are made in your image. We believe that all people, regardless of race, religion, or immigration status have inherent dignity because you made us. Our God-given dignity demands recognition.

All: We will celebrate our dignity and we will count ourselves!

Reader: We know you long for the freedom of all people and for chains of oppression to break. For far too long, too many of your children have been excluded and counted as less than human, which has resulted in inequality and injustice. But we know you count each of us as equal in your eyes.

All: Just as you count us, we will count ourselves!

Reader: You've commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves. When we count ourselves, we are helping make sure not only our needs are met, but also that our neighbors have good schools, hospitals, roads, critical resources, and fair political representation.

All: For our neighbors, we will count ourselves!

Reader: Lord, you assure us to 'fear not.' You walk with us in our lives and we trust in your spirit and guidance. We proclaim ourselves as your children and our dignified presence in this nation.

All: We declare our presence and we will count ourselves!

Relevant Scripture

Hebrew Scriptures

- On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the Exodus from the land of Egypt, the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, saying: Take a Census of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its ancestral houses, listing every name. (Numbers 1:1-2)
- The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Among these shall the land be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names."(Numbers 26:52-53)
- Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all. (Proverbs 22:2)
- Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. (Proverbs 31:9)
- Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression (Isaiah 1:17)
- But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5: 23-24)

New Testament Christian Scriptures

- In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world...So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. (Luke 2:1-5)
- The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed. (Luke 4:18)
- But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1 Corinthians 12:24-26)
- Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. (1 Timothy 5:3)

Islamic Scriptures

- He knows each one of them, and has counted them a full counting. (Maryam 19:94)
- Surely those who deny the truth spend their wealth to hinder people from the way of Allah, and will continue to so spend until their efforts become a source of intense regret for them. (Al-Qur'an 8:36)
- Do not mix truth with falsehood or hide the truth knowingly. (Al-Baqarah 2:42)
- They ask thee what they should spend. Say, "Let whatever of your wealth you spend be for parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, and the traveler. Whatever good you do, truly God knows it." (Al-Baqarah 2:215)

- You will never attain piety till you spend from that which you love. And whatever you spend, truly God knows it. (Ali 'Imran 3:92)

Sikh Scriptures

- Everything and everyone contains the same light. It's Divine Light within us all. (Guru Nanak)
- I see no strangers and no enemies. The whole world is connected to me. (Guru Arjan)
- O my mind, know that the truly liberated person is one who sees the oneness between happiness and pain and connection between friend and foe. (Guru Tegh Bahadur)
- O Ravidas – It is rare to find someone who understands that divinity is in everyone equally. (Bhagat Ravidas)

Buddhist Scriptures

The Buddha provided us the following compassionate directives:

- If we fail to look after others when they need help, who will look after us?
- Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace.

Hindu Scriptures

ŚB 5.18.9

- May the entire Universe be blessed with peace and hope.
- May everyone, driven by envy and enmity, become pacified and reconciled.
- May all living beings develop abiding concern for the welfare of others.
- May our own hearts and minds be filled with purity and serenity.
- May all these blessings flow naturally from this Supreme benediction.
- May our attention become spontaneously absorbed in the rapture of pure love unto the transcendent Lord.

REFLECTIONS

You can find faith specific reflections in the Interfaith Census 2020 Count Coalition's [Faith Leaders Toolkit](#).