

# FAITH IN PUBLIC LIFE

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**Amplifying the Encyclical!**

**JUNE 18th = E-Day**

# **Before E-Day:**

- **Get training!**
- **Make a media target list.**
- **Make a media monitoring plan.**
- **Organize your LTE-writer corps.**
- **Get your message and messengers ready.**

# The Right Messengers

- Faith leaders (of course!)
- People harmed or endangered by climate change
- People working on climate and environmental issues locally

# Messaging

**Remember Your Unique Voice!**

**VALUES > Science**

# Remember Your Unique Voice!

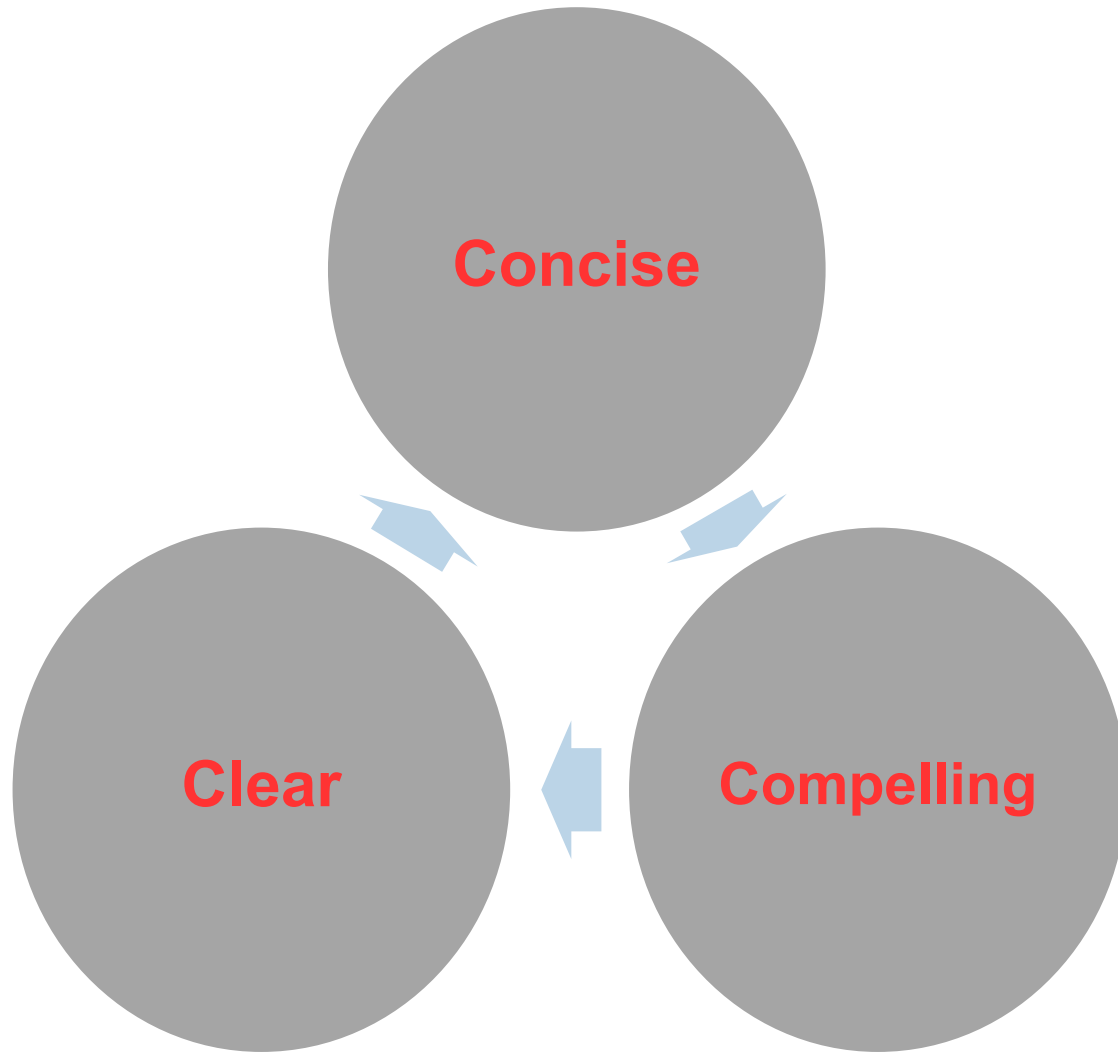
**VALUES** > **Policy**

# Your core message

- **One. Simple. Argument.**
- **The *essential* point the audience needs to remember.**
- **As short as possible.**
- **The first thing you say.**



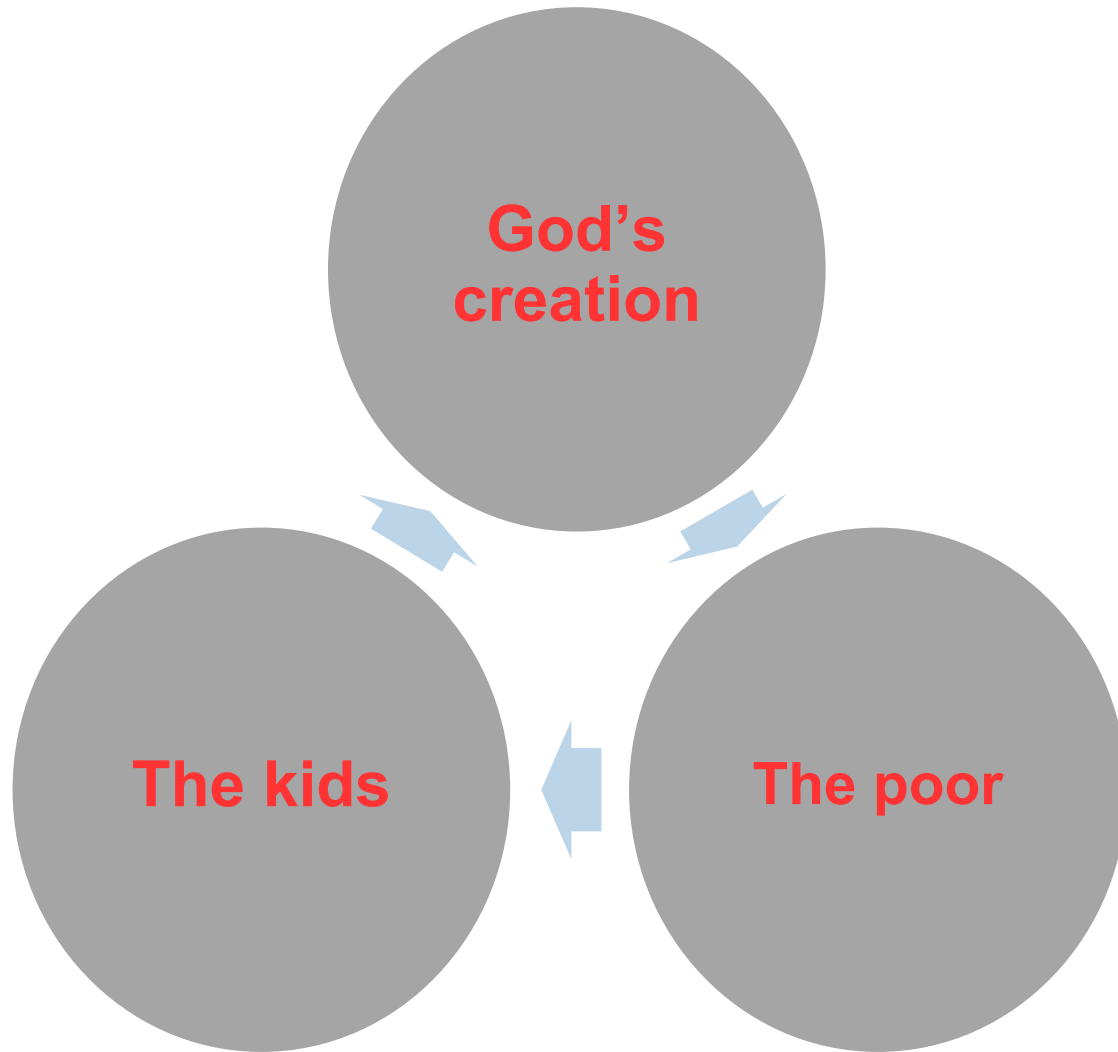
# What makes a strong core message?



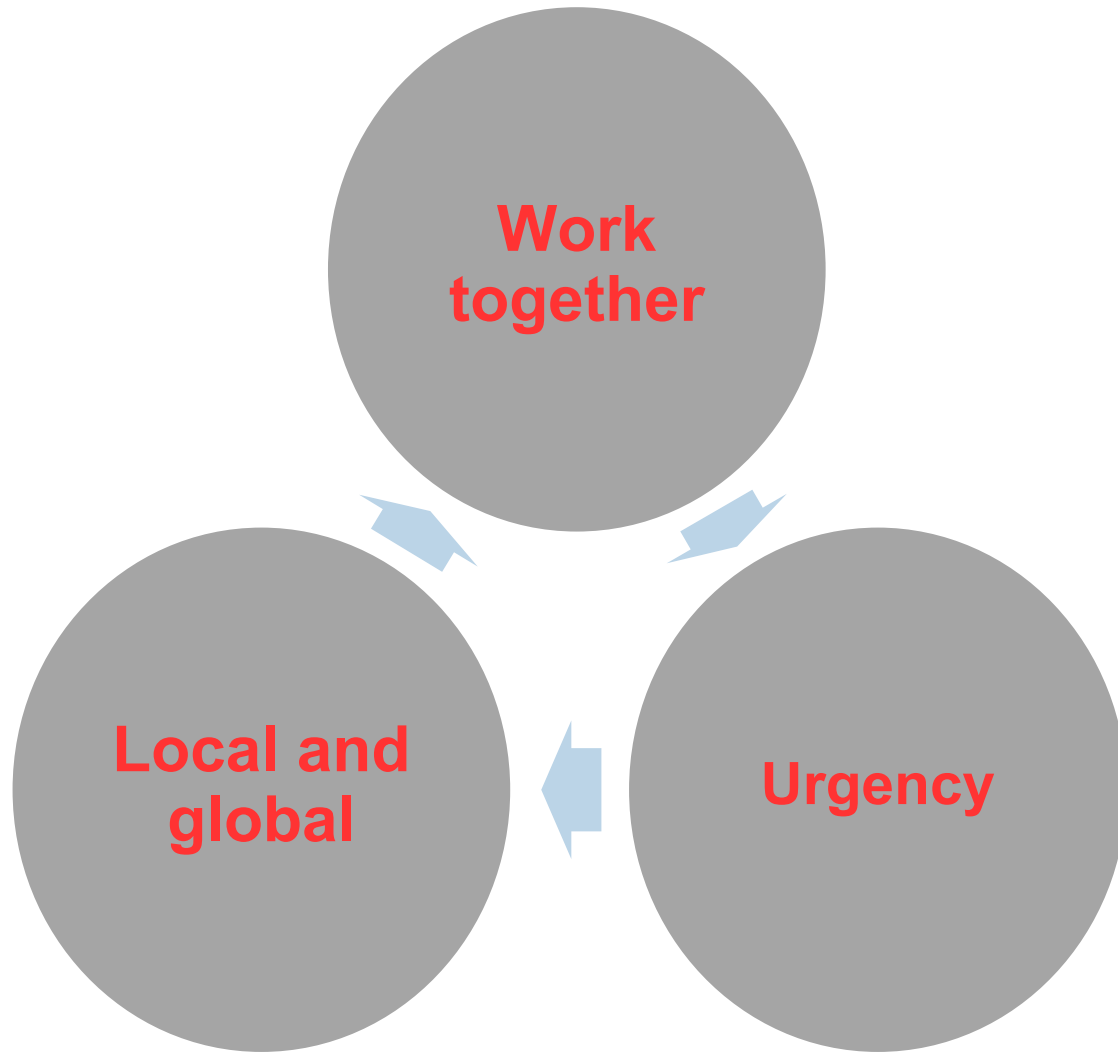
# Encyclical message themes

- **This is a moral issue.**
- **The encyclical is a call to action.**
- **The church has a key role in this issue and this debate.**

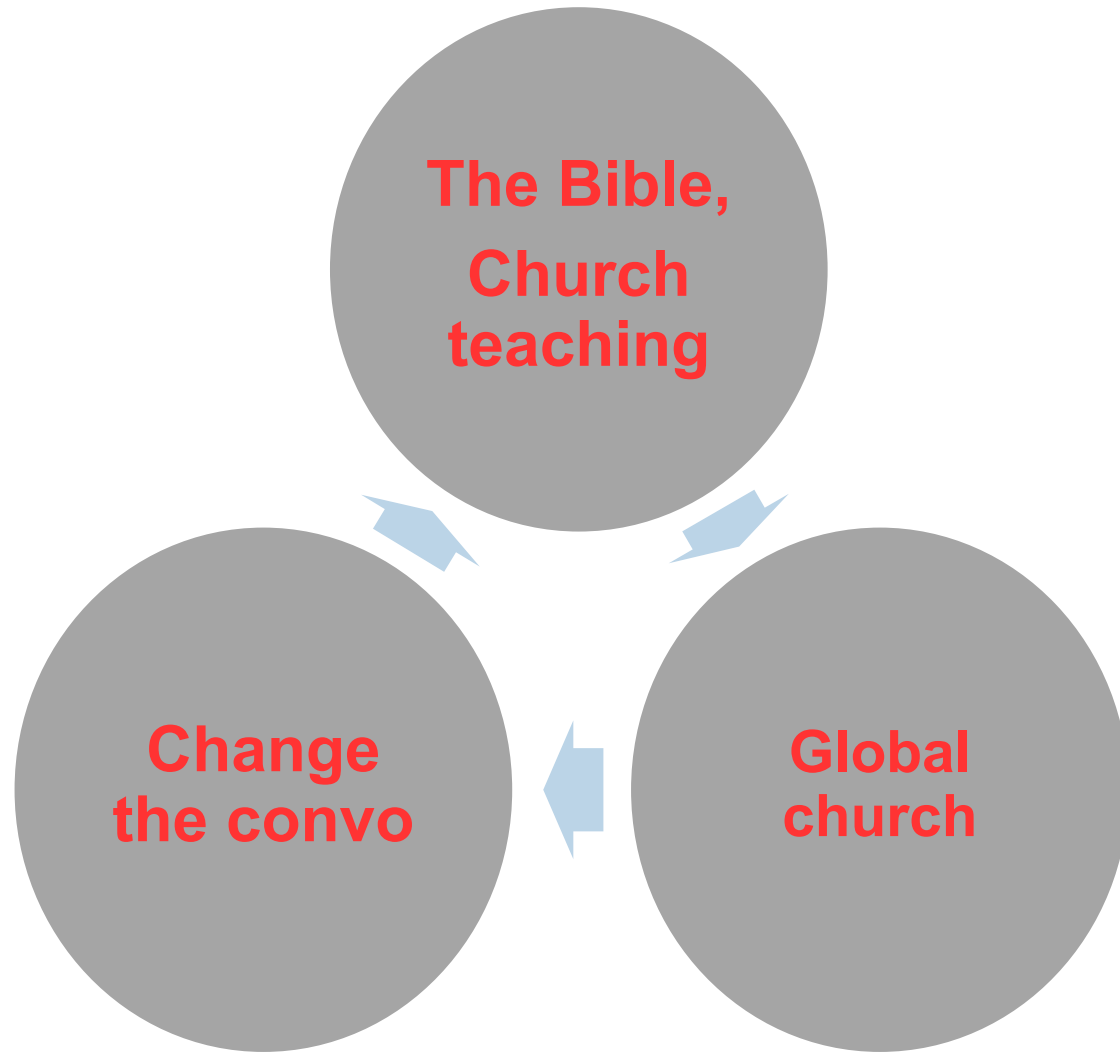
# A moral issue



# Call to Action



# The church plays a key role



# Climate messaging tactics

- **Connect to weird/severe weather.**
- **Talk about the world we will leave our children and grandchildren.**
- **Be certain. Climate change is happening. We don't just “believe” in it.**

# Climate messaging tactics

- **Confront polluters.**
- **Don't repeat opponents' attacks or arguments.**

# Types of supporting messages

- **Values statements**
- **Stats and killer facts**
- **Illustrative stories**
- **Relevant, familiar scripture or teachings**

*Don't forget to repeat your core message!*



## **Weak stat**

“Average temperatures have climbed 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit (0.8 degrees Celsius) since 1880.”

## **Strong stat**

“9 of the 10 hottest years in recorded history have been in the last decade.”

## Weak stat

“In 2013, there were 142,698 solar workers in the U.S. That’s a 20 % increase over 2012.”

## Strong stat

“America has twice as many solar energy workers as coal miners.”

## **Killer fact**

The scientific consensus on the link between human activity and climate change is as strong as the consensus on the link between cigarettes and cancer.

# **Effective stories are...**

- 1) Morally unambiguous**
- 2) Centered on sympathetic characters**
- 3) Concise**
- 4) Accessible**
- 5) Linear**

# The Write Stuff

# Letters to the editor

LTE's are *responses* to news coverage, not essays thoroughly fleshing out your stance or theology.

# Letters to the editor

## Advantages:

- Quick and easy to produce.
- Monitored by politicians.

## Challenges:

- Length limits demands conciseness.
- Timeliness is key.

# **LTE – steps to success**

## **#1 – Pay attention.**

When a news outlet runs a story, op-ed or editorial about Pope Francis or the encyclical, your window of opportunity to submit an LTE has opened.



# **LTE – steps to success**

## **#2 – Write and submit right away.**

Submitting an LTE via email the day the story is published is ideal. Be ready to write on June 18th and 19th.

# **LTE – steps to success**

## **#3 – Be specific.**

In the first sentence, mention the article to which you're responding and the issue it addressed.

# **LTE – steps to success**

## **#4 – Be concise.**

Most newspapers list LTE word-count limits on their websites. If there is no word count listed, assume it is 150 words.

# LTE – steps to success

## #5 – Be faithful!

- State that stopping climate change is a moral issue for you as a person of faith.
- If you have a title (“Rev.” “Sister,” etc.), include it in your signature.

# **LTE – steps to success**

## **#6 – Be numerous!**

When an opportunity to submit LTE's arises, encourage colleagues and members of your congregation to give it a try. The more letters the newspaper receives, the more likely they are to publish one.

# LTE – steps to success

## #7 – Be engaging!

After you get an LTE published, share it on Facebook and tweet the link @ decisionmakers and your constituencies.

# Op-eds

## Advantages:

- High-profile exposure, read by influential community leaders.
- Extended length allows for strong argument.

## Challenges:

- High investment of time and effort.
- Chances of placement are unpredictable.

# Op-eds – steps to success

**#1** -- Know the word count limit – and stick to it. This information is usually posted on the newspaper's website.

**#2** – Be early. The more lead time the editors have, the more likely they'll publish your op-ed.

**#3** – Be locally relevant.



# Op-eds – steps to success

**#4** – Find the right signer(s). Clergy, climate experts, local people affected by climate change.

**#5** – Make sure the paper hasn't already published an op-ed expressing your viewpoint.

**#6** – If you're new to op-eds, reach out for assistance from someone who's published before.

**#7** -- Pitch well. Short emails explaining the newsworthiness and your credibility.

# Interview tips

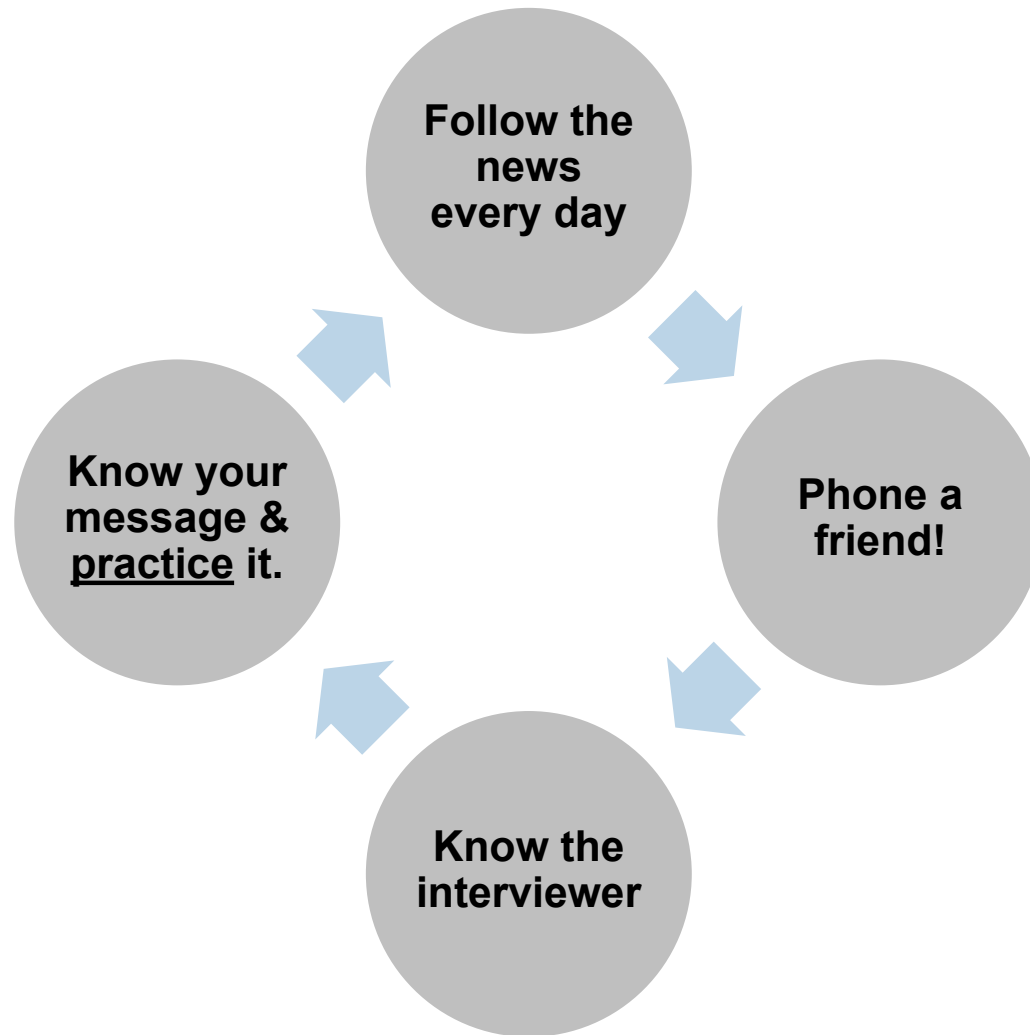
# When a reporter calls you...

- Get their name, outlet, and phone number.
- If you're not ready, ask what the deadline is and arrange a specific time to do the interview.
- If you're not familiar with them, Google them before agreeing to an interview.
- Assume that you are on the record.

**But MOST importantly...**



# Getting ready: Interview prep



# **Strength & warmth**

**The best messengers convey both!**

- Relatable and formidable**
- Hold your ground without being defensive**

# Get straight to the point

Regardless of the question, get to your core message right away – you might not get another chance.

# Expect hot-button questions

- Abortion
- Same-sex marriage
- Sexual abuse
- Women's ordination



# Pivoting: the art of changing the subject

- Answer the question quickly, return immediately to your message.
- Acknowledge the importance of the distracting issue, then change subject to yours.
- Steal the frame!
- Think of transition answers in advance.

# Transition examples:

“The real question I hear the people in the pews asking is...”

“I haven’t heard it put that way; what people in my congregation really want to know is...”

“That’s an important topic, but what most needs attention right now is...”

# **Know when to stop**

- **If you've said all you need to say in response to a question, stop talking.**
- **Reporters often let silence linger – don't take the bait.**
- **Ad libbing leads to going off message.**

**Contact me!**

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**SUBJECT LINE: Encyclical Webinar**