

**Stewardship of Time and Talent Witness Talk 2017**  
**By Matt and Katie Griffith**

Good (Morning/ Evening). I'm Katie Griffith and this is my husband Matt. We've been asked to speak to you about our personal stories about committing time and energy into building a better world. At the end of our talk, we are going to ask you to fill out Sacred Heart's Time and Talent Commitment Form. We hope that as we talk you're reflecting on how our stories may resonate with you and help you to fill out your commitments to our church for this upcoming year.

In preparing for this talk, Matt and I realized that our approaches to volunteering our time and talents are quite different. We thought we would share from each of our perspectives how we volunteer our time and how those opportunities came about.

We, like many of you, have very busy lives. We both work full time in demanding jobs and we have three young children ages 8, 5 and 2 who take up the vast majority of our time. Weekends are often filled with family gatherings, attending the kids' activities, and simply getting prepared for our upcoming busy work week. Our weekends are also filled with time spent at Sacred Heart. Our Catholic faith is central to our lives, and we make it a priority for our family to attend Mass. It is important time that we spend together as a family.

For me (Katie), between work, family, and Mass, I am not usually the one raising my hand to volunteer to add more to my schedule. I would typically listen to a speech like the one I'm giving now and be thinking, "I'm not sure I really have talents or time to share with the parish".

So, much of the time I have spent volunteering recently have been due to someone directly asking me to help. Like the time I picked up our oldest from the nursery and Libby Andrews, who was the nursery coordinator at the time, asked me how old Delaney was. I proudly responded that she just turned four. Libby quickly responded, "that's wonderful, how would you feel about teaching our 4-year-old Sunday School class this year?" I was totally thrown off-guard, and was certain I was not qualified to be a Sunday school teacher, or that I really wanted to be. But, I said yes and I'm so glad I did. I went on to teach for the next several years. As I reflect back on my time as a catechist for Sacred Heart, I think about two major benefits. One, of course, is that I, along with a handful of other dedicated volunteers, was able to teach the children of our parish about God, love, and community. A second benefit, which I didn't think about going into it, is that I personally became more connected to the community to which I was giving my time. I met my children's peers, and spent time with their families, my fellow catechists and the church staff. It made coming to church more fun. I had more meaningful interactions, and I also had a purpose.

Whether it is volunteering my time leading a newborn PEPS group, serving as a board member of Friends of the Children (a local non-profit that works with youth facing life's most challenging problems), or as a catechist here at Sacred Heart, each of these recent volunteer experiences have been meaningful to me because they fulfill a true community need AND they have helped me to build and strengthen my relationship with the communities I am serving.

I (Matt), on the other hand, take the opposite approach. Maybe I'm giving away information that is going to come back to haunt me, but my default answer is almost always 'Yes'. Ever since I started attending Sacred Heart School when I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, this school and church community have been the most meaningful part of my life outside of my family. Over the years as I've reflected on these experiences, I've realized that if you're open to them, amazing things happen when you least

expect it. Putting yourself in a place outside of your comfort zone opens your life to growth of all kinds – emotional, intellectual, and, most importantly for us as Catholics, spiritual. As I’ve realized this, I made a conscious choice to change my default response from saying yes only to the comfortable to saying yes to the uncomfortable as well.

This has led to great things in my life. In 2006, young in my career in the investment industry, I was asked by Sacred Heart parishioner Dan Coleman to join the investment committee of Seattle Prep, my alma mater. I had little experience and couldn’t imagine what I would be able to add, but I said yes. Three years later, as the industry I worked in seemed to be falling apart before our eyes during the financial crisis, I walked into a Prep investment committee meeting and was blindsided as the chairman of the committee said, “first order of business, I am resigning as committee chair and nominate Matt to take over. All in favor, say ‘Aye’.” I was stunned, and felt totally unprepared for that role, particularly given the tenuous state of the investment world at the time. My friend Jim, the now outgoing chairman, assured me he would be there to help, and I again said yes. Three years later, I was asked to join the finance committee, and the following year the Seattle Prep board of trustees. This year I will leave the Prep board after my 6<sup>th</sup> year of service, and I am grateful to have remained so deeply connected with Prep, a truly transformational place in my life, between my graduation and when we hopefully will send Delaney for her Freshman year in 2023!

Saying yes has led to other great experiences – this year I am serving as president of CFA Seattle, a local professional organization for people in the investment industry. This will also be my third year on the Sacred Heart stewardship commission. After attending high school youth groups and retreats as a participant, I spent twelve years as a youth leader shepherding the next generation of kids through these same experiences that were so meaningful to me. And one of my favorite experiences giving back has been as a member, or I guess a “young-at-heart” member, of the youth band for Sacred Heart.

I believe God is speaking to each of us every day in everything we do, and it’s our job to learn to listen closely so we can hear. We encourage you today to open your eyes and ears to what God is putting before you, even if it is uncomfortable. Each of you has talents and time, even if you do not realize it, and Sacred Heart needs you. Please, say ‘Yes’.

God often speaks to me through music. As I was flying back from a business trip this week and thinking about what to say today, a song began to play through my headphones, and I realized that this is one of those things that God wanted me to hear, and I want to share the words I heard with you:

And if all that you are is not all you desire, then come.  
Come along, come with fear, come with love, come however you are, just come.  
Come alone, come with friends and with foes, come however you are, just come.  
Come with me, then let go, come with sorrows and songs, come however you are, just come.  
Come, let yourself be wrong, come, it’s already begun, come however you are, just come.

Please find the ‘Time and Talent’ forms at the end of your pews and pass them down the row. Take a moment to read them over and indicate how you might be interested in participating at the parish. If none of these options speak to you, or you’re not sure which activity might be a good fit, just indicate that you want to say ‘Yes’ to Sacred Heart’s invitation but you’re not sure how. Someone from Sacred Heart’s staff will contact you to figure out the best place for you to contribute. Thank you for being here and your commitment to Sacred Heart.