



CONGREGATIONAL
STEWARDSHIP
WORKBOOK

Ways to Gather Annual Commitments



**Congregational Stewardship
Workbook 2000**

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Notes

So, do we need to gather commitments? Absolutely! The congregation will pay the price if it falters in this area. Congregations that do not rise to the challenge have learned this the hard way. Don't become one of them. Teach financial stewardship. Challenge people to grow in the grace of giving. Motivate with the Gospel. Do it often. Do it well. Do it regularly. You can defeat the devil in this area and lift up the cross of Christ in the process. Further information on this concept can be found in the section of this resource called "Encouraging Accountability."

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Introduction

What is one of the major factors that causes significant increases in financial giving among church members? The answer: asking people to give. Next to proper Gospel motivation for giving, a church's willingness to conduct an effective annual financial stewardship campaign determines whether or not its members increase their offerings. Stewardship committee: conduct an annual financial stewardship program.

When the congregation approached its members about financial stewardship, keep three items in mind:

- Stewardship does include money.
- Stewardship should be addressed on the basis of Scripture.
- God's people need to be trained how to manage their financial resources (100 percent) to the glory of God.

Do not avoid talking to people about money. Scripture has much to say about money. Jesus talked often about it:

- There are more than 2,000 references to money, finances and earthly possessions;
- One out of every 10 verses in Scripture deals with money and possessions;
- Forty percent of Jesus' parables deal with money and possessions.

The Annual Stewardship Emphasis

For several good reasons, congregations are urged to conduct an annual stewardship emphasis. Ed Uthe of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's Commission for Financial Support lists four research findings:

- Congregations that ask members to pledge have average giving levels of 30.2 percent higher than congregations that do not ask for pledges.
- Congregations that have a stewardship emphasis have average giving levels 23.3 percent higher than those that do not have a financial stewardship emphasis.
- Congregations that have asked members to consider tithing have average giving levels 19.6 percent higher than those that do not make such a challenge.
- Congregations that use all three of the above listed activities have giving levels 38.5 percent higher than those that use none of them.
(Take from 1989 congregation data of 10, 257 ELCA congregations.)

Typically, that annual stewardship emphasis takes place in the fall. However, another time to consider the stewardship of giving could be in the spring when people tend to be more upbeat, and summer is ahead, vs. a fall emphasis with the negative factor of approaching winter. Another reason to consider spring is April 15, the deadline for filing income taxes. By that

date, many people realize they earned more money than they thought during the previous year and can respond accordingly to blessings received from God when pledging.

And you don't need to pack all your financial stewardship activity in a two-to-four-week period. This is especially true with an Every Member Visit approach. Conduct the visits throughout the year. Make sure you carry out the following five steps:

1. Select your stewardship program. Look at various stewardship resources before deciding. (See "Methods for Contacting All Members" later in this workbook.
2. Set up your plan. Read the material and decide such things as how many people will be needed to carry out the program, what is the time schedule, etc.
3. Work you plan. Recruit and train people to carry out their assigned responsibilities.
4. Follow through. Make sure all members are contacted.
5. Pastoral leadership is necessary.

Congregations that are successful use a variety of programs and methods from year to year. They plan and work the program. They reach all members with the same stewardship message.

Methods to Contact All Members

Following are various methods used to contact all congregation members. The advantages and disadvantages of each method will be noted as well as some detail on how to carry out that program. Study these methods of addressing financial stewardship and select the method that will serve your need to reach the church's membership with the challenge to grow in the grace of giving. They are not listed in any order of preference.

Method I: Loyalty/Commitment Stewardship Sunday Plan

Brief Description

During a selected Sunday worship service, the members gather to hear the stewardship message and respond with a commitment/pledge during the service. Those not in worship will be visited.

Advantages

1. The church building allows less distractions than the home.
2. A shorter time is needed to implement the process.



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3. It is easy to implement.
4. Fewer people need to be recruited to implement this approach.
5. This plan is less threatening than other, more personal approaches.
6. It has the potential to reach more people with a consistent stewardship message presented by the pastor.
7. This approach builds on the truth that giving is a part of worship.
8. It involves the whole family.

Disadvantages

1. Because it is easier to implement, it doesn't receive the attention it should in order to make it a quality emphasis.
2. It is possible for people to avoid the stewardship program by avoiding Sunday worship. (To overcome this, conduct follow-up visits on those not in worship.)
3. Commitments are often made during worship, thereby causing the response to be made on impulse rather than after prayerful consideration and conversation.
4. There is no time for questions and answers or interpersonal interaction.

Major Steps of Implementation

If this method is to be effective, it must be well-planned. The Sunday needs to be selected well in advance and publicized in a variety of ways—monthly newsletter, bulletins, verbal announcements at church and meetings, special mailing—so there is maximum attendance at the Sunday worship service.

All members should receive a letter and phone call urging their attendance at worship and reminding them to bring their signed pledge card along (this means the pledge cards need to be sent out before the Loyalty/Commitment Sunday).

Consider using a special order of worship for Loyalty/Commitment Sunday. You might use a layperson's talk or chancel drama/skit during the service. Many congregations invite members (or families) to come forward and put their pledges on the altar or in some special container in the chancel. Include a prayer of dedication of the commitments and offerings at the appropriate time in the worship service. Be sure to take worship attendance that Sunday because people absent from worship will need to be visited in their home.

Some congregations plan a congregation dinner ("Loyalty Supper") the week before Commitment Sunday. The dinner meeting is to be inspirational, motivational and informative. Both laity and pastor should be involved in the program. Members are given pledge cards at the dinner and are asked to fill them out and bring them on Commitment Sunday.

Instead of a "Loyalty Supper," the Sunday before Loyalty Sunday could be used to share information with the members through a visual or verbal

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presentation during the worship service. This prepares them adequately for what will take place on Loyalty/Commitment Sunday.

Detailed Resources

- “Back To Basics in Giving—Firstfruit Giving” (Year 1), S21844.
- Covenanting Process Manual, S11959.
- “Called By the Spirit” (Complete kit), SS11784.
- “Called By the Spirit” Bible study (Based on Third Article of Apostles’ Creed), S11975.

These resources are available from Concordia Publishing House (1-800-325-3040).

NOTE: Even though this may appear to be the easiest method, please see that stewardship cultivation and education go on throughout the year.

Method II: Small Group/Cottage Meeting Plan

Brief Description

In this plan, members are invited to attend a cottage meeting held either in the member’s homes or at the church in order to hear the stewardship message.

Advantages

1. The group sessions encourage a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.
2. Time is saved by not making individual calls.
3. This approach provides an opportunity for Bible study together and discussion and questions about stewardship.
4. This plan provides an opportunity for fellowship.
5. Many people become involved in planning and implementing.



Disadvantages

1. Sometimes people are reluctant to go into other people’s homes.
2. It takes careful organization skills to recruit and train the presenters, hosts and callers.
3. Interruptions can occur in the home setting (phone, children, etc.).
4. Some won’t accept the invitation to attend such a meeting.

Major Steps of Implementation

Divide the parish into groups of about eight families. Once completed, you know the number of homes and presenters needed for this program. Recruit appropriate presenters and hosts from each group. At a training meeting, the group leader should receive material needed to carry out the

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Group/Cottage meeting (“talk pieces,” Bible studies, pledge cards, telephone scripts). At the training session, each leader should conduct a “dry run” of the presentation.

The actual meeting in the home should last no longer than 90 minutes. Encourage fellowship afterwards. Provide child care.

These meetings could be scheduled at the church with the same informal setting and agenda. You may want to consider a combination of meeting places; some in homes and some at the church.

For those unable to attend, inform them of the schedule for make-up group meetings. If some fail to attend, a follow-up visit should be made so they receive the materials handed out at the Cottage/Group meetings and are encouraged to participate in pledging process.

Sample Agenda for a Group Meeting

I. Opening Prayer

II. Host welcomes group and introduces presenter

III. Introduction of participants

IV. Explain the purpose of the meeting

V. Go through the prescribed material

VI. Entertain questions and discussion

VII. Distribute, explain, sign and gather pledge cards.

(Alternative: instead of collecting the pledge cards, allow them to take them home and have a gathering of the pledge cards as part of the worship on a specific Sunday.)

VIII. Prayer and dismissal

IX. Fellowship and refreshments

Detailed Resources

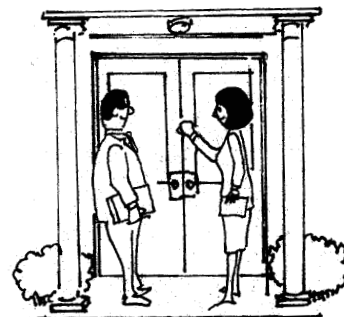
- “Back To Basics in Giving—Proportionate Giving” (Year 2), S21854. This resource is available from Concordia Publishing House (1-800-325-3040).

NOTE: Stewardship education and motivation in small groups can work well as the informal setting allows for open and personal sharing. Group leader training is vital.

Method III: Every Member Visit/Home

Brief Description

The goal of this plan is to reach every member of the congregation with the stewardship message. An number of visitors (two callers for every five homes) are selected and trained to visit all members. These visits are made during a specified time determined by



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the caller and family to be visited. Mailings and worship service announcements prepare members for the visit.

Advantages

1. This is an extremely effective stewardship approach. One-on-one is still the best way.
2. The organization and structure involve a significant number of members in the process (builds ownership).
3. This plan provides personal contact with all members when developed and carried out properly.
4. It fosters an individual response and an opportunity for discussion.
5. It is a rewarding, satisfying experience for the callers.

Disadvantages

1. This method requires a significant amount of organization to visit all families of the congregation.
2. Significant time and energy are needed to recruit and train callers.
3. There is a reluctance on the part of members to become involved in an EMV.
4. With the goal to visit all homes, this may be the only call that some inactive members receive from their congregation. There may be more pressings concerns to address with them than their stewardship of giving.

Major Steps of Implementation

The Stewardship Committee should make an index card for every household in the congregation. Recruit and assign one team captain for every 50 households. Every captain should attempt to recruit 20 callers from the 50 households. Pair up callers. The callers are asked to call on a maximum of five homes.

At a meeting, the team captains receive their 50 assigned households (on index cards), advice on recruiting 20 pairs of callers, a job description for those being recruited as callers, the time for the training meeting for callers, and the time framework within which the calls are to be made. It is crucial that all callers attend the training meeting to receive instructions on what to share with fellow members. Their ability to share the stewardship program, share their support and give their own witness is important. Resources like flip charts, “talk pieces,” etc., should be given to callers at the training meeting so there is ample supply for every home.

Part of the training session should include a “dry run” of the presentation. Give callers the names of the families (appropriate index cards) they are to call on. It is important that all callers make their own commitment before they go out and talk to others. After the caller has filled out his/her own commitment card it will be easier to share the information with fellow members.

Remind all callers that they are responsible to make visits on all

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assigned households and this is to be done within the publicized time period. After completing their call, callers, should return:

- The index cards with any comments that need to be shared with appropriate leaders.
- Any leftover materials.

Resources

- “Back To Basics in Giving—Sacrificial Giving” (Year 3), S21855.
- “Covenanting Process Manual,” S11959.
- “Called By the Spirit” (complete kit), S11784.
- “Called By the Spirit” Bible Study (based on Third Article of Apostles’ Creed), S11975.
- *Steps to Success* in Stewardship, by Louis Neibauer Co. (Warminster, Pa.).

These resources are available from Concordia Publishing House (1-800-325-3040).

NOTE:

- *The success of this method depends on how well the visitors are selected, trained and motivated.*
- *The EMV Plan confronts members with Christian stewardship principles. It expands their understanding of the commitment to serve Christ locally and globally and gives them a better sense of purpose as a child of God.*
- *The time and energy spent does bear much fruit. This method is the most effective stewardship method.*
- *Announce to the congregation well in advance information about the EMV through the newsletter, bulletins, verbal announcements or a special mailing.*

Method IV: Personal Interview Plan

Every congregation member is invited to the church at a specified time and date. At that time trained interviewers conduct a stewardship interview. A host/hostess greets the people at their appointment time. Callers are needed to telephone members to arrange appointments.

Advantages

1. This method is basically an Every Member Visit conducted at the church.
2. The stewardship message can be shared with all members.
3. Personal interviews foster an individual response.

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4. The location and environment makes it easier for the interviewer to control the conversation and ask for commitments.
5. this approach conserves the interviewer's time.
6. Fewer people are required to implement the plan.

Disadvantages

1. Members often feel pressured or threatened by the process.
2. Late arrivals for appointments and running over the allotted time can throw off the schedule.
3. Scheduling appointments can be very difficult in today's world.
4. If there is an inadequate number of interviewers, this method can take much longer to reach all members than other methods.
5. A follow-up must be developed and used to contact those not attending the interview sessions at the church.

Major Steps of Implementation

After the Stewardship Committee outlines the time frame in which this program is to take place, the next step is to recruit interviewers. Each interviewer should visit with 10-15 households. Once you establish that ratio, you will know how many interviewers to recruit. (If your pastor plans to conduct interviews, talk with him about how many interviews he will do.). Choose people who are spiritually healthy and mature to serve as interviewers. They should be committed stewards who are good proportionate givers or people who have proven to be generous in their financial offerings.

The interviews are 30 to 60 minutes long. When you have recruited your interviewer, gather them for two purposes:

- To train them.
- To establish times they are available to conduct the interviews.

Someone will have to coordinate the interview time, what rooms will be available and schedule the appointments with members. This scheduling may be done by the interviewers contacting assigned units or by trained telephone callers lining up appointments for the interviewers. Telephone callers also should be asked to call and remind the people of their scheduled appointments two or three days before the actual interview occurs.

Before the interview process begins, interviewers should be trained for their task. At their training meeting they should receive the proper material "talk pieces," flip charts, time and talent sheets, suggested outline, pledge cards, etc., to conduct their interviews. Part of the training session should include a "dry run" of the presentation.

During the interviews, a hostess or host should greet people as they arrive and make them feel welcome. The greeter should be able to answer questions asked by those coming for the interview.

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Suggested Interview Outline

- I. Welcome and thank them for coming.
- II. Share the purpose of this interview.
- III. Walk through appropriate material (e.g., “talk piece”, 2 Cor. 8 and 9, etc.)
- IV. Talk about making a commitment.
- V. Have them fill out time and talent sheets, if necessary.
- VI. Commitments/pledges could either be received at this meeting or in a stewardship Sunday worship service.
- VII. thank them again for coming.

Following up and try to reschedule those who did not keep their appointment. Also follow up on those who did not schedule an appointment. Be sure to tell the congregation what is happening well in advance, through a newsletter or bulletin, verbal announcements, special mailing, etc.

Detailed Resources

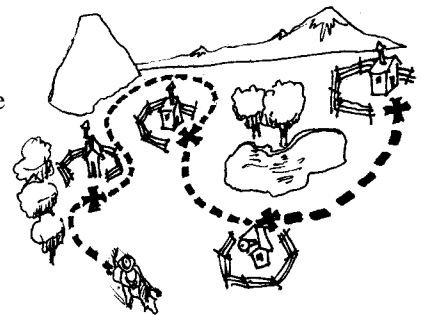
- “Covenanting Process Manual”, S11959.
- Rev. Don Abdon (Personal Interview Stewardship), Parish Leadership Seminars Inc., Mooresville, Ind.

NOTE:

- *This is a very effective way to share considerable information with congregation members.*
- *The plan is only as good as the interviewers.*
- *This approach may pose a threat to some.*
- *Scheduling an appropriate time for all may become frustrating.*

Method V: Pony Express**Brief Description**

“Saddlebags” are sent to specific homes with appropriate stewardship material to be considered by that family. When a family is finished with the material, they pass the bag to the next scheduled stop (home). This continues until the “pony express route” is complete. The “saddlebag” is returned to the church and all commitments (signed or unsigned) inside.

**Advantages**

1. This method fosters a certain degree of fellowship among members by delivery of the “saddlebags”.
2. It is easy to implement.

Disadvantages

1. *Prayer, proper stewardship education and motivation* are lacking because there is no face-to-face interaction.
2. It is difficult to monitor the activity and use of the materials in the home.
3. The “saddlebag” often sits in some member’s home for an extended period of time before being passed onto the next person on the list.
4. There is no confrontation of all the individuals in the home.
5. It fosters a very limited degree of commitment because the plan totally depends on printed materials to educate, motivate, provide an arena for decision-making.

Major Steps of Implementation

Specific routes for the “saddlebag” should be put together for a neighborhood by the stewardship committee. No more than 10 stops should be scheduled for each bag. All “saddlebags” are taken from the church on a Sunday by the “trail bosses” to begin their route.

Items included in “saddlebags” are forms for the family to fill out in which they estimate what they will contribute for the next year and items that a congregation may choose to include. Once the “saddlebag” reaches the end of its route, the “trail boss” picks it up and returns it to the church with a sealed estimate inside. This is to take place within two weeks.

Detailed Resources

- Stewardship Resources Inc., Oklahoma City, Okla. (800-234-5844 or 405-235-3628).

NOTE: This method has very little biblical stewardship education or motivation.

Method VI: Night with the Pastor Meetings

Brief Description

In this plan the pastor schedules meetings with families (individuals) or small groups of people at the church. Meetings are set up by letter or a phone call by the secretary or a trained volunteer. It is similar to group meetings at the church, however, in this plan the pastor makes all the presentations.

Advantages

1. A high-quality presentation is assured with the pastor as presenter.
2. Most people will be receptive to the presentation.
3. All will hear essentially the same message.
4. People will feel the information is important since the pastor is conducting the presentation.

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5. The pastor is directly involved in the stewardship campaign.

Disadvantages

1. People may not express their true feelings because the pastor makes the presentation.
2. Leading these presentations may tie up most of the pastor's time; this is not the best use of his time.
3. If the group is too large, the interaction and discussion among the participants is lost.
4. This method fosters the idea that only the pastor can speak about stewardship.
5. If follow-up visits (for those not attending) are not made by the pastor, those people may feel slighted.

Major Steps Of Implementation

The pastor should block out a time to conduct these meetings. Encourage members to sign up for a time. After this has taken place, volunteer(s) should contact members who did not sign up and try to schedule them. The pastor or stewardship committee should establish an agenda that lasts no longer than an hour. Fellowship should be encouraged after the formal meeting. Commitment cards may be filled out and returned either at the meeting or at a stewardship Sunday worship service. A plan should be carried out to follow up on those who did not attend one of the meetings.

Detailed Resource

- Creative Church Management, Rev. Guido Merkens, Concordia Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas.

Method VII: Contact by Mail (Letter Campaign)**Brief Description**

In this method all contacts, information, sharing and receiving of individual commitments is done through the mail. Weekly mailings are sent to each home for five to six weeks.

Advantages

1. By using the mail, less time is needed (training, visits, etc.).
2. Reaches all members quickly.
3. Repeated contacts can be made through weekly mailings.

Disadvantages

1. This method is impersonal.
2. People may not read the mail.
3. There is no chance for interaction.

4. This method puts the church ministry and request for funding in the same category as other “mailers”.
5. By sending all information in a printed format, there is no immediate opportunity to clarify miscommunication.

Major Steps of Implementation

Put together a letter or series of letters that share the stewardship message and commitment process. Set a time this will take place and have all letters sent at the same time with a request that all pledges be completed and returned to the church by mail or in person on Stewardship Sunday.

Detailed Resources

- Virgil Hensley Inc., 6116 E. 32nd St., Tulsa, OK 74135-9927.
- “Seek First His Kingdom” (complete kit), S11810.
- “As for Me and My House” (complete kit), S11976.

These resources are available from Concordia Publishing House (1-800-325-3040).

Method VIII: Contact by Telephone

Brief Description

Every family is contacted by trained telephone callers. The information is shared, commitments are requested and suggestions or comments from members are received by phone.

Advantages

1. Calling saves time compared to visiting people in their homes.
2. Less organization is needed (although phone callers need careful training) to carry out this method.
3. Feedback is possible with this method.

Disadvantages

1. It is more impersonal than a visit or group meeting (consequently, stewardship may be cast in an atmosphere that reduces the importance of this aspect of the Christian’s life).
2. By using the telephone, the caller speaks with only one member of the family.
3. There is no face-to-face contact.
4. It is difficult for the caller to gauge the reaction of the member called.

Major Steps of Implementation

Telephone scripts must be prepared and telephone callers must be trained to communicate effectively the stewardship message over the phone and receive a verbal commitment.



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Detailed Resources

This method can be organized by a parish without additional resources.

Method IX: Contact by Video**Brief Description**

Videotapes are prepared and delivered to each home. Information is shared and commitments are solicited via the video. Hosts may volunteer to open their home to (selected/assigned) members to view and discuss the video.

An alternative to this would be to combine using a video on stewardship (available from the Synod) along with a Commitment Sunday Emphasis when the pledges of members would be brought forward (see Method I).

Advantages

1. If done well, the use of video is an attractive media.
2. It is easier to grasp concepts ("A picture is worth a thousand words).
3. Everyone will hear/see the same message.

Disadvantages

1. Not all members have VCRs.
2. The amount of production time needed and the overall cost may be prohibitive.
3. People may be distracted during viewing.
4. There is no chance for personal interaction (unless the viewing occurs with a group).

Major Steps of Implementation

A script must be put together well in advance, and the video must be top quality. The number of videos required depends on how a congregation contacts members. For example, videos could be used in small groups. Or, the video could go from home to home along with the appropriate material (like the set-up of the "pony express"). Commitment cards can be mailed to the church or be brought to church on Stewardship Sunday.

Detailed Resources

Videos available:

- "I Never Thought of It That Way Before," S21816.
- "With a Grateful Heart," S21820.
- "Back to Basics"—Trilogy (three videos in one package), S21849. These resources are available from Concordia Publishing House 1-800-325-3040).

Contact your district office and the stewardship counselor for information and ideas.

| Method X: Monthly Stewardship Mailing Program Brief Description You may wish to consider a monthly stewardship mailing program. Every month each contributor or pledger receives a letter with offering envelopes for the next four or five Sundays and a postage-paid return envelope. The letter could include some positive word about your church's mission and ministry, a stewardship thought and an announcement of upcoming programs or events. Enclosed would be an acknowledgement of the person's giving for the last month and so far for the year. You may also wish to include the treasurer's report. | Notes |
|---|--------------|
| Advantages 1. Since many people are disorganized about their finances, this program keeps givers from getting too far behind, and reminds the of the status of their giving. 2. The monthly arrival of the stewardship letter serves as a reminder, not only of the support they intended, but of their church and their membership commitment. 3. The postage-paid envelope will substantially increase giving through the mail. In the average month, hundreds of dollars are wishing and wanting to find their way to support the church's mission, but are unable to make the journey for lack of an envelope and a stamp. 4. You'll have a monthly opportunity to deepen your parishioners understanding of stewardship by plugging away at that education task in these letters. | |
| Disadvantages 1. You will hear complaints. What's new? Defuse complaints on postage costs by having the mailing available for personal pick-up after worship and mailing the rest the next day. Complaints usually come from those who are faithful in their giving. Explain the program is not for them, and indeed, if everyone were that faithful, this program would not be needed. Complaints usually cease within two months as results have become apparent. 2. This program does take extra work. However, it is ideal for volunteer involvement. You will need one volunteer for each 200 giving units. 3. A considerable effort is needed to organize this program. However, this is a one-time plan and the dividends are substantial when measured against the effort. | |
| Organizing the Program Supplies should be on hand by early or mid-November. Have one year of offering envelopes for each pledge unit dated and numbered. No need for return address on the offering envelope. Order extras for new members. | |

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Monthly Statement Schedule

| | |
|------------|---|
| November | Set up new year's acknowledgement system. |
| Dec. _____ | All pledge cards due. |
| Dec. _____ | Type alphabetical list. |
| Dec. _____ | Type labels and statement cards. |
| Dec. _____ | Assign numbers. |
| Dec. _____ | Sort by month. |
| Dec. _____ | Stewardship letter and explanation letter due. |
| Dec. _____ | Print letters. |
| Dec. _____ | Stuff statements. |
| Dec. _____ | Mail letters, November statements and January offering envelopes. |

Summary: Where Do You Begin?

Ten strategies. All different. And I'm sure you could come up with 10 more. So where does one begin? What is the Stewardship Committee, charged with the responsibility to carry out a financial stewardship program, to do?

Below are a series of steps to be followed to implement any method listed in this chapter. By Following all the steps you can expect a successful stewardship campaign.

1. *Select the program/material* to be presented to the congregation. Use the following section, "Characteristics of Good Stewardship Program," or another of your choice.
2. *Select the approach* to be used.
3. *Set a date for the completion* of the program, including the follow-up.
4. *Establish a timetable* for each phase of the approach.
5. *Purchase the necessary material.*
6. *Publicize the program and approach well in advance* of its implementation and in a variety of ways.
7. *Recruit and train* those involved in conducting the program.
8. *Implement* the approach according to the established timetable.
9. *Implement* the follow-up according to the established timetable.
10. *Send thank-you letters* to appropriate people.
11. *Evaluate and celebrate!*
12. *Capture ideas and plans* for next year's program.

Consider using the following questionnaire in evaluating whether or not you use a particular program for stewardship growth in mission. Good programming starts with good theology and grows from there. Feel free to add local criteria.

Characteristics of a Good Stewardship Program

Yes No

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it always Gospel-motivated? God's people are good managers of God's blessings because they have come to know the love of God in Jesus Christ and they respond to that love. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it recognize that stewardship belongs to sanctification? This means that we can't talk stewardship to delinquent members. They need to hear the Gospel call to faith. Stewardship happens only after there is a right relationship with God. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it address the full spectrum of our Christian management of time, talent and treasure? We just don't talk about the first two so we can get down to a serious discussion of money. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it look for commitments? Here again it is not simply a financial commitment. We live the committed Christian life in everything that we do. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it function year-round? The responsibilities of the Board for Stewardship are so great that all the time available is needed. The board members need to educate God's people for stewardship continually. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it education-based? Good programming stresses stewardship and mission education. God's people do not serve and give in isolation. Rather, they respond as they grow. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it creative? Stewardship gives the opportunity to use one's God-given creativity. This is an invitation to put energy and enthusiasm into ministry. Creativity is not an invitation just to use the most gimmicks possible. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it well-planned? We should never give our second-best in the name of our Lord and His church. That is especially true when we speak of stewardship. Planning makes for good programming. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it center on people? Building people is more important than raising dollars. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it enable ministry? Good stewardship leads the church to accomplish ministry. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it help care for the poor, the needy, the suffering? Ministry effects people beyond the church walls. |

Notes

Notes

Automated/Electronic Giving

Has your congregation heard about this? It is here. Don't be too quick to judge the process. Take a look at it. It's not for everyone, but some in your congregation may find it most convenient. Both of the Lutheran fraternal—Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and Lutheran Brotherhood (LB)—have electronic programs for congregation use:

AAL—"Giving Thanks," call 1-800-225-5225 for more information.

LB—"Simply Giving," call 1-800-328-7168 for more information.

As a Stewardship Committee you should secure the information from each fraternal and study the concept. It is here to stay and may very well become the major giving strategy of the future. Both programs go at the subject of automated/electronic giving in a very responsible and Christian way.

While this is not technically a way to gather financial commitments, it is a way for members to honor their financial commitments. The local Stewardship Committee needs to be aware of this giving method and determine if now is the time to launch such a program for the membership.