



CONGREGATIONAL
STEWARDSHIP
WORKBOOK

Planning Year-round Stewardship



**Congregational Stewardship
Workbook 2000**

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Booklet design, layout and CD Rom by Production Express, 810 Villa Gran Way, St. Louis, MO 63026.
Printed in U.S.A.

Planning Year-round Stewardship

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Food for Thought

Bill and Mary Krueger just recently moved to a new city and began attending a Lutheran church in town. As they prepared for worship one Sunday, Bill was looking at the service folder. A word caught his eye. He turned to Mary and said, “This congregation must be getting ready to put its new budget together.”

“Why do you say that?” Mary asked.

“Look at the bulletin. See, it says today we will be talking about Christian stewardship.”

“Bill, it’s July. Churches don’t do budget work in July!”

“Oh, no,” Bill said, “then it must mean they’re behind in their budget and we’re going to get a pep talk for more money.”

“Shhh, Bill, the service is starting.”

To Bill’s great surprise there was no specific mention of money during the service, not in the sermon nor in any special announcements. Instead, the “stewardship” emphasis was about discovering spiritual gifts and talents and putting them to work in acts of service and compassion in the church and community.

After the service Bill made a point to talk to the pastor and shared his fears about the service dealing with money and/or the church budget because the word “stewardship” was mentioned in the service folder.

The pastor sort of chuckled and told Bill a number of years ago many of his members would have thought the same thing when they saw or heard the word “stewardship.” However, with patient teaching he and the congregation’s leadership developed an understanding of stewardship that was much more than money. They helped their members understand that Christian stewardship was actually very similar to Christian discipleship and involved much more than “money issues.”

Notes

The pastor went on to tell Bill that at this church people began to think about stewardship as the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes. This includes managing time, getting involved in volunteer activities, and putting gifts and skills to work to make a difference in the congregation and community.

That pastor and congregation were learning that stewardship themes are discipleship themes and can be used throughout the year to help God's people mature in their Christian faith and life. They called this approach "Year-round stewardship."

Introduction

If the only time stewardship is mentioned is during the annual budget preparation and presentation time, congregation members might well receive the false impression stewardship is only about money. On the other hand, if stewardship activities take place throughout the year, members learn stewardship is managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

This section of the Congregational Stewardship Workbook is designed to help implement appropriate stewardship education throughout the year.

JANUARY <i>Family Budgeting</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	FEBRUARY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	MARCH <i>Spiritual Growth</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
APRIL <i>Care of Creation</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	MAY <i>Discerning Spiritual Gifts</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	JUNE <i>Reliving Life's Activities</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
JULY <i>Participation</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	AUGUST <i>Time Management</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	SEPTEMBER <i>Skill Enhancement</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
OCTOBER <i>Personal Money Management</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	NOVEMBER <i>Special Appeals</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	DECEMBER <i>Giving Following God's Example</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Note: Work in the timing of the congregational budget process. Consider conducting your financial stewardship emphasis separate from presenting the budget. This approach encourages people to think of stewardship as "whole life" rather than exclusively money issues.

The key: Know your congregation

Notes

In the cell-group church:

A stewardship committee usually doesn't exist. Stewardship challenges and growth opportunities occur in a personal and relational setting within the small groups.

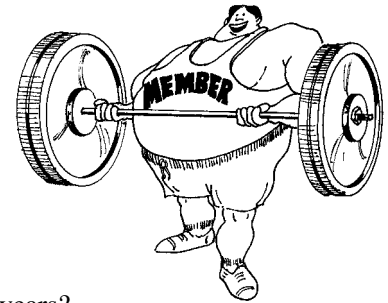
Other Considerations in Planning and Organizing:

New congregation	or	Established congregation
Small congregation	or	Large congregation
Rural congregation	or	Urban congregation
Congregation with school	or	Congregation without school
Younger members	or	Older members
Modest means congregation	or	Affluent congregation
Stable membership	or	Dynamic, growing membership
Financially assisted congregation	or	Self-supporting congregation

The above factors make a difference in how you approach and structure your year-round stewardship education. If most members have been in your congregation for some time and if few new members are added each year, you don't repeat certain activities as often. Assessing the size and type of your congregation will help to educate and assimilate all members in the most appropriate way.

An Exercise

1. Based on information in this chapter, identify the appropriate opportunities for stewardship education for your congregation.
2. What "cautions" must you keep in mind as you develop year-round stewardship planning?
3. What kind of church will you be in five years?
4. What stewardship activities/emphases are important as you prepare for the future?



Additional Exercises

There are five things you can do with money: earn it, spend it, give it, save (invest) it, bequeath it. Discuss the tensions and pitfalls involved with these uses of money. The Biblical Stewardship Principles located on the back cover of this booklet provide an excellent backdrop for such a discussion.

Another way to approach year-round stewardship is to help people think about appropriate stewardship attitudes and activities for these categories: daily; weekly; monthly; seasonally; annually; life-long. Once again, the Biblical Stewardship Principles provide excellent background material for such a discussion.

Planning Year-round Stewardship

Stewardship Planning Calendar

Use this worksheet to plan your year-round stewardship program. What might be done in the various areas of importance in the congregation? Be sure to consider the dynamics and challenges of your current ministry situation. Remember the variety of stewardship issues before the congregation.

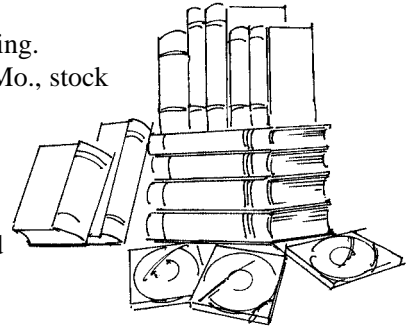
Issues	January–March	April–June	July–September	October–December

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Some Helpful Resources

Becoming Money Wise. Ronald J. Chewning. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., stock number 12-3347. This resource provides excellent information on financial planning, responsible money management, investing, dealing with debt, planning for retirement, insurance, estate planning and more. Each section is reinforced with Biblical references.



God First. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., stock number 20-2725. A collection of 52 one-page reproducible stewardship Bible studies that can be used as openings for a variety of meetings and gatherings. Seasonal and topical studies are included.

Stewardship Every Sunday. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Four editions (Series A, B, C and 1 Year) have been published. Each edition contains approximately 150 words on one of the assigned Scripture readings for each Sunday of the year. These brief applications can be used as sermon starters, newsletter articles or minuteman talks. The stock numbers are: Series A - S21843; Series B - S21857; Series C - S21835; One Year - S21856; All four together - S16053.

“How to Build a 12-Month Church Stewardship Calendar.” Available on the Internet as a link from <http://www.stewardship.org>, the Christian Stewardship Association home page.

“Big Church? Little Church?” by John Finney. *Congregations*, November/December 1992, pp.20-21.

“Characteristics of Different Size Churches” by Dr. Gary L McIntosh. *Church Growth Network*, Vol.III, No. e, March 1993. (909-506-3086, <http://www.churchgrowthnetwork.com>)