



Moving ministries forward, *together.*

## **Best practices for year-round stewardship**

**Stewardship is a way of life in which we use God's resources at our disposal for God's purposes, recognizing that God's gifts are dynamic and designed to flow out of us.**

Stewardship is part of all we do as communities of faith, so it should be part of our conversations and church activities throughout the entire year.

The following ideas are offered to help your stewardship committee develop a year-round comprehensive stewardship ministry that focuses on nurturing grateful and generous Christian disciples rather than balancing the budget. We've divided the ideas into categories as well as suggested timeframes for activities. Think about what will work best at your church and try to vary the choices from year to year.

### **Discipleship**

- Provide an opportunity for people to live a lifestyle with values other than consumerism.
- Promote the faith-based joy of generous giving.
- Help people understand stewardship as an identity rather than a task. Remember: stewards aren't born; they're formed.
- Focus on the person's desire and need to give, as a response to recognizing God's generosity in his or her life, rather than on the church's need to balance a budget.
- Encourage pastors to embrace their role as stewardship leaders.
- Establish the offering as an integral act of worship. Link the offertory prayer to other aspects of the worship service.
- Consistently teach children and youth about Christian stewardship through activities and reflective questions.
- Promote a vision of ministry and identify missional priorities that attract people and change people's lives.

### **Cultivation**

- Celebrate giving. Provide numerous opportunities for people to be able to give.
- Offer people the opportunity to discover their spiritual gifts and to find ways to use those gifts in the church and with others.



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- Preach on stewardship. Remember: Jesus talked about money, things, and possessions more than any other topics in the New Testament.
- Provide a course in personal budget planning.
- Talk about and hold seminars on wills, endowments, and bequests. Promote planned giving from people's assets and estates.
- Emphasize percentage giving and tithing at least once a year.

### **Conversation**

- Talk about money! Lift the taboo on discussing money in the church.
- Be intentional about telling stories of the work, mission, and ministry of the church in a variety of ways (during worship, articles in newsletters, bulletin inserts, etc.)
- Ask, "How is the church changing people's lives within the congregation, the community, and around the world?"
- Prepare a narrative budget for the congregation. Distribute the traditional line-item budget only to the church leaders and others who request a copy.
- Identify and focus on the church's assets. Approach ministry from a sense of where the congregation feels called rather than "What do we have enough money to do?"
- Inform members of their giving patterns. Set goals, provide follow-up information, and personalize giving statements.
- Establish clear policies concerning endowment funds and memorial gifts.
- Don't be afraid to discuss what's working and what isn't working, and make changes. For example, if you see that fewer members are willing to make a yearly pledge, offer the option to make a 6-month pledge.

### **Annually:**

- Prepare a narrative budget to explain the church's finances and celebrate its ministries.
- Do a "Time and Talent" or "Spiritual Gifts" survey
- Hold an annual campaign that emphasizes giving.
- Hold a class (suggested topics include budgeting and money management, money management for retirees or empty nesters, teaching healthy money values to your children, wills and estate planning, etc.; MMFA can help).
- Choose a year-long stewardship theme.



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- Share a “year end giving” article which gives suggestions of gifts with tax benefits (MMFA can help with this).
- Find creative ways to thank members for their giving.
- Include a brief stewardship education time during the Church Council meeting.
- Have a Bible Study or Sunday School class series on stewardship. Be sure to hold a training session for Sunday School teachers to enable them to teach stewardship themes.
- Invite a guest speaker to share information about how the church’s provincial share is used to support our shared ministries (example: Board of World Mission, IBOC, District or Provincial camp, etc.).
- Include stewardship in a yearly devotional guide or prayer calendar.
- Have a congregational dinner to celebrate and thank people for their stewardship.
- When sending out pledge cards, indicate the giver’s current year pledge on the card for reference. Include a step chart to show what will happen if each giver “steps up” his or her giving for the coming year.

### **Quarterly:**

- Send a thank you letter to each giver indicating the total amount received. Include an insert that highlights a specific ministry of the church or recent activity that was made possible by the members’ gifts of time, talent and/or treasure.
- Have the pastor preach on stewardship.

### **Monthly:**

- Give a 3-4 minute talk during worship about stewardship or a ministry of the church and how it has impacted people’s lives.
- Prepare and update a bulletin board to highlight different missions and ministries of the church or that the church supports.
- Blog about stewardship topics and including the blog as part of the church’s website.
- Include a stewardship article in the church’s newsletter (and in other communications such as email, website, and social media if applicable).
- Create bulletin inserts relating to stewardship.
- Pray for the stewardship of the congregation.



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- Include budget updates in the church's communications.
- Vary the offering time during worship: involve children, share a story, etc. Make it a creative and celebrative point in worship.

**Monthly stewardship topics (for blog, bulletin insert, articles, etc:)**

- I discovered the joy of giving when....
- I give because....
- Why I give to my church
- What is the greatest joy in giving?
- How God has blessed me and what I do to show my gratitude
- What does stewardship mean to me?
- My stewardship plan
- How my giving relates to...(scripture, ministries of my church, my spiritual growth, etc.)
- How I decide how much to give

**Other Ideas:**

- If your church has a children's sermon, use it as a time to speak about giving/sharing/stewardship.
- Write a stewardship hymn.
- Invite everyone in the congregation to read the same book on stewardship. Suggested titles include *StewardSHIFT* by Bob Sitze, *More Blessed to Give* by John MacNaughton, *Money and Faith* compiled and edited by Michael Schut, and *I Like Giving* by Brad Formsmma.
- Interview people (live in worship or on video) about what stewardship means to them.
- Incorporate earth stewardship into the life of the congregation through recycling, sharing environmental matters, having an Earth Day activity
- Have a stewardship retreat for the stewardship committee