

The Official Stewardship “Panic Kit”
Presented by the Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel, Bishop of Olympia

Introduction

In recognizing the importance of Stewardship as a year round endeavor and, in fact, as a way of life, we also realize that most parishes, in our busy lives, have not reached that goal and suddenly awake when the cool Fall breezes first begin to blow and feel the dread of yet another stewardship campaign. We believe that this does not have to be this way but we know that it is in more cases than not. With that in mind we are offering our help through this kit. You will find in it some short term and long term strategies as well as some instant resources such as pledge cards and letters that you are free to copy, alter, and use as you please.

At the end of the kit you will find a suggested timeline for what happens throughout the year on a Stewardship Committee. First, of course, is that the committee become a standing committee, meeting year round, and not simply a committee to collect money at the end of the year.

The most helpful tools to use are the Morehouse materials on the different campaigns. You will find this in the section on “Short Term Resources.” You can reach Morehouse at 1-800-877-0012.

If you would like quick, nice, “Our Covenant with God” pledge cards you can call the National Stewardship Office at 1-800-334-7626.

We begin with some quick Do’s and Don’ts, the Don’t first so we can finish on a high note!!

Don't....

1. Don't ..Ask people to give to the budget. This seems to limit God's grace. The budget should be a celebration of God's bounty not a limitation. Think about the budget coming after the campaign. The main thing to remember here is that if you have always trotted out the budget and said, "Hey, let's hit this," try instead to offer the people a way to give out of thankfulness for all they have been given. Work hard, trust God, and the budget will come together.
2. Don't...do what you did last year. If you have done the every member canvass, the pony express, or the big event for as long as you can remember is it any wonder that people think stewardship campaigns are boring and something to be endured rather than enjoyed. Even if something worked last year better than ever, do something different. You can always come back to the other. If you need ideas we have them and you will find some in the short-term bibliography that is attached.
3. Don't...have all your focus on the "Fall Beg-A-Thon" As mentioned earlier if the only time the people of your parish hear about stewardship and even money, is at the annual beg-a-thon then is it any wonder that they turn and run at the mention of the word. Stewardship is our way of life as people of faith and especially as Christians. Talk about it often, year round.
4. Don't...utilize guilt and manipulation. Trust God more than that. Tell people the story of our faith. Ask them to think of all they are thankful for. Do a well thought out and structured program with real appeals and then let the Spirit move. As we say, "Don't "should" on people"
5. Don't expect all people to be in the same place spiritually regarding money—this is a process not an event. The worst thing that could happen is to expect or even resent people because they do not seem to be where they "should" be on this whole issue. What you can do as a parish community and as a stewardship committee is create an environment where conversion is possible. The rest is up to the Spirit.
6. Don't...succumb to the scarcity mentality. The scarcity mentality is running rampant in the Church. Examples are donation cups at coffee pots and, one I can tell on St. Peter's Conway, Arkansas when a consultant came here, those toilet paper rollers that only give you one sheet every pull!! When confronted with that we pulled the pins on those so that you can have as much toilet paper as you want at St. Peter's. Scarcity is also represented by the phrases, "we can't do that because we don't have the money.." "we don't have enough, people, money, resources," etc. etc. The truth is, and it is a hard truth to swallow, we choose most of the situations we are in. When you honestly think about it, there is more than enough out there in any of our parishes to do what we want. But we all make choices.....
7. Don't...appeal to the needs of the church as much as to the need for the person to give. Appealing to the needs of the church may work short term but it will not convert people to the true reason for giving. The reality is doing a bit of both with the latter as the place you will see long term change and increased giving.
8. Don't only speak about stewardship as being about money. It is far more. Enough said.

9. Don't ...confuse people with capital campaign and operational campaign. These are necessary but be clear with them. In most cases the operational campaign is the first priority, the capital campaign above and beyond this. Be up front about that.
10. Don't...get locked into maintenance thinking. We are about mission which is bold and aspiring. Maintaining only will lead to death. Mission will lead to life and growth.

Do....

1. Do begin every stewardship meeting with Bible Study and prayer (examples attached) Why wouldn't you? The committees we have started say that the Bible Study and prayer time is worth coming to if nothing else. It is a must foundation for this work.
2. Do remember that stewardship is year round and, most importantly, a way of life.
3. Do begin year round education and talk of money, time, talent, resources.
4. Do name what you are doing and what you are dreaming about. Name all of the ministries, activities, outreach that is being done from your parish community. Do make a case for thankfulness and abundance in the life of your parish.
5. Do dream big!! Dream dreams people will find unbelievable, dreams most people can't imagine.
6. Do preach, teach, live abundance mentality. Abundance is seeing, believing, and saying that we have all we need to do everything God is calling us to do. Our faith calls us to rebuke scarcity at every turn. (See example above)
7. Do use a consultant from outside you congregation whenever possible and use them early (see timetable) Consultants can be objective and can give you insight that can help your congregation move beyond what has always been. These are most likely available in your diocese. Call your diocesan office or call me.
8. Do talk about giving as a response to the gifts we have been given as thanksgiving rather than guilt. One way for people to begin to work on this is to really calculate what percentage of their income they give to the Church. Many people have never done this. It might be too scary!! We have attached some helpful guides to help people begin to think about proportional giving.
9. Do advocate that the firstness of a gift is more important than the tenthness. The first fruits, as Scripture tells us, are the most important part of the gift. We give the first, the very best, of what we have been given, not what is left over. Think back to when we were an agrarian society and realize that the gifts brought were produce and animals and what was given was the best of these, the first, not what was left over.
10. Do talk about your story regarding money, the struggle with stewardship, proportional giving. And get other people to tell their stories. We are afraid to talk about money, much more than sex now. And yet, an American Express Financial Advisors study revealed that 66% of Americans spend more time thinking about money than they do about sex, health, or relationships. In fact, we spend roughly 80% of our time earning, spending, and thinking about money. How could something so prevalent not have an impact on our spirituality. It does!

Where can I get some help??

We have provided below a list of material and resources. We have put these in the short term and long term categories. If your main concern now is to get a campaign in full swing we suggest spending your time and money on short-term resources. However, after that we strongly encourage you to spend time with the long-term resources.

Short Term Resources

A Manual for Stewardship Development Programs in the Congregation by Thomas R. Gossen and Lonnie Schrieber. This is Morehouse Publication along with the other two mentioned below. They are good books which compile much of what the Stewardship Office at 815 has compiled and developed. They are good books to provide your Stewardship Chair and Vestry with. These are very practical “nuts and bolt” books. Morehouse can be reached at 1-800-877-0012.

The Festive Meal Commitment Program by Thomas R. Gossen and Lonnie Schrieber. This is a practical manual on how to put this program together in your congregation. It includes ideas and a timeline.

The Personal Note Commitment Program by Thomas R. Gossen and Lonnie Schrieber. This is a practical manual on how to put this program together in your congregation. It includes ideas and a timeline.

The Cottage Meeting Commitment Program by Thomas R. Gossen. Most recent book now out.

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS) This organization is of great help. Led by Mr. Tom Gossen a long time Stewardship Consultant, this group offers monthly newsletters, consultants, and great seminars. Also, a series of new videos that can be the catalyst for discussion within your parish. For more information contact TENS at 3750 E. Douglas Avenue, Wichita, Kansas, 67208, 1-800-699-2669 or TENSeward@aol.com

Stewardship Office of the Episcopal Church, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017-4594, 1-800-334-7626. Terry Parsons is the leader of this office a a great resource herself. They have a list of consultants throughout the country and many good resources specifically for Episcopal Churches.

Generous People by Eugene Grews, Abingdom Press, Part of the Effective Church Series. A Lutheran source but quite good.

Long Term Resources

Alternatives for Simpler Living This group sends a regular catalogue of resources that are quite good. They put out the book, *Whose Birthday is it Anyway?* at Christmas and they also distribute *Unplugging the Christmas Machine* with the Leader's Guide which makes an excellent Adult Christian Education Program. I did this last year during Advent and it has been requested again for this fall! You can reach them at PO Box 2857, Sioux City, Iowa 51106, 1-800-821-6153.

Behind the Stained Glass Windows by Sylvia and John Ronsvalle. This book gives the result of a multi-year, cross denomination study of giving in the Church. It is an excellent resource that will help you at least not feel alone in what you see happening in the culture and in your parish. Excellent book.

A Dresser of Sycamore Trees By Garrett Keizer. I put this book on here simply because it is an excellent book. One of the best I have ever read and, in my mind, is a real story of how stewardship and evangelism is a way of life. This book is about an Episcopal priest in a small town in rural Vermont who works as a high school English teacher. If you like this one you will also like his other book, *No Place but Here*, about his life in that town based more on his work as a teacher. It too is masterful.

The Financial Planning Workbook: A Family Budgeting Guide by Larry Burkett. Make sure and ask for the Episcopal Edition. The Diocese of Atlanta asked Burkett if they could use his material and name but publish an Episcopal version which he agreed to. This is very much what it sounds like and is quite good for working with groups of people who want to get control of their finances.

Freedom of Simplicity by Richard Foster, Harper-Collins. This book continues to be the “bible” for those in stewardship and the simplicity movement. It is an excellent book. I give my stewardship committee chapter 7 to read and ask them to read the rest.

God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy by M. Douglas Meeks. Very theological look at the idea of God as economist. Meeks makes a very interesting argument in this book in an attempt to reclaim this part of God in our understanding of God.

Grateful and Generous Hearts by The Rev. Dr. John H. Westerhoff. This is the third in his series from the St. Luke’s Pastoral Institute and I think it is quite good. It is the shortest book on this list and yet one of the most compact in terms of material. I would highly recommend it for stewardship committees and vestries and anyone else who wants to know more about stewardship.

Ministry of Money This group prints and sends an excellent newsletter. Their subtitle is “Growth in Discipleship, Compassion for the Poor, Global Stewardship.” This group also presents excellent workshops across the country. In fact, the Stewardship Office in New York is currently attempting to create a program patterned after this one for the Episcopal Church. You can reach them at 2 Professional Drive, Suite 220, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20879, 301-670-9606.

On the Pilgrim's Way : Christian Stewardship and the Tithe by John Brackett. This is an excellent book and one, if I had only one to suggest, would be the one right now. Brackett is an Episcopal priest and does a great job with this. This book would give your team a lot to think about.

When Corporations Rule the World by David C. Korten. This is an excellent book that has especially made it into academic circles the past several years. Korten was part of the Reagan administration and has had a complete conversion on the issue of the disparity in wealth in the world and how corporations are leading this movement. His title is exactly his point. There has been a slow movement by corporations over the last 75 years to rule the world. It is in this book that you find the statistic that Michael Jordan makes more money from Nike in one month than all the Indonesians that make the shoes make in a year.

Reclaiming the Great Commission by Claude Payne, Bishop of Texas. Great book on abundance thinking and congregational development.

Your Money or Your Life Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin, Penguin Book. This book is much more practical but a great source for revealing to yourself and others how consumerism is a persuasive infection of our way of life. It has profound implications for how we can image ourselves and the people sitting in our pews. The thrust of the book is how to invest wisely, live simply, and retire now! So that you can go and do something voluntary with your life.

Final Thoughts

You will note that we have attached quite a few examples for you to utilize. You may use these as you wish.

Year round Timetable

January	Reflect on Pledge Campaign and talk about next year's campaign. Recruit new members for committee, say good bye to those going off. Get on calendar of consultants for upcoming year. Plan bulletin inserts and newsletter pieces for upcoming year.
February	Spend time on time and talent. Assess ministries in your parish. Begin to firm up trainings and select program you want to do
March-April	Have ministry fair in your congregation. Celebrate the ministries and time your congregation puts into the life of your community and each other.
May-June	Take a break
July-August	
September	Plan for and hold workshop for those working in pledge drive.
October	Kick-off for annual drive
November	Wrap up annual drive.
December	Take a break

This is just an example. Of course there is more and more. Our division is reading a book together and we discuss it each time we come together. Don't forget to also do Bible Study and prayer each time you come together. Get creative and make stewardship fun and something that is celebrated all year long.