

GUIDE TO CREATING AN OPERATING GIVING CAMPAIGN: 1ST STEPS TO LAUNCH

The following outline provides preliminary guiding questions that will help to shape and build your operating campaign.

1. Vision Clarity

Discern God's hope for your church this year through prayer, conversation, and action as you build a case for faithful giving in your congregation. Emphasize giving as both maturing spiritual practice AND support of God's purposes. This conversation will be most fruitful if it includes all committed leadership.

- a. What are the core values of Christian discipleship and their relevance in our time? Which themes do we most need to reflect upon to live faithfully now?
- b. What is the unique context, energy, and resource of our congregation at this time? Is this a "thick or thin" year? What does God want us to be "up to" and why?
- c. Why is giving to the church especially important in this moment in time? What is worth sacrificing for to accomplish the mission and ministry that we will do together?
- d. What present fear/brokenness/weakness would be healed through generosity?

2. Leadership Development

A small core team that is willing to immerse in understanding the spiritual discipline and power of stewardship can be the axis for integral engagements of a broader team of volunteers. As the "farm team" is to major league baseball, so are the field of folks who do one thing during the campaign to the team that works all year to design and implement the annual campaign and year long emphasis.

- a. Start with prayer among board leaders and staff
- b. Design dream team of inclusivity. Who are tenured givers? Who are those who struggle to give and yet do? Who wishes they could give more but feels constrained by life? Who has never served (and might not be thrilled to consider) serving on the stewardship team? Who has knowledge about and capacity for finances and resources?
- c. What are team members asked to do and are they matched to their gifts?
- d. Who will ask people to serve?

3. Campaign Development

Scripture advises that we not build a barn, and presumably a stewardship ministry, without weighing our resources and creating a plan. Dream, think and wonder together before you build. Create a visual "game plan" of the build project.

- a. How will you explore and clarify particular church values and goals for this time?
- b. How will you narrate the budget to connect values and goals to stories and pictures about service to God, both ongoing and future?

- c. What is the intended good of gifts to be given for the year ahead?
- d. How will you broadly interpret, using multiple mediums and “languages”, this year’s message of steward discipleship to tell the story to different givers?
- e. How will you create a scope and sequence for stewardship formation? What learning settings, topics and actions might attract and grow stewards and in what order will they be delivered?

4. Engage Congregation

Human beings are creatures of story, but not all people are drawn to the same stories. Some folks need pictures, others plot, other people read numbers and facts. All givers give for different reasons. Make sure that you cast the seeds of invitation to give broadly and in multiple “languages.”

- a. What is the messaging strategy to convey story of values and goals for this campaign?
- b. How will you use each form of communication to convey the story in print, digitally and virtually, in-person, in practice?
- c. How will you ask the congregation to engage their hearts, mind, soul and strength? How will you give opportunity and formation for each part of their discipleship to grow?
- d. What events and gatherings will promote stewardship and how will the time of worship convey our celebration and charge over God’s good gifts?
- e. How will members experience the connection between their giving, the promises the church leadership has made and the growth of faithfulness?
- f. How will people of different generations, different giving maturities and resource hear the call to give in ways that reach them?

5. Benchmark Calendars

The operating stewardship campaign is a “build to launch” process. Create a “calendar map” for the campaign and stewardship throughout the year by placing each element and event into real time on a calendar flow. Use the map to build engagement and cohesive implementation of stewardship to goal.

- a. How will the pieces of the campaign flow for the stewardship team and who has responsibility?
- b. How will you design congregational engagement, leveraging the current year’s goals and the varied maturity of givers?
- c. How do we answer who, what, when, & how for each part of the campaign—messaging, events, engagement?
- d. How and when will the teaching and invitation of stewardship reach the congregation?
- e. When does the campaign begin and conclude? How does stewardship emphasis continue beyond the campaign?
- f. When and how will you celebrate and bless the gifts that are brought and gathered?

6. Follow Through

While you want to have a greatly generous stewardship campaign, the true goal of stewardship is the formation of faithful and sustaining stewards. How will you keep the value of stewardship as a daily discipline alive and well throughout the year?

- a. How will you say, “We give thanks to God with you!” to every giver who translates their discipleship into support for Christ’s ministry at your church?
- b. How will you continue to encourage those who have not given to grow to see themselves as givers?
- c. How will you continue to interpret faithful use of given resources throughout the year? That is, you’ve promised to put resources to certain goals for the year, how are you doing?
- d. Whether the year of giving is “thick or thin” how will lift again and again the work of stewardship as the mark of forming faith?
- e. How will you celebrate resources as authentic giving of glory to God and participation in God’s purposes and not human accomplishment?