

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Thimble-sized (mini) campaign?

A mini campaign provides an opportunity for members/friends to make a one-time contribution to the financial needs of the church for a specific purpose.

When is it appropriate to conduct a mini campaign?

Mini campaigns typically work best when there is a one-time cost that the church is facing for a specific project, immediate need, or ministry – different from those covered in a large-scale capital campaigns.

Examples include:

- A building project – A leaky roof; new boiler; necessary renovations; organ refurbishment, etc.
- A mission/ministry project – Camp scholarships, youth/adult mission trip; food or other outreach programs; etc.
- Extraordinary times – During natural disaster

How often can you conduct a Thimble-sized (mini) Campaign?

Perhaps once every three years, or so, unless compelling circumstances warrant more often. Too many mini campaigns can interrupt regular income streams, particularly if they become a normal occurrence.

Are “lead gifts” needed in a mini campaign?

Yes. The top of the Gift Chart needs to include:

- one gift of 10% of the goal
- one gift of 7% of the goal, and
- three gifts of 5% of the goal.

The top gifts will ensure the feasibility of successfully raising the goal amount.

How can we encourage “lead gift” contributions?

Ask. Schedule a few contacts/visits with members who might be capable of making a lead gift. Most often these are folks who are your most generous givers to the annual fund appeal and/or members who are retired with appreciated assets.

Visits need to “make the case” for the appeal. Introduce the Chart of Needed Gifts and ask the member if they could prayerfully consider one of the top three gifts. Briefly explain that lead gifts, received early, will build confidence with the congregation for the campaign and lift other’s sights in making their gift decision.

Do not ask for a response on-the-spot (unless it is offered!). However, receiving a gift commitment in a week, or so, will help build confidence in the campaign.

Someone may ask if they can provide a “challenge gift”. A challenge gift typically is a dollar-for-dollar match. Challenge gifts can be confidence builders, as well.

Can a mini campaign support a budget shortfall?

Be very careful on this one! It may be appropriate to hold a mini campaign to meet a budget shortfall, but only after all regular stewardship practices and realistic budgeting efforts have been exhausted. While it may solve the current year’s financial problem, unless other changes occur in the church’s income and giving patterns, the problem will be there next year.

Can a mini campaign be run concurrently with the Annual Stewardship Appeal?

It is not recommended. That said, in professionally run Capital Campaigns, often the Annual Stewardship Appeal and Capital Campaign are combined and conducted concurrently. Professionally run campaigns have experience with how to message this approach and are aware of the roadblocks. It is best to keep the mini campaign clear, concise, compelling, and urgent.

Can gifts be fulfilled over time?

No, this is not the goal of a mini campaign. This is a one-and-done campaign. Typically, the funds are needed relatively quickly for the purpose they are being raised. If someone needs a few weeks to pull together the funds, that’s fine. However, the mini campaign is not designed for a three-year fulfillment period like a larger scale capital campaign.

How do we know when we need a capital campaign?

The rule of thumb is that whenever you need to raise one time your annual giving, or more, you need to consider a capital campaign.