

Six Best Practices – Stewardship Strategy Assessment

Identify (mark) what your church is already doing in the following list.
Briefly share with your group about 1-2 things in the list that you are doing well.

I. Operational Management – Sound Fundraising Methodology

- ___ 1. Mission clarity: review and renew the congregation’s mission every 3 years.
- ___ 2. Narrative budget: develop a narrative case statement that tells the church’s mission story and connects dollar amounts with the congregation’s ministries.
- ___ 3. Annual giving program: ask members and adherents to make estimates of their annual giving and to base that on a proportion of income. Invite them to grow 1%.
- ___ 4. Multiple opportunities for financial giving: ensure people can give in many ways through the year (e.g., regular offering, PAR: pre-authorized remittance, special offerings, credit/debit card, fundraising events, legacy giving, capital campaigns).
- ___ 5. Donor appreciation: phone, visit, or send givers personalised thank-you letters with quarterly and annual reports and tax receipts.

II. Stewardship Integration in Worship – “Stewardship Every Sunday”

- ___ 1. Plan worship with stewardship worship resources.
 - ___ a. *Minutes for Mission* (promotion for the national Mission and Service Fund)
 - ___ b. United Church bulletin covers (all lift up stewardship in some way)
 - ___ c. ESC stewardship bulletin inserts (no cost; only shipping charges from UCRD)
 - ___ d. Online stewardship worship resources (www.united-church.ca/planning/theme#stewardship)
 - ___ e. “Stewardship Seconds” in bulletins/newsletters
- ___ 2. Preach stewardship almost every week.

Use the online lectionary-based stewardship Sermon Starters at above URL.
Sermon Starters coordinate thematically with Offering Invitations (see below) and with the bulletin “Stewardship Seconds” (above).
- ___ 3. Nurture young stewards through children’s messages or theme time.
- ___ 4. Celebrate the offering as an act of worship.
 - ___ a. Use an Offering Invitation that connects people’s lives with God’s mission.
 - ___ b. Dedicate offerings (including those given through PAR) with an Offering Prayer.
Offering Invitations and prayers linked to lectionary texts for each week are online at www.united-church.ca/planning/theme/invitededicate.

(Please turn to next page)

III. Stewardship Formation – Create a Culture of Gratitude and Generosity

The primary purpose of stewardship formation is to nurture individual and congregational identity as stewards and disciples, rather than as consumers. A secondary (and welcome!) outcome of biblically grounded stewardship formation is greater generosity.

- 1. Stewardship formation opportunities for young people in
 - a. youth confirmation training
 - b. youth group activities
 - c. Sunday school and Vacation Bible School
 - d. Children's Time in worship

- 2. Adult stewardship discussions in
 - a. Seekers or new members classes
 - b. Bible study or other small groups for discussion/study
 - c. legacy giving seminars: how to arrange major and end-of-life gifts
 - d. personal-finance training and budget counselling for individuals and families

IV. Stewardship Leadership – Leadership Development and Support

- 1. Clergy and lay members active in wider church roles (Presbytery, Conference, General Council, ecumenical, etc.)

- 2. Opportunities for leaders to attend stewardship training events

V. Spiritual-Nurture Opportunities

Understanding one's identity as a steward goes hand in hand with spiritual growth. People growing in discipleship are generous with their lives, including their money. There is positive correlation between spiritual vitality and financial health.

- 1. Bible study
- 2. Small group ministries

VI. Engagement in Social Justice Concerns

- 1. Mission and Service Fund and World Development & Relief promotion/support

- 2. Social justice learning and advocacy opportunities (i.e. *Challenging Empire: Justice Seeking in Your Faith Community*; United Church Mission Theme)

- 3. Active involvement by the congregation in community social justice outreach (More than giving money – people volunteer time, skills)

Note potential growth areas; choose 1-2 practices that you did not mark.
Brainstorm together how you might go about implementing them.

To develop an integrated year-round congregational stewardship strategy, **add an additional item every six months.**