



The Church of Scotland

CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

**National
Stewardship
Programme**

Dear Colleagues – Ministers, Elders, Members

I am delighted to have this opportunity to introduce the National Stewardship Programme.

This information pack includes:

- an extract from the Report of the Council of Assembly to the General Assembly of 2011
- some guidance on getting started on the programme
- contact details for the Church's Stewardship Consultants
- details of the programme options provided by the Church of Scotland.

In addition, you will receive copies of a leaflet about the National Stewardship Programme, which begins with a letter from the Moderator of the General Assembly. The leaflet then lists the reasons why we give, focuses on the vision of the Church of Scotland, and considers, with reference to the Bible, how we should give. You should receive sufficient copies of this leaflet to deliver one to each household in your congregation.

The leaflet and the cover to this pack describe the National Stewardship Programme as a *CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH*. I hope that congregations will accept this challenge to maximize the resources available for sharing the gospel through the worship, mission and service of the Church.

With kind regards and best wishes

Yours sincerely

Gordon D Jamieson

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Head of Stewardship
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2011

Extract from the Report of the Council of Assembly

Deliverance (or Decision)

The General Assembly welcomed the proposals for a national stewardship programme and

- (a) agreed that the programme include a letter from the Moderator to every member of the Church;
- (b) agreed that there be national publicity for the programme; and
- (c) instructed Presbyteries to instruct their congregations to participate in this programme. (Section 3.1)

3.1 National Stewardship Programme

3.1.1 The General Assembly of 2010 passed a deliverance in these terms:

Acknowledge the potential for increasing Christian liberality across the Church; resolve that the Church should embark upon a national stewardship programme and instruct the Council to bring detailed proposals for the implementation of such a programme to the General Assembly of 2011.

3.1.2 This instruction relates to the Christian giving of money by members and adherents of the Church. The Council understands a national stewardship programme to be a programme which gives stewardship a regular and ongoing place in the life of every congregation, rather than a 'one off' event which has few lasting benefits.

3.1.7 The Council believes that a national stewardship programme must be based on the biblical principles of Christian giving:

- we give in response to the generous giving of God
- we give to enable the sharing of the gospel through the work of the Church.

3.1.8 In the light of recent experience, the Council believes that a national stewardship programme must be

- able to increase stewardship activity throughout the Church
- adaptable to congregations of all sizes, locations and backgrounds
- susceptible to Presbytery oversight
- capable of running without a significant increase in staff costs
- adaptable for use at the right time in the life cycle of a congregation.

3.1.9 Taking account of all that is said above, the Council proposes the following framework for a national stewardship programme:

- Every congregation will be expected to take some action with regard to stewardship every year, with a focus on the giving of money at least every third year.
- Congregations will be expected to adopt one of the following options:
 - (a) The *Stewardship Season* approach, where the giving of time, talent and money are considered separately over a three year period, with a month each year being designated as the stewardship season. This approach provides the

opportunity to explore the various elements of Christian stewardship in an imaginative way, with the giving of money being considered every third year.

(b) The *Giving for Growth* programme, which is a more traditional stewardship programme designed to teach and promote the Christian giving of money and is a revised version of the pilot programme *Together we make a difference*. This programme offers a clear framework for congregations to review their giving of money.

(c) A programme from another Church designed to teach and promote the Christian giving of money, e.g. *Giving in Grace* (from the Church of England Diocese of Liverpool), *Give to Grow* (from the Salvation Army), *Seasons of Giving* (from 'Stewardship').

(d) Another approach which incorporates the principles stated in 3.1.7 above and is approved by Presbytery.

- Congregations will be expected to embark on one of these options in 2012, or within three years of the completion of their last stewardship programme which promoted the giving of money.

3.1.10 In addition to the above, congregations will be urged to adopt the following practices:

(a) There is regular teaching on the biblical basis for Christian giving through sermons, study groups and articles in parish magazines.

(b) Members and adherents are made aware every year of the work of the Church – local, national and global - which their giving supports.

(c) An opportunity is given every year for members and adherents to review their offering, request offering envelopes or bank standing order forms or sign a Gift Aid Declaration.

(d) There is an annual reminder of the value of gifts in the wills of members and adherents for the work of the Church.

(e) Members and adherents receive an annual 'thank you', affirming their giving and its value in enabling the sharing of the gospel through the work of the Church.

3.1.11 This process will require the firm support of Presbyteries. Presbyteries have an encouraging, monitoring and disciplinary function in relation to their congregations. It is hoped that most of the action required in respect of a national stewardship programme will be in the encouraging and monitoring parts of the Presbyteries' function, but disciplinary action through the superintendence process may be required. Congregations which are willing to embark on the programme as outlined above have a right to expect their Presbyteries to ensure that those congregations which are less willing do address their giving of money by participating in the national stewardship programme.

3.1.12 To introduce and explain the national stewardship programme, representatives of the Council of Assembly and the Stewardship and Finance Department will convene Presbytery Conferences throughout Scotland in the autumn of 2011, to which every congregation will be invited to send representatives. Guidelines for implementing the national stewardship programme will be issued to Presbyteries and congregations. These will provide more detailed information about the framework outlined above.

GETTING STARTED

This pack contains details of the options which are available to congregations when they embark on the national stewardship programme.

There are two programmes offered by the Stewardship and Finance Department – *Creating and developing a Stewardship Season in your Congregation* and *Giving for Growth*. Detailed guidelines for these programmes are included in this pack. These guidelines are also on the Church of Scotland website – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/subjects

Alternatively, congregations may wish to consider one of these programmes offered by other Churches:

(a) The Diocese of Liverpool in the Church of England has produced a very full programme entitled *Giving in Grace* - www.givinginGrace.org

(b) The Salvation Army offers a programme based on the scriptural principle of tithing, which is entitled *Give to Grow* – for further details send an e-mail to: missiondevelopment@salvationarmy.org.uk

(c) 'Stewardship' offers *Seasons of Giving* – www.stewardship.org.uk/money/downloads/resources/Discover%20Seasons.pdf

A further option is a congregation's own programme. It may be that your congregation has successfully challenged members to review and increase their giving, using your own material. If this material is based on the biblical principles of Christian giving as outlined in the Council of Assembly's Report to the General Assembly:

- we give in response to the generous giving of God
- we give to enable the sharing of the gospel through the work of the Church

this is a valid option, provided your Presbytery agrees.

Whichever option congregations choose, they may still wish to use some of the ancillary material in Liverpool's *Giving in Grace* programme.

Please remember that stewardship programmes are tools to help congregations. They are tools which have served congregations well in the past, but they are only tools. When congregations embark on stewardship programmes, they need to be enthusiastic about what they are doing. The stewardship programme should be linked to their vision for the Church – where they believe God is calling their congregation to be.

Core ingredients for any stewardship programme are:

- commitment and enthusiasm from all office-bearers
- prayer to remind us that we are working with God and need his strength and direction
- careful preparation and planning
- teaching Christian giving as a response to God's giving and a means of sharing the gospel through the life and work of the Church
- imaginative material to communicate the message
- an opportunity for everyone in the congregation to make a personal response

SUPPORT FROM STEWARDSHIP CONSULTANTS

The Church's five Stewardship Consultants and the Head of Stewardship are ready to assist and support congregations in the planning and delivery of the National Stewardship Programme.

While it will not be possible to offer every congregation seven or eight meetings with a Stewardship Consultant to plan and deliver the programme, it will be possible to offer assistance and support through some meetings when the Stewardship Consultant is present, through e-mail contact with the Stewardship Consultant, and through telephone contact with the Stewardship Consultant.

Here are the contact details for the Stewardship staff:

For congregations in the Presbyteries of Edinburgh, West Lothian, Lothian, Melrose and Peebles, Duns, Jedburgh, and Orkney:

Margot Robertson

Email: mrobertson@cofscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 01620 893459

For congregations in the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Wigtown and Stranraer, Ayr, Irvine and Kilmarnock, Ardrossan, Lanark, Greenock and Paisley, and Hamilton:

Edith Scott

Email: escott@cofscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 01357 520503

For congregations in the Presbyteries of Glasgow, Dumbarton, Argyll, Stirling, Lochaber, Lochcarron-Skye, Uist and Lewis:

Stuart Sangster

Email: ssangster@cofscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 01360 622302

For congregations in the Presbyteries of Falkirk, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, St Andrews, Dunkeld and Meigle, Perth, and Dundee:

Sandra Holt

Email: sholt@cofscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 07807 477 682

For congregations in the Presbyteries of Angus, Aberdeen, Kincardine and Deeside, Gordon, Buchan, Moray, Abernethy, Inverness and Shetland:

Fiona Penny

Email: fpenny@cofscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 01771 653442

Congregations in the Presbyteries of Ross, Sutherland, Caithness and England should contact the Head of Stewardship, the **Rev Gordon Jamieson**, at the Church Offices:

Email: gjamieson@cofscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 0131 240 2226 (Direct Line)

Creating and developing a Stewardship Season in your congregation

KEEPING STEWARDSHIP ON THE AGENDA

Teaching and promoting the Christian giving of time, talent and money should be a regular activity in the life of a congregation. The way in which we use our time, talent and money is a fundamental part of our Christian living, our Christian discipleship.

Stewardship programmes tend to be occasional and infrequent events in the life of a congregation because they involve a considerable amount of work over a number of months, as a planning group prepares for the special event at the heart of the programme and follows up the responses which come from the members of the congregation.

Many congregations have seen the fruits of their labours in increased offerings and increased involvement, but having completed stewardship programmes, most congregations want to wait for a number of years before embarking on another such venture.

If they wait too long, they risk losing the benefits they have gained.

It is also important that congregations take seriously each of the traditional aspects of Christian stewardship – time, talent and money. This is best done by considering each of the three on its own. Looking at time, talent and money together can dilute the Christian message about each and the Christian response to each.

This approach encourages congregations to keep Christian stewardship on their agenda by considering the giving of time, talent and money separately in a three year cycle, and in different ways from the traditional stewardship programme.

STEWARDSHIP SEASON

- Pick a MONTH which does not already have special occasions, e.g. Easter, Remembrance, Christmas, and is not one of the main holiday times.
- Designate that month the STEWARDSHIP SEASON.
- Reflect on the Christian giving of TIME or TALENT or MONEY during that month, with each being considered in one year over a three year period.
- Focus the congregation's life on this theme during the STEWARDSHIP SEASON:
 - Worship themes
 - Study groups
 - Children's ministry
 - Youth activities
 - Guild meetings.
- Organise a SPECIAL EVENT for the whole congregation.
- Look for a particular RESPONSE from members of the congregation during the STEWARDSHIP SEASON each year.

CHRISTIAN GIVING OF TIME

TIME is a fundamental part of God's creation (Genesis 1: 14-19) and should be recognised as a very important gift from God. The stewardship of TIME is often neglected by the Church as it often concentrates its attention on money and talent.

In considering the Christian giving of TIME, members are encouraged to reflect on the way they use their TIME – all of it.

The following themes will provide a useful exploration of TIME:

Time for God

Why are corporate worship and private devotions essential ingredients for a healthy human life? In what ways does time for God differ from time for the Church? Should time for God be regarded as time spent in activity or time when we stop doing, stop being busy?

Time for Friends and Family

In what ways does time spent with friends and family enrich human life? How important is time for friends and family when we prioritise our use of time?

Time for Work

What are the benefits from spending time working? In what ways is the balance of life upset when there is no opportunity to work or when time for work encroaches on time for other things?

Time for Rest and Recreation

How does time for rest and recreation differ from time for family and friends? What was Jesus saying when he emphasised the second great commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" ?

Time for the Church

In what ways do we give time for the work of the Church? Does the Church make the best use of the time we give? In what ways could the Church make better use of our gift of time?

These are only a few of the questions which might be explored during a STEWARDSHIP SEASON dedicated to the Christian giving of TIME.

Consideration of the stewardship of TIME in this way takes people beyond the life of the Church to the whole of life. This is to be welcomed as Christian stewardship and Christian discipleship should be concerned with the whole of life.

Focussing on the stewardship of TIME is also an opportunity to reflect on the different amounts of 'free' TIME that are available to people at different stages in their lives.

Practical Exercise

Invite the congregation (adults and children) to keep a TIME DIARY for a week before the month when the Christian giving of TIME will be considered. This will show how much time is used on eating, sleeping, and work or education. The time that is left is the time when we make choices about what we do.

- What choices do we make?
- Does our use of time lead to a balanced life?
- What different choices could we make?

Response

The response which will be sought from members and adherents is a re-commitment to giving TIME for God, through participation in worship and creating space for Bible reading and private prayer.

CHRISTIAN GIVING OF TALENT

The story of the birth of twins, Esau and Jacob, to Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 25: 19-28) reminds us that each person is unique, with his/her own physical characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. This theme is developed by Paul in his New Testament Letters (Romans 12: 3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 1-31) when he refers to Christians as different parts of the body of Christ and encourages them to use their particular gifts for the glory of God.

The Christian giving of TALENT is concerned with members identifying their particular gifts, skills, strengths – knowing what they can do well (and what they cannot do well) and recognising that everyone has some gift. This process will reveal the POOL OF ABILITY which is available in the congregation – available for involvement in the worship, mission and service of the Church.

This POOL OF ABILITY will distinguish between those skills and strengths which are people-orientated, e.g. children's ministry, pastoral care, leadership, and those which are of a more practical nature, e.g. maintenance of buildings and grounds, music, administrative tasks.

Once the POOL OF ABILITY has been identified, members and adherents will be encouraged to be more involved in the life of the Church by giving their skills and strengths in appropriate ways.

Consideration of the TALENT available within a congregation will ask questions about the existing structure of the congregation:

- Do the current members and adherents have the skills and strengths necessary for all the traditional roles in the congregation?
- In what ways can the pattern of congregational life be changed to make best use of the available skills and strengths, and minimise the need for skills and strengths which are not readily available?
- What skills and strengths are surplus to the congregation's requirements, but could be used in a neighbouring congregation?

Practical Exercise

At meetings of the Kirk Session or the Guild or Youth Groups or Study Groups, invite each person to share with another whom he/she knows well. In each pair one will tell the other what talents the other has, and then the process will be reversed. This overcomes the difficulty that some of us are too modest to admit our own talents.

This should be a positive exercise. One person should not be telling another what talents the other does not have. A person can indicate the lack of particular talents for himself/herself.

Response

The response which will be sought from members and adherents is a commitment to give their TALENT to enable the sharing of the gospel through the work of the Church. This commitment has to begin with a person's skills and strengths, and not with a list of jobs which 'need' to be done.

CHRISTIAN GIVING OF MONEY

For some people, stewardship is solely concerned with MONEY. For others, a broad view of stewardship can be a way of ignoring MONEY for as long as possible. MONEY is an important aspect of any consideration of Christian stewardship and Christian giving.

There are many references in the Old Testament to the way in which the people of Israel and Judah should use their MONEY AND POSSESSIONS (e.g. Deuteronomy 26: 1-15; 2 Samuel 12: 1-6; Ezekiel 18: 5-9).

In the gospels we read of many occasions when Jesus spoke of MONEY AND POSSESSIONS (e.g. Luke 12: 13-21; 18: 18-25; 21: 1-4). Some of the most practical comments in Paul's Letters are concerned with MONEY (1 Corinthians 16: 1-4; 2 Corinthians 8: 1-15). Encouraging a financial offering to God is a theme which runs through the whole Bible, and has been an essential part of Christian discipleship throughout the history of the Church.

It is also important that we remember that Christians are accountable to God for what they do with all their MONEY – not just the amount they give as an offering for the work of the Church.

The various biblical models for giving – first fruits, tithes, sharing, sacrifice, made in the image of a Giving God – can be explored during a STEWARDSHIP SEASON dedicated to the Christian giving of MONEY.

Members and adherents will be encouraged to give regularly and generously:

- to show gratitude for all that is received from God;

- to make a difference to individual lives, the life of the community and the life of the world through the worship, mission and service of the Church.

Members and adherents will be encouraged to think about their OFFERING OF MONEY. How does it relate to their total income? How generous is it?

Practical Exercise

Invite the congregation (adults and children) to consider their own personal budgets – all that they have and how it is spent.

- What proportion is given to charity (including the Church)?
- How does my charitable giving relate to what I spend on myself?
- What would my Church offering buy if I did not give it to God for the work of the Church?

Response

The response which will be sought from members and adherents is a commitment to make a generous OFFERING OF MONEY –

- using offering envelopes
- or a bank standing order
- and, if taxpayers, signing a Gift Aid Declaration to enable the congregation to recover the tax already paid on the money given
- considering a GIFT TO THE CHURCH IN THEIR WILL.

HELP IS AVAILABLE ...

The Church's Stewardship staff want to assist and support congregations in the creation and development of a STEWARDSHIP SEASON.

Various items of stewardship material are available:

Worship Resources

Bible Studies

Leaflets

Posters

These items of material consider the biblical and theological basis of Christian giving; the nature and purpose of the Church; Ministries and Mission Contributions; Gift Aid; legacies.

One of the staff will be willing to meet with Kirk Sessions as they consider establishing a STEWARDSHIP SEASON.

As Stewardship Groups in congregations begin planning the STEWARDSHIP SEASON each year, one of the staff will be available to provide support and assistance.

GIVING ***for*** ***GROWTH***

**Church of Scotland
Stewardship Programme
to teach and promote
the Christian Giving of Money**

**“God invites us to join his mission,
not to maintain a religious club.”**
(Panel on Review and Reform)

We give MONEY
to make a DIFFERENCE
to the life of our community
to the life of our nation
to the life of our world
by SHARING THE GOSPEL
through the worship, fellowship,
mission and service
of the CHURCH.

Introduction

Christian giving is a response to God's gifts of life and love. In particular it is a response to the good news of God's love in Jesus. It is also an opportunity to enable the sharing of this good news through the worship, fellowship, mission and service of the Church.

GIVING FOR GROWTH is a stewardship programme to teach and promote the Christian giving of money.

It focuses on the life of the Church and the ways in which our giving of money enable the sharing of the gospel through the life of the Church.

It seeks to provide financial resources, not just to maintain things as they are, but to develop the life of the Church, that the Church may grow numerically and spiritually.

The objective of this programme is to increase the regular, committed giving of money by members and adherents of the Church to resource your vision for the Church.

Three things are very important:

The first is **prayer** –

- recognising that **GIVING FOR GROWTH** is undertaken with God;
- involving everyone in the congregation in prayer for the programme.

The second is **commitment** from the minister, elders, and other office-bearers to **GIVING FOR GROWTH**.

The third is **enthusiasm** –

- for sharing the gospel through the life and work of the Church;
- for talking about the difference the Church makes to the life of the world;
- for generous giving to make this difference.

GIVING FOR GROWTH should not be a painful exercise you have to endure : it should be an opportunity for the congregation to **celebrate Christian giving**.

Planning

GIVING FOR GROWTH centres on Gatherings to which all members and adherents are invited. At these gatherings they will see and hear the main message of the programme. This message will be reinforced by a brochure which each member and adherent will receive. They will then have the opportunity to review their giving and make their response.

Careful preparation is essential if **GIVING FOR GROWTH** is to be effective in your congregation. The first step is the appointment of a Planning Group by the Kirk Session. All the members of the Planning Group do not have to be office-bearers : the Planning Group should include people with the necessary abilities for the various tasks.

The **Stewardship Consultant** for your area is willing to provide advice and support in the planning and delivery of **GIVING FOR GROWTH**. You may wish to engage the services of the Stewardship Consultant, free of charge, throughout the process, or you

may wish to seek assistance by e-mail or telephone at particular stages. The Stewardship Consultant is there to help you.

Planning Group Convener

Co-ordinate the work of the Planning Group and liaise with the Stewardship Consultant. Encourage and liaise with the other members of the group to ensure that the various tasks are completed at the appropriate time. Prepare an agenda for each Planning Group meeting and chair the meetings of the group.

Administration Convener

Record and distribute minutes of Planning Group meetings. Prepare list of homes to be visited and, in consultation with the Visitor Convener, lists of districts for visitors. Arrange printing/copying of letters, lists etc as required. Arrange availability of accommodation and any equipment required for various meetings. Order any material required from the Stewardship and Finance Department.

Visitor Convener

With the help of others in the group prepare a list of potential visitors and team leaders. Recruit team leaders and through them arrange recruitment of sufficient visitors. In consultation with the Administration Convener, prepare lists and allocate visitors districts. Prepare a timetable and letter of thanks to visitors. Via team leaders, encourage and support visitors throughout the programme.

Publicity Convener

Arrange design, content and production of all materials required for the programme. Make appropriate use of opportunities for publicity before and during the period of the programme to obtain maximum impact within the congregation. Ensure that the Planning Group has approved the publicity strategy and the content of material.

Gathering Convener

Co-ordinate all matters relating to the congregational gatherings (with or without catering), presentations using audio/visual displays, an exhibition of the work of the Church. Recruit others to help with this. Ensure that the Planning Group had approved the content of presentations and the choice of presenter(s).

Follow-Up Convener

Prepare a system for recording and acknowledging responses. In consultation with Visitor Convener, make arrangements for the return of responses by visitors. Plan a method of following up responses and recording the outcome. Produce an analysis of results.

Minister

The minister should be part of the Planning Group but should not be its Convener and should not be delegated specific tasks as detailed above. The minister's role is to teach Christian giving, to give general advice and guidance, and to provide encouragement and support to the other members of the group.

Important Note!

Members of the Planning Group are not expected to undertake all of their allocated tasks on their own. The whole group has a collective responsibility for deciding what should be done and what resources are required. It is then up to individual conveners to oversee their specific tasks and, where appropriate, enlist the help of others with the knowledge and abilities required. This is particularly relevant with the design and production of publicity materials when it can be worthwhile approaching people outwith the congregation for help and advice.

Timetable

It is important that a timetable for the whole programme is worked out at the beginning. Every effort should then be made to stick to this timetable.

Planning Meetings	Starting 5 months before Gatherings and frequently thereafter
Recruitment of Visitors	Should be completed 2 months before the Gatherings
Preparatory Services	3 or 4 Sundays before Gatherings (or intermittently over a longer period)
Briefing of Visitors	3-4 weeks before Gatherings
Commissioning of Visitors	Sunday before Invitation Visits
Invitation Visits	Completed 1 week before Gatherings

GATHERINGS

Delivery of Brochure and Response Pack to those who did not attend Gatherings	Immediately after Gatherings
Response Visits	Completed within 3 weeks of Gatherings
Thanksgiving Service	4 weeks after Gatherings
Follow Up	Should begin as soon as responses are received and be completed within 6 weeks
Feedback Meeting	Within 3 months of Gatherings

Teaching Christian Giving

Christian giving has a biblical and theological foundation. As members and adherents understand this more clearly and more fully, they will think of their Christian giving as an integral part of their Christian faith and commitment.

The minister's main role as a member of the Planning Group is to take responsibility for teaching Christian giving as a core ingredient in **GIVING FOR GROWTH**.

Study groups in the congregation may be encouraged to use the Bible Studies produced by the Stewardship and Finance Department –

'The Bible teaches ... GIVE - Explore some Biblical models for Giving ...'

The Biblical models considered in this booklet are first fruits, tithes and freewill offerings, sharing, sacrifice, and created in the image of a giving God.

It is very helpful if the minister leads worship on a 'giving' theme on three or four Sundays prior to the Gatherings.

Possible themes are:

- 1 Made in the image of a giving God (Genesis 1: 1-31)
- 2 Giving in response to God's giving (Deuteronomy 26: 1-11)
- 3 Selfishness and Sacrifice (Luke 12: 13-21
and Luke 21: 1-4)
- 4 Giving in the first days of the Church (2 Corinthians 8: 1-15)

It is helpful to pick up biblical themes of sharing (Acts 4: 32-27 and 2 Corinthians 8: 1-15) and relate these to the sharing of financial resources in the Church of Scotland to maintain a Christian presence throughout Scotland, to make particular provision for the Church in more deprived or more remote areas, and to share in the mission of the Church in some of the poorest parts of the world.

New Testament passages about the Christian giving of money in Acts and Paul's Letters are concerned with consolidating new congregations and growing the Christian community. Today the message about the Christian giving of money should not be focusing on maintaining a declining Church : it should be concerned with providing financial resources to enable the Church to grow in faith, commitment and numbers.

There are many passages which focus on the gospel making a difference to people's lives (e.g. Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 19: 1-10; John 10: 1-10). These might be explored to make the point that Christian giving enables the sharing of the gospel, which in turn enriches individual lives and the lives of communities.

The purpose of leading worship on 'giving' themes is to encourage members and adherents to think about what the Bible is saying about giving. Sermons on these themes should be expository and explanatory, rather than occasions to call for better giving.

The Gatherings, at the heart of **GIVING FOR GROWTH**, provide the opportunity to challenge members and adherents to give more generously.

Personal Contact

How do you intend to invite members and adherents to the Gatherings at the heart of your **GIVING FOR GROWTH** programme?

How do you intend to obtain responses from members and adherents to the message of your **GIVING FOR GROWTH** programme?

Personal contact with members and adherents is the best way. This will mean recruiting a considerable number of visitors.

Many people are apprehensive about being a visitor in a stewardship programme. It is very important that potential visitors are told that they will not be expected to convey the message of **GIVING FOR GROWTH**. The visitors' role is to invite members and

adherents to the Gatherings and to collect responses from members and adherents after the Gatherings.

The Visitor Convener or the Stewardship Consultant will lead a briefing meeting for visitors – to outline the purpose of **GIVING FOR GROWTH**, explain their role, provide answers to questions they may be asked, and, most of all, to help visitors approach their task with confidence. There should also be a **Commissioning of Visitors** in the context of Sunday Worship.

There may be good pastoral reasons why it would be insensitive to visit certain members and adherents – consult the minister about this.

In a few places congregations have successfully contacted their members and adherents by telephone or by post. The Stewardship Consultant will advise the Planning Group about these means of contact.

Material

GIVING FOR GROWTH will require various items of material to communicate the Christian giving message.

You will probably need to produce:

- Prayer Card for use by members and adherents;
- Articles for the Church Newsletter, to give advance notice to members and adherents and to report the results of the programme to the congregation;
- Invitation to the Gatherings (with RSVP to advise numbers or transport requirements);
- Brochure to portray the sharing of the gospel through the worship, fellowship, mission and service of the congregation and the Church of Scotland as a whole;
- Response Pack, to provide members and adherents with an opportunity to commit themselves to regular, generous giving of money, and to include a Gift Aid Declaration and a bank Standing Order form;
- ID for Visitors (if required).

Templates for the above are available from the Stewardship and Finance Department in electronic form.

Also available is a template for a PowerPoint presentation to be used at the Gatherings.

The most important things about material for any stewardship programme are:

- It must be visually attractive to ensure that it is read.
- Its content must be presented in an imaginative way.
- The stewardship message must be clear.

Gatherings

Gatherings provide members and adherents with an opportunity, not only to hear the message of the **GIVING FOR GROWTH** programme, but also to ask questions and make comments.

Please note that members and adherents are invited to attend one Gathering.

The number of Gatherings will depend on the size of the congregation. The maximum attendance may be achieved when at least one is scheduled for a morning or afternoon. When issuing the invitations it may be helpful to include a reply slip which will give an indication of the number attending on each occasion.

The message at any Christian giving event should be positive. This is achieved by emphasising:

- Christian giving is a joyful response to God's generous giving to us.
- Christian giving is an opportunity to enable the sharing of the gospel through the worship, fellowship, mission and service of the Church.

God's generous giving to us can be highlighted in the opening worship at the Gatherings. There should be some reference to God's giving at the beginning of the brochure.

Our Christian giving as a joyful response to the gifts of God is a very important part of the message at the Gatherings.

Equally important is persuading and convincing members and adherents that their Christian giving is supporting a worthy cause – the sharing of the gospel through the worship, fellowship, mission and service of the Church.

Talk about Christian giving often gets bogged down in discussion about local expenses relating to the buildings and the Ministries and Mission Contribution which has to be sent to the Church Offices in Edinburgh. It is important that the work done through local expenditure and through the Ministries and Mission Contribution is highlighted.

All the ingredients of the Gatherings should be designed to present this work in a positive and attractive way.

In presenting the message, do not be negative –

- DON'T talk about deficits and books that will not balance
- DON'T apologise about requesting more money for God's work.

Remember the important role which all members and adherents, including the housebound, can play – praying for the sharing of the gospel through the work of the Church and giving to support this work.

SAMPLE PROGRAMME

7.00pm People begin to arrive, are welcomed by members of the Planning Group, and have the opportunity to view displays of the life of the Church, which is supported by Christian giving. Brochures and Response Packs are issued as people arrive.

7.30pm Welcome, followed by a brief act of worship focusing on Christian giving as a response to God's gifts of life and love (10 minutes)

A presentation on giving enabling the sharing of the gospel the worship, fellowship, mission and service of the Church, usually making use of PowerPoint (not more than 20 minutes)

Questions and Comments (10 minutes)

The Response Pack is explained and the arrangements for returning these are outlined. At this point guidance will be given about Offering Envelopes, Standing Orders and Gift Aid. (10 minutes)

Questions about Response Cards (5 minutes)

A challenge to respond by giving generously and a closing prayer (5 minutes)

8.30pm Refreshments

Responses and Follow Up

If **GIVING FOR GROWTH** is to be an effective means of resourcing the life of your congregation, it is important that all members and adherents have the opportunity to respond to the Christian giving message.

The Response Pack should provide the opportunity for members and adherents to declare their intention to give regularly and generously, highlighting the use of bank standing orders and offering envelopes, and encouraging those who pay tax to sign a Gift Aid Declaration (if they have not already done so). It should also provide an opportunity for members and adherents to enquire about making a gift to the Church in their will.

There is no point in receiving responses from members and adherents if these are not followed up promptly. All requests must be dealt with as soon as possible.

In the history of the Church many special efforts, including stewardship programmes, have been less effective than they should have been through lack of follow up.

Thanksgiving

When responses are received, it is time –

- to give thanks to God for his guidance, strength, support and encouragement throughout the programme;
- to give thanks to God for the work of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of members and adherents to prompt increased giving of money.

It is an important symbolic act to offer the responses of members and adherents to God in the context of Sunday worship.

A Thanksgiving Service is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Christian giving and commemorate a sense of renewal in the life of the congregation.

Conclusion

When a congregation completes **GIVING FOR GROWTH**, the Planning Group should hold a Feedback Meeting when the following questions will be addressed:

- To what extent have the offerings of members and adherents become more committed – through the increased use of offering envelopes and standing orders?
- How many members have now decided to give through Gift Aid?
- How many requests for information about legacies were received?
- To what extent will the results of the programme help resource your vision for the congregation?
- Were there any ways in which the programme did not meet your expectations?

An honest appraisal of the programme and its results should be submitted to the Kirk Session and the Stewardship Consultant by the Planning Group – with recommendations for continuing teaching and promotion of Christian giving.

The results of the programme should also be communicated to the congregation. This may be done through the Church Newsletter and should include a word of thanks to all who participated and responded.

It is important that the teaching and promotion of Christian giving is not an occasional event in the life of the congregation, but becomes an integral part of that life. Christian giving (of money, time and talent) should be part of the culture of every congregation.

To help you develop this culture, the Stewardship and Finance Department has produced material ***Creating and developing a STEWARDSHIP SEASON in your congregation.***

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