



Stewardship Strategic Plan Checklist & Calendar



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Overview

In our effort to help you build an ongoing culture of generosity in your church, the following checklist will provide you with the tasks your stewardship committee needs to complete during the year to meet this goal. Each of these items should be listed on the master stewardship ministry calendar prepared by your stewardship committee at the beginning of the year.

Rather than tell you when each item should be completed, we wish to give you the items that we think you should accomplish to grow stewards and build generosity during the course of a year. Then you can fit these tasks into your ministry programming as best fits your church calendar.

If you have questions about any of the items listed, please feel free to shoot us an email at office@church-development.com

Goals

1. Give you practical strategies to implement to create a culture of generosity.
2. Equip you with practical resources to implement in your campaign planning.

Annual Culture of Generosity Checklist

Build these ministry programs or offerings into your annual stewardship plan:

1. Teach Stewardship

- Invite lay speakers to share “How God has blessed me” in worship, at events, or via video (email or post on your social media sites).
- Include weekly stewardship reflections and a monthly newsletter column in your bulletin ([The Stewardship System](#) can give you everything you need).
- Preach on the meaning of stewardship (4 times per year).
- Offer Personal Financial Education classes at least once a year.
- Offer an Estate Planning Workshop.
- Offer a financial coaching ministry.

Lay speakers' witness is the most effective means of teaching stewardship.

2. Engage Disciples as Volunteers

A church member who volunteers is 11x more likely to participate financially in a capital campaign. Barna Group's report, *The Generosity Gap*, confirms that this correlation extends to all financial giving, not just in capital campaigns. This should not be surprising if you understand the [spirituality of stewardship](#). We recommend building in many opportunities in your parish life for people to live their discipleship through giving their time.

- Offer a wide array of diverse episodic volunteer opportunities (one time!) to engage those who are someone on the margins of your community. These don't need to be complicated or require a lot of organizing. Ask your ministry leaders what they need help with and I bet you'll have an endless list before you know it!
- Host a spiritual gifts workshop: Sometimes people need a intentional time of prayer and some guidance to discover what God is calling them to. A workshop on gifts and discernment can broaden the understanding of vocation through asking "What are your spiritual gifts and how do you feel called to share those with the world?"
- Hold a ministry fair once a year to highlight all the ministries offered in your church.

3. Connect People Socially

Technology is on the rise and daily life is busy. Yet people are more lonely than ever. The church is God's gift to the world to help us live this joyous and sometimes difficult life. Your parish community can be a soup kitchen for those who are starving for real connection. When people are connected socially, they see the personal benefit of their church and are more likely to support it financially.

- Offer fellowship opportunities after worship - donuts and coffee anyone?
- Host pot luck dinners to celebrate special events or "just because" (no fundraising or asking for donations at these events!).
- Develop a welcoming/hospitality ministry with your extroverted, friendly volunteers. No one should walk into your church for the first (or second, or fifty-seventh) time without a greeting from a real person.
- Develop a small group ministry. Chances are you are probably already doing this but didn't consider it to be a part of your stewardship efforts. #winning
- Hold a few church-wide community projects/events each year.
- Offer swag (t-shirts, coffee mugs, hats, etc) branded with your church logo or mission statement that remind people they belong when they are not at the church on Sunday.

- Solicit a communications staff person or a tech-savvy volunteer to start or manage a social media account for your church to keep people informed of opportunities to connect.

4. Share Decision Making

Church members give more when they are actively involved in the life of the church, and they are more likely to take personal responsibility for decisions in which they have had a say. To facilitate sharing decision making among your people:

- Invite members to lunch with the pastor once a year. Have a facilitator present to gather feedback on this question: "What could we do better as a church?"
- Hold town hall meetings to gather feedback and ideas about solving a problem the church is facing.
- Send out a survey to gather feedback on issues affecting the life of the church. (a stewardship survey is provided in the [Hope Grows Here Annual Campaign](#)).
- Publish annual financial statements in the bulletin.
- Offer complete transparency in church financial dealings (transparency builds trust).
- Have all board/financial meetings open to the public.

5. Teach Prayer and Discernment

For many people, prayer is "asking for what I need". Stewardship is rooted in gratitude for the blessings we have already been given. Teaching gratitude through reflection and prayer can change a person's life! When a faithful person starts looking at everything they have, instead of what they don't, the natural response is "what am I supposed to do with this abundance?".

- Offer classes/workshops teaching prayer and discernment (twice a year).
- Annually, gather prayer requests for a season of prayer and thanksgiving.
- Have a team call each household in your church and ask for prayer requests.
- Publish a 7 or 14-day prayer guide with your annual campaign materials. This should include short 1-2 paragraph stories from lay people sharing how God showered them in abundance when they were generous.

6. Ask for Support

Host 4 appeals during the year - not 52. Keeping your solicitations to a minimum prevents donor fatigue and encourages participation for everyone. We have some [samples you can view](#) if you're not sure what to say. Your four yearly asks should include:

- Annual stewardship campaign - This is your big ask for the year to support your annual budget. Build into the budget your tithing to community projects or partners that your parish supports to avoid regular, small appeals throughout the year (we offer a [comprehensive guide](#), based on best practices to kick start your annual campaign effort).
- Capital Appeal Letter - some people are very concrete thinkers and like to have a tangible outcome to their donation. Give them an opportunity to sponsor a roof tile, parking space, or fellowship hall table.
- "Emergency" Appeal Letter - Barna's study, The Generosity Gap, unveiled that millennials are more likely than older generations to see generosity as "spur of the moment". They need an urgent need to prompt a response. Plan a way to invite them to save the day.
- Year-end Appeal Letter - 10% of most organizations' annual income comes from a year-end solicitation. You may have a low participation rate, but for your top 10-12 donors, they need this reminder to invite their collaboration while reducing their tax liability.
- Offer electronic giving options for the 50% of your church that doesn't carry cash or checks. If you're not sure where to start with that [download our introductory guide](#) to electronic giving.

7. Thank your supporters

Who would we be if we did not practice what we preached? As we invite our friends to recognize God as the source of all blessings, so too are we called to give thanks. We are thankful for the blessings God has bestowed upon our ministries through the people who support it with their resources.

- Send quarterly thank you letters with a statement of gifts to date ([here is an example](#)).
- Periodically send a handwritten note from a stewardship committee member or the pastor.
- When appropriate, give a gift to those who pledge or give to a campaign.
- Hold a volunteer recognition banquet one month before your annual campaign Commitment Sunday.

Committee Discussion Guide

1. What activities are you already doing that contribute to a growing culture of generosity at your church? List your current stewardship-related ministries.

2. Building on what you've already established, what activities have been a success? How might you expand what is already working?

3. What areas would you like to improve? Are there ministries that are needed that you'd like to include? What topics from above need the most support (i.e. education, prayer, thanks..)?

4. What specific activities/ministries/events would build on your success and help you improve in the areas that need some attention?

a. Education_____

b. Volunteer Engagement_____

c. Community Building _____

d. Sharing Decisions_____

e. Prayer and Discernment_____

f. Asking_____

g. Thanking_____

Plan Your Stewardship Activity Calendar

Build your calendar for stewardship activities based on your discussion of activities that relate to your goals. Make a note of major liturgical events, cultural holidays, and parish events that may interfere with or support your ministry (i.s. Advent and Thanksgiving are good times for a prayer campaign; avoid the Christmas season for special events since many people are out of town or spending time with family).

MM/ YYYY	Stewardship Education	Engage Volunteers	Community Building	Shared Decision	Prayer & Discern.	Ask	Thank
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							

For more how-to guides, stewardship checklists, and pro-tips visit:
www.church-development.com