

Volunteer Talking Point Samples

Sample A

At its best, your congregation's stewardship program provides a conversion opportunity. This is the most important goal and is an act of the Holy Spirit for which one can only plant the seeds. The giving of time and money involves a conversion of heart and mind. Pledging goes beyond fundraising for a church--for someone to go from "paying dues" to having a deep theological understanding of giving back to God can be a life-changing gift.

Basic Assumptions

- Stewardship is about joyous acts of thanksgiving in response to all that God has given us. Therefore, stewardship is not about making people feel guilty.
- Stewardship is about changing hearts, minds and lives, which is a work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, stewardship is not about coercion.
- Stewardship is deeply involved in our relationship with God. Therefore, if you're not talking about Jesus, it probably isn't stewardship, but might be engaged in something more akin to collecting club dues.

Some Best Practices

- Connect all stewardship materials to the vision, mission, and plan for your congregation. What is the vision? What will you do with the funds to further the mission? What will you accomplish when even more money comes in?
- Design your own pledge cards. Canned materials can not fit your congregation as well as what you create.
- Look for specific skills needed when recruiting a stewardship committee, then ask the people with those skills.
- Have lay people in the church talk to other lay people about their own giving, either through newsletter articles or speaking briefly during announcements in church.
- Change up the stewardship campaign each year, so that you are teaching new things, and using new ways of asking for and gathering pledges.

Sample B

Your congregation may use some, or all, of these. Each church has its own culture. Maybe you can work on just two or three things a year, but change we must. If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you already got.

1. Scripture-Based Theme - base the theme of your campaign around scripture; offer training to the volunteers involved that include Bible Study; recruit as many volunteers as possible to help with the campaign (up to 20 to 30 percent of the congregation is best).
2. Witness Talks - Short vignettes from lay members of the congregation on why they give to God - Use an outline for putting these together and have them reviewed and edited if necessary.
3. Personalize the Appeal - Use personal letters/approaches as individualized as possible (no more one size fits all; segment the donor base). At the minimum use different appeals to those already giving and those yet to make a commitment.
4. Sermon/Teaching - Use scripture-based stewardship sermons by clergy and lay folks and provide opportunities for teaching in small and large groups about what the Bible and Jesus tell us about giving.
5. Year Round Stewardship - Practice year-round stewardship, not just the fall campaign for funds; honor time, talent, the environment, thank ministries and honor those involved regularly at worship services.
6. Thank People All the Time - Thank people for their contributions of time, talent, and treasure; thank you's from clergy mean much to lay people, a thank you should go out within a week for every pledge card that comes in. When sending financial statements, always include a thank you.
7. Celebrate - Hold a gathering of pledge cards, bring them to the altar and give thanks for the abundance in your church; hold a festive meal/brunch/celebration and give thanks together.
8. Transparency - Financial, budget, salary information needs to be available and congregations need to be honest and upfront about the realities of their finances and giving. Honesty is the best policy; people need to know sooner rather than later. Be clear about the mission and ministry of the congregation.
9. Publish a Giving Ladder - Share a giving ladder, by levels, showing how many people give at various levels; tell people what the average pledge is for your church, and how it stacks up with local churches, the diocese, and the national average.

10. Narrative Budget - Include a simple, straightforward, low level format budget that outlines in a pie chart where the money goes, with a mission orientation; outreach, pastoral care, youth, music, etc. Have a detailed budget available for the few who ask.
11. Publish the Names of All Who Make a Pledge - Publish the names of all those who make a financial pledge, in alphabetical order, in the Sunday bulletin or in your newsletter, thanking each individual/family for supporting the mission/ministry of the church with their gift. Allow for anonymity with a line on the pledge card.
12. Teach Proportional Giving/Tithing/Holy Habits - Include information about proportional giving and a chart to help people determine the percentage they are giving. Provide information about tithing as the standard of the Episcopal Church and invite them into a deeper relationship with Christ.