

## Essential Elements of Stewardship

### About Annual Campaigns

Many thriving churches are moving away from annual campaigns and emphasizing tithing - not as a way of raising funds for the church, but as a way of growing in one's relationship with God, and growing as a congregation.

But many congregations still do annual campaigns. The question for them is, "How can we conduct an annual emphasis on financial commitment that is consistent with what we believe about God, the Church, and Christian discipleship?"

### Essential Ingredients

1. **A clear theological statement:** Why are we doing this? It's not just a rationale; it provides criteria for deciding what to do and what not to do, what to say and what not to say. It needs to be consistent with the congregation's understanding of its vision - where do we see God leading us, and how are we following?
2. **Setting Goals:** these can be churchwide goals, session goals, individual goals. Goals bring us together, encourage us to work together. Beware of a goal that implies that "once we've reached our budget, that's all, folks!"
3. **Telling the Story:** What is God doing in your congregation? How do you get the word out? What's exciting, faithful, energizing?  
Hint: A line-item budget is an accounting tool, not a way to tell the story.
4. **Leadership:** Who needs to lead, in what ways, and when? Think year-round and long-term.
5. **Involvement:** In an annual stewardship emphasis, the more people who are actually involved the better. There should be a role for everyone, no matter what their life situation.
6. **Every Member Contact:** Notice it doesn't say "Every Member Canvass." There are many methods out there. Don't stay with any one method for more than three years at most.
7. **Celebration and Thanks:** How about celebrating faithful commitments made, thanking God for new opportunities for ministry and new vitality in people's spiritual lives? Don't neglect to thank people who have made these commitments.

## Year-Round Stewardship and Interpretation: (for example)

**September**...Rally day, education of our children, Mission Fair representing mission locally and globally.

**October** ... Peacemaking Offering with World Communion...portion to be used locally. Where is the unrest in your community? Develop something locally that contributes to peace.

**November** ...Harvest, Thanksgiving, concern for the poor and homeless or a special emphasis on Hunger in midst of plenty. How about an "Alternative Christmas" Fair for those last minute or justice-concerned shoppers?

**December** ...Christmas Joy Offering for PCUSA pensioners and for Racial/Ethnic Schools, a speaker from Menaul or Cook or someone with history of plaza schools in NM or AZ? Las Posadas and the gift of hospitality..encourage the congregation to welcome international students into their homes for the holidays.

**January**....Celebrate the community use of your church building...and the financial gifts of members that make keeping the building open possible. Day Care, Parent's day out, AA, Al-Anon, Community Chorus, shared space with another faith community such as Korean Church or Jewish Temple, etc.

**February**...Bring in an international mission speaker...a missionary on home assignment or an international studying or working in this country. Have a 4 to 6 week period of concern for the global church. Try the Missionary in Residence from Worldwide Min.

**March**...One Great Hour of Sharing Offering...set \$ goals and interpret for several weeks on Disaster Response, Refugees, Hunger, Self-Development. Try drama, visual aids and more.

**April**...Begin the planning of this year's stewardship campaign...and the mission interpretation around it. Go on (planning needs to begin almost a year in advance) mission trips within the U.S.A. and/or internationally with youth and adults during Spring Break. Expose people to another reality than their own community.