



SAMPLE

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO STEWARDSHIP

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO STEWARDSHIP

PREPARATION

Stewardship is an ongoing practice, but as you prepare for your seasonal stewardship campaign, we strongly encourage you to start early in your preparations. Form your team and plan for at least three to four sessions of spiritual formation using our materials prior to working on specific campaign details. Our preparation materials will walk you through writing your personal and your communal money stories.

Why start this way? Why invest so much time in spiritual development with your team before getting started planning your campaign? Because we are meaning-makers. We process information through story. We remember and retell narratives. The best stories captivate and transform us—they change how we live. Learning more about your personal money stories will become valuable as you work together. When you know each other's stories, you can more gracefully support one another when you are facing challenges or difficult money decisions. You can help each other identify when your personal money stories might be causing conflict or limiting your capacity. You can also better celebrate the gifts of your team members when you know the parts of their money stories that hold promise.

Writing your community's money story will help you gain clarity around how your community lives out (*or is neglecting to live out*) your beliefs and values. It will help define your approach and shape your actions moving forward. Additionally, telling your community's money story (*or parts of it*) throughout your stewardship campaign can create connection and build trust. It will paint a clearer picture of who you are and how your community members can contribute to your larger mission. It should incite energy and inspire engagement.

Here's the process we recommend pursuing with your stewardship team:

PHASE 1: YOUR MONEY STORY

Refer to and use the document: "Your Money Story Workbook"

PART ONE WRITING THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR MONEY STORY | 30-45 min

To be completed individually (as homework or within a longer group session)

PART TWO PROMPTS FOR INDEPENDENT REFLECTION | 15-25 min

To be completed individually (as homework or within a longer group session)

PART THREE PROMPTS FOR SMALL GROUP SHARING | 45-60 min

To be completed in small groups of 2-3 people

PART FOUR LARGER GROUP SHARING (OPTIONAL) | 30-45 min

To be completed together as a larger group, with each small group sharing with the whole group

PHASE 2 / YOUR COMMUNITY'S MONEY STORY

Refer to and use the documents: "Your Community's Money Story Curriculum Guide" & "Your Community's Money Story Worksheet"

SESSION 1 | 1.5-2 hrs

PART ONE *THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR COMMUNITY'S MONEY STORY* | 20-30 min

PART TWO *DISCUSSING & DISCERNING TRENDS IN YOUR COMMUNITY'S MONEY STORY* | 25-30 min

PART THREE *WRITING YOUR THEME STATEMENT* | 30-35 min

PART FOUR *GOD'S MONEY STORY* | 15 min

Completed at home by one or two copywriters:

PART FIVE *REFINE YOUR COMMUNITY'S MONEY STORY (TAKE HOME EXERCISE)*

SESSION 2 | 1 hr

PART SIX *ASSESSING YOUR STORY AND TAKING ACTION* | 60 min

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND

GATHER A STRONG TEAM.

Your campaign will only be as strong as your team is, so think carefully about who might join you. Ideally you will gather your pastor, a staff member who can handle many of the logistics, and several lay people who are excited to engage in this work, are up to learning new things, desire exploring their own money stories, and will pledge generously (*whatever that means to them*) and early. It helps if you combine skills of people who: dream, organize, ask, and communicate. Remember, your committee will be asking for a lot more than just money! You will ask for people to share testimony, write, plan, and engage with you.

ANALYZE DATA.

Data is your friend. Before you set goals, look at how many have pledged in the past, and determine your regular attrition rate. Review who has pledged what and set potential goals for each household; this will allow you to set a reasonable goal. Review the money gathered over the past several years and look at trends. This review can be done by one or two people and then reviewed by a larger committee. Before this work begins, the committee should know that this work requires confidentiality.

ANALYZE DATA. (continued)

As you do this, notice trends: evaluate if your campaign goals in the past have been met through a few donors or the entirety of the community. What is their generational makeup? What about racial experience? This information will help you communicate more effectively and value the particularity of money stories. Keep lists handy of those who have given, what they have given, contact information, and any necessary pastoral information. This will serve you well.

A note: there are congregations who do not allow their pastors to see who pledges or what people pledge (*or give*). Regardless of your circumstances, think about why it is that you have the particular practice that you do. What are the stories that guide this practice? Are they stories you want to celebrate? Do you want to shift the narrative?

We personally advocate for pastors and small committees to know about their congregants' giving data.

Allow me to make our case:

- 1) **We trust our pastors with the most intimate details of our lives;** they are there for us at the most crucial times in our lives. As you have done work on your own money stories, you have seen that this work is also very intimate, very personal, and at times very hard. If we are to trust discretion and pastoral confidentiality with the most vulnerable parts of us, why is it that we so often prohibit our pastors with this information? What don't we trust about our pastors, or ourselves?
- 2) **Our financial reality reflects our life reality.** When pastors see pledges change or payments change, it means that something is happening that might require pastoral care. Tracking changes in giving patterns allows for pastors to deepen their pastoral care opportunities.
- 3) **A huge part of fundraising is thanking people.** Each congregant needs to be thanked, and their pastors are cut off from being able to engage in this sacred act by not knowing what they are thanking their congregants for. We realize that changing these habits can be challenging; at the very least, begin to analyze why you have them and how they are serving or not serving you.
- 4) **Pastors need to work on their narratives, too.** Transparency in giving can serve as a catalyst for pastors in asking questions about their own narratives about money, wealth, and their relationship to God.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



This resource was created in partnership with Mieke Vandersall & Erin Weber-Johnson from the Vandersall Collective

The Vandersall Collective serves churches and faith-based organizations as they imagine, identify, and implement their call for the 21st century. Learn more by visiting vandersallcollective.com

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