

# **Diocese of Nova Scotia & PEI Stewardship Workshop**

## **Overview of Four Parish Financial Stewardship Models**

An effective commitment program intentionally relates to the decisive factors of success: leadership, context, congregation. That is, the ability and commitment of the leaders, the socio-economic environment of the church and the kind and number of people who make up the membership are the main factors that determine the shape of all successful programs.

It is, therefore, important to spend time reflecting on the current situation of the parish. What did you do last year and the two or three years prior? What worked, what didn't and why? What are the realities of the congregation now in contrast to how it might have been the prior few years? Things to consider include:

- Are there lots of new members vs. fewer members vs. not much change?
- Is there an upbeat economy vs. anxiety producing economic conditions?
- Is there a new Rector vs. no Rector vs. same Rector as for many past years?
- Is there an energized leadership team vs. leadership exhausted from the latest capital improvement project?
- How is the perceived level of trust of the leadership?
- Is there a sense of vision for the future of the congregation?
- Are we a very large or a very small congregation?
- What is the general understanding of the theology of stewardship in the congregation?
- Is the parish in conflict or generally depressed?

All of these things, and more, have an influence on the kind of program that is best suited for the culture of the congregation in any given year. By analysis of the current conditions in the congregation vs. those that are desirable, the leadership will be able to identify, select, and design both the education and commitment programs. For obvious reasons, all of the key leadership of the congregation should be involved in this evaluation.

To be effective, each of the following four models must have an effective stewardship education teaching component. The more people who participate in the stewardship education, the more effective whatever model you choose will be.

The following outlines the most common types of effective and personal stewardship commitment programs used in the diocese:

## ***The Faithful Member Home Visitation Commitment Program Every Member Canvass***

Over the years we have learned that visits to every household in the parish by trained stewardship visitors is the most effective process for the ongoing conversion of the members of the church and for increasing their knowledge about and commitment to the mission and stewardship of the church.

The basic requirements for a successful Faithful Member Visitation Program include:

1. Carefully recruited, trained and motivated callers, enough so that no caller is expected to make more than 3 calls.
2. A thorough training event, no callers visiting without participating in the training.
3. Careful screening of the homes to receive calls. Do not call where there will be no welcome.
4. A leader to personally report back to after the calls are completed.
5. Mail contact with all households before and after the calls
6. A celebration to honor the callers.

### **The Four Basic Advantages of a Visitation:**

1. Creates a clear focus on the spiritual and evangelistic dimensions of life together in Christian community. This is **stewardship! This builds community like no other stewardship model.**
2. Provides excellent opportunity to give information about the work and vision of your parish program; also to hear what members think about the church and its ministry.
3. Encourages stewardship commitment as a thoughtful, intentional act of discipleship.
4. Clears up misunderstanding about the priorities of the parish and those who want to be on the parish list or not.

### Weaknesses:

- i) Requires a large commitment from parishioners
- ii) Takes time
- iii) Requires training for all visitors
- iv) Requires reporting back from each visitor
- v) Should be followed up with a celebration

## *The Commitment Sunday (and Consecration Sunday)*

**Commitment Sunday:** Commitment Sunday concentrates on a single Sunday morning when every member of the parish is expected to participate in a special worship service where people complete their financial commitment during the worship service. This program can be part of a special luncheon held following the service. An outside guest preacher is often recruited to speak. The main energies of the congregation are directed toward promoting a very large attendance for Commitment Sunday.

The elements of a successful Commitment Sunday are:

1. Leading up to Commitment Sunday, preparing the congregation through the use of sermons, witnessing and/or story telling by select members of the parish.
2. Innovations in the worship service that makes the Sunday special (children's choir, special guest preacher, something other than the "norm").
3. A meal after church to celebrate, with some entertainment.

**Consecration Sunday:** An four-week program which includes:

- A leader, the Guest Steward, from outside the congregation, to inspire leadership and to preach.
- Three members, the Witnessing Stewards, giving witness to why giving is important to them.
- A sermon by the Steward Pastor on giving and being a steward.
- A series of letters to the whole congregation.
- A dinner for congregational leaders.
- A special Consecration Sunday, including a worship service where giving commitments are made and the giving cards are brought forward for consecration, and a luncheon in "Celebration of the Stewards."
- An effective effort at follow-up with all members who haven't responded.

**Strengths** -- Requires little time or training. Can distribute materials about the parish program easily. Is low cost. Can use a guest leader. Requires little calling and few volunteers. It provides a truly inspirational and motivational environment because it is the gathering of a faithful Christian community.

It gives assurance of an honest, favorable response because the people who attend church regularly are more inclined to respond openly. It allows for the use of audio-visuals, graphs or charts.

**Limitations** -- May rise or fall on the strength of the sermon or the guest leader. Offers little opportunity for involvement, discussion and questions about parish programs. Does not reach shut-ins. Does not reach the marginal members of the congregation. May require extensive follow up to those who do not attend. It depends upon a large attendance for any measure of success. Two-thirds of the membership should be present to make this effective. It allows those who desire to avoid accepting responsibility to do so. It requires a follow-up of those not attending and upon those who chose not to make commitments at the service

## *The Festive Meal*

### **(Banquet or Loyalty Dinner) Commitment Program**

All energies of the congregation are focused toward one major event. Table Hosts are recruited and trained and assigned members whom they invite to join their dinner table group. Discussion Leaders, who are matched with Table Hosts, are also recruited and trained. In large congregations, it may be necessary to host more than one event, either concurrently or at different times.

The elements for a successful Festive Meal Program are:

1. A wonderful place for the meal.
2. Good entertainment.
3. An inspiring speaker.
4. A brief Bible study.
5. Trained Table Hosts
6. Trained discussion leaders.

#### Strengths:

- i) All energies of the parish on focus on the one event
- ii) Matched and trained table hosts and discussion leader
- iii) In large congregations more than one event may be required
- iv) Chance to study scripture together

#### Weaknesses:

- i) Need a wonderful place to eat together
- ii) Need good entertainment and an inspiring speaker
- iii) Need to train and match table hosts and discussion leaders

## ***The Cottage Meeting Commitment Program***

The elements for a successful cottage meeting program:

1. A host home for every 8 to 10 persons in the congregation.
2. A trained host(ess) for each home.
3. A trained discussion leader for each home.
4. A brief Bible study.
5. Dessert.

### **Strengths:**

- i) 8-10 people per home
- ii) Trained host and discussion leader for each home
- ii) Scriptural base
- iii) Good dessert

### **Weaknesses:**

- i) Not everyone will take part
- ii) Requires training of willing hosts and/or leaders
- ii) Someone must provide good food

## **Basic DRAFT Timeline To Be Revised Depending on Commitment Model**

### *Week 1*

#### **Sunday,**

Bulletin cover for Parish Stewardship program launch  
Bulletin announcement  
Mailing – Rector's/Warden's letter announcing launch of stewardship program

### *Week 2*

#### **Sunday,**

Focus on parish vision of ministry and outreach  
Introduction to principles and practice of stewardship by a key lay stewardship leader (Parish Council Chair)

### *Week 3*

#### **Sunday,**

Lay witness presentation

### *Week 4*

#### **Sunday, Commitment or Celebration Sunday**

Lay witness presentation  
Focus on parish ministry and outreach  
Stewardship Commitment Focus  
Intercessions - thanksgivings

## Planning Your Parish Financial Stewardship Campaign

The following **planning questions will assist you in working out your parish's plans**, timetable and calendar for this Fall's campaign. This is a great way to clarify what you will do and what resources will help you to do it.

1. *How will **Stewardship Teaching** be a focus at Sunday worship services?*  
See below: Planning a Stewardship Focus....
2. *What **Educational Opportunities** can you present during the week?*  
Suggestions:
  - a) Use Bible Study and other resources.
3. *What **Information** do people need before making their financial commitment?*  
Suggestions:
  - a) letter from Rector, announcement of the stewardship program, information about parish;
  - b) indication of what to expect - special Sundays, speakers, events, how commitments may be made, Highway coverage (suggest parish newsletter coverage also);
  - c) will these items be delivered by visitors, picked up on Sundays, or used at a Festive Meal or Cottage Meeting?  
(Dates and deadlines for completion of such plans will be needed).
4. *What **Model** will you use to obtain financial pledges?*  
If you're using Visitors, have they received training?  
Are Visitors expected to collect Commitment Cards, or will this be done during the services on Commitment Sunday? Will you need to recruit phoners?
5. *Have you planned the **Conclusion** to your stewardship focus?*
  - a) blessing of Commitment Cards;
  - b) thank-you letter to those who have made a financial commitment;
  - c) special appreciation for the work of Visitors and committee members;
  - d) follow-up to those not making commitments.

### Planning A Stewardship Focus for each Sunday Worship

**Suggested Order of Service** (\*Items having a stewardship focus)

General announcements (other than Stewardship)

1. Singing before Liturgy begins
2. Processional
- \* 3. Introduction by Stewardship Chair - theme of the day, reminder of stewardship events, etc.
- \* 4. Lay Witness talk
5. Liturgy of the Word - Opening
6. Collect
- \* 7. Bulletin insert reading - Stewardship message is read aloud to congregation by Wardens
8. Scripture readings
- \* 9. Sermon
10. Creed
- \* 11. Prayers of the People - pray Stewardship Prayer together
12. The Peace
13. Offering.
14. Celebration of the Eucharist.
15. Commissioning of Visitors.
16. Recessional.

**NOTE:** At least one hymn with the theme of Stewardship is sung during the Service.