

# Giving is God's Way

Stewardship materials from the Diocese of Southwark

**Part 5:  
After the  
campaign**

## How to use this guide

*Giving is God's Way* is designed to work in five distinct stages, each covering a different aspect of your campaign. For best results, you are encouraged to tackle each section in the order suggested. Each stage comes with a step-by-step guide to completing all the necessary tasks in that section, plus a checklist summary at the end.

**Part 1:  
Getting  
started**

This section shows you how to lay the groundwork for a successful campaign, including choosing your planning team, assessing the current state of your stewardship and gathering together the financial information you will need for your brochure and promotional materials.

**Part 2:  
Teaching &  
preaching**

The second part of *Giving is God's Way* asks people to consider their own response to God's generosity. This section links to a range of possible Bible studies to help with this question, and also provides sample sermons to preach at the beginning and end of your campaign.

**Part 3:  
Asking for  
money**

This section gives advice on creating your own brochure to support your *Giving is God's Way* campaign, how to write 'ask' letters and what to include in the packs you distribute to encourage giving, including response and Gift Aid forms.

**Part 4:  
Giving  
thanks**

An important part of your stewardship campaign is saying thank you to those who have responded. This section shares ideas for thank you letters, a thanksgiving service and how to follow up with people who may not have engaged with your campaign yet.

**Part 5:  
After the  
campaign**

Once the campaign is over, it is time to reflect. This section shares ideas on how to debrief everyone involved in delivering *Giving is God's Way*, how to assess your strategy and success and how to continue to encourage generosity in the future.



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Even after your *Giving is God's Way* campaign has ended, there is a lot to learn from it. What went well, what didn't go as well, who responded and how: all this is learning that can feed into future campaigns. It is therefore good practice to take time to reflect on and review your ongoing stewardship strategy.

Developing a congregation of faithful givers does not happen with one campaign; it needs a year-round approach of encouragement and teaching so that people will be able to respond to Paul's invitation to "excel in this grace of giving".

As well as encouraging individual giving, the PCC needs to demonstrate that it is a good steward of the money entrusted to it. The PCC should be open, transparent and accountable as well as corporately generous in supporting mission and ministry elsewhere.

## Step 1: Debrief and evaluation

The planning team should arrange to meet and debrief after the end of *Giving is God's Way* to evaluate the process. Learning from your experience will enable you to identify some points to be included in your future stewardship strategy.

It may be helpful to gather some informal feedback as well as analysing results to form a more complete picture. A short questionnaire to help identify areas for improvement is one of the [supporting documents for this section](#).

Please consider what good news you would like to communicate to the congregation as a way of encouraging them in their discipleship.

"Now as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you – so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking" – 2 Corinthians 8: 7

## Step 2: Review your strategy

After your successful initiative, it is a good opportunity for your PCC or stewardship committee to think about your current strategy, identify some development priorities and incorporate these into a medium- and longer-term plan. At the heart of good practice on encouraging generosity are seven key tasks, according to the *Giving for Life* report commended by General Synod in 2009 (material from which is reproduced on the following pages):

- preaching and teaching regularly about generous giving in the context of discipleship

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- clearly communicating that giving to the church enables the mission and ministry that flows from it
- holding some form of annual review of giving
- sending an annual, personal 'thank you' to regular givers
- agreeing a legacy policy and communicating this to church members
- claiming Gift Aid regularly
- using the [Parish Buying Service](#) to steward your resources wisely.

After your *Giving is God's Way* initiative, think about adopting these key tasks, which we know help churches to develop a rounded approach to biblically based stewardship and a culture of generous giving. Generosity is not just about the giving of money – the giving of time, skills, hospitality and compassion are vital too – but sometimes we have to focus on finances.

## i. Preaching and teaching

Preaching and teaching on matters of generosity and stewardship are essential if we are to learn to live generously as disciples of Jesus. It's not just about money but to help us seek to respond to God's generosity to us.

Teaching is important in ensuring that giving and generosity are taught within the context of discipleship as well as tackling wider money issues such as ethical spending, debt, contentment and simplicity. Home groups, personal reflections, blogs and magazine articles are good ways of helping church members to think through these issues. Remember to include children and young people in your discussions.

## ii. Communicating mission and ministry

It is helpful for givers if you clearly communicate how their donations enable mission and ministry. All too often churches focus on their cost or budget shortfall, but it is inspiring for donors to hear wider faith perspectives, and what their giving enables in terms of both current ministry and future vision.

You can help church members to understand this link by using figures from the Parish Support Fund as an example of how giving provides parish ministry; it is also a good idea to add local examples such as teaching children through school assemblies, baptisms or providing bereavement care. You can find out more about the Parish Support Fund on the Diocesan website at [southwark.anglican.org/giving/parish-support-fund/](https://southwark.anglican.org/giving/parish-support-fund/)



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## iii. Holding an annual review

It's much healthier to review giving on an annual basis rather than every three or four years – it's how money works for most of us, prompting us to think about what we give and reminding us that giving is a key element of discipleship.

## iv. Annual 'thank you' letters

Annual thank you letters provide the opportunity to show that the giver is appreciated and to remind donors how their contribution is making a difference to the life of the church. Make sure it's at a different time of year from any annual renewal process so your 'thank you' letter cannot be interpreted as a request for more.

The letter can be signed by the Treasurer, the Gift Aid Secretary or the vicar but be careful to maintain confidentiality. If the letter contains personal financial information, such as the amount of Gift Aid recovered, it must come from someone the donor would expect to have access to those details. One option is to send a general thank you letter from the vicar with an attachment from the Gift Aid Secretary noting the amount given.

An alternative way of acknowledging people's contributions and how these impact on the mission and ministry of the church is by creating a 'generosity in numbers' poster. The Diocese of Durham has a template for this at [bit.ly/GenerosityInNumbers](http://bit.ly/GenerosityInNumbers).

### Top tips for thank you letters:

- time the letter for January/February at the end of the Church's financial year or around late April/May to fit with the tax year
- keep it personal: handwrite the greeting and sign in blue ink; avoid impersonal mailing labels and the impression that it is photocopied
- a well-written thank you letter helps to build relationships and affirms the place of the donor as a partner in the life of the church

***"When thanking me for a donation, please do not ask for more money. It's better to say nothing than to send this kind of thank you note" – Burk's Blog, What donors are thinking in 2018***



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- the letter should refer to the things that the church has achieved in the past year. Be specific: focus on the mission, not just that the bills have been paid
- ideally, you should explicitly thank givers for the amount of their donation; this acts as a receipt and helps people to realise the impact of their weekly giving. If you do mention people's exact giving, make sure the letter comes from someone such as the Parish Stewardship Officer or Gift Aid Secretary
- consider including a standard sentence about higher-rate taxpayers being able to claim further relief on their Gift Aided donations between the basic rate of tax claimed back by the Church and their higher rate of tax
- do not ask the recipient to review their future giving – a thank you letter should simply say 'thank you' and not be a request for more
- where possible, personalise the letter to thank the recipient for any other help that they have given the church over the year, for example as a sidesperson or PCC member
- finally, re-read any letters before they are sent out to double check that the main message is 'thank you' and not another request for money!

Three separate templates for different 'thank you' letters are among the [supporting documents for Part 5](#). Please try to vary your 'thank you' letters each year. Remember to ensure that you are GDPR compliant (see box, below).

### v. Agree and communicate a legacy policy

We should also be encouraging members of our congregation to make a will if they haven't already done so. Without one, a court could decide how to distribute a family's money and belongings and even who should look after any children or dependants.

Southwark Diocese has a variety of leaflets to support you, including a straightforward PCC guide on encouraging will writing and information leaflets for individuals on wills. Find them on the Diocesan website at [southwark.anglican.org/giving/legacies-and-giving-in-memory/](https://southwark.anglican.org/giving/legacies-and-giving-in-memory/)

Please note that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) changed the way in which we handle personal information and data stored on individuals. This will make a difference as to how you circulate stewardship review material. For more details about GDPR and our Diocesan advice please see our website: <https://southwark.anglican.org/support/for-our-churches/data-protection/>



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## vi. Claim Gift Aid regularly

Each year, parishes claim more than £90m through Gift Aid and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) but the Church of England is missing out on up to £10m more. The Diocesan website has advice on how to get started with Gift Aid and general best practice at [southwark.anglican.org/giving/gift-aid/](https://southwark.anglican.org/giving/gift-aid/). You can also find a Gift Aid checklist at [www.parishresources.org.uk](https://www.parishresources.org.uk).

## vii. The Parish Buying Service

This service enables the Church to take advantage of its overall buying power through a series of national contracts for many of the goods and services which parishes use such as energy, photocopiers, paper and office products, software, telecoms and fire safety. Find out more about how the service works and whether your parish could benefit at [www.parishbuying.org.uk](https://www.parishbuying.org.uk).

## Step 3: Consider other areas of good practice

Two or three times a year the Diocese sends a newsletter, *Stewardship Shoots*, to Treasurers and Gift Aid secretaries which highlights news and recent developments. If you would like to be added to the mailing list then please e-mail Gabby Parikh, Head of Giving, at [gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org). You can also contact the Parish Giving Communications Officer if you have any queries about stewardship practice or would like any help.

Other areas of best practice you might like to adopt are listed below.

### Appointing a stewardship adviser

Think about appointing a local Stewardship Adviser or Parish Giving Officer who can encourage giving and generosity and help with key tasks. More details, including top tips and a sample role description, are available on the Parish Resources website at [www.parishresources.org.uk/giving/parish-giving-officers/](https://www.parishresources.org.uk/giving/parish-giving-officers/)

### Digital giving

New forms of giving are growing fast and digital giving is a key current topic. Whether you are considering online giving, text giving, would like to receive card payments or investigate crowdfunding, the Parish Resources' Digital Giving page has guidance: [www.parishresources.org.uk/digital-giving](https://www.parishresources.org.uk/digital-giving)



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The Diocese has taken part in the National Card Reader trial; I-Zettle and Sum-up terminals are available to buy at [www.parishbuying.org.uk](http://www.parishbuying.org.uk). Contact Gabby Parikh, Head of Giving, at [gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org) for more information.

## Teaching good stewardship

Ethical spending, budgeting and debt counselling are areas where churches have identified that they can offer support services for their community. Some hold money management courses such as Christians Against Poverty's Money course, to help people 'get more in control of their finances, so they can save, give and prevent debt', or work with CAP and other organisations to provide help to those with debt issues.



## Sharing good news stories

While running *Giving is God's Way* you will have been communicating God's generosity and your church's vision and plans. Consider how you might continue to share good news stories about people's generosity and God's blessing with your congregation. This may be through updates in a magazine, on your website, using personal testimonies, videos or blogs. Do you have a giving page on your website? If not, would this be helpful?

If you give to overseas and local mission, report back to the congregation about the thank you letters you have received concerning the work as this is part of how you are distributing people's gifts and is part of the mission and ministry of your church.

## Reimagining the offertory

A big challenge is trying to encourage people to give regularly and there are both benefits and disadvantages to passing a plate during the service. The Parish Resources' *Reimagining the Offertory* resource, available at [www.parishresources.org.uk/offering/](http://www.parishresources.org.uk/offering/), aims to "help parishes enable their offering to move closer to becoming both a joyful act of worship and a committed part of discipleship".

As well as talking about how to enrich your current practice, the resource also offers advice on topics such as providing information for visitors or new members to help them understand what the collection or offering is about.



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## Step 4: Review

If you have completed all the steps to your satisfaction, use the checklist below to review where you are. You can find further assistance in [Other resources](#).

		Notes
Step 1	Notes from your debrief and evaluation	
Step 2	Have you reviewed your stewardship strategy in the following areas: preaching and teaching; communicating mission and ministry; legacies; Gift Aid and Parish Buying? Have you decided how and when you will be sending out your annual 'thank you' letters?	
Step 3	Have you thought about appointing a stewardship adviser, digital giving, teaching courses on money management, how to share good news stories going forward and how to approach the offertory?	

