



CONGREGATIONAL  
STEWARDSHIP  
WORKBOOK

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# *Planning Whole Life Stewardship*



**Congregational Stewardship  
Workbook 2000**

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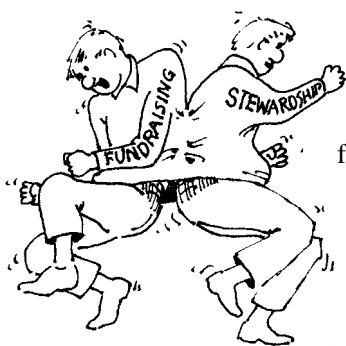
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# Planning Whole Life Stewardship

## Synopsis

“So what is stewardship?” asks James Hudnut-Beumler. “It is the responsive practice of human beings tending to what has been placed in their care by God. It is the responsive practice in the sense that it is something people do because of what God has first done for us. Stewardship is the peculiar response that we can make to our creator who has blessed us with gifts and given us responsibility for creation and for the Gospel.”

This section offers readers the challenge of seeing stewardship with new eyes. Over the centuries the church has wrestled with how to develop both revenue and disciples. God has richly blessed the church when it has sought to follow Him faithfully. When the



church has failed, it has jeopardized the welfare of many. Stewardship and money are both deeply rooted in the human heart. It follows that confusion is inevitable, but confusion also provides opportunity for dialogue and the development of greater insight. We need to separate stewardship from fund raising so that we can be better stewards of both.

The intent of this section is to stimulate dialogue by presenting a tray of “seedling thoughts” to be planted in the soil of people’s lives and congregational processes. These thoughts are organized around five core areas: Grace, Gifts, Gratitude, Growth and Generosity. Thoughts not typically emphasized in stewardship programs are:

- Stewardship involves all life, not just church.
- Stewardship builds on the congregation’s stewardship of people.
- Stewardship is more about investing than giving.





















## Notes

salvation and reconciliation to the world. Stewardship is about our willingness to place our trust in God by investing generously from all that we have care of. Such stewardship involves risk because we must relinquish our sense of ownership and place our sense of future and well being beyond our ability to control.

### Activity 1:

How could our congregation take steps to better identify and use people's gifts?

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### Activity 2:

What steps can we take to honor members for their life of stewardship outside the church?

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## Grace, Gifts, Gratitude, Growth, Generosity

Stewards are grateful people; grateful for the honor of being trustees of the possessions of the creator of the universe. We understand, if only in part, the breadth and depth of the gifts God has entrusted to us. We seek to more fully appreciate the gift of life in its knowns and mysteries, the gift of the Gospel, the gift of relationships, the gifts of talents and creativity, and the gift of the world in which we live. Our response to God's grace is an attitude of gratitude and desires to seek what God desires for us.

Gratitude begins with the small graces God blesses us with in ordinary everyday life: small moments of insight, joy and laughter, peace, relationships, quiet, pain and anxiety, prayer, reflection and study. Experiencing God everywhere in every day enables us to discern and respond to His loving presence in all dimensions of our life. It is through wakefulness, listening, deep empathy and concern with helping others that we become more aware of God's rich blessings and great gifts. Deep gratitude that ultimately leads to generosity begins with an overwhelming sense of God's abundant grace to us in all aspects of our world and our life.

How can the church encourage generosity? By graciously accepting what people contribute. Be prepared to receive what people have to offer when and where they offer it. Provide opportunities for people to respond



















