

November 2009 (dot) Stewardship



An Annual Stewardship Emphasis is Vital

Many pastors have discovered the value of planning a stewardship series each year. Mark Lindstrom, senior pastor at Bentonville, Ark., Church of the Nazarene, is one such pastor.

According to Mark, an annual stewardship series “is essential because Christ’s followers need as much discipleship training in this area as they do in other areas of spiritual growth.” Mark points out that, since Jesus talked about stewardship so much, we do our parishioners a disservice if we avoid the topic.

Mark recognizes that many people who attend his services have no Christian background. “They do not understand even the basics of how a church organization works,” he says. “Teaching them how we fund the mission is important to providing the resources needed to carry out the work God has called us to do.”

While Mark realizes each congregation is different, he usually presents his stewardship series in January. Because of this, he feels that the financial impact is felt through the entire spring. He also varies the focus of the series and tries to be creative while addressing stewardship from various angles. For instance, one year, Mark may focus on stewardship of life issues such as time, talent, treasure, and touch. Then, the next series may focus on the stewardship of wealth, resources, and money.

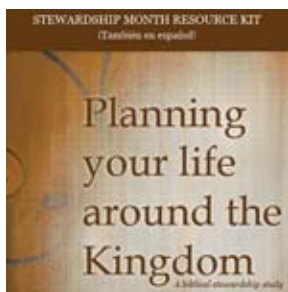
Mark usually supplements his four-week series with weekly letters or e-mail blasts, video clips, dramatic sketches, and other types of multi-media. From time to time, he has also involved small groups by providing curriculum that corresponds with the theme of the series. Mark also asks his people to sign a commitment card indicating their willingness to honor God in the areas addressed in the series. “We don’t seek a pledge number,” Mark says, “but we do seek a firm commitment to tithe and give offerings throughout the year.”

“I think it’s important to add a lot of humor to the subject,” Mark adds. “Many are disobeying God, especially as it relates to financial stewardship, so weaving opportunities to laugh about the issue as you sprinkle in heavy doses of truth is a good way to help them listen instead of getting angry.”

An annual stewardship emphasis is always part of Mark’s preaching plan. As he says, “Without an annual emphasis, we miss the opportunity to help our people grow spiritually and resource the vision of our ministry.”

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Tom Felder
Resource Manager



WEB EXCLUSIVE: Planning Your Life around the Kingdom

The newest version of the annual Stewardship Month Resource Kit series is now available from Stewardship Ministries. Created by Dr. Stan Toler, *Planning Your Life around the Kingdom* focuses on the big idea that God wants us to transform our world through generosity.

“As a believer in Jesus Christ, you are both a new person and a member of a new community, the kingdom of God,” says Dr. Toler. “Your life no longer functions according to the old rules where success was measured by how much you could earn, spend, and consume.

Your life operates by different values now.”

Planning Your Life around the Kingdom follows the pattern of the previous Stewardship Month Resource Kits in providing everything you need for a month-long stewardship emphasis. The resources include sermons, letters, bulletin inserts, PowerPoint presentations, and age-group lessons. All materials are also provided in Spanish.

Planning Your Life around the Kingdom is available now from Stewardship Ministries – free of charge! You can order your copy online at www.nazarene.org/stewardship and visit the online store. Or click this link and go directly there.

Previous versions of the resource kits are still available. These include:

- One Family: The Sacred Blend
- God Rebuilds: Building Kingdom Stewards
- Loving God: Loving Each Other
- Lordship Living: God Provides
- Cycle of Victorious Giving

All kits are available online, free of charge.

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Tom Felder
Resource Manager



NCM Gift Cards make memorable – and meaningful – presents

Christmas can present a unique challenge for families that don't want to get caught in the materialistic attitude that pervades our culture. Just in time for the beginning of the Advent season, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries has announced that their gift card, which contributes to livelihoods, education, and hope around the world, is now available.

This Christmas, you can extend the gift of hope with an NCM gift card.

Making use of existing technology and the capabilities to capture online credit card transactions, NCM is now moving down a path made wildly popular by gift card giants such as Wal-Mart, iTunes, and Target. Later this month, representatives of NCM, Information Technology, Web Development, and Stewardship Ministries will be recognized by nonprofit fundraising industry leader Convio, Inc. in Austin, Texas, for the creativity and implementation behind the gift card program.

Unlike buying or receiving a gift card to a mainstream retailer, an NCM gift card offers your friends and family the opportunity to support life-transforming compassionate ministries around the world. With this unique and practical gift consumers have the power to change lives \$25, \$50 and \$100 at a time.

Here's how it works:

- You purchase an NCM gift card
- You give the gift card to someone
- They learn about NCM causes at <http://www.ncm.org>
- They donate to a cause using their NCM gift card

The NCM gift card can be redeemed toward over 100 projects and causes, ranging from water wells, to supporting unsponsored children, to HIV/AIDS ministries, and more. Through such gifts, NCM partners with congregations worldwide to provide education, prayer, economic partnership, and training for communities in their times of need. Simply, the task is to extend Christ's love in word and action to those in need.

Visit <http://www.ncm.org/giftcard> to purchase an NCM gift card and give the gift of hope today.

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Information from NCM

Additional reporting by Josh Jakobitz



Do's & Don'ts for Year-End Church Contributions

Psalm 96:8 says:

"Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts."

Offerings, the product of the joyful, can be complicated. Please consider the following tips for year-end church contributions as tools, but don't allow them to overshadow the joy of giving.

- Do provide donors with quality charitable contribution receipts early in January. Your donor needs a receipt from your church prior to submitting his/her tax return. Individual donations of \$250 require acknowledgement from the church in order to be deductible.
- Do not allow contributions received in 2010 to be recorded as 2009 contributions, even if it's really early on Friday morning, Jan. 1.
- Do ask! The Bible makes it clear that bringing offerings to the Lord is appropriate. If there is a need, take it to the body of Christ and watch the miracle of generosity.
- Do pray... and have faith and trust that the Lord will lead through economic uncertainty.
- Do not accept checks post-dated for 2010 as 2009 contributions.
- Do not include the value of donated labor on charitable contribution receipts.
- Do say "Thank you!" A receipt is a receipt, but a personal word of thanks to faithful contributors speaks volumes.
- Do seek professional help when receipting large gifts of stock, real estate or property.
- Do use and carefully follow instructions for IRS form 1098-C for donations of vehicles.
- Do obtain and study [IRS form 526 Charitable Contributions](#)

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Mark E. Lail
Director

Thanks for reading!

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