Giving in Grace

Preparing the brochure

The brochure is the unifying element of the written literature, going to every person on the differentiated database. This document offers generic guidance on preparing a brochure for Giving in Grace in the local church.

Churches are entirely free to produce their own brochure from scratch or to edit freely the sample brochure provided under *Preparing the Literature* at *The Brochure* tab. The Giving in Grace logo may be replaced by another graphic and the title of the local programme may replace *Giving in Grace*. The text, of course, will need careful editing to reflect local ministry and ministry costs.

Feel and tone

Pay attention to the overall feel of the brochure. It will be sent to all church members: Leaders, Planned and Plate. Accordingly, it must reflect a spectrum of giving motivations. Some who read it will be primarily motivated in their giving by what the bible says and by their understanding of personal discipleship. For others it is the desire to resource mission and church activities and for yet others the financial facts of church life are being met for the first time. There must be some bible but it must not be overpowering. There will be some financial facts but they should not shape the brochure as a fundraising and not a faith-raising document.

Note also that the brochure colour scheme, straplines, logos and so on should influence the appearance of the written literature.

The church's ministry

A key task of stewardship in the local church is to connect the giving of money with the difference that the money makes in people's lives. This is one of the insights and key tasks in the excellent *Giving for Life* report from the Church of England in 2009. The brochure needs to identify not the *bills* we have to pay but the *ministry* we offer. The readers must recognise some of the key ministries of their church: youth work, a debt advice service, a thriving Friday club for older members of the community. Try to clarify the 'people difference' an increase in giving will make: for example, a new PA system to enhance our worship experience and assist the hard of hearing.

Always resist the temptation to dramatise the financial situation in the hope of extracting larger gifts. The word *CLOSED?* stamped over a picture of the church on the cover of a brochure is not helpful! The tone is one of urgency, invitation and opportunity, not of crisis or desperation in the last-chance saloon.

The financial facts of life

The brochure needs to carry a simple but accurate summary of the financial situation of the church, broken down into *weekly* amounts – annual figures just scare people off. This information has already been identified in the preparation of the Case Statement.

Always resist the temptation to put in too much financial detail. Church members need just sufficient information to help them make a realistic decision about their giving. The purpose of the brochure is not to communicate in-depth awareness of the church's finances but to request a serious review of personal giving to its ministry.

How much to give and the gift array

The brochure must carry clear and simple guidance to help people make their decision about how much more to give. Ambiguity and lack of guidance is fatal. We are not asking people just to *think* about or *consider* an increase in giving, we are asking people to act.

The template brochure includes the gift array prepared for the Case Statement. This offers to people a range of possible responses that reflects the different circumstances and faith experience of the congregation. When including the gift array in the brochure, just double-check that the figures are correct.

Of course, any planning group is free to exclude a gift array in favour of another form of guidance. You might invite everyone to tithe or to increase giving by £3 per week or by 30 pence for each £1 they currently give. There are advantages and disadvantages to all forms of guidance. These are briefly considered in Give from *What you Have* found under *Building the Case* at *The Gift Array* tab. Planning group members just need to be sure that the guidance offered is appropriate to their congregation and situation.

Whatever the practical guidance is, it must be there in the brochure. Don't leave people wondering what amount they should give. Don't simply ask people to give what they can, and never, ever, ask people to give a little more to the church. The way in which you make the ask sets the level of their gift: ask for a little and that is what you will get.

The proportionate giving table

The inclusion of a proportionate giving table is optional. The 2011 *Giving Insight report* [i] suggested that most church members do not think proportionately about their giving at all. You may feel that the table is best excluded from the brochure. It is included in the template brochure for two reasons.

First, the proportionate giving table resonates with those who already seek to give proportionately of their income and these will very often be the biggest givers in the church. Second, the proportionate giving table is there to open up another way of thinking about giving. Most charitable giving in the UK is defined by fixed amounts of money: £1, £5, £10 and so on. The result is a disconnect between income and giving levels that sustains both low-level and static giving. As household incomes increase, the percentage of income that is given away actually decreases. To make the point starkly, American Christians are giving a lower proportion of their income today than they were during the Great Depression. The proportionate giving table challenges people to reconnect income, lifestyle and generosity.

Notes and Resources

i A free download from www.parishresources.org.uk/giving