



Introducing Giving in Grace

Introduction

The focus of Giving in Grace is our Christian responsibility to give generously and proportionately of all that God blesses us with, in the area of money and possessions. This is not to deny for one moment the importance of good personal money management or the importance of the giving of time and talents. Giving in Grace is a process not a one off fundraising exercise. It is a lay led stewardship programme linking faith with giving as an act of worship, thanksgiving and ministry. Carefully and prayerfully planned it has yielded significant financial results for parishes in the Diocese of Liverpool and beyond. But its purpose is not simply to balance the books.

Giving in Grace helps Christians make the connection between the call to generous giving and their own personal journey of faith. Secondly Giving in Grace makes connections between our giving and the ministry and mission needs of the church. The programme is supported by a comprehensive range of resources which can be found at the website www.givinginGrace.org. The resources are grouped into the five essential strands or building blocks of the programme.

Preaching

There are background notes for sermon preparation and also 'ready to preach' sample sermons to support a three, four or five week preaching series. Four preaching tracks are available to suit the tradition and worship patterns of all churches. One track is based on passages from St Matthew's Gospel, a second is based on Paul's extended teaching about giving in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 and a third on passages from St Luke. A

fourth track is based on the Exodus narrative and has a greater emphasis upon all age worship. It is co-authored with Jane Leadbetter, Children's advisor in the Diocese of Liverpool, with CPAS and with David Bell, a freelance writer now working for the Diocese of Chester. There are additional materials for Harvest Festival and for a financial presentation, including interactive all age sermons where the parish plan (budget) can be presented to the congregation in the context of worship.

Leadership

The importance of leadership is stressed heavily within the programme. There are discussion papers for the PCC or leadership group in the church. There is advice on setting up the planning group, and the financial analysis needed to produce a case statement to help design the programme appropriate for the parish. In particular the leadership is encouraged to address two specific issues fundamental to Giving in Grace.

- [Differentiation](#) is the process of 'meeting people where they are' in their spiritual journey and making clear connections between faith and money by speaking in a language the *core* of the church, the *congregation* and the *fringe* will understand. This necessarily involves the planning group in producing a database for the parish using Electoral roll, planned giving scheme and pastoral lists.
- The [Case Statement](#) is a key document in the process. The PCC work on their strengths and weaknesses and financial analysis, exploring weekly giving, reserves, financial needs including their agreed plans for the following year and concluding with a parish plan and giving in grace programme design for consultation then action.

Prayer

Giving in Grace is a programme which should be rooted in prayer. Resources include intercessions, liturgical resources and ideas for assisting corporate and individual prayer around giving and money.

Interaction

The resources in this section aim to create space for people to discuss and reflect upon the challenge of Christian giving. The choice as to how this is done depends on what the planning group and PCC or leadership team see as appropriate for the church. Resources include materials for a parish visiting programme and four options for small groups study in home or cell groups.

Communication

All communication through the written word is based around the principle of differentiation, offering different literature for the core, congregation, and fringe groupings within the church. There is a wide range of pre-written materials that simply need the parish name and details inserted, and 'how to' guides for those parishes producing their own. Careful, sensitive and personal follow up of the responses and also the non responses from individuals is of key importance and is well resourced.

Planning for Giving in Grace

To make the most of Giving in Grace you need to get the right people doing the right things in the right way. This takes time; don't rush the planning. Better to delay the programme than attempt something half hearted and ill prepared. Like the wise man in Jesus' parable, build on deep and solid foundations. The web site has the information you need to run the programme itself.

- Get permission and agreement within the church leadership to go ahead with a programme.

- Choose the right people to lead and champion the initiative in the church in a small planning group.
- Identify and collect key financial information.
- Seek God's blessing through prayer and biblical reflection.
- Have an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the church and its people through talking and listening, face to face.

Timetables

A Timetable section offers a comprehensive range of agendas for the planning group complemented by checklists for the four key stages of the programme:

- Preparation: securing leadership agreement and establishing a planning group to plan the programme
- Planning: the phase prior to the launch of the programme with the preaching series. Typically this phase lasts for up to six months.
- Programme: the preaching period, typically three or four weeks closing with a Thanksgiving Sunday a fortnight after the end of the preaching series.
- Post Programme: evaluation and planning to address ministry and stewardship issues raised by the Giving in Grace programme.

Giving in Grace establishes formative and foundational principles which enable the church to attend to the need for Christian stewardship as a natural and normal part of church and parish life.

