



Communications

Drafting the brochure

Introduction

The brochure has a unique role as the unifying element of the written literature. It will go to every member of the church on the parish database. The letters that are sent are differentiated to the Core, Congregation and Fringe. By contrast all church members will receive the same brochure. The logos and colour schemes, even the typefaces found on the brochure should govern all other written communication - letters, response forms, briefing papers or any posters that might be produced.

Feel

Because it goes to all church members the brochure needs to carry multiple messages. Beware of making the brochure either too “spiritual” with an exclusively biblical appeal and content or too “financial” with too much focus on budgets. The brochure must reflect the concerns of those who give out of obedient discipleship and those for whom the financial realities of church life are encountered for the first time. The sample brochure will need to be edited to suit the local context. When editing the brochure consider the following principles

Our church section

People respond to specific requests that produce identifiable benefits. Edit the Our Church section of the brochure to reflect the local situation so that readers will recognise some of the key concerns of the ministry of their local church. 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. Resist the temptation to dramatise the financial situation in the hope of extracting larger gifts. The tone is urgency and opportunity, not crisis.

Finance

The brochure needs to carry a simple but accurate summary of the financial situation of the church broken down into weekly amounts. Much of this work has been done in the preparation of the Case Statement and this document should be consulted carefully. Resist the temptation to put too much financial detail. Church members need just sufficient information to help them make a realistic decision about their giving. Beware of trying to transfer knowledge about finances rather than a request for a review of giving levels.

Financial targets and the gift array

The brochure must carry definite financial targets to assist people in making their decision. Ambiguity is fatal to Christian stewardship; people need to know what it is they are being asked to do. The gift array or gift ladder offers a range of possible responses for church members to make. The gift array has already been prepared as part of the Case Statement. Be careful to check that it is correct and to insert the correct figures in the sample brochure. It is not unknown for a gift array to be printed for a real church with fictional sample figures!

The proportionate giving table

Resist the temptation to ditch the proportionate giving table in favour of dealing with set amounts of money. Most charitable giving is conducted on the basis of set amounts of money so that those on the lowest incomes who do give donate around 3% of income compared to less than 1% of the most wealthy. Proportionate giving reconnects income, lifestyle and generosity in a way that fixed amount increases can never do. Proportionate giving challenges people to give not only realistically in terms of financial need of the church but also in terms of their actual income.