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Rev Smale said: "Giving in Grace provides good sermon ideas, home group materials, and plenty of other resources. The opportunity for differentiation between various groups of people was also very useful for us. It allows people to explore how

Giving in Grace is relevant to them in particular and also gives them the impetus to really think about their role in the church community as well as their giving."



✠ CASE STUDY ✠

# St Mary's Church Overton

"Talking about money is never easy – but Giving in Grace encouraged us to bring it out in the open."



**Location:**  
semi-rural village

**Congregation:**  
120

**Started Giving in Grace:**  
September 2012

**When Giving in Grace was launched at a thanksgiving service at st Mary's Overton, the Home Group responsible for rolling it out was prepared for the fact that it would make some people uncomfortable.**

"People in general do not like talking about money," said Rev Ian Smale. "However, Giving in Grace isn't just another fundraising drive, nor is it all about money – it is about being good disciples. It opened the eyes of a lot of people to realise that all our funding,

and the ability to grow and develop our church, comes from each one of us. It especially helped some new Christians and some early on in their faith journey realise that giving is such a fundamental part of what it means to be a Christian."

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At the Giving in Grace launch service, Rev Smale and his preaching team used the sermon resources and spoke in particular about the implications of discipleship as seen in chapters 14:25 - 17:10 of Luke's Gospel.

However, the official launch in church was not the start of the process. The Giving in Grace programme was set up and run by one of their new Home Groups, who had also been trialling the resources themselves. The group did the initial research of looking at the Giving in Grace website and resources,

analysing how effective it had been in other parishes, how Biblical it was, and how it had been prepared and developed. "We had to be sure that it was the right thing for us," said Rev Smale.

The Home Group then presented to the PCC an outline of how Giving in Grace could work at Overton. They kept the PCC involved with progress right up to the launch in church, and continue to do so. All Home Group leaders were also introduced to the Home Group study materials before it was launched as a whole church initiative.

"It was significant for us that one of our Home Groups took on the task of running Giving in Grace. They had not been set up very long, but their stepping up to lead on this was itself discipleship in action."

When St Mary's started Giving in Grace in September 2012, they had a deficit of £10,000. This year they have halved that and ten people that didn't do so before now give regularly.

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"What Giving in Grace did for us is to enable us to keep going with all our initiatives, ministry, mission and outreach without having to pull back from anything. It is quite hard work, and there is a lot of material to get to grips with, but it has been very beneficial to us."

The church is also proposing to roll out a Giving in Grace follow up programme this year, and it is proposing a 'time and talents' Sunday to emphasise the fact that that aspect of discipleship is just as important as material giving.