



Select a Response Method

God's work. Our hands. How do you decide which stewardship method or program to use for the annual congregational response program? Often, the decision is formed by delaying a decision rather than by planning. Put yourself in a proactive planning position rather than falling into a reactive mode by answering the following questions. Your answers can guide you in the selection of methods or programs that would be in line with your goals and resources.

Begin by answering these questions:

1. What are the educational goals for the annual stewardship response program?
2. What are the goals for interpreting the ministries of your congregation?
3. What are the financial goals?
4. How many commitments are sought?
5. What response method(s) have you used for the past three years?
6. What has the effectiveness been of your last three response programs?
7. How many people will realistically be involved in the leadership of this emphasis?
8. What is the budget for this emphasis?
9. How much time is there between introduction of the stewardship response emphasis and the commitment date?
10. Are there response methods that are usually successful or should be avoided in your congregation?

Select a response method compatible with your answers. It is most effective to vary the response method, not using the same method for more than three years in a row.

Visitation

- * Deepens relationships within the congregation
 - * Provides a vehicle for in-depth dialog with membership
 - * Provides an opportunity to include education/interpretation
 - * Requires training of visitors
 - * Requires a significant number of workers
 - * Produces the high level of financial response
 - * Is most effective in congregations of 50 to 400 households
- Program Option: "Smart Living: Let the Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly"; How to Improve p. 28-31; Picture Book; Every Member un-Canvas

Relay

- * Is relatively easy to plan and execute
 - * Requires close monitoring
 - * Requires few people in the planning
 - * Requires little volunteer time and training
 - * Involves the entire congregation in implementation
 - * Produces better than average response rate
 - * Works best where members live close to the church
- Program Options: "Giving Magazine-Sharing the Gift" (2000); Pony Express (800/234-5844); How to Improve p. 16-17; Dessert First

Mailing

- * Requires little preparation
 - * Requires few people for implementation
 - * Allows for very minimal education and interpretation
 - * Is inexpensive
 - * Does not provide for interaction with members
 - * Produces lower than average response rate
 - * Works in any size congregation
- Program Option: None recommended

Pie and Prayer

- * Requires few volunteers with minimal time commitment
 - * Allows congregation to gather in smaller groups at one time
 - * Produces average response rate
 - * Works in almost any size congregation
- Program Option: None recommended; Small Group can be adapted

Small Group

- * Provides a non-threatening, comfortable atmosphere
 - * Requires training of small group leaders
 - * Uses existing small groups or can begin new small group
 - * Provides an opportunity for education and interpretation
 - * Can be staggered throughout the year
 - * Provides average response rate
 - * Works well in any size congregation
- Program Option: "Giving Magazine-Dessert First" (2001 issue); How to Improve p. 21-23; All God's Children Need to Give; Let God Lead As You Gather and Give; We Say Yes!; Generations of Generosity

Worship-based

- * Requires few volunteers
 - * Doesn't require a special event, a meal can follow worship
 - * Occurs in the natural rhythm, when most people gather
 - * Doesn't have education/interpretation built in, can be added
 - * Provides average response rate
 - * Works well in any size congregation
- Program Options: "Where Your Heart Is"; New Consecration Sunday; Stewardship Key Leader; How to Improve p. 14-15; Faithful, Hopeful, Loving; Rejoice; We Say Yes!; Great Permission; Walk with Jesus; Celebrate Generosity; New Beginnings

Meal

- * Provides a comfortable setting for making commitments
 - * Provides an opportunity for limited education/interpretation
 - * Requires minimal volunteer time commitment
 - * Does not require training
 - * Produces average response rate
 - * Works best in small sized or rural congregations
- Program Option: "Legacy: That Your Faith May Live"; How to Improve p. 18-20; Faithful, Hopeful, Loving; Every Member un-Canvas; Thanks/Giving Dinner Adventure; Common Hope, Common Trust

Year Round

- * Provides stewardship to be emphasized throughout the year
 - * Offers opportunities for education and interpretation
 - * Spreads the work through the year
 - * Is a challenge to change from a one-time a year emphasis
- Program Option: "Giving Magazine-Remember" (2002 issue); A Year-round Stewardship Program