

**52+ Offering Ideas**  
**(Includes prayers, kids stuff, devotions, sermon ideas, resources)**  
**<http://www.barnabasfoundation.com/firstfruits/52ideas>**

**Ideas for "special offerings"**

**Minute of Ministry**

Have you considered setting aside a "minute" during a worship service to highlight a particular ministry at your church or abroad? This worship experience creates a connection between what the congregation says it believes and how it acts out the church's mission. Whenever you choose to do a minute for ministry, planning and placement are important. Consider the following:

**Length:** It must never be longer than 3 minutes.

**Appropriateness:** Will the story appeal to the congregation's interest?

**Timeliness:** Does the subject relate to current events in the church?

**Factual:** Is the information correct? Where can you verify the information if in doubt?

**Placement:** What will precede and what will follow the Minute for Ministry? Does it fit within the flow of worship?

**WHO CAN GIVE A MINUTE OF MINISTRY?**

- **Individuals:** Minutes for Ministry offer excellent opportunities for individual members to participate in the worship service.
- **Team Presentations:** Two or more people may present a dialogue, skit, or interview that will make the information more vivid.
- **Guests:** Invite a representative closely involved in a ministry. Make sure guest speakers understand their time limit.

**SOME IMPORTANT "DO'S" FOR YOUR MINUTE OF MINISTRY**

- Tell a personal story about someone who has been helped by the church's ministry.
- Limit your presentation to one story.
- Look at your audience as though you are proud to tell the good news.
- Use visuals that are big enough to be seen by all.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Respect the established time limit.
- Feature descriptive information about the ministry in the church bulletin.

**IMPORTANT "DON'T'S" FOR YOUR MINUTE OF MINISTRY**

- Don't read from a script. Tell the story in your own words.
- Don't use a lot of statistics -- use no more than 2 significant figures.
- Don't tell the entire history of a ministry. Tell what is currently happening.
- Don't repeat.
- Don't use flip charts or graphs.

A Minute for Ministry can point out the need to support present ministries and will communicate how funds are used effectively and efficiently.

### **Limited Opportunity Giving**

Here is an idea to help raise a specific amount of money for a cause. In this case, money was needed to buy mattresses for a Honduran hospital. Only twenty envelopes were printed showing scanned pictures of the hospital and the doctor. At the table with the envelopes the church had a poster which told about the medical clinic and showed pictures of some of the church members volunteering there. The people were asked to take the envelopes and return them the following week with the specified amount enclosed. They could ask friends and co-workers for help. The scene after church was comical. People were fighting for the envelopes and then looking for someone who had one so that they could contribute. We raised much more than we had asked for!

### **Cheerful Giving Sports-style**

At a high point in baseball (or football) season, demonstrate "cheerful giving". Describe the crowd at the game. Perhaps lead a few cheers. Next read II Corinthians 9:7-8 and explain what Paul means by giving with "hilarity". Then have the ushers pass the hats, substituting baseball caps (or football helmets) for offering plates. Ask the organist to put out all the stops "Wrigley Field" style.

### **Offering vs. Collection Story**

The pastor tells a story as follows:

There was a little boy, Bobbie, who came home from school and asked his mother what was for supper. She replied that they were having pork chops. Bobbie looked into the oven to see four pork chops cooking. There were only three people in his family, so he assumed that the fourth pork chop would be for the dog. At supper that evening, dad was extra hungry and ate two pork chops. All that was left at the end of the meal were the bones. Bobbie gave them to his dog and said, "I hoped to give you an offering, but all I have is a collection."

An offering is firstfruits. A collection is left overs.

### **Mission Sunday**

Instead of having a mission week (or two), have a monthly Mission Sunday, during which an offering is taken for the missionaries that the church supports. Pray for them, and read information received from them during the offering. If possible, have the missionary come and share while the offering is being given.

### **Food Bank Sunday**

Once a month is Food Bank Sunday. A special offering is taken in addition to the regular offering. People are asked to come forward with their gifts which are received in offering plates on the communion table. It is impressive to see older people with canes, young people in blue denim shorts, and a child in a wheelchair, all come forward to present their gifts together.

### **Reverse Food Offering**

Once a year, a reverse offering uses slips of paper on which various food items are written. Each person takes one from the offering plate as it is passed. They are asked to bring that item to the front of church the following Sunday. This can be for the local food bank. It's always inspiring to see the pile of food right in front of the sanctuary.

### **Parable of Talents Offering**

Each member of the congregation, including the children, is given \$1.00 in an envelope. A sermon about Jesus and the Talents might be given on that Sunday (Matt. 25:14-30). Encourage every person in the congregation to get involved in investing that dollar (talent) to "multiply their talents" for a specified cause. One family bought a shovel and took turns shoveling neighbors' driveways to earn money (buy rake to rake neighbors' leaves).

## Soup-er Bowl Sunday

The week before Super Bowl Sunday, a drama can be presented, highlighting a special offering that will take place the following week for a local food pantry.

This is the way the drama went in the church that submitted this idea. It and can be altered to best fit your church.

Some middle-school boys barged into the service at the designated time (during announcements before the offering). They were dressed in white plastic aprons, chefs' hats, and carrying soup pots and spoons with a can or two of soup in the pots. Banging the spoons and making as much racket as they could, they made an announcement to the people. The pastor (in on the drama) acted angry and said to them "You can't do this. We're having a worship service here..." One of the "chefs" pleaded and said something about it being an offering, and that the deacons knew all about it. Other bits of humor were thrown into the drama. At the end, one of the key parts was a synchronized raising of the soup cans while saying: "Remember to bring your soup and cash for SOUP---er Bowl Sunday next Sunday morning."

The next week, the middle-school kids dressed in the aprons and hats with their soup pots, collecting the cans of soup and money from the congregation. In this church, over 500 cans of soup and about \$1000 was raised for their local food pantry, which was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the offering when the youth director, along with the young people, brought the soup and money to the shelter.

Not only does this get the young people in the church involved, it also helps a great cause!

## Souper Bowl of Caring

Here's another Super Bowl Sunday idea. Encourage people to give one dollar each as they leave worship on or near Super Bowl Sunday. Young people from the congregation stand at the sanctuary exits to receive the donations in large soup pots. All the money and any food collected is then sent to the charity of their choosing.

An organization keeps track of congregations that participate by having those churches report the amount collected via their web site ( [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org)) or by calling **1-800-358-SOUP** on the day of the Super Bowl game to determine national totals. In January 2001, Canada & U.S. churches & schools raised \$3.6 million to help the hungry.

## 90%/10% Challenge

When most people think about an offering and the tithe, they think 10% for God, 90% for me. To help people understand that ALL we have belongs to God, one time in the year the church asks the congregation to reverse the offering, giving 90% to God and keeping just 10%.

## Definition of a Good Steward

This can be presented from the pulpit or projected during the offering.

**God calls us all to be good stewards. What is a steward?** A steward is someone . . . Who has been entrusted with another's wealth or property, Charged with the responsibility of managing it, in the owner's best interest.

We have been entrusted with God's wealth & property because EVERYTHING we have is God's.

God has charged us from the time He created Adam to manage and care for the gardens and the animals, all of his creation.

We need to manage ALL that we have in our Owner's, or God's, best interest. It's easy to manage things in OUR own interest, but we all have to work on how we use our TIME, our TALENTS, and our TREASURE in GOD'S best interest.

Next time you get your paycheck, think of how that money will be managed. Will it be used in God's best interest or will God get what's left over?

Next week, will you schedule time for personal devotions and prayer, or volunteering at church, in our community, visiting a widow, a lonely neighbor, or someone sick? Or do those things take a backseat to everything else on your schedule?

Will you use your talents in teaching Sunday School, visiting shut-ins, baking cookies for a program, or do you say "I can't" or "Someone else will do it"?

May God bless us with the wisdom to use our finances, our time, and our talents for His will and purpose.

## **SPECIAL GIFTS**

SPECIAL GIFTS can be invited at times of building and capital campaigns, gathering of products to meet needs, and special outreach offerings. These kinds of gifts have several advantages:

1. They give people an opportunity to give more than they might give otherwise.
2. They provide education about specific concerns and needs.
3. They help the congregation and its people see a greater giving potential.
4. They inspire gifts from those who do not give regularly.
5. They allow for differing ways of giving.

Some guidelines for effective special gift programs:

1. Direct special gifts toward a real need: local, emergency, or mission.
2. Set a challenging goal to be reached by a specific day.
3. Tell the people exactly how and when to give and challenge them to respond with a special gift above their regular giving.
4. Invite inactive members and friends of the congregation to give.
5. Keep communications positive. State that the goal will be reached on the target date. A "we can" attitude is essential.
6. Conclude the program with a victory celebration.

\*From Stewardship in the Small Membership Congregation - Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies

## **Ideas for Children**

### **Children's Banks**

Educating the children of your church about giving to God from a young age is important. Banks that are separated into three parts (Spending, Saving, God's) can be used to teach children how to best handle the money they earn. Some parents may choose to give their children an allowance and have their children put aside a certain percentage for church. When a special offering in their church is given, the kids will be able to give to that cause knowing that they had put aside the money themselves. Or, if the child saves "God's" money throughout the year, they may be excited about a more substantial gift and be able to choose the cause to which they give.

### **Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's Peter Fish Banks**

The banks are distributed to Sunday School children or to any other selected groups. Money is used to help CRWRC in their effort to end world hunger. Allot a specified amount of time for people to collect money in their banks. The filled banks are then brought back to church on a designated Sunday. Deacons may go up and down the aisles with nets to collect all the fish banks. Peter Fish banks may be reused at intervals, possibly to tie in with a children's message about sharing.

Call or visit [CRWRC's website](http://www.crwrc.org) (www.crwrc.org) for detailed project information. CRWRC's website offers the Peter Fish banks under kids' resources in their online catalog.

### **Noisy Offering**

Three weeks prior to having this special offering, an announcement is made to the children of the congregation to start saving change. Kids are encouraged to earn the change doing extra chores for their parents or neighbors. On the designated Sunday, a large metal pot is put in front of the church. The children are encouraged to make as much noise as possible putting their change into the pot to make a "joyful noise to the Lord" in their offering to Him.

### **Children's Sermon Suggestions**

- One pastor asked a child to climb a small step stool and then jump into the pastor's arms. It requires trust, a "leap of faith" and was compared to how God keeps us in His care. We can be grateful to God for such good care, and try to care for others as well.
- Ask children to open their hands and think of what God puts in them.
- Have a large, beautifully wrapped gift box. Ask the children to think about God's gifts to us, and if any of those gifts could be put in a box, what might be in this box. When they have imagined, include those suggestions in a prayer.
- A more whimsical approach asked for a child to literally step into an offering plate. If people give money when they put envelopes and bills and checks in the offering plate, what did the child do? "I gave myself."

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### **Children's Sermon - What's a Penny Worth?**

A pastor called all the children to the front of the church and gave them each a penny, and explained that the money was God's. The pastor then told them that they could either buy something with the penny or trade it for a dime. All the kids traded their pennies for dimes. The pastor then offered dollars in exchange for the dimes. Most kids opted to spend their dollars and buy something at a dollar store. However, a seven-year-old girl decided to hold out and she changed her dollar for a ten-dollar bill, and then finally the \$10 was exchanged for \$100 bill.

This little girl decided she wanted to spend God's money by helping the children in Afghanistan. She

did this by first purchasing ingredients for hot chocolate mix. She then sold the mixes earning a profit of \$1000! With the help of her parents and an international aid organization, they were able to send \$1000 worth of hygiene kits for the Afghanistan children. Another donor matched the girl's initial \$100, so teddy bears were purchased to give to the children as well.

This seven-year-old understood what GOD'S money could do! What a good lesson to learn from such a young believer in how much we can accomplish with GOD's money!

### **Children's Sermon - Ten Bananas**

Use ten bananas as an example of a family's income received for work done (salary). Explain to the children that you are going to prepare a "budget" with the banana payment, much like Mom and Dad would do with their money.

Explain: "We need to pay for the house (3 bananas), pay for the car (2 bananas), pay for clothing -- you need a pair of jeans & a pair of Michael Jordan shoes (2 bananas), pay for Christian schooling (1 banana), and we have a payment to make on that vacation trip we're planning to take (1 banana)."

Say: "I've got one banana left and I'm hungry. Let's just share this with our little group. We didn't budget anything for food, and you know as well as I do that bananas are good to eat." (Share the banana.)

In surprise: "Oh oh!! We forgot something. We didn't think of something that we should have thought about. What did we forget?"

"We didn't give anything to God."

Let's review again. We received our money for work in the ten bananas. We paid 3 bananas for our house, 2 for the car, 2 for clothing, one for Christian school payment, and one for our vacation trip. We had one left over and we bought something for ourselves -- food. We forgot to give something to God.

All we have are the leftovers - the peeling of our one banana. I guess that is what we will give to God. But God does not want leftovers. He wants our firstfruits.

If we are going to give of our firstfruits, we will take care to give our gift first to God and then worry about the other things we need to take care of.

Do the count again, beginning with one for God (church?), then help the children decide on the rest of the distribution.

### **Children's Sermon - Garage Sale**

I wonder how many of you can tell me what a garage sale is? What's a garage sale? Something that you have and then you sell it. And who has ever gone to a garage sale - like with their mom? It's kind of fun for awhile, isn't it? There are usually a lot of garage sales in the spring - people do spring cleaning. We gather together all kinds of things that we probably don't need anymore. And other things that are just sort of in our way. We get some tables and put them up in our garage. Then we hope that people will come over and buy all those things we don't want anymore.

It's kind of fun, but you know there's one thing I don't like. I hate it when the garage sale is done and you still have a whole bunch of stuff left. Now what do you do with it? Stuff you really don't want for yourself anymore, and it seems like nobody else wanted to buy it either. Some people say, "put it back down in the basement and we'll try to sell it next spring". Some people say, "a friend of mine is going to have a garage sale next week, and we'll take it over there". Or, maybe we think, why don't we take it to the Salvation Army or someplace where they'll just give it to somebody who needs it.

Now I want you to use your imagination for a minute. I want you to imagine that you and your family had a garage sale at your house and lots of people bought things, but you still have lots of leftovers. You're wondering what to do with it and just then Jesus comes to your house and He knocks on your

door and says, "I need some clothes for some people who don't have any. And there are some boys and girls that I love and they really need some toys. I wonder if you could give some to Me?" What would you do?

Will you say, "Jesus, you're so lucky you came right now. We've got lots of leftovers in our garage. Help yourself. Anything that we don't need anymore you can have." Or, do you say, "Yes, Jesus, come right in. Come into my bedroom, open up my closet--you can have any of my clothes that you want. You can have my newest Nike shoes--my favorite toys. You deserve the best!" Will you give Him your best, or will you give him leftovers?

### **STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARDS for KIDS**

May be used in conjunction with a reverse offering, or used after a sermon on stewardship of time, talents, and/or treasure. The church that used these cards made a carbonless form so one copy could be kept by the individual and one put in the offering plate and kept by the church.

#### KIDS STEWARDSHIP CARD

\_\_\_ Boy \_\_\_ Girl

\_\_\_ Age

\_\_\_ Make a card for a sick person.

\_\_\_ Bring a friend to Sunday School, church, or Cadets/Gems

\_\_\_ Visit a sick person.

\_\_\_ Make a tithing/spending/savings bank.

\_\_\_ Come to Sunday School and Worship regularly.

\_\_\_ Give some of my money to Jesus every week.

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## **New Offering Approaches**

### **Offering Pots**

Instead of passing a plate, offering pots are placed off to the side and at the entrance of the sanctuary. A break in the service provides the opportunity to get coffee, to meet people, and to give gifts (use the offering pots).

### **PowerPoint/Screen Offering Presentations**

If your church uses a screen in front of the sanctuary and has the capability of using Power Point, put together some texts regarding offerings/living a God-honoring lifestyle, with corresponding pictures to use during the offering time. Some suggested Scripture verses:

- Deut. 8:18
- I Chron. 29: 11-12
- Psalm 37:5-6
- Proverbs 3:5
- Proverbs 3:9-10
- Proverbs 23:4-5
- Matthew 5:42
- Matthew 25:21
- Luke 12:31
- Luke 12: 33
- Luke 16:12
- John 13:14
- Acts 20:35
- I Corinthians 4:2
- I Corinthians 9:7
- 2 Corin. 9:6
- Phil. 4:11-13
- Phil. 4:19
- Colossians 3:15
- Colossians 3:23-24
- James 4:3

### **Introducing the Offering as an Act of Worship**

To insure that offerings are viewed as an act of worship, announce the offering from the perspective of the worship theme. Examples:

- "Hear the Word of God regarding the offering..."
- "Here are some guidelines for giving from God's Word..."
- "It is no casual act to give of your money to God's work. Listen to these words from the Scriptures...."
- "...an opportunity to participate with God."
- "...the thrill of working with God."
- "...God's M.O."
- "...your means of Giving Life."
- "The offering is a time for us to put our worship into action by giving back to God a portion of what He has given us."

Try to clarify just what it is you're doing, rather than just collecting money. This will help emphasize that it is an offering from the worshipper, not a collection from the church. It helps people to give to God and not to a budget.

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## Paying for the Pipes

A pastor shared a personal story that can be adapted to a general story. Putting in new plastic plumbing on a shower (PVC pipes), he cut the pipe and ended up with a piece of pipe about 3-4 inches long. As he did this, he remembered a story simply about building a cabin in the mountains near a clear flowing stream. It's a great place. The water is free. However, if you want the water to run to the cabin, you need to buy and install pipes. "The water is free, but you have to pay for the pipes". God's grace, like the water, is free. But to get the grace to the world, you need the church--the pipes. Giving an offering is paying for the pipes.

The pastor then put several 3-4 inch sections of PVC piping in each of the songbook racks. The people took the pipe home with instructions to put it near the place where they pay the bills and write checks to the church. It was a reminder that they were paying for the "pipes" of God's grace.

## Reverse Offering Using Candy Bars

If your church has raised money and has exceeded its goal, a reverse offering might be considered. Serving trays are filled with candy bars. Little comments according to the names on the candy bars were made. For example, Almond Joy bars dealt with the "joy" we had in reaching the goal. Crunch bars were for the "crunch" the church was in and now were no longer "crunched". 100 Grand bars signified being thankful that the church didn't have to raise that much, but knowing that by God's grace, they could have, if they had needed to. The congregation had fun and ate the candy bars through the rest of the service.

## The Pastor Gives, Too!

When the offering is received, the deacons go to the pastor to allow him/her to give his/her offering. It is a visual reminder for the people to see that the pastor is doing exactly what they are being asked to do. It is also a reminder that we **ALL** have the privilege and the joy of giving. It helps children understand that the deacons aren't bringing the money to the pastor, but that the pastor also contributes just like others of the congregation.

## Reverse Offering of Prayer

The church directory is taken and cut into slips with one household per slip. The slips are then put into the offering plate. At an appropriate time in the worship service, before the congregational prayer, the slips are distributed, making sure all of them are taken. During the congregational prayer, there is a time of silent prayer when everyone is encouraged to pray for the person(s) on their slip. You may want to encourage people to contact those for whom they prayed to let them know they prayed for them. It might possibly help them get to know someone they don't already know. Tell visitors that they may participate, or they can use the time to pray for someone in their home congregation.

## Non-Monetary Thank Offerings

To make the offering time more meaningful, encourage people to share testimonies of what God has done in their lives as a way of giving Him a non-monetary thank offering. These times may be planned ahead, or with the congregation, you might offer an invitation for people to come forward and share during the offering.

### **\$2.00 Reverse Offering**

Offering plates are passed filled with \$2.00 bills. The congregation is encouraged to take as many \$2.00 bills as they would like to invest, and then six weeks later, the offering plates are again passed to collect the money. (In this church's case, money was being raised for a ministry center for community youth. \$500 was taken and \$6,700 returned!)

Some suggestions for using the money to increase the return:

- buy lemons to make lemonade and sell at a garage sale/lemonade stand
- buy ingredients to make cookies, candy, popcorn, etc. to sell at work and other places
- bake goodies to sell, knit dishcloths, etc.
- a teacher bought bulk candy, packaged it in small Baggies, and sold it to students.

This not only brings in funds, it also brings people of the church together and involves all ages.

Reverse offerings can be done with varied amounts of money, and of course, for various causes (missionaries, shelters, special projects, needed church items).

### **Where Did it Go? (report results)**

What better way to encourage people to give to various causes than to show what their money has done in the past. Organizations normally do a good job of relating their needs, but rarely do the givers hear what resulted from the money given. For example, the Gideons send volunteer representatives to churches to report back on how many Bibles were purchased and where they were placed, from monies given. They also share their goals for the coming year.

### **Songs of Thankfulness During Offering**

Suggestions of songs to sing while the offering is being given. They reflect two themes: 1) everything we have belongs to God, and 2) praise and thankfulness for God's blessings.

- "Now Thank We All Our God"
- "Great is Your Faithfulness"
- "This is My Father's World"
- "Take My Life and Let It Be"
- "We Give Thee But Thine Own"
- "I'd Rather Have Jesus"
- "Give Thanks to God for Good Is He"
- "I Surrender All".

### **Alternative Hymn Words (suggested for use during the offering)**

(tune of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow")

We bring these gifts that we might share,  
That we might love and be aware.  
O God, to us you richly give.  
Now let us share that all may live.

Praise God, who gives us all we have.  
Praise Christ, whose life calls us to give.  
Praise Holy Spirit, power for good.  
These gifts we bring to thank our God.

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### **A True Tithe**

After a sermon on the Old Testament tithe, challenge your congregation to bring a true tithe (a full ten percent of what was earned) the following week. Most when challenged to give a full tithe will strongly consider what that true amount is and will give significantly more than usual. The deacons could give an accounting of what was given that Sunday. The report on the increase in giving would make the congregation aware that if we all gave what God expects of us and if each person of the congregation did this regularly, the things that could be accomplished in various ministries in the church and community would be tremendous!

### **Making it Grow!**

At the end of a series of stewardship sermons, one church passed out boxes containing various denominations of money to the congregation. The congregation was encouraged to take what they felt led to take and multiply it to reinvest in ministry or to simply use the money in ministry. This came as a total surprise to everyone in the congregation, except council members and children's leaders. Parent liaisons had been assigned to each children's class to devise a plan for each class to pool their money and use it for a group project.

One month later, stories about the use of the money were shared during the morning worship. As examples, one woman took \$100 and asked several neighbors to match the money so they could offer some cushion to a neighbor going through a divorce and unexpectedly thrust into the job market. A middle-school class threw a party for neighborhood kids by seeking and receiving donations of pizza/party goods needed for the party. The neighborhood kids loved the party, and several began attending the church. Money that was left over was donated to the local library for Spanish videos that could be borrowed by those in the neighborhood.

### **Testimonies About Money**

Maybe your church has some members that might be willing to share a testimony of how God has worked in their lives when they have been obedient to God in how they handle their finances.

At one church, after their pastor preached several sermons on what stewardship/firstfruits is all about, one couple shared their conviction to tithe when they were first married. They revealed details of financial hardships they had endured through the years, but reported that they were diligent to tithe anyway. Sometimes they wondered how God was honoring their obedience. Recently they received a windfall of money, several times the amount they had tithed, and knew that it was a gift from God.

Another couple (both recently became Christians) shared how their love of money and acquisition of worldly goods was unfulfilling. Now that they've devoted their lives to Christ, they have a new focus in life and look forward to tithing a portion of their earnings. With the change in the stock market, this couple has lost much of their wealth, but it doesn't matter to them. They are cutting back and trusting that God will provide.

### **Use of Giving Thermometer**

A rising thermometer (or graph or pie chart) may be used as a visual so the congregation can see the amount of what has been given to date alongside the proposed goal. On the same board, attach pictures of activity related to the cause.

## **Resources**

### **Prayers and Litanies**

## Sample Offertory Prayers

A prayer time before the offering is an important prelude for the congregation to understand the importance of the offering as a part of worship.

**Lord,** it's so easy for us to hold on tightly to the money we earn. Help us to realize that You alone gave us the ability to do our jobs and to earn the money that we do. Help us to be open-handed in our giving to show our thanks to You. Bless these gifts. Amen.

**Only You, Lord,** know whether our offering is generous or only another way we show our selfish nature. Forgive us when we do not give generously or when we lack supporting Your work in our world. Amen.

**Creator God,** we know that You have made everything in this world. You have been so generous to us every day. We pray that this church will show our generosity in giving back to You what is already Yours. Amen.

**Our Father,** we thank You for this place we have to worship You. We so easily take for granted the church building, the staff that keeps the church running smoothly, the lights and plumbing and all the other things it takes to hold our worship services each week. Help us to realize that while it may not be what we consider to be an exciting cause, it is one that is important to Your cause. Bless this offering. Amen.

**Lord,** may we always give our gifts to You as a thank offering for the magnificent gift of Jesus that you so generously gave to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Give us, Lord,** a heart that gladly gives. Even as You gave Your all for us, so may we give our all to You. May we not give out of our abundance, but out of our poverty. In Christ, Amen.

**Father,** make giving a blessing and not a burden. As we reflect more and more on all You have given us, make us eager and willing givers of all the gifts You have poured down on us. Make each one of us grateful. In Christ, Amen.

**Touch our hearts, Father,** with Your love so that we may urgently plead for the privilege of sharing our resources with others. May Your grace shown to us in Jesus Christ make us generous givers. Amen.

**Lord God,** giving is for all ages. As parents may we raise our children to give. May we teach them to give of themselves and of the resources You have so graciously provided. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Father,** may we not rob ourselves of Your riches by robbing You of what is rightfully Yours. Make us generous givers and so fill us with the abundance of your goodness. In Christ, Amen.

## Offertory Prayers:

O God; great, giving, generous God;  
We have just opened our hands to give of our wealth.  
Bless now these gifts and our giving. And yet for a little while,  
keep our hands open so that we might give again  
when we see the needs of any of your people,  
or our own need to give. And yet a little longer, O God,  
keep our hands open that we might receive and give thanks for all good gifts from You.  
Amen.

## LITANY ON TIME:

**Leader:** God is sovereign over time. "My times are in Your hand." Psalm 31:15

**All:** Our lives are controlled by our Lord who works His purposes in us and through us. You are the owner of everything. You control and dispense to us the time of our lives.

**Leader:** "Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity." Ephesians 5: 15 & 16a

**All:** Lord, help us to plan and manage our time wisely. We budget our money. We need to also budget the time that You give us.

**Leader:** Time involves priorities, and our priorities reveal the real depth of our commitment to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matt. 6:33

**All:** We can gauge the stewardship of our money by looking at our checkbooks. Our daily and weekly activities are a gauge of the stewardship of our time. Help those activities to reflect making You are first priority.

### **LITANY ON TREASURE:**

**Leader:** "Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is Your Kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything." I Chron. 29:11

**All:** Help us to realize that everything we have—our houses, our cars, our clothes, and the money in our wallets—all belongs to You.

**Leader:** "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of worldly wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you." Luke 16:11

**All:** May we use the resources You have given us in the way Your Word has showed us. You have promised to bless us when we are faithful with what You have blessed us with.

**Leader:** "Your heart will always be where your treasure is." Matt. 6:21  
"Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are of the earth." Col.3:2

**All:** If we make possessions and worldly wealth our priority, You know that our hearts are not where You want them to be. May You help us put our relationship to You first in our lives.

**Leader:** "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

**All:** Help us to trust that just as You will provide a place for us in heaven when we believe in You that You will also provide for us each day when we give our offerings to You.

## LITANY ON TALENTS:

**Leader:** God gives us the skills to do our jobs. "And every skillful person in whom the Lord has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work." Exodus 36:1

**All:** We are gifted uniquely by You. You have created for each of us a unique job and given us the proper skills, aptitudes and desires to accomplish this work.

**Leader:** "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." (Eccl 9:10)

**All:** Help us, Lord, to do our work to the best of our abilities. We are responsible to God for all our work -- including volunteer service, working in the home or outside of the home.

**Leader:** Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord, rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive your inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. Colossians 3:23 & 24

**All:** Sometimes it's hard for us to remember that we work for You, Lord, and not the bosses we may have. Help us to realize that the way we work & the attitudes we have are to honor You.

**Leader:** "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men -- To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another -- knowledge..to another faith -- to another gifts of healing..." (I Corin. 12:7-9)

**All:** God, You have given each of us unique skills. Thank you for the skills You have given to me. Help me to use those talents to Your glory.

**Leader:** "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (I Corin. 12:27)  
"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." (I Peter 4:10)

**All:** Lord, Your church needs pastors, elders, and deacons. But we know Your church also needs Sunday School teachers, committee leaders and members, musicians, and many others. You know what spiritual gifts You have given to each one of us. Bless us with a giving attitude to use our gifts in Your church for Your service. Bless those in our church who give of their talents and time for Your Kingdom.

## A Litany of Gifts

**Leader:** People of God, celebrate the gifts that enrich our lives!  
**All:** Breath and food, caring people and gentle words, music and colors.

**Leader:** Celebrate God who is the Giver.  
**All:** We praise God for knowing what we need and for giving even before we ask.

**Leader:** Many of God's gifts surprise us:  
**All:** Like the hug of a child, words of encouragement, bright colored blooms from gray buds.

**Leader:** Many of God's gifts fulfill us:  
**All:** New vocational opportunities, courage to stand up for justice, words that say, "I love you."

**Leader:** Many of God's gifts change us:  
**All:** Hope when despair rules, forgiveness when sin burdens, "Yes" when we expected "No."

**Leader:** Now let our common words thank God.  
**All:** O God, Giver of every good and perfect gift, we thank you for reaching out to us, touching and caring, loving and giving.

**Leader:** And let our lives thank God,  
**All:** Help us, O God, more and more to become giving people, reaching out to those who lack, touching the lonely ones, caring for those who are troubled, living with all in joy and hope and peace, giving gifts of time and self and wealth.

**Leader:** In our giving we grow in God's image.  
**All:** For God is a giver.

**Leader:** We become more like the people God made us to be.  
**All:** For God created us for good.

**Leader:** In our giving, we become caring stewards for God.  
**All:** Today, O God, consecrate our living & our giving. Amen!  
*Used with the permission of the United Church of Christ.*

## **Stewardship Devotions (From the Pulpit)**

### **Stewardship Devotion 1**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse is from 1 Timothy 6:18:  
*Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*

**And the question is this:**

Are you a generous person? Do you look for opportunities to share the good things that God has given to you? Are you willing to share?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that we are not always generous and we are not always willing to share. Give us hearts that overflow with generosity because of our gratitude to You. Amen.

**Stewardship Devotion 2**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse is from Matthew 6:19-21:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**And the question is simply this:**

What do you treasure most? Is it the things of this world such as clothes, cars and houses...or is it your relationship with God?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that it is so easy for us to get caught up in the things of this world. Help us to recognize that there are eternal consequences to what we treasure today. Help us to get our priorities straight. Help us to put you first in our lives. Amen.

**Stewardship Devotion 3**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse is from Proverbs 3:1-2:

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

**And the question is this:**

Is your handling of money influenced by the teaching of Scripture or by the influence of culture?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that more often than not, our money decisions are influenced by culture rather than by the teachings in Your Word. Help us to apply the teachings of Your Word to our everyday money decisions. Amen.

**Stewardship Devotion 4**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask

you a question.

The scripture verse is from Matthew 6:24:

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

**And the question is this:**

Who is your master?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that many of us try to maintain a balancing act between our love for money and our love for You. Jesus said that wouldn't work. Help us to put you first in our lives. Amen.

**Stewardship Devotion 5**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse for this morning is from Hosea 13:6:

When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me.

**And the question is this:**

Do you sometimes put so much focus on the things that God gave you that you forget about God?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that when things are going well it's sometimes easy to forget about You. Help us always to remember that You are the source of everything that we have. Amen.

**Stewardship Devotion 6**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse for this morning is from Mark 12:41:

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury.

**And the question is this:**

What does Jesus think when he sees what you put into the offering plate?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that we frequently do not honor You by our giving. Help us to honor you in our giving and in our living. Amen.

## **Stewardship Devotion 7**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering, I'd like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse for this morning is from Deut. 24:19-21:

When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow.

### **And the question is this:**

Are you doing what you should, to take care of the fatherless, the widow and the alien?

Would you think about that this week?

### **Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that we frequently ignore the fatherless, the widow and the alien. Help us to look for opportunities to share of the abundance that You have given. Amen.

## **Stewardship Devotion 8**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse for this morning is from Proverbs 21:13:

If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.

### **And the question is this:**

Are you shutting your ears to the cry of the poor?

Would you think about that this week?

### **Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that we frequently shut our ears to the cry of the poor. Help us to look for opportunities to share of the abundance that You have given. Amen.

## **Stewardship Devotion 9**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse for this morning is from Matthew 16:24:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

### **And the question is this:**

What are you saying no to because you are a Christian?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that it's not very often that we say no to self and to things because of You. Help us to put you first in our lives. Amen.

**Stewardship Devotion 10**

(It would be helpful if the scripture verse for the day was printed in the worship folder or displayed on an overhead screen.)

As we worship God with our offering this morning I would like to read a scripture verse and then ask you a question.

The scripture verse for this morning is from Romans 12:2:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- His good, pleasing and perfect will.

**And the question is this:**

What evidence is there that your lifestyle is shaped by Scripture rather than by culture?

Would you think about that this week?

**Let's Pray:**

Father, as we bring our offering this morning we confess that many of us have allowed our lifestyles to be shaped by our materialistic culture rather than by Scripture. Help us to make You and Your Word the guiding influence in our lives.

## Sermon Ideas

### Bible Talks About Money!

Show your congregation a few facts (in bulletin or presented from the pastor or deacon during a service) about how much the Bible has to say about how we manage the Master's money It is an eye-opener for most.

Did you know:

- Over 2,100 Biblical references to possessions--second only after the Bible's references to love?
- 1/6 of the New Testament is how we should live according to what Jesus taught?
- 2/3 of Jesus' parables have to do with our possessions?
- Five times more is said about money than prayer in the Bible?
  
- More is said about money than about heaven and hell combined?

### GOD WANTS YOU BLESSED

- **God Wants You Blessed**  
III John 2 - *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."*
- **God is No Respector of Persons**  
Acts 10:34 - *"Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism."*
- **God Gives You Power to Get It**  
Deut. 8:17 & 18 - *"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers,*

as it is today."

God would not give you the power if He did not want you to be blessed.

### **ALL IS GOD'S**

*"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein."* Psalm 24:1

*"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of Hosts."* Haggai 2:8

*"For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills."* Psalm 50:10

*"For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His Counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to Him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory forever."* Romans 11:34-36

*"Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all."* I Chron. 29: 11-12

#### **A. ALL IS GOD'S**

- The earth
- The silver and gold
- The cattle on 1,000 hills
- Riches, honor, power, might

#### **B. ALL WE HAVE IS GOD'S - YOUR NAME ON DEED OR TITLE, BUT IT IS REALLY GOD'S - NOT YOURS.**

#### **C. WE ARE STEWARDS OF GOD'S GOODS—Give easily when a steward; hard to give when owner.**

### **GOD'S MONEY PLAN**

Every dollar = 10 dimes

First dime is God's, Nine for you

God blesses the nine so they go farther than 10!

Malachi 3:10-12: *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this,"* says the Lord Almighty, *"and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."*

God says, "Test me."

### **Why Do We Give?**

1. You are a steward, not an owner.
2. Part of worship to God/our response of gratitude to God
3. Acknowledges and honors God as our Source.
4. Plant and receive harvest -- reaches people & you receive part of the reward  
Matt. 6:20 *"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."*
5. Keeps our hearts free from the love of money.

### **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MY POSSESSIONS?**

#### **1. GOD GIVES ABILITY TO EARN IT**

Psalm 119:105 - *"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

Deut. 8:17&18 - *"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers,*

*as it is today."*

Proverbs 10:22 - *"The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, and He adds no trouble to it."*

## 2. **IT IS HIS**

Psalm 24:1 - *"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."*

Matt. 25:21 - *"His Master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

## 3. **REFLECTS WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART & GOD'S PURPOSE**

Matt. 6:21 - *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

- Keep God First
- Reach the World
  
- How can they (missionaries, etc.) go unless they are sent? Romans 10:15 - And how can they preach, unless they are sent?

### **HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?**

Here is a story one pastor shared:

A boy was helping his father, who was a farmer. Because times were hard during the Depression, the boy suggested to his father that they buy one bushel less seed per acre. Because they had 300 acres and would save on the cost of those 300 bushels of seed, they would save a good sum of money. The father replied to his son that that was not a smart thing to do. Why? Not only will less seed grow to produce the crop, but because there are fewer good crops growing, weeds will grow in place of the missing crops and choke out the good crops that remain.

A well-known passage to most, from the Living Bible II Corin. 9:6,7, & 10: *"But remember this - if you give little, you will get little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much. Everyone must make up his own mind as to how much he should give. Don't force anyone to give more than he really wants to, for cheerful givers are the ones God prizes. For God who gives seed to the farmer to plant, and later on, good crops to harvest and eat, will give you more and more seed to plant and will make it grow so that you can give away more and more fruit from your harvest."*

## **Stewardship/Pew Cards**

### **Stewardship Commitment Cards**

## MY OFFERING AS WORSHIP PEW CARD

*Purpose: In a tangible way, church members will have an opportunity to write down the ways they have gratefully used the gifts God has given them.*

While most people equate the word "offering" with \$\$ because of the passing of the traditional offering plate, emphasis should also be made in ALL areas of stewardship in our lives. As Christians, we should develop and daily act upon returning to God the gifts He has so richly given us. Christians should realize that time and talent and "trees" are also "returnable" gifts to God.

In order for the offering time to be more meaningful to all participants, it is important that the worship leader/pastor take a moment to explain the purpose of the Offering Pew Card and to also allow enough time for completion of the card.

Members can complete the card with minimal writing by checking off boxes that apply. They can also be encouraged to write additional comments on the back of the card if they choose.

To prevent the card from becoming "stale" by leaving it in the pew racks year around, it is best to use it perhaps one week at a time on a quarterly basis, or during the weeks of a stewardship month, or whenever it would be fitting to tie into a particular church service. Though members should be informed that this is something that will be available on a random basis, they should be encouraged to continually think of ways of sharing all their gifts.

Upon completion, the card can be placed in the regular offering plate with their monetary gifts, or a separate offering can be taken to collect these cards. Once the cards have been received, summarize the results and report back to the congregation i.e.:

Treasure: 98% of respondents gave to God this week

Talent: Church - 20% taught, 10% were involved in music, 10% served on committees  
Outside Church - 2% served on a committee/board, 20% helped a neighbor, 20% volunteered

Time: 10% gave ½ - 1 hr, 20% gave 2 hrs, 5% gave 2-3 hrs, 2% gave 3-4 hrs.

Trees: 80% recycle, 90% conserve energy, 5% picked up trash/planted tree.

<b>MY OFFERING AS WORSHIP THIS WEEK</b>				
<i>As Christians, we should develop and daily respond to God by using the gifts He has so richly given us.</i>				
<b>Treasure:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> I/we gave a portion of our income to God.			
<b>Talent:</b>	How I use my talents in daily living matters to God:			
Church:	<input type="checkbox"/> Taught or led an education program	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Music: choir, voice, instrument, other	<input type="checkbox"/> Serve on Committee: nursery, council, etc.	
Outside Church:	<input type="checkbox"/> Serve on a board/committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Help a neighbor, visit needy, random acts of kindness	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer time: thrift store, mission, help poor	
<b>Time:</b>	Given to the Lord this week:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> ½ - 1 hr	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 hrs
<b>Trees:</b> environment	<input type="checkbox"/> I/we recycle	<input type="checkbox"/> I/we conserved energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Picked up trash, planted tree, etc.	
<i>If you would like to make additional comments or explanations, you may use the reverse side of this card.</i>				

## Websites

### Websites as a Great Resource for Material

If giving to or through a particular organization, look to their organization's website. As just one example, visit the website of Christian Reformed World Relief Committee ([www.cwrc.org](http://www.cwrc.org)). It has many interesting resources for children:

For children:

- **Peter Fish** explains how to help with world hunger.
- **Make a Splash!** explains the importance of helping with the water supply for underdeveloped countries.
- **Give 'Em a Shot** explains how to raise money for helping children "get healthy".

For youth:

- **Going For Three...** gives youth a chance to lead a Sunday worship service to excite the congregation about helping the poor. Includes a bulletin cover, bulletin insert, litany & drama script

For adults:

- **Jars of Blessings, FAST Forward** education on world hunger.

These resources help your members understand how the organization helps and whom it helps through short videos or other related materials. Most of these materials can be ordered at no cost to the church.