

I can give, too!

Stewardship activities for children

Sample letter & children's resource

Stewardship resources for children, youth, and families

Education for Mission and Stewardship

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I can give, too!

Introducing the concept of stewardship to children

*Start children off on the way they should go,
and even when they are old they will not turn from it.*

Proverbs 22:6



Children participating in programs at University Presbyterian Church in Toronto.

Helping children to understand and participate in stewardship is essential to their faith journey, and is an important element of a congregation's stewardship ministry.

We teach our children from a young age to say thank-you. Stewardship is about saying thank-you to God for all of the gifts we have received. We give to others because we are thankful for the things we have been given. We look after ourselves because we are thankful to be alive. We care for the environment because we are thankful for the place where we live. We share our talents

because we are thankful that we are able to sing, dance, laugh, read, play, bake, paint, listen.

Sometimes adults forget that children are capable of great generosity. Children give in lots of ways!

- Sharing what they have
- Giving time to help others
- Being kind
- Helping care for the environment

Christian stewardship is about making choices that reflect our faith. To live fully, we must give fully of ourselves - of our time, talent, and treasure.

Stewardship for children activities

Children are often excluded or forgotten when it comes to stewardship rituals in our churches. Often they are absent from the sanctuary during the offering time, and overlooked when we need volunteers. It is important that we talk with children and youth about stewardship and involve them in the stewardship programs of our church. We must find time to emphasize both how and why we give. Here are some ideas for teaching children about the stewardship of time, talent, treasure, and creation:

STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

So . . . whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

God has given each of us 24 hours every day to spend as we choose. Every single second is a gift from God. Like money, time can be spent wisely or foolishly. We can use it to learn and to help others, or we can waste it doing only what we want.

Simple Activity: Volunteer at a local food bank

As a group, visit a local food bank. Many are in need of volunteers to help sort food, and children are usually welcome to help. Some food banks offer tours and talks about poverty issues. Talk to the children about what it means to be hungry. Ask them to imagine going without food for a whole day, or only eating one meal a day. How would they feel? Let them know that when they spend time at a food bank, they are helping the food bank to feed people who are hungry. If there is not a food bank in your area, consider visiting a nursing home, etc.

STEWARDSHIP OF TALENTS

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.

Romans 12:6a

God gives each of us unique gifts and talents, and wants us to share them with others.

Simple Activity: Share talents during worship

We are all good at different things. Ask the children what talents they have, and if they can think of ways to share them with other people. Invite children to share one of their talents with the congregation. Older children could greet people at the door, read during worship, or play a musical instrument. Younger children could work together on a banner or poster that says thank-you to God for all that they have been given. The banner could be brought to the front of the church at offering time.



STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURES

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21

In today's materialistic world, it is important to equip children with the discipline of saving and sharing their money instead of just spending what they have. Having money is a responsibility, and what we do with it is important.

Simple Activity: Make a treasure chest

Children will each need a box with a lid. Cut three slots (big enough for a toonie) with a knife into the lid of each box. Write SPEND, SAVE, and SHARE under each slot. Cut two cardboard dividers for each box, and place them upright so that the box is divided into three sections. Ask the children to decorate the boxes - use gold ribbon, glitter glue, sequins, and other material to make the box look special. Talk about money with the children. Do they have a bank account? Do they get an allowance or receive money as a birthday or Christmas gift? How do they spend their money? Do they share it? Do they save it?

Encourage them to take their treasure chest home and to divide any money they receive into three equal portions, placing one portion into each corresponding slot of the chest. They could bring the "SHARE" money to church as their offering, and put the "SAVE" money into their bank account or piggy bank. Talk about what they might spend their money on to help them make wise choices.

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

Through God, all things were made.

John 1:3a

All that we have and all that we are belongs to God. It is our special honour and our responsibility to take care of it all. Taking care of our bodies and taking care of the environment are important aspects of stewardship.

Simple Activity: Lunch after church

Have a healthy lunch after church and get children to bring their toothbrushes. Ask the children what they had for breakfast. Ask them what would happen if they ate candy at every meal. Discuss the importance of a balanced diet, and eat something from each food group at lunch. Talk about how we need to look after our bodies (and our teeth!) because they are a gift from God. When brushing teeth, talk about how it is important to turn off the tap while brushing so as not to waste water. This helps take care of the environment.

Simple Activity: Pick up litter in your neighbourhood

Ask the children how they would feel if they gave a gift to a friend, and the friend threw it on the ground and broke it. Ask them what would happen if they dumped garbage all over their house. How would their parents feel? Is that how God might feel when we don't look after the earth, the home that God gave to us? Go for a walk in the church neighbourhood and pick up litter. Separate items into two bags: recyclables (pop cans, newspapers, bottles) and garbage. Talk about why it is important to recycle. If your church has a bin for recycling, place the items in the bin when you get back from your walk. Recycling is an act of worship!



Sample letter & children's resource

Below is a sample letter written by The Rev. Derek Macleod of Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto to introduce stewardship to parents in his congregation. Feel free to customize it for your own context.

On the next page is a children's resource you can use to introduce children to giving. Photocopy the pages back to back to make a handout which children can use to show what they will give to God.

Hello Glenview parents,

I write this on the eve of Thanksgiving Weekend and trust that your holiday will be a joyous one filled with all the good things that you are thankful for.

In our Sunday services, our offering is an act of worship, a response of gratitude. We give to others and the church as a way of saying thank-you to God for all that we have received. The offering we share each week at Glenview supports the work of our church and the many ministries our congregation supports.

Our children are stewards, too. They have been blessed with many gifts and opportunities. It is important that, as part of their Christian development, we teach them what it means to share gifts of time, talent, and resources. One of the ways we can teach this is by helping them participate in the weekly offering. Included in this letter are 'offering envelopes' for your children's weekly offering collected during class time. Your offering number will be attached so that your children's contributions can be recorded for your tax benefit. Please take some time to talk to your children about what these envelopes represent. You may wish to show them the envelopes you use, or speak to them about what and why you give.

Our church school will endeavour to teach your children the many aspects of stewardship. This year, we will focus on caring for creation and provide opportunities to take an active role in worship, help with service projects, and learn about our work in Africa. There are many ways to be good stewards with the gifts God has given us.

The Curious George soundtrack by Jack Johnson, of all things, has some great songs that help children, both young and old, feel good about sharing. It reminds them of the power and pleasure that one can experience when generosity abounds. Here is an excerpt:

It's always more fun to share with everyone.
If you have two, give one to your friend;
If you've got one, here is something you can learn:
You can still share just by taking turns.
If you've got a ball, bounce it to the gang,
If there is a new kid, invite him out to hang.
If you've got one sandwich, cut that thing in half!
If you know a secret joke, tell it and share a laugh.
And if you're feeling lonely, share time with your mom.
Share some milk and cookies and sing the sharing song.

Thank-you for the many ways that you support Glenview's ministry.

The Rev. Derek Macleod

We all have something to give!

(Based on a United Church of Canada resource by Martin Settle)

Think about some of the things that you want to thank God for, and make a list.

Giving to other people is one of the ways that we say "thanks" to God. We can give in lots of ways!

- Share toys, allowance, things
- Spend time helping others
- Be kind to family, friends, and pets
- Help keep the earth clean

What are some of the ways that you give to your family, friends, or the world around you?

Did you know that every week, people have a chance to give money to the church? The church uses the money to do God's work. Giving money to the church is another way that we say "thanks" to God.

Thank-you God, for:

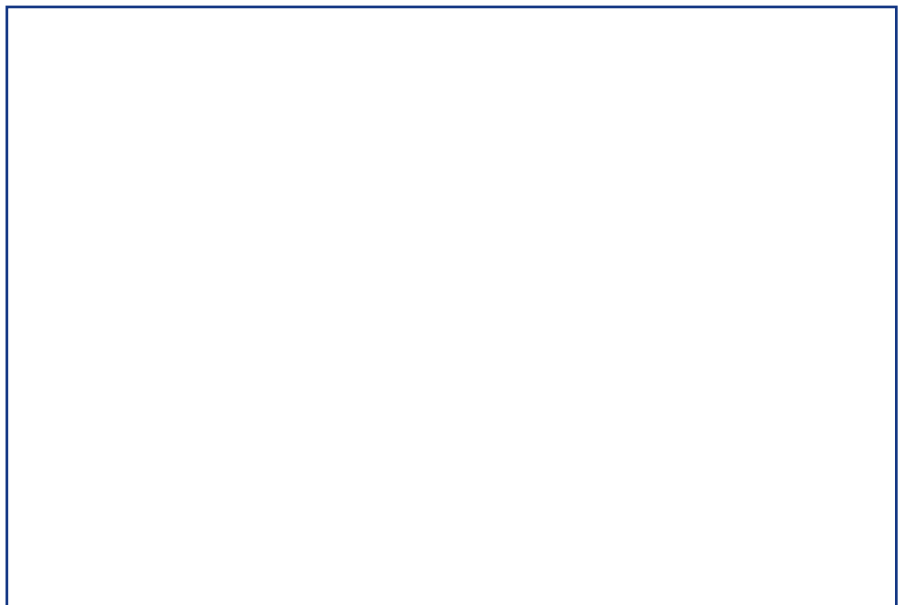
Fill out this form, cut it out, and bring it to church on Sunday for the offering plate.

Tell God what you plan to give to others.

My name is:

I'm going to give a gift of:

Draw a picture in the box of a gift you will give to someone to say thanks to God.



How we give to God

- We give a portion of what God has given us. For example, if we have \$1.00 we might give 10 cents to God. If we have \$10, we might give \$1 to God. In both cases, we are giving part of what we have been given back to God.
- We also give regularly to God – it's not just a one-time thing, it's something we do all the time!
- We give to people we know, like family and friends, but also to people we don't know, through the church and other charities.
- We give cheerfully – not because we have to, but because we want to.



Not everyone is able to give money, which is why we have lots of ways of saying, "thank-you to God." What else might you give to God?

Create a stewardship notebook where you can write down and draw what you will give to God. Make a plan each week for how you will give.

Tell God what you plan to give to the church.

Put a check mark beside the sentence that describes you.

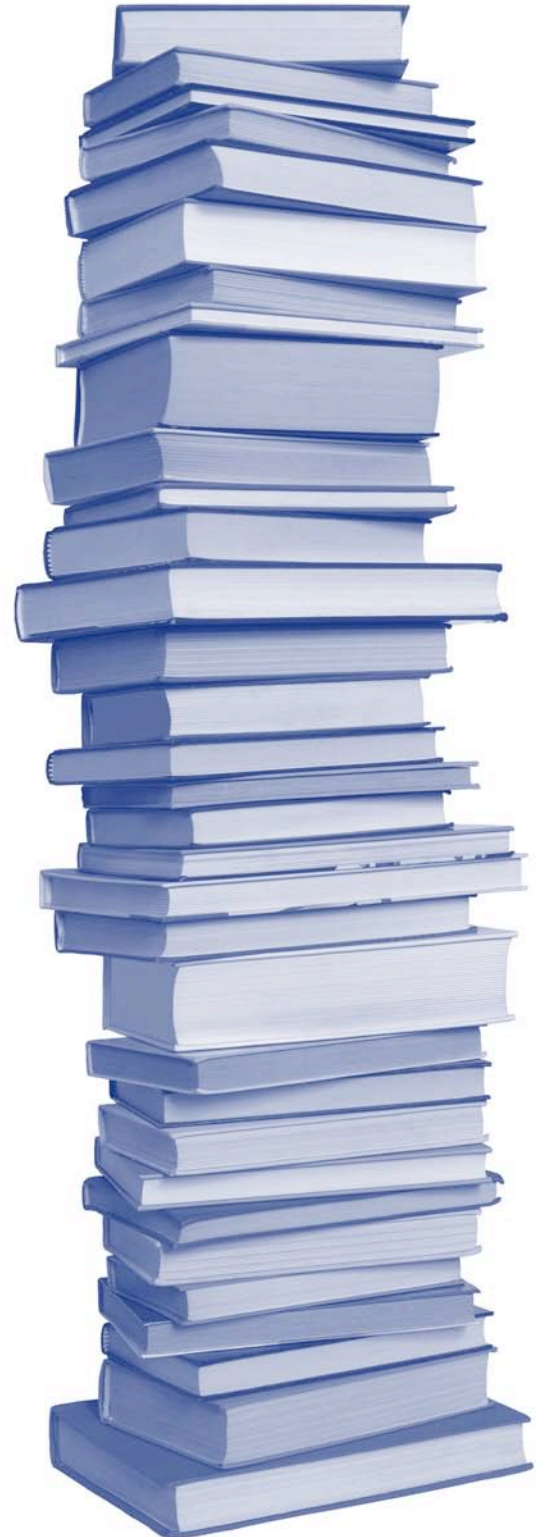
- I almost never have money, but I will give in other ways.
- I don't get money regularly, but when I do, I will remember to give some to God!
- I get money from an allowance or as pay for jobs I do regularly, and I would like to give some of my money to the church. I will try to give:
 - 10 cents a week
 - 25 cents a week
 - 50 cents a week
 - One dollar a week
 - My own amount _____

I will put this money in the Sunday School or church offering plate.

Stewardship resources for children, youth, and families

Available from the Book Room

- **Growing a Grateful, Generous Heart - Stewardship Resources for Children and Their Families.** *Includes materials for leaders, teachers, parents, and children.*
Family resource \$7.50, student \$4.75
Developed by *Living the Good News* in collaboration with the Office of Stewardship at the Episcopal Church Centre, this series of resources provides excellent lessons for study.
- **Let the Children Give: Time, Talents, Love, and Money** (Delia Halverson) \$14.75
Offers ideas for church leaders and teachers to engage children of all ages in the important task of stewardship. Includes creative, educational activities to teach stewardship through arts and crafts, drama, storytelling, writing and research, games and puzzles, music, reading activities, and more!
- **Thinking Theologically About Money** (Sarah Arthur)
Leaders Guide \$12.75, Participant Book \$7.75
Challenges youth to think theologically about personal choices and controversial issues. Gives them a theological framework to use for understanding issues and making faithful decisions.
- **Giving Together: A Stewardship Guide for Families** (Carol A. Wehrheim) \$20.95
A concise, accessible resource to help families better understand the importance of stewardship - in the family, in the congregation, in the community, and in the world.
- **Growing Up Generous: Engaging Youth in Giving and Serving** (Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Elana Dalyah Naftali, Laura Musegades) \$19.50
Offers a way for children, youth, and adults to explore monthly stewardship themes.
- **Here's Something You Can Do: Stewardship Themes for Intergenerational Gatherings in Worship** (Rev. Leslee Alfano) \$3.00
Ideas for monthly stewardship themes to be used as part of worship. Includes opportunities for the entire community - children and adults - to participate.



- **A Guide for Parents: Children and Money** (Carol A. Wehrheim) \$2.25
A very basic guide that helps parents or teachers talk with children about stewardship.
- **Allowances: Dollars and Sense - A Proven System for Teaching Your Kids About Money** (Paul W. Lermite) \$22.95
Parents can help their children learn the money management skills that will make them money-smart consumers for years to come.
- **Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to be Your Child's ATM** (Nathan Dungan) \$40.95
Parents are in a position to influence and shape their children's financial habits. This book helps guide parents on the long and sometimes arduous journey.
- **Money Savvy Kids: Parenting Penny-Wise Kids in a Money Hungry World** (J. Raymond Albrektson) \$17.95
Children can learn to give generously, save wisely, and spend carefully - and you can teach them! This book provides a workable strategy you can use to prepare your child for financial success today that will carry over into financial security for a lifetime.

Children learn by example

When children see those around them incorporating stewardship into their daily lives, they accept it as a natural and important part of life. If we nurture their natural desire to give and share, they will become good stewards, blessing their churches and communities for years to come. What are we teaching children about stewardship at home? At church?

Online Resource:

www.lifeway.com

This Bible study on stewardship has a leader's guide and sessions for grades 1-3 and 4-6. It includes Bible stories, games and activities, crafts, drama, storytelling, and more!

- In the search window, type in "kids downloads"
- Click on "Lifeway Kids Downloads"
- Click on "Prayer and Stewardship" under "Short Term Bible Studies for Kids"

For more information contact:

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www.presbyterian.ca/stewardship