GENEROSITY ASSESSMENT INITIAL MEETING

FIRST MEETING

Who comes to the initial meeting? A small group of people from the congregation, maybe 5 or 6. Ideal candidates include:

- Pastor
- Treasurer/finance, stewardship representatives
- Church leaders
- Interested lay people

It is good to have at least one person who knows the history of the congregation.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

STARTING THE DISCUSSION

Some easy starting questions are:

- How old is this congregation?
- How old are the members?
- Where are you seeing generosity lived out?

This might be all the questions the facilitator needs; listening is the goal. Be sure to probe if it seems there is an elephant in the room—an issue that people are *not* talking about—such as a church conflict, staffing issue or ongoing dispute. It's essential to address such issues **before** starting a stewardship education program.

Scarcity vs. Abundance

Talking about the church budget will reveal if the congregation is functioning with an abundance mindset or a scarcity mindset. Really it's whether the glass is half-full or half-empty. Are people grateful for what God is doing in their midst? Did the congregation meet its budget last year? The year before? What's the history? Listen to everyone in the group.

Are there some projects that are easier to raise money for than others?

Did the church raise money to sponsor a refugee family or send the youth group on a mission trip without difficulty, yet struggle to meet the budget? There is always more than one story.

"Is this about money?"

Secrecy vs. Transparency

The nature of the conversation will reveal how much people know about the church's financial situation, and how much money is discussed. It could be that money is only mentioned when there's a lack. This is common. Congratulate the group on their courage in having this discussion!

Gratitude is foundational for generosity

Theology of Giving

Giving is an act of grateful worship and obedience to a generous God who gives us everything we need.

Giving is a spiritual discipline like prayer. Christians try to pray regularly and we also pray spontaneously in times of joy and crisis. Likewise with giving: aim for regular giving *and* spontaneous giving.

As with prayer, while we don't want to be boastful, we do need talk about our spiritual practices: that's how we learn, grow and

SURVEY OPTION

At this point, the generosity assessment process has come to a fork in the road. One could proceed directly to getting the giving numbers for analysis, or one could do a survey as part of that analysis.

How to decide? Think about what feels most manageable and most helpful. The survey is not complicated – two open-ended questions:

- What are three things you are grateful for about this church?
- What are three ways the church uses its money that you value most?

The first question is more foundational than the second: the answers will be useful input for a number of possible next steps. Modify the second question to suit the context.

HOW TO DO THE SURVEY

A tech-savvy person could set use Survey Monkey or another product to do an email or online survey. Paper surveys work too! Make sure there is a deadline for returning the surveys.

COLLECTING GIVING DATA

Because of the automated spreadsheet, the giving data needs to be EXACTLY as formatted. It's simple and a template is provided.

Number	Total giving last year	Estimated age
1	400	38
2	5000	80
3	800	42

Exact ages aren't necessary – don't stress, just guess!

The number column is just that – the row number. We want each person/household to have a unique number. For total giving last year, follow the church's fiscal year – if they use the calendar year, this would be the last calendar year. The age is only an estimate – don't stress, just guess!

Make sure you have a plan for who is providing the giving data and running the survey. Set a time to meet again to review the results of the generosity assessment. This could be a Sunday worship plus Sunday school, or another meeting time that suits the congregation. Blessings as you proceed!