

Generous Giving Programme

Planning Guide



Together Building a Generous Church

Introduction

Generosity is at the heart of the Christian faith, and woven throughout the way that we grow in living Christ's story. It is a gift in response to God's generosity to us, a discipleship commitment as we seek to become more Christ-like, and the means to enable mission and ministry.

As we seek to enable our vision of generous churches, and as part of our commitment as a diocesan family to 'transform our finances and structures', it is important that we regularly reflect on generous giving as church communities: intentionally putting aside periods of time in which to explore, pray and respond. We encourage all churches to preach and teach about generosity at least once each year, and run a more in-depth Giving Programme for the whole church community once every two or three years.

Every programme is unique, shaped according to your context and what you want to get out of the programme – this guide talks you through the process of planning and facilitating a Giving Programme, thinking about different elements and ways you might engage with people.

BASIC SHAPE

Every programme is different, but this is a recommended outline to shape your programme around.

Opening Sunday

This is where everything is introduced.

Include an offering in worship

There are plenty of ways to weave generosity through liturgy and music, and one of the most important is an offering.

Share supporting materials

This could be hard copy or digital materials.

Encourage engagement and personal reflection

There are lots of ways you could do this, so that when people respond it is prayerful and fruitful.

Thanksgiving Sunday

This is the closing Sunday of your programme where people are encouraged to respond, and the church gives thanks.

Thank people

This could include a card or letter, a form of words within an act of worship, a video message, or a tea and cake party over Zoom.

TOP TIPS

A series of suggestions to get the most out of your programme.

Share your story

Communicate your vision, and inspire people by talking about what their giving is enabling in your church.

Engage people in prayer and discipleship

Send out prayers card, and think of other creative ways to encourage your community to pray together or individually. Point people towards resources which help them reflect on generosity in the context of discipleship.

Have clear beginning and end points of your programme.

This helps to focus people's minds, gives a clear day for people to respond by, and a clear point to send out your message of thanks.

Weave generosity into all aspects of worship

As Anglicans, we learn so much of our theology through our worship. Think about parts of the liturgy which could be adapted, music you might sing, and include a virtual offering.

Think carefully about the language you use

The language we use shapes our message – such as 'collection' or 'offering, 'pay' or 'give' – influences how the message is interpreted and how the individual responds.

Create eye-catching materials

This can help capture people's imagination, and show that this is a message that the church values. See below for example materials.

Make it clear how you want people to respond

This might be signing up to the Parish Giving Scheme, increasing their Standing Orders, or offering their time and skill for an area of church life.

Thank people

This could be marked with a Service of Thanksgiving which centers around God's generosity to us, and gratitude for all that continues to be given by your community to enable mission.

Support

If you would like a member of the Generous Giving team to guide you through planning your Giving Programme, advise you on other aspects of giving, please get in touch with us through the Generous Giving pages on the diocesan website: www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/generosity

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

Matthew 6.21

Making a Plan

Together Building a Generous Church



STARTING PLACE | ENGAGEMENT: PRAYER, DISCIPLESHIP AND WORSHIP

MATERIALS | ENGAGEMENT: COMMUNICATION | THANKSGIVING AND FOLLOW-UP

STARTING PLACE

By understanding what we want to achieve through the programme, this grounds us in the rest of our planning.

Programme dates:

From:

To:

What are you aiming to achieve through running your programme?

For example, increase in financial giving, or in lay ministry, or in giving in time, or support from the wider community. You might want to raise awareness of church mission and resource, or grow discipleship.

Would you like your programme to have a title?
Do you have any ideas?

Giving a programme a name can help to give it an identity.

Will you be promoting the Parish Giving Scheme during your programme?

If so, has your parish registered?

**ENGAGEMENT:
WORSHIP, PRAYER
AND DISCIPLESHIP**

Including generosity in aspects of prayer and worship help to orientate ourselves with the spiritual core on which our giving is grounded, and shapes our thinking and theology as we are sent out as changed people.

Worship

How might you weave the theme on generosity into your worship?

You might want to think about liturgy, readings, sermons and hymns/songs.

Liturgy chosen

This could make use of [The Generosity Week](#) worship materials, and could be on a theme (week one: God's generosity, week two: our generosity, week three: gratitude)

Preacher booked: weeks one, two and three.

Hymns/songs chosen

[The Generosity Week](#) includes Litanies (prayer petitions): one for generosity, and one for gratitude. Will you make use of these?

The Litany for Gratitude can be a really good thing to include on the closing Sunday of your programme as a means of giving thanks.

Will you include an offering in your worship?

Even if you are not passing an offering plate, or streaming online worship, the Offering is our most tangible expression of giving as Christian people, and can be a really powerful way of reflecting prayerfully and blessing gifts given electronically. To find out more, [click here](#).

Prayer

Prayer card: chosen prayer and designed?

To see examples of good generous giving prayers, [click here](#).

Notice sheet: will you include prayers here for people to take home?

The same each week, or different ones throughout your programme?

Do you have any prayer groups who could meet to pray about giving and generosity?

Creative prayer: will you include a prayer station or a prayer tree in church?

Have you notified intercessors who are on rota to include generosity in their prayers?

Anything else?

Discipleship

Do you have any small groups or homegroups who could explore generosity together?

Your Adviser can suggest suitable study guides to use.

Anything else?

MATERIALS

Materials are a good static way of communicating your giving message to those in your community, inspiring people and building trust through explaining how their gifts will be used.

Materials to include:

	Yes	No
Covering letter		
Brochure about church		
PGS information and Gift Form <i>You might not need a Gift Form if you are promoting the PGS phone number and website.</i>		
Response form (for church)		
Prayer card/bookmark		
Anything else?		

Practicalities

	Yes	No
Will you print your materials professionally? <i>This gives your material more value to the receiver.</i> <i>Note: Instant Print is a good company to use.</i>		
If printing materials, have you factored in the time and people to collate the envelopes, address and distribute?		
Will you also send materials electronically?		
Are you going to design your own materials, or would you like a member of the Generous Giving Team to design them for you using existing templates?		

Content for materials

What would you say your vision is as a parish/church/benefice? <i>Think of the story you are telling about yourselves, and how it will inspire people.</i>	
What ministries and activities do you have in your parish/church? <i>For example, pastoral care, children's group, homegroups.</i>	

What would you say is your biggest challenge?

This could be financial, or not enough people giving their time.

How would you like people to support you in meeting that challenge?

Have you considered using tokens for people who give to your church through the Parish Giving Scheme or Standing Order?

Using tokens enables people to participate in the offering, even if their gift is given digitally.

Are there any Bible verses or prayers you'd like to include on your materials?

When people give to your church, how is the money spent?

Understanding how our money is used helps to build trust with givers.

Response

How would you like people to respond to you?

This could be through a paper form, or an online form.

What data would you like to collect in this response?

This helps you to thank people with more accurate details.

Who/where would you like this response form to go to?

**ENGAGEMENT:
COMMUNICATION
AND EVENTS**

Beyond static materials, it's important to think of other, perhaps more personal, ways to engage with people, as well as embracing technology to embed a culture of a generous church.

Communication

<p>Are there any groups you can engage? If so, how?</p>	
<p>Will you include testimonies of people's giving stories as part of your programme? How will you share these?</p> <p><i>These are good as peer to peer encouragement, advocates of PGS and local giving.</i></p>	
<p>Will you include video messages?</p> <p><i>These could be of people talking about why they give to your church, a 'thank you' video, or reflections.</i></p>	
<p>Will you include information on your website?</p> <p><i>This could include sharing podcasts or videos, or practical information about giving such as the PGS phone number and Gift Form.</i></p>	
<p>Do you want to add content to your social media pages – if so, what?</p> <p><i>This could include a 'thought for the day', prayers, reflections and practical information.</i></p>	

Events

<p>Are there any events we could organise for our community?</p> <p><i>These can be a good way of bringing people together. Remember to think of the generous giving aspect of these events.</i></p>	
<p>Event planned: practical</p> <p><i>This could be a talk on a mechanism of giving such as PGS, or on understanding the church's finances.</i></p>	

Event planned: spiritual

In addition to groups, you could host a talk exploring a 'Vision for a Generous Church' or the theology of giving, or lead a Generosity Fika.

Event planned: fun

It's common that when giving is approached in churches, it is done cautiously or even apologetically. By creating aspects of fun we can help embed the notion of giving as joy.

EVENT IDEAS: Generosity Fika: cake and conversation

Bible Bingo: every verse is related to giving, generosity or gratitude

Hymns and Pimms: every hymn is related to giving, generosity or gratitude

Cheese and wine evening, with a short talk

Vision for a Generous Church: a talk with discussion

A Generosity Challenge: a creative challenge for your community for the duration of your programme

THANKSGIVING AND FOLLOW UP

Gratitude is the foundation for all Christian giving, and a vital part of any giving programme.

How might you thank people at the end of your programme?

This could be as creative as you like! Pentecost Party, a Celebration of Gratitude, cake or a picnic after your Sunday worship, or thank you cards distributed.

Will you write a letter to give thanks, and share the results of your programme?

If so, who will write it, and when?

An evaluation meeting is a really helpful way of reflecting on your programme, thinking of ways to follow up and continue embedding a culture of generosity in your church.

Have you planned a date for this meeting?