**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. As we seek ways to become more Christ-like in our discipleship, we enable mission and ministry; gaining a fuller understanding of how our generosity is a gift, and an act of worship, in response to God’s abundant grace and love for us.

As part of Living Christ’s Story, we seek to enable our vision of generous churches, including our commitment as a diocesan family to ‘transform our finances and structures’. It is important that we reflect on generous living 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 regularly or at least once a year, including a more in-depth Giving Programme for the whole church community once every two or three years.

Every programme is unique and prayerfully shaped according to your context and what you want to achieve. This guide talks you through the process of planning and facilitating a Giving Programme, thinking about different elements and ways you might inspire and engage with your whole community.

**BASIC SHAPE**

Every programme is shaped according to your needs and context, but this is a recommended outline to shape your programme.

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| Opening Sunday | This is where your vision is shared with all ages of your church community. With a firm foundation of teaching and prayer. |
| Encourage engagement and personal reflection | There are many ways to make this unique to your parish, so that when people respond it is prayerful and fruitful. From young to older, each member is invited to participate in their discipleship journey. |
| Include an offering in worship | There are plenty of ways to weave generosity through liturgy and music, including the offering as an act of worship. |
| Share supporting personalised materials | This could be hard copy or digital materials, so the community can continue their thoughts, actions and prayers of generosity in their daily life. |
| Thanksgiving Sunday | This is the closing Sunday event of your programme, where people are encouraged to respond, and the church gives thanks. |
| Thank people | Thanking all involved is vital for sustainability, this could include a card or letter, a form of words within an act of worship, a video message, a tea and cake party, etc |

**TOP TIPS**

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

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| Share your story | Communicate your vision, and inspire people by talking about what their giving is enabling in your church. Create a warm welcome and reach out to the whole community. |
| Engage people in prayer and discipleship | Possibly send out (paper or online) prayer cards, 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 planned 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, and any music you might sing. |
| Think carefully about the language you use | The language we use shapes our message, for example, say offering’ instead of 'collection' or 'gift' instead of 'pay'. It influences how the message is interpreted and how the individual responds. We aim to live generously. |
| Create eye-catching materials | These can help capture people's imagination, and show that this is a message that the church values. See ideas for materials further in this planning guide. |
| Make it clear how you want people to respond | Communicate how time and experience can be offered for an area of church life. This also might be to sign up to the Parish Giving Scheme and increasing their Standing Orders. |
| 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 and advise you on other aspects of giving, please get in touch with us though the Generous Giving pages on the diocesan website: [www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/generosity](http://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.

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| **Programme dates:** | From: | To: |

|  |  |
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| 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. Consider how you cover raising awareness of church mission, resources and the intention to grow in 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 for the community to belong to.* |  |
| 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 inspired people.

**Worship**

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| 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*](https://www.parishresources.org.uk/generosity-week/) *worship materials and could be on a theme of Week One - God’s Generosity; Week Two - Our Generosity; Week Three – Gratitude.* |  |
| Preacher booked  *Weeks one, two and/or three?* |  |
| Hymns/songs chosen  *All with generosity/discipleship theme.* |  |
| [The Generosity Week](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/building-generous-church/generosity-resources/generosity-week/generosity-week-resources) 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 idea 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 an online service, the Offering is our most tangible expression of worship as Christian people. It can be a really powerful way of reflecting prayerfully and blessing gifts given electronically. To find out more,* [*click here.*](https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/generosity-stewardship/resources/offering/) |  |

**Prayer**

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| Prayer card: chosen prayer and designed?  *To see examples of good generous giving prayers,* [*click here.*](https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/uploads/attachment/4634/gg-prayers.pdf) |  |
| 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?  *Or establish new ones - youth group, parent and tots group, a café type group, etc?* |  |
| Creative prayer:  *Will you include a prayer station, a prayer tree in church or post prayers on social media?* |  |
| Have you notified intercessors who are on rota to include generosity in their prayers? |  |
| Anything else?  *Allow space for the Holy Spirit to minister to you as you plan.* |  |

**Discipleship**

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| Do you have any small groups or home groups who could explore generosity together?  *Your Generous Giving Officer can suggest suitable study guides to use.* |  |
| Anything else? |  |

**MATERIALS**

Materials are an effective way of communicating your clear vision and giving message to those in your community - inspiring people and building trust through explaining how their gifts will be used.

**Materials to include:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **No** | **Next Step** | **Who Responsible?** |
| Covering letter |  |  |  |  |
| Brochure about church with QR Code |  |  |  |  |
| PGS information and PGS Gift Form  *You might not need a PGS Gift Form if you are promoting the PGS phone number and website.* |  |  |  |  |
| Response form (for church) |  |  |  |  |
| Prayer card/bookmark with QR code |  |  |  |  |
| Anything else? |  |  |  |  |

**Content for materials**

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| What would you say your vision is as a parish/church/benefice?  *Think of the story you are telling about yourselves, and how it will inspire people.* |  |
| What ministries and activities do you have in your parish/church?  *For example, pastoral care, children’s group, home groups, Eco teams.* |  |
| 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 those people who might give in the plate to your church but then move to the Parish Giving Scheme?  *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, communicate how is the money spent?  *Understanding how our money is used helps to build trust with givers.* |  |

**Practicalities**

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|  | **Yes** | **No** | **Who?** |
| 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? |  |  |  |
| Will you print your materials professionally?  *This gives your material more value to the receiver.*  *Note*[*: Instant Print*](https://www.instantprint.co.uk/) *is a good company to use.* |  |  |  |
| If printing materials, have you factored in the time and people to collate the envelopes, address and distribute? |  |  |  |
| Will you send materials electronically? (*Eco friendly)* |  |  |  |

**Response**

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| Have you thought about producing a response form?  *This could be through a paper or an online form.* |  |
| What information would you like to collect on this response form?  *This helps you to thank people with more accurate details.* |  |
| How long would people have to complete this response form?  2 weeks etc? |  |
| Who is going to collect these forms and when are you giving feedback to the congregation?  *Feedback builds openness and trust.* |  |

**ENGAGEMENT: COMMUNICATION AND EVENTS**

Beyond generic materials, it’s important to think of other, perhaps more personal, ways to engage with people; as well as embracing technology to embed and activate a culture of a generous church.

**Communication**

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| Who are the groups you can engage with?  If so, how? |  |
| Will you include testimonies of people’s giving/ disciplship stories as part of your programme? How will you share these?  *These are good as peer to peer encouragement, advocates of PGS and local living generously.* |  |
| Will you include video messages?  *These could be of people talking about why they give to your church, a ‘thank you’ video, or reflections.* |  |
| Will you include information on your website?  *This could include sharing podcasts or videos, or practical information about giving such as the PGS phone number and Gift Form.* |  |
| What content will be added to your social media pages and by whom?  *This could include a ‘thought for the day’, prayers, reflections and practical information. Also, photos add personal touches.* |  |

**Events**

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| Are there any events you could organise for your community?  *These can be a good way of bringing people together. Remember to think of the generous giving aspect of these events.* |  |
| Event planned idea 1: practical  *This could be a talk on a mechanism of giving such as PGS, or on understanding the church’s finances.* |  |
| Event planned idea 2: 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 idea 3: 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 joyful.* |  |

**EVENT IDEAS:**

* + - Generosity Fika: cake and conversation
    - Event with local school Eco Fair
    - 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 / curry evening, with a short talk/ quiz
    - 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 worship, and any giving programme, to embed living generously.

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| How might you thank people at the end of your programme?  *Be as creative as you like! A Celebration of Gratitude, cake/soup or a picnic, or thank you cards distributed. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to be involved.* |  |
| Who will write a letter to give thanks, and share the results of your programme? And when? |  |
| An evaluation meeting is a really helpful way of reflecting on your programme. To help think of ways to follow up and continue embedding and activating a culture of generosity in your church.  Have you planned a date for this meeting?  *Please remember the Generous Giving team will happily come alongside and support you.* |  |