

# What Is Stewardship?

## Confirmation Resource

by Carole Bennett, Islington United Church, Toronto

### Goals

- To introduce an overview of the full meaning of stewardship
- To present the concepts of gifts of time, talent and treasure
- To portray the biblical tradition of tithing

### Time Required

30 minutes, with opportunities for expanded discussion and activities if more time is available.

### What You Will Need

- Biblical texts and stewardship labels on letter-size paper (see **Texts** below)
- Handouts from UCRD (see **Resources** below) and appendix
- Flipchart or chalkboard (optional); markers or chalk
- Wall to post biblical texts, labels, and poster
- Masking tape
- Three banks, jars, or other containers for saving money: one labelled **Share**, one labelled **Save**, the third labelled **Spend**

### Texts

Transcribe the following texts on brightly coloured letter-size paper, one text per sheet. Number the texts in the order in which you plan to use them.

At a minimum use the texts numbered: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 17, 18.

Also make letter-size sheets with the following labels in large size: **God's Generous Gifts to Us, Time, Talent, Treasure, Generosity.**

## God's Generous Gifts to Us

1. Yet for us there is but one GOD, from whom all things came and for whom we live.  
1 Corinthians 8:6 (NIV)
2. [Jesus said:] "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."  
John 10:10 (NRSV)
3. [GOD]...gives life and breath to everything, and satisfies every need there is.  
Acts 17:25 (TLB)
4. [Jesus said:] "Your heavenly Father knows your needs. GOD will always give you all you need from day to day."  
Luke 12:30–31 (TLB)
5. [Jesus said:] "Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."  
Luke 6:38 (NRSV)
6. [Jesus said:] "You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought."  
Matthew 5:5 (*The Message*)

## Time

7. GOD helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life—and place it before GOD as an offering. Embracing what GOD does for you is the best thing you can do for GOD.  
Romans 12:1 (*The Message*)

## Talent

8. Each of you has been blessed with GOD's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others.  
1 Peter 4:10
9. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it—to prepare GOD's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.  
Ephesians 4:7, 12 (NIV)
10. GOD creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join GOD in the work GOD does, the good work GOD has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.  
Ephesians 2:10 (*The Message*)

## Treasure

11. If you start thinking to yourselves, “I did all this. And all by myself. I’m rich. It’s all mine”—well, think again. Remember that GOD, your GOD, gave you the strength to produce all this wealth so as to confirm the covenant that GOD promised to your ancestors. Deuteronomy 8:17–18 (*The Message*)
12. Jacob vowed a vow.... “This stone that I have set up as a memorial pillar will mark this as a place where GOD lives. And everything you give me, I’ll return a tenth to you.” Genesis 28:22 (*The Message*)
13. [GOD spoke through Moses:] “A tenth [tithe] of the land’s produce, whether grain from the ground or fruit from the trees, is GOD’s. It is holy to GOD.” Leviticus 27:30 (*The Message*)
14. Honour GOD with everything you own; give GOD the first and the best. Proverbs 3:9 (*The Message*)
15. [GOD said:] “Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this and see if I don’t open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.” Malachi 3:10 (*The Message*)

## Generosity

16. This most generous GOD...is more than extravagant with you. GOD gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in GOD, wealthy in every way... 2 Corinthians 9:10–11 (*The Message*)
17. Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. GOD loves it when the giver delights in the giving. 2 Corinthians 9:6–7 (*The Message*)
18. Live out your GOD-created identity. Live generously and graciously towards others, the way GOD lives toward you. Matthew 5:48 (*The Message*)
19. [Jesus said:] “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27 (NIV)

## Resources

Obtain sufficient quantities of the following resources from UCRD (see [www.united-church.ca/catalogue](http://www.united-church.ca/catalogue)). Most are available at no charge, but note that shipping and handling charges apply.

<b>Handouts</b>	<b>Product code</b>
Share the Gift: Money, Money, Money	200000102
Share the Gift: But Have I Any Gifts?	300000938
Share the Gift: Weekly Percentage Giving Guide—Can One Person Make a Difference?	300000939
Share the Gift: What I Do with My Life—The Gift of Time	300000940
Share the Gift: How Much Stuff Do I Really Need? Me and My Money	300000947
<b>Poster</b>	
Share the Gift Activity Poster	200000101

## Session Outline

Open with the question “What do you think stewardship is?” to determine the group’s current understanding of stewardship. Post the ideas on a flipchart or chalkboard.

Introduce this definition of stewardship from Terry Parsons of the Episcopal Church USA: “Using all the gifts that GOD has given us, to do the work GOD is calling us to do.” Or, use a definition that appeals to you.

Distribute the texts in random order, giving at least one text to each participant.

### God’s Generous Gifts to Us

Ask the participant with text #1 to read it aloud and then post it on the wall. Remind the group of the creation story and all GOD has given us. Ask for examples of these gifts. Encourage the group to see the bounty of this life and to “push the envelope” in their interpretation of “gifts.” Lay the groundwork for understanding that all of creation and life itself is a gift from GOD.

If using texts #2 through #6, ask each participant to read each aloud and post it. Then pursue the discussion of gifts introducing new aspects revealed by the texts. If using fewer texts, weave the concepts into the discussion of the texts you are using.

- GOD intends abundant life for us all.
- GOD meets all our needs.

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*Please credit the source. Thank you!*

“What Is Stewardship?” by Carole Bennett, Islington United Church, Jan. 2006. Downloaded from [www.united-church.ca/exploring/stewardship/allages](http://www.united-church.ca/exploring/stewardship/allages).

- GOD knows our needs.
- GOD has given us the responsibility to care for creation (sometimes translated as “having dominion over...”).
- We learn to give because GOD has first given to us.

Introduce the terms time, talent, and treasure as ways to think about God’s personal gifts to us. Introduce the term steward as the descriptor for our responsibility to care for GOD’s gifts. If time permits, encourage discussion about the difference in the biblical translations or interpretations of “having the care of creation” and “having dominion over creation” and the consequences of those interpretations.

### **The Gift of Time**

Ask the person with text #7 to read it aloud and then post it on the wall under the label “Time.”

Ask the group how they spend time on themselves. After getting several answers, ask if they think that this is good stewardship. Assure the group that by spending good time on self we are being good stewards—rest, play, meals, exercise, and study are all day-to-day examples of time well spent on self.

GOD gives us the Sabbath—not because GOD needs it but because we do: to refresh body, mind, and spirit and to enter into worship of GOD.

Now ask the group how they spend time on others. Encourage as much broad thinking as possible. Record the responses on the flipchart or chalkboard.

If time permits, supplement this section with the activity from the Share the Gift handout, *What I Do with My Life: The Gift of Time*. If the group is meeting over a series of days or weeks, then each person might do the exercise *What I Do with My Life*, and track how they spend their time each day for a week. The following week use the questions on side two of the handout to have a discussion about *The Gift of Time*.

### **The Gift of Talent**

Introduce the gift of talents or skills by asking the person with text #8 to read it aloud and then post it on the wall under the label “Talent.”

If the group is large (e.g., 20 or more) and time permits, divide into smaller groups of four and introduce the questions for discussion. If the group is small, lead a

discussion with the whole group. Use the Share the Gift handout *But Have I Any Gifts?* to guide this activity.

Ask each participant to think about what they do well, and then ask for responses. Or, if the participants know one another fairly well, have one member of the group tell another what they have observed the other doing well.

Follow up with texts #9 and/or #10.

Once each participant has identified a gift, ask them to share how they could use that gift to help others.

### **The Gift of Treasure**

Ask the person with text #11 to read it aloud and then post it on the wall under the label "Treasure."

Ask the group for their reaction to this text.

Go on to introduce the tradition of tithing. Explain that the tithe is older than the Bible itself and that it is traditionally one-tenth of all one possesses. A tithe is considered a minimum gift. It is a gift to GOD in gratitude for all GOD has given each of us.

Ask the person with text #13 to read it aloud and then post it on the wall. If possible, have participants read the other biblical references to tithing. Point out the changes in the tithe over time as we have moved from an agricultural society to a technical/industrial one—now we measure our wealth in money and other assets and a tithe is one-tenth or 10 percent of our income. Use the Share the Gift handout, *Weekly Percentage Giving Guide*, to illustrate some examples of tithing and ways to gradually increase giving to reach a tithe.

Ask the participants for their reaction to giving away 10 percent of their earnings.

Introduce the **Share–Save–Spend** formula from the book *Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child's ATM* by Nathan Dungan.

A stewardship formula:      Share (10%) – Save (10%) – Spend (80%)

Demonstrate this approach to stewardship and living out faith by taking a \$10 bill and the equivalent 10 loonies. Place three coin banks or other containers on a table before the group and then distribute according to the formula. This formula provides the abundant life while honouring GOD'S call to share from our abundance and to tithe. It also introduces the merits of saving for the future—for others and ourselves.

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If time permits, include activities from the Share the Gift handout, *How Much Stuff Do I Really Need? Me and My Money*.

Provide the Share the Gift booklet *Money, Money, Money* as a take-away handout. Also provide all the stewardship texts used during the session using the handout *What Is Stewardship?* that follows.

## What Is Stewardship?

Using all the gifts that GOD has given us, to do the work GOD is calling us to do.

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### Texts

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you need from day to day."  
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shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give  
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no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that  
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GOD helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-  
to-work, and walking around life—and place it before GOD as an offering. Embracing  
what GOD does for you is the best thing you can do for GOD.  
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service of others.  
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But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it—to prepare  
GOD's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.  
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work GOD has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.  
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<b>Share</b>	<b>Save</b>	<b>Spend</b>