

Tithing: A Leap of Faith! *A Three-week Stewardship Program*

Thank you for downloading the **Tithing: A Leap of Faith!** sample packet. This packet includes:

- † **Program description.**
- † **List of resources included in the program.**
- † **Samples of a few of the resources to provided so the reader can evaluate writing style, tone, etc.**
- † **We also suggest downloading the [program instructions and timeline](#), which will provide a detailed description of program implementation.**

If you would like additional information,
please visit our website or call us toll-free at 888-320-5576.

Program Description

Tithing: A Leap of Faith! is a 3-week stewardship program that inspires “a leap of faith” to increased giving for a 10–week period following the program ... and beyond. It is designed to foster a higher level of commitment to the Lord. During the three main weeks of the program, it focuses on conveying the importance of our commitment to God through tithing and encourages members to prayerfully consider an increased level of giving (up to a full tithe) for a ten-week period immediately following the program. Then, during those ten weeks, the program continues to reinforce your members’ commitment to increased giving with additional resources that inspire and encourage the faith to give.

This educational and challenging program, based on God’s Word, will help your members take a “leap of faith” in their giving. It will inspire members to give joyfully and generously. For the first time many of your members will tithe, some will surpass the tithe, and others will grow in their giving.

The program is designed to be an integral part of your stewardship plan, but we recommend that it be accompanied by monthly communication and inspiration about stewardship, such as a bulletin or newsletter insert. This will provide a consistent, meaningful stewardship message all year long!

Program Material Files

The program material files contain all of the resources required to undertake a successful program ... there is nothing else to buy! These materials are available to download from the *Stewardship Resource Center* at www.parishpublishing.org. They are clearly labeled in separate files, making them very easy to use. Simply download the material to your computer in either MS Word or PDF format. Share the Username with others involved so they can download what they need too!

You can edit or change any material, as desired, to add the church name/logo or personalize in any way. Print as many copies as you need for your entire congregation!

Materials to prepare and follow-up the program:

- † Program Instructions
- † Background photo
- † Clip Art
- † Letter from pastor to announcing the program
- † Letter from pastor to be distributed with a Commitment Form
- † Letter from pastor to those not returning a Commitment Form
- † Letter from pastor to thank members who turned in a Commitment Form
- † Giving Chart
- † Commitment Form

Materials to launch the program and for each of the three weeks of the program:

- † Theme essay in both tri-fold and letter formats (*Four essays, for launch and three weeks of the program.*)
- † Newsletter article (*Two articles, for launch and during program.*)
- † Bulletin insert (*Two inserts, for launch and first week of program.*)
- † Bulletin or email message (*Four messages, for launch and three weeks of the program.*)
- † Lay reader message (*Four messages, for launch and three weeks of the program.*)
- † Worship suggestions
- † Bible studies, including Bible study answer guide.
- † Sermon
- † Children's lesson
- † Sunday School handouts (K-6 and 7-12)

Materials for each week of the ten-week period of increased giving following the program:

- † Newsletter article (*One article for during 10-week period.*)
- † Bulletin insert
- † Bulletin/newsletter/email message
- † Lay reader message (*Seven messages included. Use every other week with two alternates.*)

Tithing: A Leap of Faith!

Theme Essay

Becoming a Tither

“But just as you excel in everything ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us ... see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7

In spite of our unworthiness, God has blessed us with a wonderful privilege and opportunity to be his stewards. In order to be faithful to our calling as faithful stewards who want to grow in the grace of giving and honor God through tithing, we need to stay connected to Jesus who equips and strengthens us to be faithful in our stewardship. Jesus said:

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” John 15:4

Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. His wonderful promise to us is that he will always remain connected to us. *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you”* (Hebrews 13:5). If the branch breaks off from the vine, we, the branches, have broken the connection. In order to remain connected to Jesus, we must spend time reading and hearing his Word and participate regularly in the Sacraments. Through this intimate relationship with Jesus that is possible only as we abide in him, we are enabled to be faithful in our giving and begin to tithe.

We, his branches, receive nourishment from Jesus, the Vine, as his love and blessings flow through us. As we grow spiritually by continually abiding in him, our giving increases. When we give faithfully of our time and money, God is glorified, and we are filled with God’s supply to give even more. *“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work”* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

By God’s grace, we can become tithers. Through faith, we become new people who are transformed and empowered to give generously. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). As new people in Christ, we grow in the grace of giving by:



Spending Time in God’s Word

God’s Word calls us to give and assures us that we will be enabled to give. By our own reason or strength, we are unable to be faithful in our stewardship, but, through the Holy Spirit working through God’s Word, we can give generously. Through his Word, he equips and nourishes us to be faithful stewards.

The Holy Spirit changes our minds and hearts so we can adopt God’s ways and become more like him, the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17), through our giving. Through the hearing and reading of God’s Word, we are changed into new creations who become givers rather than takers. Our selfish attitude is replaced by a spirit of generosity. *(Continued on second page...)*

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Bulletin Insert
First week of program

Does God Command Tithing?

Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). Under the grace, mercy, and love of Jesus, we are not commanded to tithe. However, under grace, we are asked to give freely (Matthew 10:8) and generously (2 Corinthians 9:6-8). The tithe has changed from a command to a benchmark.

Tithing is a guide to our giving. When we tithe, we are responding to God’s grace. Without the tithe, we would lack guidance as to what would be an appropriate response. Through faith and trust, many of us will give well beyond the tithe.

In the book *Holy Smoke! What Ever Happened to Tithing?* J. Cliff Christopher and Herb Mather wrote, “The

tithe is a benchmark along a journey rather than a mark of having arrived at the destination. When we travel on highways today, we need roads, signposts, and other benchmarks such as motels, restaurants, and gas stations. These are institutions. Their purpose is to serve the public on its journey. Likewise, benchmarks such as tithing are required for the person on the spiritual journey.”

While tithing is no longer a requirement, it still serves as a useful and proper benchmark for our faithful response to God for who God is and what God has done for us. Our giving is a natural response to God’s love for us.



Tithing: A Leap of Faith!

Sermon - Second Sunday

“Tithing: A Leap of Faith”

The Word of the Lord for the second Sunday of our two-week stewardship emphasis “Ten for Ten” is taken from Mark 12:41-44 which reads as follows:

“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, ‘I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.’ ”

The Bible is truly a remarkable book. One of the things that makes it so remarkable is the kind of stories it tells. Where else would you find the story of a son who leaves home, wastes his father's money, returns home broke, and is welcomed by his father with open arms? Or a Samaritan who stops at the side of the road to tend the wounds of a traveler who has been beaten and left for dead? Or a widow who, during a famine, gives her last crust of bread to a hungry prophet named Elijah?

When we turn to history books, we are accustomed to reading about great battles and the conquests of explorers and people who made names for themselves in shaping the world, but in the Bible it is the little people who stand out – the ordinary people who are not famous for anything, except for some act of mercy or love which was lifted up and preserved.

So today, we read about a woman whose name we don't even know, but her story is told because one day she threw two copper coins into the temple treasury and was seen by Jesus. Why are such stories told?

I think as Jesus went about the towns and villages around Galilee preaching the Gospel, he looked for those rare persons who exemplified the things he was talking about. Whenever he found such a person, he pointed to that one as a mirror of the Good News. So, here, on this day as Jesus rested by the temple gate, weary from his travels, not especially noticing anyone who went into the temple, he heard the clink of two small coins being dropped into the offering box by the entrance. The sound of the coins was distinctly different. They didn't make the loud, heavy sound of the larger coins being thrown into the box. This sound was hollow, almost muffled, but Jesus heard it and looked up. What he saw was a frail woman in old clothing who was obviously not very well-to-do. We don't know whether Jesus spoke to her or not, but he had a keen ability to see into the depths of people's lives, and this was the woman for whom Jesus was looking.

"Come on over here," he called to his disciples. "Come and see this woman. She has put in more
(Continued on pages 2-4...)

Tithing: A Leap of Faith!

Lay Reader Presentation – Second Week of Program

Should I Pledge to My Church?

Each of us will be asked to make a financial commitment to the mission and ministry of our church. Maybe you're still struggling with the question: "Should I make a pledge or a commitment to my church?"

Life is full of examples of the commitments that we make. We make commitments to make our house and car payments. We pledge to make timely payments to our utility suppliers and our newspaper carriers. In our marriage vows, we pledge our commitments to our spouses. Our way of life depends on our willingness to pledge.

As God's children, we should have an even greater willingness to commit some of our financial resources for the work of the Lord that He is doing through our church. Here are some thoughts as to why a pledge is beneficial:

1. When we pledge, we give careful thought to our giving. A pledge commits us to a predetermined amount of weekly giving rather than making weekly giving decisions in haste.
2. Pledging tends to safeguard our decision not to let our love of money overcome our love for the Lord. The commitment of the pledge helps us overcome the temptation of giving less when our financial situations get a little tough.
3. Pledging is an affirmation that we will do it God's way. It says that we are taking a definite stand on the side of God. To make such an affirmation in word and deed is part of living the new life we have in Christ.

(Continued on page 2)