

DID YOU KNOW...?

Did you know that... that the average church member equates “stewardship” with the annual fund drive to underwrite the budget? In many churches people are subconsciously programmed to find reasons not to attend on the Sunday pledge cards will be received. A year-round initiative to teach stewardship without mentioning money moves people into a deeper understanding of stewardship as a lifestyle. However, there are strategies that can help between now and the annual pledge drive.

Did you know Barna research shows that the number one reason people give is to help people? As a result, did you know people give to people not budgets? Of course you do. But it is easy to fall in the trap of creating a budget and then asking people to give to it. Convert the budget into a narrative that tells a story. How will the Children/Youth line item in the “budget” make a difference in the lives of the children and youth? Share an example. How does the staff make a difference in peoples’ lives? List the many people caring tasks they provide daily and weekly making life better for the families in the church and community. How will the utilities and building maintenance enhance the ministry to touch peoples’ lives? List all the ministries dependent upon the behind the scenes service of the Trustees including those from community service groups. Tell a story not a financial statement with the budget. Less than 10 percent of members are interested in the actual numbers. Rather, they are interested in how their gift will make a difference for others.

Did you know the average church struggles to tell its story? Pastors and lay people are so busy with the activities of the church that they miss their greatest opportunity...telling the story. Whose life was transformed through a memorial service, wedding, baptism, small group, helping others in mission, food pantry, etc. Almost all churches utilize some form of a testimonial in the

weeks before pledge Sunday; however, are they the tried and true leaders heard year after year? It may be beneficial to hear a greater variety of experiences, generations, and ministry areas. Shorter is always better if passionate and experiential rather than what someone thinks. Coach these “story tellers” so they feel prepared but still spontaneous.

Did you know the “silent majority” applies to the church as well? The average person in the church will not speak up in a larger group. Also the average person does not really know the “big picture.” Consider using several smaller “cottage meetings” in individual homes to share the vision, the past year’s successes, the opportunities and what was learned from the challenges. Design the small groups to be a dialogue involving everyone. Ownership of the mission and ministry of the local church will result in an increased prayerful consideration of a commitment for 2012.

Finally, did you know the word pledge or commitment has a greater negative connotation for most people than “estimate of giving?.” A simple change of language can relax the heart and soul as an individual prayerfully considers their giving for 2012.

Did you know I am available to review and potentially talk through your strategy for the fall annual mission and ministry campaign?

COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENT

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