



The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 16



Congratulations! You just survived the weirdest Easter of your ministry! Now what? Rest! Relax! Refresh and recharge! Seriously, the last few weeks have been the most stressful for many of us in our entire ministries. My prayer for you is that you do find some downtime to recharge your batteries.

Sustainability of your ministry has been my goal since early in March. For the last few weeks, I have been advising you that you must have one eye toward the future. We have been advocating a 30-, 60-, 90-, and 120-day outlook for planning. That is going to be even more critical in the next few weeks. Here is why.

COVID-19 does seem to be peaking in many sections of the country. Some of you might indeed get back to meeting onsite by May. I expect that churches will be full for the first few weeks of May *if* social distancing is dropped. That should mean giving picks up for you. The downside is that within weeks you will be in the summer months. Americans, having just spent weeks sequestered away in their homes, are going to hit the great outdoors. Traditionally, summertime has been one of the slowest times for giving for churches. None of us can afford to lose any more giving ground! To help you negate the decline of summer giving, here is my annual post-Easter edition of the Coach entitled ***Summer Planning Edition***.

Immediately after Easter, my focus with clients is upon getting them started on the three keys for summer planning. Let me break each of them down for you here. As with all "asks," you need to first...

1. Set the Vision for your summer giving initiative. Every appeal needs its own vision that drives a donor to give you more. Those communicated needs are the "drivers" that will either drive me to my wallet in support of them or cause me to throw the appeal away.

The more compelling the driver, the more likely you are to get a response. Tell your donors why giving to this cause is important and impactful.

Your vision has to be **clear, concise** and, most of all, **compelling**. The same is true for every appeal you make. The driver, like your vision, must be clear, concise and compelling, or you will not succeed. I call that The Three C's of Vision.

What is the story behind your summer? Each mission and ministry initiative has a story behind it. Telling that story effectively will increase your chance of giving.

Spend the next few weeks nailing down the vision for your summer giving. Work to make that vision, clear, concise and compelling, and you will raise more dollars.

After you have your vision, message and story down, you need to next...

2. Build the infrastructure required for a successful summer giving initiative. For your summer giving plan to be truly successful, you need to make sure you have what I call the Basic Building Blocks of Support. Briefly, here is my list of blocks that, if you don't have now, you need to immediately start working toward.

Database – Make sure your database is up to date and applicable for the 21st century. You should have your database broken out into key segments. For instance, the top 15% of your donors should make up one list. Another might be those that give less than \$200 or first-time donors. My point is that you should never treat every donor the same in terms of messaging.

Digital Footprint – Here are the basics that are a MUST for this Digital Age we live in.

Website – You must have a robust and up to date website. You will want to use your website to highlight your summer giving plan.

Social Media – At a minimum, I think a church should have Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as their Social Media base. You will want to use your Social Media footprint extensively to highlight your summer offering. I call it show and tell giving, and social media is great at this.

Online Giving – COVID-19 showed everyone the importance of a good online giving base. From text giving to a great online page, this platform is crucial for giving success.

Offering envelopes – While envelopes might seem old school, they none the less are an effective means of collecting donations. However, it essential that your envelope has a postage-paid meter stamp on it. After your infrastructure is set, then...

3. Prime the pump to assure a successful summer giving initiative. This recommendation comes in two parts.

Leaders First! When I talk about priming the pump, I want you to communicate early in the process with your giving leaders, laying out the summer giving plan. This builds confidence in your donors that you have a plan to increase giving so that it doesn't all fall upon them to save the day. It also lets them know that the appeals and communications you are putting out are directed to gain new donors, not merely dog your current ones to death.

Make May a push for setting up recurring giving. Again, here is another lesson from COVID-19 that shows the value of recurring giving. I push for recurring giving two times annually, in January and in May.

16 weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day will determine how your financial year goes. Start thinking, praying and planning now for a great summer of giving!

Keep your eye on the future! I have been saying to anyone who will listen, that we must keep thinking ahead. Don't let your plans for future projects die from lack of focus and attention. As we continue to struggle through COVID-19, what should you be doing with regards to your future plans? **In my webinar on Monday, April 13th, I am going to have my friend, Chad Vanderipe, of Churches By Daniels, on to discuss this very issue.** You will not want to miss this session!



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Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach live this Monday, April 13th at 11 AM EST.

Here is the link <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7081778876232214541>.

This Week's Offering Talk

As we are still in a forced lockdown from physically meeting, this offering talk is written with that in mind. Remember, when you lead showing compassion, it makes your appeal to give more readily heard.

Here is What You Can't See

I love that churches all across the world have been finding ways to stay connected with their flocks.

Yet, I have to say that while I enjoy worshipping with you online, I miss seeing a full sanctuary of people. Staring into a camera is just not the same. For you, staring at a TV screen or a computer screen isn't the same either. We can't see what is happening.

So, before we focus on the offering, let me help you "see" some results from Easter and the last few weeks.

- Last week for Easter we had over XXX watch our services either live or on playback. We know the number of devices that logged in, but we don't know the number of people sitting in homes watching as a family.
- Over XX responded last week to our invitation to accept Christ!
- Every week we are, _____.

Those are just a few things that you can't see as a result of being sequestered. Do you know how we can do all of this? Your faithful generosity! Without your faithfulness, none of what we "saw" last week would have happened. So, thank you for your faithfulness in giving.

Let me remind you of the various ways in which you can give to our church. List all the ways people can give. Your generosity, even though you can't see the results, is making a difference in the lives of countless people. Thank you!



Bonus Section

Every year I put out a manual on summer giving. I am working on updating my material and will share it with you here in the bonus section. Below are some general ideas.

Stewardship Plan Calendar

2020 Calendar

In the month of May

Early May - Leadership Reach out – Consider sending out an advanced letter to your giving leaders, laying out the summer giving plan.

5/3 Bulletin insert encouraging Automatic Withdrawal – Insert into your bulletin a signup sheet for setting up automatic withdrawal. If your church is still closed by this date, shift this suggestion to the first weekend you are back.

5/10 Tithing Testimony – Enlist laypeople to give a one to two-minute testimony of their experience in tithing. People expect ministers to tell them to give. When they hear from people just like themselves give testimony of God's faithfulness, it resonates sometimes better than your best stewardship sermon!

5/18 Direct Mail and Email blast about summer giving campaign sent to entire church family.

In the month of June

6/1 1st Direct Mail and email letter – First Summer Giving campaign reminder letter or email reminding members of the importance of their gift. Consider putting a self-addressed postage paid envelope into each letter, making it easy for members to give.

6/7 Bulletin insert – Focus on another missions or ministry initiative

6/21 Tithing Testimony

In the month of July

7/1 2nd Direct Mail and email blast – Reminder letter goes out with envelope to every person.

7/13 Second quarter giving statements mailed – Quarterly statements give you an opportunity to thank your donors. A thank you is the least offensive way to put giving on the radar of your members.

7/19 Bulletin insert

7/26 Tithing Testimony

In the month of August

8/3 3rd Direct Mail and email blast – Final letter goes out with envelope to entire church family.

8/9 Tithing Testimony and promotion of fall session of Financial Peace (if applicable)

8/16 Bulletin Insert encouraging strong close out on Summer Giving Campaign

At the start of September

9/1 Final Fruit offering for Summer Giving Campaign

9/14 Send out thank you letters to all who gave
