

Story-telling

(Engaging others in congregational ministries!)

Inspiring story-telling helps members know at a deep level that their tithes, offerings and gifts provide significant avenues for love, service, welcome and evangelism through your congregation. A Narrative Budget* tells the story of your congregation's vision and mission - and moves from a finance/budget-or-budget-only approach to telling others about your response to God's call. If you have not yet created a narrative budget, you can still plan creative ways to share your Good News stories so that others will be inspired by and enthusiastic about the ministries of your congregation! (Be sure to include all ages and a variety of "media" in your story-telling!)

I d e a s :

- 1) Invite children to create posters that tell about all of your congregation's ministries. Post these in the halls of the church building, or use them on bulletin inserts or newsletters.
- 2) Use visual displays to highlight one ministry area for several months, then rotate into a new display. Try an attractive and well-placed bulletin board or a display board (such as the tri-folds used for children's school projects), placed on a table in your narthex or coffee area.
- 3) Highlight one congregational ministry area per month in worship. Have a leadership team member share about the effects of the ministry - OR, ask a person affected by the ministry to share first-hand.
- 4) Use your narrative budget in new membership classes. Participants will understand how gifts to the church affect others' lives and reflect the vision and mission of the congregation. This is an excellent way to teach new members about Jesus' call to love God with our all.
- 5) Enlist photographers or computer-savvy folk to create a slideshow that illustrates a ministry area of your congregation. Try this with music background only, so that images tell the story.
- 6) Create a special weekend fair that helps tell about all your ministry areas. Include hands-on projects or activities that involve participants in each ministry.
- 7) In a worship service or special meal, celebrate your ministries by telling stories through special recognitions. Be joyful and delight-full. Some examples are:
 - Create "Going the Second Mile" certificates as thank-you's for members who have served beyond expected tasks;
 - Give "Care of Creation" certificates for those who have exemplified good stewardship of the earth. Make them on the back of printed paper you were going to discard or recycle - or create a "trophy" using recycled objects.
- 8) Choose a hymn, such as "*We give thee but thine own*" (*Hymnal*, 384) or "*God whose giving knows no ending*" (383) that relates to your ministries. Alternate each verse with a brief reading about the work of your congregation. This can be a thanks-giving celebration, or a way of letting your members recognize the wide variety of work your congregations does - all in response to God's wonderful gifts to you!
- 9) When new leadership team members or task forces are installed for the year, highlight "budget areas" by telling about the ministries in which these people will be working.

* The "Narrative Budget," a tri-fold pamphlet of "how-to's" is included in the 2006 Stewardship Resource Packet from the General Board. Additional copies are available from United Church Resource Distribution in Toronto, Canada, 1-800-288-7365, Product Code 305 853 037.

