

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN - CONGREGATIONAL BANQUET

Ideal for 12 or more participants

Any banquet suggests that this is an important event. To use such a gathering of the congregation to focus on the support of the mission and ministry of the parish has many pluses. This kind of event should be celebrative, full of energy and fellowship. The following is a step by step guide to an event that can have significant impact on the stewardship response of the members.

1. Locate a nice venue for the banquet. It is best if this take place away from your own parish setting. To meet elsewhere suggests its importance, and relieves members of the congregation from the chores of set-up and take down. They too can enjoy the event.
2. Provide a nice meal. Such a meal makes a statement that this time together is significant. Have it catered. Potlucks suggest that this is a normal church gathering which it is not.
3. Seek a donor or donors who will underwrite the cost of the banquet. Do not charge people to attend. If necessary take the cost out of the budget, just be aware doing so can lead to criticism of the use of church funds.
4. Secure an outside speaker who can articulate with passion the importance of first fruits giving and its impact on the mission and ministry of the church, the diocese and the Episcopal Church. This person should be compensated for their time preparing and delivering their talk.
5. Invite the congregational members
 - Sign-up at church beginning four weeks in advance
 - Or ask key members to invite a table of friends
 - Or have a committee make phone calls; all callers coming together at the same place at the same time. Cell phones make this easy to do.
 - Combine the above to net the largest turnout possible
6. Identify table hosts, one person or couple per table. These people will, when the time comes, share something of their stewardship story, pass out materials to those at their table and be asked to make their own commitment at the dinner.
7. Prepare materials
 - Pledge or response forms that can include both a Time and Talent commitment and a separate dollar commitment.
 - Place cards for each table with assigned seating
 - Banquet program

- Budget if this is helpful. Put in narrative form and not line item form. It is good to break this out by ministries; for example money spent on religious education will likely include a significant portion of the clergy salary. Puts a whole new perspective on how much emphasis is actually made among the various church ministries.
- Put the handouts into packets for each of the table hosts.

8. Suggested banquet program

- Social time
- Gather at the tables. Head table can include guest speaker, the pastor, chair of the Event, Master of Ceremony and their partners.
- Introduction and welcome
- Prayer
- Meal time
- Optional Entertainment. Skit (what do you expect for a buck?), spirited group singing, solo or ensemble from your church, all focused around stewardship themes
- Introduction of speaker and the address
- The “Why” of this event
- Table hosts hand out materials and the people are lead through the commitment process
- Prayer
- Making the commitment. It is well to collect the material at this event. However it can be equally effective to have people return their commitments the following Sunday and place them on the altar or in the offering plate
- Closing. If the congregation likes to sing, go out with a strong song like “On our way rejoicing” or “Now Thank we all our God.” End with excitement in the air.
- “Go in peace. Serve the Lord.” “Thanks be to God!”