

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN - COTTAGE MEETINGS

Ideal for 6 or more participants

The purpose of the cottage meeting stewardship approach is to gather a significant number of the congregation in home settings where the goals of the congregation can be identified and support to accomplish these goals can be secured.

1. Determine the number of host/hostess homes needed based on the number of people expected to participate. Should strive for 20-30% of the congregation.
2. Recruit the host/hostess homes. Most need place to seat 12 – 20 individuals.
3. Choose a variety of times and days to offer the cottage meeting. Mornings, afternoons, evenings, weekdays, weekends, etc. over a two-week timeframe.
4. Obligation of host/hostess: provide space and refreshments.
5. Available sites and times are posted at the church several weeks in advance to allow people to sign up for the most convenient time.
6. Ten days prior to the start of the cottage meetings, phone calls are made to those who have not signed up, to secure their attendance.
7. Content of the cottage meeting:
 - a. Time for introductions- even in small communities, people don't know everything about each other. Have fun.
 - b. Refreshment break- bring goodies back to the gathering place. May want to wait till later.
 - c. Using newsprint, have people tell what they like about their church. This starts things on a positive note. Have someone be the scribe and post the newsprint somewhere in the room if possible.
 - d. Using newsprint, have participants share their hopes, dreams or wish list for the congregation in the next two to five years. This is collective goal setting. Promise that this list will be copied for the congregation to see and reflect upon. Priorities and plans can develop from this and implementation started.
 - e. Personal witness about time and talent and financial support should be voiced by the leader of the meeting. The priest/deacon/pastor is often the best one to be in the lead role. It is with our gifts that the mission and ministry of the church (Locally and globally) is enabled. The leader is encouraged to shares what he/she and family are committing to the work of the church in very specific dollar amounts.
 - f. Invite the participants to be an equal partner in the work of mission and ministry. Remember "Equal sacrifice is not the same as equal gifts." Hand out pledge cards for time and talent. Fill out and hand in.

- g. Hand out pledge/commitment cards for financial support. People are encouraged not to fill this card out now. Take it home. Pray about it. Count your blessings. Return it on Commitment Sunday when they shall go to the altar at the time of the offering and place it in the offering plate.

FOLLOW UP:

Mail or hand deliver pledge card (Time, Talent and Financial) to those families which were not present at the cottage meetings. It should be done prior to Commitment Sunday so they too will have the opportunity to place their pledge in the offering plate. Always have spare cards available for the forgetful ones at church on Commitment Sunday.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THIS APPROACH

Advantages:

1. Sets a positive tone about the church/parish.
2. Gets many people involved in setting goals for the next five years.
3. Builds community
4. Personal testimony is always powerful, even from the "Paid Christian". (Priest, pastor, Deacon)
5. A witness to one's personal giving helps people understand what sacrificial giving is – not the \$5 or \$20 per week at which are many.

Disadvantages

1. Heavy commitment for the meetings by the one leader.
2. Reaches a small percentage of the congregation – although the most active.