

<p style="text-align: center;">CONSECRATION SUNDAY A STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION PROCESS By Herb Miller Adapted for Use in the La Crosse Area Synod</p>
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PHILOSOPHY OF CONSECRATION SUNDAY

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS GENERALLY HAVE THESE INGREDIENTS:

- Budget building
- Use of a proposed budget as a stimulus for giving. (i.e. “give to need”)
- The solicitation of pledges
- The determination of the final budget (adjusted to match anticipated income)

STRENGTHS OF THE CONSECRATION SUNDAY

- It is Biblical (stewardship is a spiritual, not a money issue)
- There is no budget to clutter up the stewardship process
 - (Normally, some will disagree with the budget priorities and vote with their offering, others may calculate their “fair share” based on total budget and number of families)
- Members respond positively and every member is reached
- It works in every size church
- It uses a guest leader
- It is a stewardship education process, not just another program.

CAUTIONS:

- **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** is not designed as a “quick fix” or “magic pill” for a troubled congregation.
- The **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** approach should be used only if a church leadership is committed to following the plan as set forth in the program booklet and leader’s guide.

ASSUMPTIONS OF CONSECRATION SUNDAY

- People do not like to ask for money. Instead the leaders are asked to invite fellow members to the luncheon. At no time do they ask for money or pledges.
- **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** is based on the philosophy of the “need of the giver to give” for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the “need of the church to receive.”
- **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** asks “What is God calling me to do?” rather than “What does the church need in order to pay its bills?” It is a spiritual growth, worship experience, not a fund- raising effort.
- **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** focuses on tithing and percentage giving, not as legalism but as an appropriate faith commitment. (Matthew 6:24-33; 25:14-30; Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 1 Timothy 6:8-8; 1 John 3:17; 1 Chronicles 29)
- By completing the “Estimate of Giving Card” in a worship service, **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** models the idea that stewardship is part of our worship of God, rather than a fund-raising technique.
- **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** conducts the campaign before building the budget.
- **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** assumes that people can enjoy rather than feel negative about stewardship programs.

- The **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** program can be used year after year, because the guest leader changes. It provides the outline and tools for a Biblically based stewardship education program.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONSECRATION SUNDAY

1. About six weeks prior to **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**, the guest leader meets with members of the CONSECRATION SUNDAY Team. The guest leader helps the committee understand the program and establish the schedule.
2. There are several kinds of publicity during the four weeks prior to **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**. (e.g., model letters, verbal announcements, etc.)
3. The Sunday prior to **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**:
 - a. A committee member uses the “Grow One Step” sheet in the morning worship.
 - b. Celebration Luncheon (catered and provided by the congregation) reservations are requested at worship and Bible classes.
4. On Sunday or Monday evening prior to **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**, the guest leader speaks at a dinner for church leaders and spouses. No financial commitments are taken at this dinner; however, people are requested to help in the contacting of all members and friends who have not yet made their luncheon reservation. They are asked to make these personal contacts that week on Tuesday and Wednesday, prior to **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**.
5. On **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**, the guest leader preaches and conducts a commitment session at the end of the service.
6. The results are announced at the Celebration Luncheon.
7. On Monday following **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**, a letter is mailed (with a stamped, self-addressed envelope and an Estimate of Giving Card) to those who were unable to be present.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. There are no “quick fixes” or “magic pill” programs.
2. A stewardship education process tailored for the congregation is more helpful than a program.
3. Leaders need to lead in making their commitment and building a positive climate.
4. Stewardship needs to be built around the congregation’s mission statement and vision.
5. Most people want and need to be instructed and challenged in their giving.
6. Say “thank you” and celebrate victories!
7. Sacrifice is a mark of discipleship. Giving is a spiritual issue.
8. Stewardship recognizes God is owner of all that we are and have. We are managers and our giving is a faith response.
9. Teaching stewardship is more than raising money. It is God’s way of raising Christians.
10. It is important that a congregation model proportional, first fruits, growth giving (with a goal of 10% minimum) of its income to ELCA Mission Support

THE CONSECRATION SUNDAY TEAM

The team will not be asking fellow members for money or pledges. There are no tricks, manipulation, or pressure tactics. Its goals are to insure that every member be involved in two events:

1. CONSECRATION SUNDAY Worship Service
2. Celebration Luncheon/Brunch/Dinner following worship

The **CONSECRATION SUNDAY** Team consists of:

1. CONSECRATION SUNDAY Chair
2. Celebration Luncheon Chair
3. Telephone Chair
4. Three persons making announcements in worship three weeks before CONSECRATION SUNDAY.
5. Financial Secretary and assistant to compute results on CONSECRATION SUNDAY.

Note: Some of these could be combined. If there is no stewardship committee or board, form a task force of your best stewards. They may become your standing committee.

PRAYER

Prayer needs to under gird any stewardship education process. Ask your council or Vision team to develop and lead a congregation wide prayer emphasis throughout the six week program.

CALENDAR

6 – 8 Weeks	Guest Leader meets with CONSECRATION SUNDAY Leadership Team
3 weeks prior	Announcement by committee member Worship (importance of CONSECRATION SUNDAY, Date & Time, “need of giver to give”, proportionate giving as faith response, Celebration Luncheon is catered)
Monday (3 weeks prior)	<u>Mail Letter #1</u> (All letters may be prepared in advance)
2 weeks prior	<u>Announcement</u> in Worship
2 weeks prior (Monday)	<u>Mail Letter #2</u>
2 weeks prior (Tues. & Wed.)	Telephone Council & CONSECRATION SUNDAY Team members and spouses stressing importance of them being at the leadership dinner, giving the date and time.
Sunday prior	Introduce “Grow One Step” sheet <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Worshipers write in steps # members, presenter should give illustrations, chart on back, ask them to pray and think about this week.b. Ask them to make reservations to attend worship and luncheon. Tell them phone calls will be made on those from whom a reservation card is not received. Pass out cards, give them time to fill out, pick them up. <u>Stewardship sermon</u> emphasizing percentage giving by the local pastor.

Sun. or Mon. (Prior)	<u>Leadership Dinner</u> (everyone who serves in any leadership capacity) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guest Leader may meet with Team one hour prior to finalize plans, etc. 2. Guest Leader speaks at dinner (Inspirational and "Instructions For making Celebration Luncheon Reservation Contacts") Assignment of phone calls...to be made before Thursday by the Congregational Leaders
Mon. prior	Mail Letter #3
Tues. & Wed. (Prior)	Personal <u>phone calls</u> by officers and CONSECRATION SUNDAY Team to obtain reservations.
Thurs. prior	Phone in reservations to CONSECRATION SUNDAY Team leader By this evening
Consecration Sunday	<u>CONSECRATION SUNDAY WORSHIP</u> – Guest leader preaches, Commitment Time and Benediction... (Results computed by Financial Secretary and Assistant <u>CELEBRATION LUNCHEON</u> following (Results announced)
Monday after	<u>Mail Letter #4</u> to those who did not attend (include stamped, addressed return envelope and a personalized Estimate of Giving Card)
Monday, 1 week after	Mail a personalized <u>letter of appreciation</u> to those who filled out an Estimate of Giving Card, stating the exact amount of their gift.

COSTS:

Consecration Sunday Stewardship Materials by Herb Miller. Order from Amazon.com

- New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program, Guest Leader Guide & CD-ROM: Revised Edition by Herb Miller Paperback \$24.88 (need one for your church)
- New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program Team Member Manual: Revised Edition by Herb Miller Paperback \$9.99 (need one for each team member)
- New Consecration Sunday Estimate of Giving Card (Pkg of 100) Cards \$9.89
- Additional costs: Leadership Dinner, Catered Lunch, Honorarium \$250+.

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

The La Crosse Area Synod encourages use of New Consecration Sunday or a similar - effort to strengthen stewardship. Several congregations have already participated.

Rev. Libby Howe serves as the coordinator for Consecration Sunday. She will be happy to answer your questions and walk you through the Consecration Sunday process. You can call or e-mail Pastor Howe at **608-788-5000** or by e-mail at assistant@lacrosseareasynod.org.

Steps Involved:

- Make a decision about use of Consecration Sunday
- Order Consecration Sunday materials
- Establish calendar – clear dates on congregational calendar
- Allow 2 months for the Consecration Sunday process
- Schedule the guest leader for Consecration Sunday worship
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the approach when process is completed
- Make a decision on type of stewardship effort to be used next year.