

Looking Back and Looking Forward

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
I support our congregation's funding of mission outside of our own needs.	5	4	3	2	1
The congregation asked for my contributions in a respectful, forthright fashion that honored my life of faith.	5	4	3	2	1
In the program I learned more about living my total life as a steward.	5	4	3	2	1
I received a spiritual benefit from this year's theme and program emphases.	5	4	3	2	1
I look forward to seeing/hearing how the theme(s) will be strengthened and connected during the coming months.	5	4	3	2	1
I am confident about our congregation's capability to fund God's mission here.	5	4	3	2	1
In the program I learned more about the work we do as the ELCA, locally, nationally and worldwide.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel blessed by God.	5	4	3	2	1
The program theme and emphases were communicated straightforwardly, and were easily grasped.	5	4	3	2	1
I heard as much (or more) about God as I did about the church.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: _____

Take a few moments to complete each item in this survey. (Just circle the number that best matches your response.) We'll use the results to evaluate our annual program of stewardship response. Thanks!

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
Everything I am and have comes from God and belongs to God.	5	4	3	2	1
I participated in the annual stewardship response program.	5	4	3	2	1
I understand the spiritual/biblical messages I heard and read.	5	4	3	2	1
I can recall the stewardship theme and its connected meaning(s).	5	4	3	2	1
I understand what my contributions will make possible in the coming year.	5	4	3	2	1
I made a financial commitment for the coming year.	5	4	3	2	1
The program was accomplished with relative ease and in a positive spirit.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel honored and affirmed for my participation in this annual program.	5	4	3	2	1
I am grateful for "leadership by example" that was evident in the program.	5	4	3	2	1
The congregational mission plan (budget) was well-crafted and hopeful.	5	4	3	2	1

Using “Looking Back and Looking Forward”

The survey form, “Looking Back and Looking Forward,” gives you a chance to ask members about some of their thoughts about your annual stewardship response program. Use this survey in any of the following ways:

Photocopy and distribute the form as a bulletin insert. The completed surveys can be part of the follow-up for an annual congregational stewardship emphasis.

Mail copies of the form to a random sample of congregation members, including “inactive members.” Compare the results with a set of surveys completed by stewardship leaders.

Use this survey as the start of team or committee meetings immediately following an annual stewardship emphasis. Participants can talk about their reactions to the questions or share their personal stories about surprising or heartening moments during the program emphasis time.

One simple activity to introduce the survey: Ask respondents if they look both ways before crossing a street (or changing lanes). The value of any “double look” is both excellence and safety. For our stewardship program, this looking back will make our looking forward that much better.

Interpreting the Survey Results

The survey will reveal respondents’ feelings about a program you may have worked very hard to accomplish. Work hard to stay objective and be grateful for respondents’ honesty.

Look for trends in responses that reveal some previously-intangible good that has come from your program. (For example, Item 9.)

Although not all “Strongly Agree” answers will necessarily characterize your program, a tendency towards “Strongly Disagree” answers may indicate that respondents did not significantly benefit from the annual stewardship emphasis.

See how the survey helps answer the question, “How did this annual program accomplish more than funding our mission for another year?”

Next Steps After This Survey

Translate your interpretation of the survey results into a set of recommendations for the next stewardship response program. Think of interviewing a small sample of members to add narrative material to the final report.

If the survey results were troubling, think about the extra-congregational resources you’d like to look at, hear from, tell your story to. What and who would they be? What could they do that you can’t already do for yourselves? How will you take advantage of their help?

Compare the results of the survey compare with the final numbers in your response program. Are there correlations between any data and specific survey items? Do any of the survey items suggest causes for any of the numerical/financial results?

Make the final report of this survey part of the thankful prayer at the end of the last meeting of the team that conducted the annual response program.

Believing and Practicing Stewardship (Adults)

	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
11. I care for creation and the environment in my everyday life.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I am continuing to learn about being a follower of Christ.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I am a generous person.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I plan ahead for my financial contributions to this congregation and elsewhere.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I have made a financial contribution to my congregation in the last year.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I feel good about the percent of my income I give to my congregation and other causes or efforts.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I give to this church, to other causes and to other people for good reasons.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I use money and my possessions with care and concern for their value.	5	4	3	2	1
19. Sometimes I sacrifice of myself for some greater good, or the good of others.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Some people consider me an example of a Christian steward.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: _____

Take a few moments to complete each item in this survey. (Just circle the number that best matches your response.) We'll use the results to help plan how our church helps you with your life of stewardship. Thanks!

	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
1. Everything I am and have comes from God and belongs to God.	5	4	3	2	1
2. God has an active presence in my life today.	5	4	3	2	1
3. God wants Christ's followers to be financially wealthy.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The way I live my life has an impact on other people's lives.	5	4	3	2	1
5. My offerings are a response to what God has first given me.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I am responsible for using God's gifts wisely in my life.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I live my life in order to accomplish God's purposes for the world.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I am uniquely gifted by God.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I intend to add to the legacy that was left to me and my generation.	5	4	3	2	1
10. God invites and requires me to be a good steward.	5	4	3	2	1

Using “Believing and Practicing Stewardship”

The Adult form of the survey, “Believing and Practicing Stewardship,” gives you a chance to ask members about some of their views about their beliefs and daily-life applications of Christian stewardship. You can use this survey form in any of the following ways:

1. Photocopy and distribute the form as a bulletin insert. The completed surveys can be part of your preparation for a congregational stewardship formation (education) emphasis. Think about using this tool both before and after a program or event, to see how members’ opinions might have changed.
2. Because the survey assays the levels of self-awareness of personal stewardship among members, think of this as a base-line assessment device in a place where stewardship education has been minimal or non-existent for a number of years.
3. Give the survey to new members’ classes as a way to introduce the matters of stewardship education in this congregation.
4. A simple way to introduce the survey: Tell a story about a time when you felt awkward starting a conversation with someone you knew down deep was a really wonderful person, and talk about how you finally began the conversation. This survey does the same thing among congregation members, and the subject is how people feel and live their stewardship out in the world. A wonderful conversation WILL follow!

Interpreting the Survey Results

1. Remind yourself and survey-takers that this is a SELF-ASSESSMENT, not an objective measurement of the quality or quantity of their faithfulness in God’s world.
2. Look for places where congregation members seem to consistently under-rate themselves as stewards. This may be a place to focus activities and programs of stewardship formation.
3. Be ready to rejoice and be amazed at the high levels of self-awareness members carry with them regarding their personal stewardship.

4. The first ten questions ask questions about beliefs, the second ten about actions/lifestyle. Compare the levels of responses on these two basic elements of stewardship: belief and practice.

Next Steps After This Survey

1. Based on the results of the survey, make a list of the places you will need to re-emphasize some basic concepts of stewardship.
2. If your congregation is ready, consider reconstructing your entire congregation around the presumptions of “gifts-based ministry” or “asset-based planning.” Talk to a synodical, regional or churchwide stewardship staff member if these concepts are new.
3. If consistently strong responses appear for Item 20, consider setting up cross-generational activities or programs of mentoring, in which members teach, coach or encourage each other in lives of stewardship.
4. If Item 9 receives a strongly positive response, consider using elements of the *LEGACY* resources from Augsburg Fortress Publishers, first available in 2000.
5. A program of forming stewards rests on the witness of members regarding the way they live their lives. Audit your congregation’s education and worship activities to find places where personal testimony and/or sharing could be incorporated effectively.
6. If Item 3 receives consistently weak responses, conduct an adult forum on a subject such as “A Christian Looks at Wealth.”
7. Publish bits and pieces of the survey as sidebars in your newsletter. (For example: “85% of survey respondents sacrificing for the good of others.”)
8. Read the comments sections of the survey for hints of content for sermons, congregational activities, newsletter articles, etc.