



Stewardship Education Thoughts and Ideas

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Guiding Questions

- When is money transactional or transformational?*
- What else do we spend or transact?
- What are our UU theological reason and the obligation as stewards – community leaders, individuals, and/or collective community?
- How do you define stewardship?

* *Transactional* means to put in our time, doing our job, receiving our paycheck, consuming – giving to obtain.

Transformational: recognizes that life is limited. We choose to prioritize our time, talent, and treasure according to values and purpose.

Thinking Paths

When we approach life from a position of gracious receiving it is easier to be generous givers. When we are gracious receivers, we are able to see more readily what flows to us, recognizing and appreciating the abundance in our lives. When we feel abundant and recognize the flow as unending, it is easier to give from a place beyond all reason: our values.

To truly move from a culture of scarcity to a culture of generosity, the journey begins by investigating our relationship with money by prioritizing our values and goals for this lifetime. The next stop on the journey is to come into alignment with all of our resources, including money.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition has a curriculum called Our Whole Lives (OWL). OWL is about understanding the constant presence of relationships and sexuality and living them through our values. To live in right relation with our money, we must commit to living out our values in our daily lives.

Defining Stewardship



Stewardship is defined in many ways. Below are just a few examples. Defining stewardship for ourselves and for our congregation is a thoughtful process that can lead to unearthing our values so that we can receive support and encouragement for them.

Definition sample #1: Stewardship connects what we have been given and inherited, with what we have earned. Stewardship is the way we track and account for those resources, what we decide to do with them (according to our values/beliefs), and how we ensure that they are skillfully used to those purposes.

Definition sample #2: Stewardship is the growing, nurturing, promoting, and building of the gifts, calls, and spiritual vocation of the faith community's congregants.

Definition sample #3: Stewardship is receiving graciously and giving generously of our time, talent, and treasure.

Definition sample #4: Stewardship calls us to live consciously, purposefully and intentionally in alignment with our values on all levels and with all of our resources including money.

Stewardship Key Concepts

Life is a precious gift that we have been given. It is finite – it will end.

We each have unique and special gifts of time, talent and treasure

- They can be innate – developed or ignored
- They can be learned – chosen and developed
- They are finite – our ability to do them will end with our life

We all leave a legacy. The questions are: “What legacy do we chose to leave? How do we want to recognize, develop and apply our time, talent, and treasure?”

We often use our time, talent, and treasure to keep or obtain sustenance or wealth.

We can choose to use our time, talent, and treasure in a transactional manner or a transforming manner.

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal tradition – a relationship of promise among us. Living in right relation with money is a form of living in covenant.

Stewardship Educational Opportunities to Consider

- Offer an annual class on basic banking and budgeting
- Offer a class or workshop on estate planning
- Create a children's curriculum. Use *Stewardship: The Joy of Giving* as a model (available at <http://archive.uua.org/re/curriculum/stewardguide>)
- Provide opportunities for children to give time, talent, and treasure including coin jars in classrooms, passing the plate in the worship service before children are dismissed for their classes, working in the church garden or clean up on the church grounds



- Offer generosity workshops for all, especially including children and youth
- Invite children and youth to interview the congregational elders to learn how specific programs and buildings came into being
- Adopt a gratitude attitude. Make a conscious practice of gracious receiving.
- Talk about money at times other than December and the during the annual budget drive
- Demonstrate the impact on programs, mission and vision when talking about money.
- Conduct quarterly worship services around giving and receiving
- Conduct stewardship conversations year round, not just when asking for an annual financial commitment
- Include the Suggested Fair Share Giving Guide and a financial commitment form, as well as a joyful conversation about giving, in your path to membership classes
- Adopt an appreciative inquiry approach to all lay leadership positions
- Offer a workshop on children's allowance, family generosity giving decisions, saving for family events, values based consumer decisions
- Offer a seminar on socially conscious investments
- Schedule a seminar on the fundamentals of a global economy

Small Group Ministry/Adult Religious Education Opportunities

Sponsor a book study using any of the following resources:

- *Giving the Sacred Art; Creating a Lifestyle of Generosity* by Lauren Tyler Wright
- *Thieves in the Temple* by G. Jeffrey MacDonald
- *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer
- *A Year to Live: How to Live This Year As If It Were Your Last* by Stephen Levine
- *Take Time for Your Life* by Cheryl Richardson
- [See any of the resources listed in the Spiritual Giving section of the FORTH Annotated Bibliography]

Possible Workshop Topics

- Healing Your Relationship with Money
- Living Abundantly and Responsibly on a Shoestring
- The Art of Job Networking
- Gracious Receiving
- The Meaning of Shared Ministry
- The Joyful Giving of Gifts
- Making Values Based Financial Decisions

Worship Service Topics

- The Meaning of Covenant
- Introduction to Stewardship Grounded in UU Theology, Principles, and Legacy

FORTH



A Stewardship Development Program

- Exploration of Ministry: Time, Talent, and Treasure
- The Generosity of Spirit
- Gratitude and Abundance

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