

The Four Bases of Stewardship

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We are approaching spring, and for me this brings to mind the great American pastime of baseball. As a sport that is not as fast paced as some, it needs some patience, a broad vision of the whole field and all of the components in order to put a winning team together. I believe that is also true about stewardship ministry in the congregation.

The Four Bases of Stewardship:

Education

The first base of stewardship is the basic foundation of teaching the Biblical message regarding possessions—tithing, giving as an act of worship, and giving as a spiritual discipline and need. In the game of baseball, you can't progress to second base without first touching first base. In stewardship, providing a solid educational foundation prepares and enables us to move on to the next step.

Mission Interpretation

The second base of stewardship is telling the story of God's mission and ministry. How is God at work in your own congregation, in the wider church, and among God's people around the world? Amazing things are going on all around us if we take the time to see them and then pass them on.

Invitation

The third base of stewardship is the intentional work of asking congregation members to be joyous and generous participants in God's work. This can be the most fun of all the things we call stewardship because you are genuinely inviting others to participate in God's mission. Whether we are talking about an annual financial response program or other opportunities for regular, special and planned mission support, it is an opportunity to reenergize the congregation for mission near and far.

This stewardship base calls for pastoral leadership in preaching and teaching, as well as motivated lay leadership to share their own personal stories of God's generosity in their lives. As Lutherans, we may have stayed away from too much talk about tithing and proportionate share giving, but it is truly God's invitation to us all.

Appreciation

The fourth base of stewardship is saying thank you. Now you've got some real momentum going. This stewardship ministry isn't all about law and obligation. We're not focused on budget, the need of the church to receive, or taking care of ourselves. In fact, stewardship is quite the opposite. God has blessed God's people with the generosity of mercy and grace. We are blessed with resources and possessions in abundance and we have God's own invitation to share in the joy of this amazing ministry. How privileged we are to be invited by God into the very heart of God's work!

Just like in baseball—when you hit the ball and touch all four bases, you have a home run!

Now everyone, batter up!

To download this article or for more stewardship and mission support resources, visit www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources/Stewardship-MissionSupport.asp.



Time to register for WIYLDE



Online registration has begun for the Wholly Iowa Youth leadership Discipling Event (WIYLDE) set for July 22-27, 2013, at Luther College. WIYLDE is a youth ministry leadership workshop with opportunities for high school youth to grow in their faith and take tools back to their home congregations to provide leadership in their youth ministry programs. This annual event is supported by all three ELCA Iowa synods.

Registration fee is \$375 if registered by Monday, June 17, and \$400 after that date. The Northeastern Iowa Synod is offering \$150 camperships for students who register by June 17, and \$75 for those who register after the early registration date. To learn more or to register, visit www.luther.edu/ministries/congregations/wiylde.