



Living the Gift: Stewardship in Word and Practice

How to Talk About Money and Faith

A faithful ask is not pressure. It is an invitation to respond.

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Handout 1: The Faithful Ask Framework

Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step

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Talking about money in church is faithful when it is grounded in gratitude, honesty, transparency, mission, pastoral care, and invitation.

A faithful ask is not pressure. It is an invitation to respond.

1. Gratitude

Begin with the person, not the project. Before asking for support, recognize the person's presence, care, leadership, generosity, or connection to the parish.

Try saying:

"I'm grateful for the way you've been part of this parish."

"Your care for this community has meant a great deal."

"I know this ministry matters to you, and I'm thankful for the ways you've supported it."

Gratitude opens the conversation.

2. Story

Connect the project to ministry meaning. Do not only describe the cost. Describe the ministry.

Try saying:

"The parish hall kitchen supports our community meal, funeral receptions, youth gatherings, and the everyday hospitality of the church."

Story connects money to mission.

3. Invitation

Make the ask directly and respectfully. Do not hint. Do not apologize. Do not make the person guess what you are asking.

Try saying:

"Would you consider making a meaningful gift to help make this project possible?"

"Would you consider supporting this ministry in a significant way?"



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“Would you consider a gift of \$____?”

Clarity is kindness.

4. Silence

After the invitation, stop talking. This may feel uncomfortable. That is normal.

Silence gives the person space to think, pray, feel, and respond. Let the invitation breathe.

5. Next Step

Offer a clear next step.

Try saying:

“Would it be alright if I followed up with you next week?”

“Would you like written information about the project?”

“Would you like to speak with the treasurer about ways to give?”

“Would you like some time to pray and consider?”

The next step keeps the conversation pastoral and practical.

The Whole Framework Together

“I’m grateful for the way you’ve cared for this parish over the years. We’re repairing the parish hall kitchen because it supports our community meal, funeral receptions, youth gatherings, and parish hospitality. Would you consider making a meaningful gift to help make this possible? [Silence] Would it be alright if I followed up with you next week?”

A Courage Sentence

Choose one and carry it with you:

“I am not asking for myself; I am inviting someone into ministry.”

“A faithful ask is not pressure; it is an invitation to respond.”

“We do not apologize for inviting generosity when the invitation is honest, pastoral, and rooted in mission.”



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Handout 2: Before You Ask

Project Support Preparation Sheet

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Before making a direct invitation for ministry support, take time to prepare. A clear ask grows from a clear project story.

1. What are we asking for?

Project or ministry name:

What needs to happen?

Total financial need:

Desired timeline:

2. Why does this matter?

What ministry will this project support, strengthen, repair, expand, or make possible?

Who will be served, welcomed, formed, cared for, or strengthened?

3. What is the project story?

Moment: What happened that revealed the need or opportunity?



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Meaning: Why does it matter?

Invitation: How can this person help respond?

4. Why are we asking this person?

What relationship, interest, history, capacity, leadership, or connection makes this person someone to invite?

What pastoral sensitivities should we remember?

5. What is the specific invitation?

Write the ask in one sentence: Would you consider...

6. What next step will we offer?

- Follow up next week
- Send written information
- Invite them to a project conversation
- Connect them with the treasurer
- Give them time to pray and consider
- Other: _____

Follow-up date: _____



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Person responsible for follow-up: _____

Final Check

- What are we asking for?
- Why does it matter?
- Who will be served or strengthened?
- What is the financial need?
- Why are we asking this person?
- What is the direct invitation?
- What next step will we offer?
- How will we remain pastoral, honest, and grateful?



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Handout 3: When the Spanners Appear

Pastoral Responses to Common Barriers

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Not every conversation about money will go smoothly. That does not mean the conversation has failed. Resistance, concern, discomfort, or hesitation may be openings for pastoral listening.

The goal is not to win an argument. The goal is to remain calm, curious, honest, and mission-rooted.

General Practice

- Listen first.
- Acknowledge what you heard.
- Do not shame or argue.
- Return to mission.
- Offer a next step.

“The church only talks about money.”

Try saying:

“I hear that concern. I don’t want money to be the only thing we talk about either. For me, this project is about ministry – and money is one of the tools that helps make the ministry possible.”

Why this works: It acknowledges the concern without becoming defensive. It reframes the conversation around ministry.

“I already give my time.”

Try saying:

“And that matters deeply. Your time is a real gift. For this project, we’re also asking those who are able to consider financial support, because there are costs we can’t meet through volunteer labour alone.”

Why this works: It honours time and service while still naming the financial need directly.

“I can’t afford to give.”

Try saying:

“Thank you for telling me. Please know there is no shame in that. Your place in this parish is not measured by a gift. I’m grateful for you.”



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Why this works: Pastoral care comes first. A person's belonging is not measured by financial capacity.

"I don't trust how decisions are made."

Try saying:

"Thank you for being honest. Trust matters. Would it help to talk through how this project was chosen, how costs will be reported, and how leaders will stay accountable?"

Why this works: It does not dodge the issue. It treats trust as part of stewardship.

"Why doesn't the diocese pay for it?"

Try saying:

"That's a fair question. Some support may come through diocesan relationships, but this is our parish's ministry and responsibility. We are part of a wider church, and we also have local work entrusted to us."

Why this works: It honours wider church connection while naming local responsibility.

"We should just cut expenses."

Try saying:

"Careful spending matters. At the same time, some ministry cannot be sustained by cuts alone. We also need to ask what God is inviting us to support, not only what we can reduce."

Why this works: It affirms prudence without making scarcity the only lens.

"I need to think about it."

Try saying:

"Of course. Thank you for considering it. Would it be alright if I followed up with you next week?"

Why this works: It respects discernment and keeps the conversation moving.

"How much are you expecting me to give?"

Try saying:

"That is a personal decision, and we want you to make it prayerfully. A meaningful gift will look different for different households. For this project, gifts in the range of \$____ to \$____ would make a significant difference."

Why this works: It avoids pressure while still giving useful guidance.



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“I gave to the last project.”

Try saying:

“Thank you. That generosity mattered, and we are grateful. This is a new need connected to a different part of our ministry, and we are inviting people to consider whether they are able to help again.”

Why this works: It honours past generosity and explains the present invitation.

“I don’t like the project.”

Try saying:

“Thank you for being honest. I’d be glad to hear more about your concerns. Would it help to talk through why parish leaders believe this project matters for our ministry?”

Why this works: It opens space for conversation without surrendering the ministry case.

“I only give to outreach, not buildings.”

Try saying:

“I appreciate your commitment to outreach. One reason this project matters is that our building supports outreach, hospitality, pastoral care, and community connection. Would it be helpful to talk about how this project serves people beyond the building itself?”

Why this works: It reframes buildings as ministry infrastructure.

Remember

A faithful stewardship conversation should leave the person feeling respected, heard, honoured, invited, and free to respond – not cornered, shamed, or managed.



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Handout 4: Role Play Cards

Practicing a Pastoral Ask

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Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step

The goal is not perfection. The goal is practice.

Role Play Instructions

- Person A makes the ask.
- Person B responds using the scenario.
- Person A practices a pastoral response.
- Pause and reflect.
- Switch roles.

After each round, name:

- one thing that felt clear
- one thing that felt pastoral
- one place the invitation could be more direct
- one next step that would help



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Scenario 1: Parish Hall Kitchen

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|---|
| The Project | Repair the parish hall kitchen for community meals, funeral receptions, youth gatherings, and parish hospitality. |
| The Person | A longtime parishioner with capacity, wary of special asks. |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful financial gift. |
| The Spanner | "I already give so much time. Why are you asking me for money too?" |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 2: Accessibility Ramp

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| The Project | Install an accessibility ramp and improve the entrance so elders, visitors, families with prams, and people with mobility needs can enter safely and with dignity. |
| The Person | A parishioner who cares deeply about welcome but worries about cost. |
| The Ask | Invite a significant gift toward the project. |
| The Spanner | “This sounds important, but shouldn’t we just wait until we have more money?” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 3: Children and Youth Ministry

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| The Project | Fund curriculum, supplies, safe church training, and part-time coordination for children and youth ministry. |
| The Person | A grandparent in the parish who wants young families to feel welcome. |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful financial gift. |
| The Spanner | “I’m not sure there are enough children here to justify spending that much.” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 4: Community Meal

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| The Project | Expand the weekly community meal by replacing worn kitchen equipment and increasing the food budget. |
| The Person | A parishioner who supports outreach but is frustrated by parish finances. |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful financial gift. |
| The Spanner | “The church only talks about money.” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 5: Music Ministry

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|---|
| The Project | Support music ministry by funding choral resources, guest musicians, and maintenance for the parish instrument. |
| The Person | A parishioner who loves worship but does not think of music as a funding priority. |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful gift. |
| The Spanner | “Isn’t music nice to have, but not essential?” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 6: Building as Mission

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| The Project | Repair the roof and improve insulation so the parish can continue hosting worship, community groups, and winter programming. |
| The Person | A parishioner who prefers giving to “people, not buildings.” |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful gift. |
| The Spanner | “I don’t want to give to bricks and mortar.” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 7: Technology and Livestream

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| The Project | Upgrade livestream and sound equipment so homebound members, newcomers, and rural parishioners can participate more fully. |
| The Person | A parishioner who attends in person and does not understand the need. |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful gift. |
| The Spanner | “Why do we need to spend money on technology? People should just come to church.” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 8: Diocesan and Wider Church Partnership

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| The Project | Support the parish's full contribution to diocesan ministry while also funding local parish needs. |
| The Person | A parishioner who is suspicious of diocesan spending. |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful gift to help sustain the parish's shared commitments. |
| The Spanner | "Why does the diocese need so much from us?" |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 9: Pastoral Care Ministry

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| The Project | Strengthen pastoral care by funding lay visitor training, communion kits, transportation support, and printed resources for homebound members. |
| The Person | A parishioner who has received pastoral care but is uncomfortable being asked. |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful gift. |
| The Spanner | “I thought pastoral care was just what the church is supposed to do.” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Scenario 10: Parish Communications

Role Play Card

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| | |
|--------------------|---|
| The Project | Improve parish communications through website updates, signage, printed materials, and better newcomer follow-up. |
| The Person | A parishioner who thinks communications are not “real ministry.” |
| The Ask | Invite a meaningful gift. |
| The Spanner | “Do we really need to spend money on this?” |

Use the framework: Gratitude → Story → Invitation → Silence → Next Step



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Role Play Debrief

Reflection Questions

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What felt awkward?

What became easier after saying it out loud?

Where did gratitude help?

Where did story help?

Where did silence feel hardest?

What pastoral response felt most useful?

What will you practice back home?

You are not asking for yourself. You are inviting someone into ministry.



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