

Making the Case

Inspiring Generosity
Through Story
& Purpose

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Discover
your WHY.

Find
one person.

Write
the story.

This workshop follows a simple three-step process. First, discover the deeper purpose behind your campaign. Second, identify one person whose life has been changed because your congregation exists. Finally, rewrite your appeal beginning with that story.

Write.

Write the opening paragraph
of your next financial appeal.

(3 minutes)

Begin by writing the opening paragraph of your next financial appeal without overthinking it. We'll return to this paragraph later.

Debrief.

What did you hear these churches asking people to support?

What do you think the writer wanted you to feel?

Did the paragraph help you feel that?

As participants share, listen for what the paragraphs ask people to support and what emotions they are intended to evoke. This establishes a baseline before introducing a different approach.

WHY?

Before writing a compelling appeal, we must understand the deeper purpose behind the campaign. Projects are important, but purpose is what gives them meaning.

The Five Whys.

The first answer is usually true.

It just isn't the whole truth.

Keep asking "Why?"
until you discover the deeper purpose.

The Five Whys originated in the Toyota Production System. Here it is adapted to uncover the deeper purpose behind a ministry or campaign. The goal is not to ask exactly five questions but to keep asking until you reach what truly matters.

Listen.

Take turns asking one another,

Why?

Keep asking until you reach the deeper purpose

(5 minutes each)

In pairs, one person explains the campaign while the other repeatedly asks, 'Why?' Continue until you discover the deeper purpose.

Mission statements define our purpose.

Stories show us
that purpose in action.

Mission statements express a congregation's purpose in the abstract. Stories reveal that purpose in action. Generosity grows when people can see the mission embodied in real lives.

ONE PERSON

Rather than representing the entire ministry of the church, focus on one individual whose life has been changed. One authentic story often communicates more powerfully than a list of accomplishments.

Tell.

Tell your partner about
one person.

(4 minutes each)

Tell your partner about one person who is different because your congregation exists. Describe one life and one experience rather than summarizing the ministry.

Every story begins with someone.

Someone...

Something happened...

Now life is different.

Stories do not need to be elaborate. Introduce someone, describe what happened, and show what changed. Simple stories are often the most memorable.

Budgets tell us
what things cost.

Stories tell us
what they're worth.

Budgets describe how resources are allocated. Stories reveal why those resources matter. Stories help people connect emotionally with the mission they are invited to support.

BEGIN AGAIN

Now return to the appeal you wrote at the beginning of the workshop with fresh eyes.

Rewrite.

Go back to your original appeal.

Begin with the story of one person.

Then continue with your appeal.

(10 minutes)

Do not edit your original paragraph. Start over. Begin with the story of one person, then continue with your appeal. Notice how beginning with a story often changes the tone and emphasis of everything that follows.

Share.

What did you hear these churches asking people to support?

What do you think the writer wanted you to feel?

Did the paragraph help you feel that?

Did anything change between your two drafts?

Invite participants to share their revised openings.
Discuss what changed between the first and second drafts and why beginning with a story created a more compelling invitation.

A mission statement tells us
what kind of church we aspire to be.

A story shows us that God
is already making it true.

Mission statements describe the congregation we
aspire to become. Stories remind us that God is
already at work through the people and ministries
entrusted to our care.

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These three practices form a repeatable process for writing stronger appeals: discover your purpose, find one story, and write from there.

This week...

Ask one person,

”Who is different because our church exists?”

Before writing another appeal, ask someone, 'Who is different because our church exists?' The answer may become the beginning of your next invitation to generosity.

Thank You!



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