

REDISCOVER MACEDONIA

A spirit of gratitude and generosity



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Planning Guide

Introduction

The resources are designed to guide your community of faith in growing a spirit of gratitude and generosity that reflects abundant joy. Using the text for 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 and the theme overview as starting points, your community can use specific resources to:

- ▶ Learn the biblical principles Paul lifted up to the Macedonians
- ▶ Engage in conversation about each principle
- ▶ Deepen trust in God's abundant blessings
- ▶ Write a personal story about your relationship with money
- ▶ Invite people to participate in Try-a-Tithe Sunday
- ▶ Build a case for ministry in your community
- ▶ Strengthen relationships through a four-week emphasis

Through these resources your community of faith and individuals can grow spiritually and in financial giving.

The following steps are suggested in determining which resources to use:

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| Step 1 | Review each of the resources below |
| Step 2 | Determine how each might best be used in your context |
| Step 3 | Determine the period of time for resources to be used |
| Step 4 | Select the resources that will best fit your context and schedule |
| Step 5 | Determine the sequence in which you will use each resource |

After completing these steps, go to the **Congregational Response Work Plan** and complete the Congregational Stewardship Work Plan.

Accessing the resources

Most of the resources for this theme are available directly from the web at www.ELCA.org/macedonia.

You can simply download or print out the resources you want to use. The artwork is provided in file formats to be compatible with the widest possible range of word processing and desktop publishing software. There are also places where stories can be added that are specific to the life experiences and ministries of your setting.

Overview of resources

ARTWORK: Full-color version of the theme masthead and images for each of the seven principles. These files can be found on the website in the Resources tab.

BIBLE STUDY – DEVOTION BOOK OF FAITH INITIATIVE: This resource involves a biblical conversation with 2 Corinthians 7:16–8:7. The study is meant to help you to invite others into

this text, to facilitate a conversation, to listen as God speaks to you and to each other. Gather around the word, so that it may shape and form you for your common vocation as those having been recipients of God's free gift of grace who now freely give to others.

BIBLE STUDY – DEVOTIONS ON THE MACEDONIAN PRINCIPLES: Building on the principles Paul lifted up about the Macedonians, there are six devotions or Bible studies. The principles include; abundant joy, generosity, gratitude, share, commitment, sacrifice and give freely. These can be used for personal reflection, small groups, adult or youth classes.

BOOKMARKS: There are seven bookmarks with the text for each principle on one side and three questions to start conversation on the reverse side. Use as ice-breakers in small or large groups.

BUILDING A CASE: Telling stories about how your congregation's mission or work impacts others provides a foundation for building a case to fund current and future ministry. This tool walks through preparation, development and presentation of the case for your ministry. The case provides a concise and practical outline for donors.

BULLETIN INSERTS: Produced by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, these inserts Offer short take-home reflections covering the areas of focus for the four-week emphasis – devotion, worship, spiritual gifts and honoring God with our use of money.

COMMITMENT CARDS: These full-color forms are available in two formats: A) Joyful Covenant Card with stewardship response information; B) Percentage Living Card for you to customize to fit your needs. These cards are intended for use as a means of receiving a financial response from households during your stewardship response worship service. Cards are designed to be mailed in a standard #10 business envelope.

ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATION GUIDE: A series of questions to engage pairs or triads in conversation about their stewardship principles and practices. These can be used in small groups or within a household.

PLANNING GUIDE: An overview of resources for implementing the theme.

SAMPLE LETTER: Drafted by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, this sample letter introduces the four-week emphasis. The letter is an invitation for people in your community to participate in upcoming study, conversation, prayer and response.

STEWARDSHIP RESPONSE: Ecumenical Stewardship Center guide emphasizes percentage-giving living and provides planning for four Sundays – Giving in Our Day, Giving Our Day, Giving the Sabbath, Giving of Our Spiritual Gifts, Honoring God with Our Use of Our Money. A percentage giving chart is also included.

THEME OVERVIEW: Introduces the theological focus, biblical themes from 2 Corinthians and provides planners with a theological basis for using the resource.

TRY-A-TITHE SUNDAY: Provides an opportunity to teach people about tithing and an invitation for each household to tithe for one week.

WRITE A PERSONAL MONEY AUTOBIOGRAPHY: A series of questions are provided for

people to write their personal responses. It is not necessary to answer all questions. After completing at least four questions, several paragraphs may be written as a personal autobiography. This can be shared within the household or with others as appropriate.