



A Project in the Diocese of Derby

# Christian Disciples learning together about Giving

Seeking to awaken congregations to their responsibility for  
resourcing the mission of the local church.

*A revised resource for parishes in Mission and Ministry Areas*

COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPING DISCIPLESHIP AND MINISTRY  
David Phypers and Mike Warner - Christian Giving Advisers  
March 2007



## Contents

Foreword by the Bishop of Derby	3
Introduction	4
1. Principles of Christian Giving	6
2. Characteristics of Christian Giving	7
3. Some Scriptural Resource Texts	9
4. Running a <i>Talking Money</i> Project	10
5. <i>Talking Money</i> – a typical timetable	13
6. Statements about Giving	14
7. Sample invitation to Promise Week	15
8. Sample Pledge Card	16
9. Briefing 1	17
10. Briefing 2	19
11. Briefing 3	21
12. Further resources	23

## 12 Further Resources

### First Fruits

A worship anthology on generosity and giving compiled by Adrian Mann, Robin Stevens and John Willmington  
Canterbury Press Norwich 2001 ISBN 1-85311-392-1  
Now £2.00 from the publisher's website!

An invaluable resource when planning worship and preaching on Christian giving. The book comes with the full text on accompanying floppy disc, useful for copying and pasting.

Your Christian Giving Advisers can let you have copies of this disc as it is, or on CD if you prefer!

### Rediscovering the Joy of Giving

A stewardship resource pack for churches  
written and compiled by Redina Kolaneci  
Macedonian (Evangelical) Trust 2000 £10.00  
Macedonian (Evangelical) Trust, Tenison House, 45 Tweedy Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3NF  
Telephone: 020-8502-5600

### What does love require?

A series of Bible studies on stewardship  
by Redina Kolaneci  
Macedonian (Evangelical) Trust 1999

[www.parishresources.org.uk](http://www.parishresources.org.uk)  
Church of England Stewardship website

[www.givinggrace.org](http://www.givinggrace.org)  
Liverpool Diocesan Stewardship website  
*absolutely superb*

If you pay income tax at the standard rate please complete the Gift Aid declaration as well, if you have not previously done so. It will cost you nothing! The Chancellor of the Exchequer wants to give back to your church the tax you have already paid on your gifts. At current rates of income tax this means that every pound you give will become £1.28.

As you give you will find God will bless you. Financially, you will find you will still have enough for your basic needs, and maybe more still to give to others. You will also know that God is using you to fulfil his work in the world. Nothing is more satisfying than giving, and giving well. May God bless you as you give.

## Foreword

*by the Rt Revd Alastair Redfern, Bishop of Derby*



The Renewing Ministry exercise has encouraged us to look at Church life from a different perspective. There are new possibilities, new visions and exciting opportunities as we move towards a more self conscious missionary strategy. Our communities need their churches and congregations to offer imaginative and effective avenues of access and connection – to enhance the quality of life in neighbourhoods and to help people know more directly the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Every vision of growth and development has a cost in time, in love and not least in money. This course is designed to help address the last of those issues; Christian giving.

I hope you find it a useful resource, because giving is not just about paying the Parish Share, it's about resourcing the whole ministry of the people of God.

+ Alastair

## Introduction

A liner taking many rich people on a cruise got into difficulties and sank. Many passengers perished. Two were washed up on a small but barren island. As they came to, they surveyed the scene – nothing: not a tree, not a plant, seemingly no sign of any life. One of them became desperate and began running aimlessly around. “We’re doomed! We’re going to die! There’s no hope for us!”

The other just sat there saying quite calmly, “I earn £1 million a year and I give 10% to my church!” The other got more and more desperate shouting out his bleak assessment of the situation – “Doomed! Doomed! We’re doomed!” The other continued to sit and calmly declared, “I earn £1 million a year and I give 10% to my church!”

The desperate one eventually yelled at him, “Why do you keep telling me that? What good is that going to do us?” “No need to worry,” he said, “My Vicar is bound to come looking for me!”

## Renewing Ministry

We stand at a ‘defining moment’ in the history of our Diocese. As we implement *Renewing Ministry* we are restructuring and revitalising the way ‘Church’ is lived in our Derbyshire communities – see Diocesan website, *Renewing Ministry*, [www.derby.anglican.org/about/rm\\_index.php](http://www.derby.anglican.org/about/rm_index.php)

We are redefining our parishes as **Mission and Ministry Areas**. We are moving:

- from maintenance to mission;
- from looking inwards at what we do as a church to looking outwards to see how we work with the communities in which we live, work, worship and play;
- from clergy and licensed lay people being the only resource for ministry to all Christians supporting and encouraging each other.

We are concerned with growth, and not preservation. We wish to be dynamic, and not static. And we expect this process to continue for many years to come.

## 11 Talking Money – Briefing 3

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man I would do my part,  
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

At last, **Promise Week** is almost here. What have we learned in recent weeks? I hope we’ve learned that giving to God’s work and the needs of our world is vital to our Christian journey, not just an add-on. Jesus said, ‘whenever you give....,’ not, ‘if you give....’

Now it’s time to make a tangible response. With this briefing comes your **Promise Week Invitation and Pledge Card**. We invite you to complete the card prayerfully and carefully and bring it with you to worship at the beginning of **Promise Week**.

Remember:

- Your card will only be seen by the Recorder – someone chosen because of their discretion. Only you, God and the Recorder will know the amount you are promising to give over the next twelve months.
- The card is not a legal contract. If your circumstances change then you can give less, or more, during the year.
- The pledging is part of our self offering to God. As such, we rightly bring it during worship.

So, as you make your response, try and make your gift:

- a proportion of your regular income, an amount you give ‘first to the Lord’ before any other commitments;
- a regular commitment, an amount you intend to give each week, or each month;
- sacrificial – not just something you’ll never miss, a tip for God!
- cheerfully, not grudgingly. Remember, ‘God loves a cheerful giver’ – 2 *Corinthians 9:7*.
- a statement of your personal commitment to Jesus and the mission of his Church;
- something of which you are not boastful, proud nor ashamed;
- prayerfully – seeking God’s guidance, not your own selfish interest.

So, even if you've never joined a group before, come and join a group. You'll do more than learn with your head. You'll get to know other group members better than you've known them before. All of you will begin to grow together in love, becoming better the Christian community you're intended to be.

Remember, Jesus said:

When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. *Matthew 6:3,4*

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.' *Luke 6:38*

St Paul said:

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. *2 Corinthians 9:6*

For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. *2 Corinthians 8:9*

Indeed, we are seeking nothing less than a renewal of an early church understanding of ministry, a ministry which is the outward expression of our inner Christian faith and discipleship, a ministry in which we are all called:

- to love people
- to worship God
- to witness to our faith
- and to serve God's kingdom.

See Diocesan website, *A Better Way*,

[www.derby.anglican.org/about/better\\_way.php](http://www.derby.anglican.org/about/better_way.php)

Every human enterprise bears a financial cost. Christian mission is no different. No longer can we think of running the Church on a shoestring, of getting more people to give so that we do not have to give any more ourselves. No longer can we expect to finance the Church's needs through jumble sales and other fundraising 'efforts.' They simply perpetuate the complaint in our wider communities that 'all the Church wants is our money.' They distract from the Good News of a loving God who gave his Son that we might live in and through him. Christian giving is the province and privilege of 'the household of faith,' of those who are committed to Christ and the proclamation of his Kingdom in the world.

**Talking Money** provides some resources to challenge and guide us. Beyond these we shall need the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to change and empower us.

We shall encourage each church to appoint a parish **Giving Adviser**, whose task will be to encourage congregational giving. The parish giving advisers within MMAs can meet together for mutual support and communication and advise MMA Councils on the development of strategies for Christian Giving in MMAs. Through Talking Money and other materials we hope to resource these Advisers to promote Christian giving within their own Areas. Because our material will be web-based, as well as available in hard copy, we look forward to extending this core material, to encourage feedback and thus to provide flexible resources from which we can all learn from each other.

### Note

Much of the material which follows formed part of the first edition of **Talking Money**, published in October 2000 and written by Canon Barrie Gauge, then Parish Development Adviser in the Diocese. We acknowledge our debt and our gratitude to Barrie for the depth and enthusiasm of his teaching, not only in our Diocese but across the whole of the Church of England.

## 2 Principles of Christian Giving

**Forming effective Mission and Ministry Areas will depend on God's people in each area accepting their responsibility to resource God's work with time, personal gifts and finance.**

**Giving to resource God's work will come primarily from 'the household of faith' – Galatians 6:10**

When finance appears on PCC agenda, many people often ask, 'How can we get more people to give?' 'If only more people would give,' the argument goes, 'our problems would be solved.' 'People want the church when they want it, so why shouldn't they pay something.' But why should people who are not committed to the mission of the church contribute to its costs? Indeed, we long that those who only use the church when they want it should come to faith. That is part of our mission. But, until they do believe we must, with charity, treat them as guests. We cannot expect unbelievers to behave as though they are believers until they are.

**We are concerned to resource mission, not merely balance the books.**

Our mission is not so much to get more believers into church as to have fewer unbelievers in the parish! We shall need to take risks, to achieve as much as we can with the resources available. If we are merely concerned to balance the books we start to ask, 'How and where can we cut back? What savings can we make?' When we start to resource mission we never have enough! God calls us much further than our limited vision can conceive. But when we give what we can, really give what we can, really, *really* give what we can, God gives what we can't. For he is no one's debtor. And when we give sacrificially to him and to the mission of his church in the world, he gives back to us in abundance.

**Giving is integral to discipleship.**

The New Testament Greek word translated *disciple* describes someone who *learns by inquiry*. Discipleship never ends. We are always learning, and we always need to be taught. Parish Giving Advisers will bear primary responsibility for encouraging teaching and learning in this area. If they are not licensed ministers themselves (clergy or Readers) they will need the unswerving support of their ministers. Together they will teach. Together they will set an example by their own levels of giving.

## 10 Talking Money – Briefing 2

William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, once said, 'I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.'

Next week/month [give dates and details if you wish] we're starting our **Talking Money** groups. We hope you will join a group, even if this will be a new experience for you.

In the groups **you will not be asked to talk about your personal financial circumstances.**

In the groups **no one will attempt to tell you what you should give to your church.**

Rather, we shall explore together what the Bible teaches about money and wealth, and how we should handle it. We shall look at what it means to be God's people, God's church, in the twenty-first century. We shall remind ourselves of God's love for us when we don't deserve it. We shall look at what it cost Jesus to live for us on earth, to die on the Cross for our forgiveness, and to be raised again to give us new life. We shall ask how we should respond to love like this.

Then we shall see how God's people in the Old Testament handled their giving. And we shall see how a poor church in the New Testament, in Greece, responded to the needs of even poorer Christians in Jerusalem.

After all that, during **Promise Week** we shall be able to respond to all we have learned, and our response will be private and confidential.

Five years ago some parishes in our Diocese saw their giving increase dramatically when they followed **Talking Money**. Others saw hardly any increase at all. When we asked these parishes, they all said they had not done the work in groups. Groups lie at the heart of the Project. Without them, the Project will fail.

Over the next few weeks we're inviting you to share in an exciting project called *Talking Money*. There'll be talks from the front in worship, and further briefings, like this one. At the heart of the project we hope many of us will meet together for five group studies when we shall look in detail at Bible teaching about money and how we, as Christians, should handle it. At the end, during a special **Promise Week**, we shall pledge our gifts to our church for the next twelve months.

Many parishes in the Diocese used this project a few years ago. Some saw their regular giving rise by up to 36% as a result. But figures are not that important. What really matters, as with the poor widow, is the attitude with which we give. When we get that right God will be pleased with us, and Jesus will be known in our towns and villages and across the world.

So, come and get involved. As John D Rockefeller once said, 'Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege.'

The **Talking Money** project and its accompanying material will challenge:

- **Our belief** What do we believe? Do we believe that what we believe has eternal significance? Do we want others to share what we believe? Does our church help us to understand and articulate our Christian faith?
- **Our commitment** to our church as God's instrument for witness and proclamation of the Gospel.
- **Our understanding** of the church's function and mission
- **Our giving** Do we accept the principles of Christian giving? Do we consider that the amount we give is a realistic proportion of the money at our disposal?

**Money talks.** What does our money say about all these things?

## 3 Characteristics of Christian Giving

Giving by committed members of the local Christian congregation will be:

**Thankful and responsive to God's gifts:** We give because we need to give as disciples, as we respond with thanksgiving to a God who gives and loves to give. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that all who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life.' (John 3:16) Our motives will be 'Gratitude' (what we feel towards God) and 'Thanksgiving' (what we do with that feeling). 'Let our attitude be gratitude!'

**Regular:** We shall give regularly, not when and where we feel like it! The local church's needs are constant, be they maintaining worship, paying for stipendiary ministry, resourcing outreach, funding projects, or whatever. Proper budgeting relies on regular giving.

**Proportionate:** What we decide to give will be a realistic proportion of what we have. Much giving at present is mere 'tokenism' – a 'little bit out of the left-overs'. We believe it should be first in our budgeting, not last, when everything else has been paid – that way God ends up 'owing us'!

**Budgeted:** Our giving to the local church will come first when we budget all our spending and commitments. We shall calculate 'off the top' not 'off the bottom'!

**Obedient to God's word:** How do we decide on the proportion? To the surprise of many, God has laid down a benchmark. It is the Tithe (plus, incidentally Offerings!). The tithe or tenth ought to be our starting point in our decision about our obligations. Of course for some that will not be enough; for very few it will be too much. We do not want to be prescriptive about this, but we do want everyone to recognise that we must each of us work to a proper, realistic (even sacrificial) starting point. Of course this may not all be given to the local church: we will however bear in mind that fewer people are resourcing our local church than other charities.

**An expression of our discipleship:** The amount we give will say something about the state of our discipleship and the level of our commitment to God's work.

**Cheerful:** Our giving will not be grudging – better not to give at all than to give grudgingly. 'God loves a cheerful giver' – *2 Corinthians 9:7*

**'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich' – 2 Corinthians 8:9**

## 9 Talking Money – Briefing 1

One day, during the last week of his life, Jesus and his friends were sitting near one of the gates which led into one of the Jewish Temple courtyards in Jerusalem. On each side of the gate stood a large trumpet-shaped offering box. As people entered they put money into one of the boxes to pay for the upkeep of the Temple complex, and for the support of those who looked after it. As they gave Jesus watched.

'Many rich people,' we are told, 'dropped in a lot of money; then a poor widow came along and dropped in two little copper coins, worth about a penny.' 'See *her*'? Jesus said to his friends. 'She's put more money into Temple funds than all those rich people put together. All they've done is given what they had to spare from their riches. She's given all she had to live on!'

Who was she, this widow? If she gave all she had, what happened to her afterwards, with no Social Security benefit next week? Why did she do it? We shall never know. But God knew, and through the eyes of Jesus, his Son, he saw her. Two thousand years later she's still remembered, and commended.

Like the Jewish Temple, our dear Church of England and those who work for it, need money to keep going. More importantly, we also need new money with which to share again the wonder of God's love in Christ for everyone. Working towards the re-conversion of England costs money.

For centuries, in our Church, we had enough from the land we owned and the legacies we received. When we needed extra, enough rich people seemed able to help us from what they had to spare. Now, by and large, we're on our own.

How will you give to your church next week, or next month? Jesus says it's not the amount we give that's important, but the proportion of what we have. Then, as now, money talked, and people measured themselves by their wealth. But Jesus offered a different way. 'Sell all you have and give the money to the poor,' he said to a rich young man, 'and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me.'

## ST AGATHA'S CHURCH, ANYTOWN

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Recognising God's goodness, and my/our responsibility to play my/our part in resourcing his work through his church

**I/we will gladly give for the next year:**

£ \_\_\_\_\_ (Weekly/Monthly/ \_\_\_\_\_ )

for the mission and ministry of God's work in my/our parish, in the Diocese of Derby and throughout the world.

I/We understand that my/our giving may be revised or cancelled should my/our personal circumstances make this necessary.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- Please let me/us have a set of weekly giving envelopes
- Please let me/us have a monthly Standing Order form
- Please let me/us have a Gift Aid form so that every £1.00 I/we give becomes £1.28 for the church at no cost to myself/ourselves.

**Please tick as appropriate**

***'Yours Lord is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and earth is yours. All things come from you, and of your own do we give you'.***

## 4 Some Scriptural Resource Texts

Bible writers know nothing of disciples who do not give.

### **Deuteronomy 14:22-27 – the law of the tithe**

Notice how the tithe is to be used:

- joyful thanksgiving before God
- supporting the Levites, the Old Testament equivalent of our Christian ministers
- providing for foreigners, orphans and widows, i.e. supporting those in need.

### **Malachi 1:6-14**

Our giving says something about our picture of God. Nothing twists or deforms the soul more than a low or unworthy understanding of God. Our notion of God determines the quality of our faith. Poor giving reveals an imperfect and inadequate view of God.

### **Malachi 3:6-11**

We must give obediently as those who live under God's sovereign rule.

### **Luke 8:1-3**

Jesus' earthly ministry was financed by human supporters.

### **Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37**

The earliest Christians gave generously to each other.

### **Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23**

Our giving springs from an understanding of who we are in Christ: 'saved by grace,' 'bought with a price.'

### **1 Corinthians 16:1-3**

Giving should be regular, and in proportion to income.

### **2 Corinthians 8:1-9**

We give in response to Christ's grace, who became poor for our sake, to make us rich by means of his poverty.

## 5 Running a Talking Money Project

Having heard that a local church was enjoying a time of renewal through prayer, the Devil called an emergency meeting with his fallen angels, to decide how to frustrate further growth.

‘How about starting a fire in church? That should stop them!’ said the first angel.

‘No,’ said the Devil, ‘they’d claim on the insurance, erect a new building they could use every day of the week and end up with more converts than ever.’

The second angel said, ‘We’ll tell them prayer doesn’t work.’

‘No,’ said the Devil, ‘even the most gullible Christian won’t believe that. But, I know what will work. We’ll tell them that prayer is the most important thing, and they should start - tomorrow!’

It is very easy to ‘start tomorrow.’ The idea of **Talking Money** is to start *today*.

### Planning

Early in its life we hope every MMA will appoint in each of its parishes **Christian Giving Advisers** and plan a **Talking Money** project. How the Project runs will vary enormously from Area to Area. In some Areas each congregation will enjoy its own Project or Projects. In others, one Project will run across the Area. The enthusiastic support of an Area’s licensed ministers and Council members is vital, so in some places it may be right to start with these people. In these places the Project initially will be for the MMA Council and/or its constituent Church Councils. After all, if Council members do not set an example, why should others in the congregations and wider Christian community follow?

## 8 Sample Invitation to Promise Sunday

**ST AGATHA’S CHURCH, ANYTOWN**

**The Vicar and Churchwardens Invite**

---

**to attend Worship at the beginning of  
PROMISE WEEK**

**on Sunday \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_**

**and to bring with you the completed Pledge Card overleaf**

We hope you have enjoyed being part of our recent **Talking Money** Project. As you make your response may we remind you of the main points in our Project?

**Our Giving will be Regular.**

either through weekly/ monthly envelopes or by Standing Order.

**Our Giving will be Proportionate.**

You will decide and budget your amount in proper relation to what you have – your income. You will be giving ‘off the top’ not out of what is ‘left over’ after meeting other commitments. God has first claim on all that we have.

**Our Giving will be in line with God’s guidelines.**

We have been learning about these – the Biblical standard is the tithe or tenth for our ‘giving away’. It is for you to decide how much of the proportion you decide will go to your local church. But remember that there are fewer people to support your church financially than there are to support large charities.

**Our Giving will be Cheerful** – not grudging, because we give in response and thanksgiving for all God’s blessings – our creation, our preservation and our redemption through Jesus Christ.

## 7 Statements frequently made about giving

- **Money is an unspiritual issue!**  
Patently untrue! Just see how often Jesus talks about money, possessions and our attitudes to them.
- **My money is my business and a private matter**  
It's God's business too. "All things come from you and of your own have we given you". *1 Chronicles 29:14*
- **You can't ask people to give more.** They are giving as much as they can afford already. Go armed with statistics from the PCC treasurer, eg, average levels of committed giving, numbers in giving bands, average weekly Gift Aid gift, average weekly non-Gift Aided gift, and average weekly plate offering.
- **The church has plenty of money - why don't they use that?**  
Again give a summary of costs, relationship of Commissioners' allocations to total Diocesan cost, cost of incumbent, amount of 'subsidies', etc. These will be available from the Diocesan Giving Advisers.
- **People who want the church's facilities should contribute towards keeping the church going.**  
Well to an extent they do, via fees, and what's more they think they do and in any case the church, they think, should be free at the point of delivery, just like the National Health Service is (or used to be!)
- **People give generously at events so you can't ask again.**  
How generously do people give at events? How many hand over cheques for £500, £1000, £2000 or more?  
Suppose an event, attended by 500 people, raises £3000 on the day. That equals £6.00 per head, or under 12p per week spread across the year! Generous giving? The most generous giving will have been made by the stall holders who will have worked beforehand to make, prepare and sell items on the day, often at a fraction of their market value. Try this exercise with the actual results of a fund-raising event.  
  
Events indeed have a place, if a church is raising money for a capital project, or if it is raising funds to give away to some other needy cause at home or abroad. But is this really the way to fund the church's mission and ministry, from the small change of those who are not committed to its cause? Is it any wonder people complain the church is always asking for money?

From start to finish a **Talking Money** project lasts about ten weeks with five weeks in the middle for **Groups**, and **Promise Week** as the climax. In our experience only one or two periods in any year are suitable, when the Project can enjoy prominence in the life of the Area and Parish, when five successive Groups can run without interruption, and when Promise Week can attract the largest number of participants. The first week in Advent and the last week in Lent may be particularly suitable for Promise Week, but in some Areas a different time may be better. If Lent is chosen, then the Group studies can form an effective Lent course.

From start to finish, communication will be a challenge. **Talking Money** is aimed at the 'household of faith,' those Christians who wish to be associated with the life of the MMA and its constituent parishes. Ideally, unless **Talking Money** is being piloted with a defined group of people, we wish to involve as many in the whole Christian community as possible.

So we start with **Sunday congregations**. But remember, in every congregation today, one-third to one-half of all those who consider they belong are missing on any one Sunday. Then we cast our net wider, to other groups like **Mothers' Union, home groups, men's groups**, any who attend **midweek services, Fresh Expressions** initiatives and so on. Nor must we forget every member of the **Electoral Roll** or **Rolls**.

### Database

Compile a database of the whole Christian community in any one place. Then, when people miss vital information about the Project they can be contacted in other ways. The **Briefings** are designed for this task. They can be used as magazine articles, as handouts, or even as the basis for sermons and talks. But remember, simply pushing paper at people is largely ineffective. Happy the Adviser who can attract a team to help her or him in personally contacting those who miss out at vital stages in the Project!

### Groups

Groups lie at the heart of **Talking Money**. In 2001, when the Project was first launched in the Diocese some parishes saw their giving increase by 30-40%. Others saw hardly any increase at all. In every case, when we enquired, we learned that none of these parishes had included the Group work in their projects.

Groups are vital to the success of **Talking Money**. If parishes don't 'do groups' then maybe they should try and start. Members of the MMA Council or PCC might form a group and grapple with the **Group Bible studies** themselves. If parishes only 'do groups' in Lent, then make *Talking Money* a **Lent course**, leading to Promise Week in Holy Week. But even in parishes where groups are integral to their life, their times and places will never be convenient for everyone. So the Group material can be used for personal study and reflection by individuals.

## Promise Week

Sample **invitations** and **Pledge cards** are included in the Resource. Many MMAs and parishes will wish to design their own. Personal invitations to Sunday worship at the beginning of Promise Week should be circulated to everyone on the database during the final week of the Project. The completed cards become part of the offering on that day. Our giving to God and his work in the world is rightly part of our worship. Again, those who cannot come themselves on that day, should be visited and gently asked for their completed card.

After Promise Week is over some people will need to receive **weekly gift envelopes**, or **monthly standing order forms** or **Gift Aid forms**. These requests should be fulfilled promptly. Then, at the next Council meeting the Treasurer should be ready with a report detailing the results of the Project.

## Hostility

Sadly, a **Talking Money** project will provoke hostility from some people. British people do not like talking about money, particularly in the context of church. Some of their most common objections are included in the Project. But remember, in answering objections, 'a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger' – *Proverbs 15:1*. We are not looking for disgruntled givers. Rather, we wish to encourage those who give gladly, 'for God loves a cheerful giver' – *2 Corinthians 9.7*.

## 6 Talking Money – a typical timetable

<b>Before week 1</b>	The whole programme will have been introduced via Briefing 1 as well as through announcements, pew sheets etc.
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Sermon of Introduction.</b> Church members will now be invited to join one of the Discussion groups. Briefing 2 can be distributed
<b>Weeks 2 &amp; 3</b>	Sort out <b>Group membership</b> and communicate arrangements. Continue general publicity.
<b>Week 4</b>	Group Meeting 1.
<b>Week 5</b>	Group Meeting 2
<b>Week 6</b>	Group Meeting 3. Sermon 2.
<b>Week 7</b>	Group Meeting 4.
<b>Week 8</b>	Group Meeting 5.
<b>Week 9</b>	Sermon 3. Briefing 3 and/or invitations to Promise Week distributed. (If you wish to involve a visiting Sunday preacher within the process, this is the best week on which to invite - next week is too late!) Personal distribution of invitations to those who are absent.
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Promise Sunday and Week.</b> Follow-up with a pledge card those who were invited but who did not attend.

Within a month following Promise Sunday, present a **Report on the Project** together with the **figures from Promise Sunday** to the MMA Council and/or the PCC.

At this stage make a note of specific areas of the organisation of Promise Sunday which you feel could be improved on next year. Draw up preliminary plans for next year's 'renewal'.

**REMEMBER** If you fail to plan, you plan to fail!