

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF TORONTO FOUNDATION

Raising Resources for God's Mission

A Parish Fundraising Toolkit

"You don't need to be an expert - you just need to begin."

This Toolkit is your practical guide to building a culture of generosity in your parish and running effective fundraising campaigns. Whether you are launching your first annual appeal, preparing for a capital campaign, or simply trying to grow your giving culture, the Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation is here to walk alongside you every step of the way. You do not need to have all the answers. You do not need a development office or a professional fundraiser on staff. What you need is in these pages - and in the relationships already present in your parish.

Contents

2	Why Fundraising Matters in the Church – Generosity Is Spiritual Practice
3	Building a Culture of Generosity - Before the Campaign: Laying the Foundation
6	Running an Annual Appeal - <i>Your Most Important Fundraising Tool</i>
9	Major Gifts - <i>Transformational Giving in Your Parish</i>
10	Planned Giving & Legacy Conversations - <i>The Gift That Endures</i>
11	Capital Campaigns - <i>When the Vision Is Big</i>
12	How the Foundation Can Help - <i>You Are Not Alone</i>
15	Practical Templates & Tools - <i>Ready-to-Use Resources</i>
18	Frequently Asked Questions
20	Begin Where You Are - <i>Closing & Call to Action</i>

Section 1 - Why Fundraising Matters in the Church

Generosity Is a Spiritual Practice

There is a long tradition in the Anglican Church of treating money as something best left unspoken - a necessary, slightly awkward subject, addressed once a year with apology and dispatch. But this Toolkit begins from a different premise: that generosity is not a necessary evil of parish life, but one of its deepest spiritual invitations. When we ask people to give, we are not interrupting the work of the church. We are participating in it. To invite someone into generosity is to invite them into trust - trust in God's provision, trust in one another, and trust in the vision of a community that believes it has something worth sustaining.

The biblical tradition of generosity is ancient and rich. The Hebrew practice of the tithe - setting aside a tenth of all one receives as an act of acknowledgement that everything belongs to God - runs through the Old Testament as a discipline of the spirit, not merely a financial mechanism. In the New Testament, the widow who gave her last two coins was honoured not because her gift was large, but because it was complete: she held nothing back. And in the earliest days of the church, the community described in Acts shared all things

in common, holding possessions loosely and distributing to each according to need. Generosity, in the biblical imagination, is not a fundraising technique. It is a way of being human before God.

This means that the frame matters enormously. There is a profound difference between asking people for money and inviting people into mission. When the appeal is framed as a financial transaction - "We need X dollars to cover our budget" - it reduces the relationship between donor and parish to something transactional. But when the appeal is framed as participation in a shared vision - "Here is what God is doing through this community, and here is how you can be part of it" - it becomes something altogether different. It becomes an act of belonging. As one experienced development leader has put it: "The sermon on giving is never really about money. It's about trust, vision, and belonging."

It is also worth noting that parishes with strong cultures of generosity are not simply financially healthier - they are spiritually healthier. The research on this is consistent: when people give sacrificially to a community they love, they become more deeply attached to it. Generosity is not the result of a flourishing parish; it is one of the causes. Your parish already has the most important ingredients: people, relationships, and a story of God's work in the world. This Toolkit will help you tell it - and invite others to become part of it.

Section 2 - Building a Culture of Generosity

Before the Campaign: Laying the Foundation

Fundraising campaigns do not succeed or fail based on technique alone. They succeed or fail based on the culture that surrounds them. A parish that has cultivated a genuine culture of generosity — where giving is celebrated, stories of impact are shared regularly, and donors feel seen and appreciated — will outperform a parish running a technically perfect campaign in a culture of silence. Before you print a pledge card or draft an appeal letter, there is foundational work to do.

2.1 - Start with Your Story

Every parish has a story of impact - usually many of them. Before you ask anyone for money, you need to know your story and be able to tell it clearly and compellingly. This is not a marketing exercise. It is an act of gratitude and discernment: pausing to notice what God has been doing in and through your community and finding the words to name it.

Spend some time with your team asking these questions: What has your parish done in the last year that you are genuinely proud of? Who has been served, welcomed, fed, or accompanied? What would not have existed without your community's presence and generosity? What moment from this past year, if you shared it from

the pulpit, would make your congregation nod and feel something? Find that story - or, better, find three of them. Write them down. Practice telling them. Story is the currency of generosity.

Key Principle

People give to people and stories, not to budgets and line items. Your most powerful fundraising tool is a true story told well.

2.2 - Know Your Donors

Your congregation is full of generous people. Not everyone can give the same amount, and not everyone will. But it is worth understanding how generosity typically distributes itself within any community of faith - because the pattern has profound implications for how you focus your energy. Development professionals speak of a "donor pyramid": a relatively small number of major donors at the top, capable of transformational gifts; a mid-level group in the middle, giving meaningfully but not maximally; and a broad base of annual and small donors whose participation is the lifeblood of the community's culture of giving.

In most parishes, the base is reasonably well-tended through the Sunday offertory and annual campaigns. But the mid-level and major donor tiers are often significantly underdeveloped - not because those donors don't exist, but because no one has ever had a meaningful conversation with them about what they might give. This is the highest-opportunity area in most parishes. The Foundation can help you identify and begin cultivating these relationships, as described in Section 7.

Tier	Typical Gift Range	Approximate % of Donors	Approximate % of Revenue
Major Donors	\$5,000+	3–5%	50–60%
Mid-Level Donors	\$500–\$4,999	15–25%	25–35%
Annual / Base Donors	Under \$500	60–80%	10–20%

Note: These are illustrative ranges based on general patterns in faith-based fundraising. Every parish will vary.

2.3 - Cultivate Before You Ask

In the world of development, cultivation is the art of building relationships with donors before you make a request. It is the work of drawing people closer to the parish's mission - through storytelling, through personal connection, through invitations to be involved - so that when an ask does come, it lands on fertile

ground. The ask is the last step, not the first. A donor who receives their first meaningful communication from you in the form of a request is unlikely to respond warmly. A donor who has been thanked, informed, and inspired throughout the year is far more likely to give - and to give generously.

Practically, cultivation looks like this: thanking donors promptly and personally after every gift; sharing stories of impact in the bulletin, the newsletter, and from the pulpit; inviting significant donors to tour a ministry they support, meet someone whose life was changed, or share their own story with the congregation. It means treating donors not as ATMs but as partners - people who care about what you care about, and who are deciding every year whether your parish is the best expression of that care. Make them feel that it is.

Foundation Tip

Within 48 hours of receiving a significant gift, send a personal, handwritten thank-you note from the incumbent. It costs almost nothing and makes an enormous impression. Track who gives, what they give, and how they were thanked - even a simple spreadsheet will do.

2.4 - Recruit a Fundraising Team

The incumbent or rector should not carry fundraising alone. Beyond the burden this places on one person, it also misses a profound opportunity: laypeople advocating for the parish's mission are often more persuasive than clergy, precisely because their giving is voluntary and their testimony is peer-to-peer. Build a small team of three to five laypeople who love the parish's mission, understand the importance of generosity, and are willing to make their own commitment first.

Key roles to consider include a Campaign Chair (a respected lay leader who takes ownership of the campaign), a Donor Stewardship Lead (who manages thank-yous and follow-up), a Communications Lead (who drafts bulletins, letters, and emails), and an Event Coordinator (who organizes any campaign events or special moments). Not every parish can fill all four roles - and that's fine. Adapt to your context. The point is to share the load and multiply the voices.

Remember The first people to make a gift commitment should be your campaign team. It is very difficult to ask others to give if you have not given yourself. Lead with your own example — this is not a demand but an invitation to integrity.

Section 3 - Running an Annual Appeal

The Annual Stewardship Campaign: Your Most Important Fundraising Tool

If your parish does only one thing in the realm of intentional fundraising, make it the annual stewardship campaign. The annual appeal is the cornerstone of parish fundraising for good reasons: it is predictable, which allows for budgeting and planning; it is relationship-building, providing regular touchpoints with your donor community; and it is mission-affirming, giving the parish an opportunity each year to articulate what it is for and why it matters. Done well, the annual appeal is not just a financial exercise - it is a spiritual renewal.

3.1 - Set Your Goal

Setting the right goal is more art than science, but there are principles that help. Your goal should be realistic - based on what you know about your donor community and what has been raised in previous years - but also motivating, representing genuine growth and ambition for the parish's mission. Most importantly, your goal should be anchored in mission, not deficit. There is a world of difference between these two framings, and donors feel it immediately.

Avoid This

"We need \$80,000 to pay our bills and keep the lights on." This framing invites guilt, not generosity.

Try This Instead

"We need \$80,000 to keep our doors open, our ministries running, and our community growing — to be present for every funeral, every baptism, every person who walks in off the street looking for something more. That is what your gift makes possible."

3.2 - Build Your Case for Support

Every campaign needs a clear, compelling reason to give - what development professionals call a "case for support." This is not a list of budget line items. It is a narrative: the story of who you are, what you are trying to do, why it matters, and what donors' gifts will make possible. A strong case for support answers four questions with clarity and conviction: What is the vision your campaign is serving? Why does it need to happen now? What will donors' gifts specifically make possible? And why is this parish the right vessel for that vision?

Writing a persuasive case for support takes skill and perspective - it is often hard for those closest to the parish to step back and articulate its value with fresh eyes. Do not rush this step. Spend real time on it, test your draft with people outside the leadership team, and revise until it sings. The case for support will infuse everything: your pulpit announcements, your letters, your personal conversations, and your thank-you notes.

The Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation can help parishes write their case for support — this is one of the Foundation's core services. Whether you need help drafting from scratch or refining a draft your team has begun, do not hesitate to reach out. Strong writing makes a measurable difference in fundraising outcomes.

Foundation Service: Campaign Writing Support

The Foundation's team can help you write your case for support, annual appeal letters, and campaign materials. Contact us at any stage of your planning - even if you are just getting started. See Section 7 for full details.

3.3 - The Campaign Calendar

A structured timeline keeps your campaign on track and ensures that no key step is skipped. Below is a simple 8-week template that can be adapted to your parish's size, season, and resources.

Week	Key Activities
Week 1	Team recruitment and orientation; set campaign goal; confirm campaign chair and team roles
Week 2	Finalize case for support; prepare campaign materials (letters, pledge cards, bulletin inserts, email templates); ensure online giving is functional
Week 3	Pulpit and bulletin communications begin; personal letters sent to top 20–30 donors from incumbent and/or campaign chair
Week 4	Mid-campaign moment: a testimony from a parishioner, a short video, or a guest speaker sharing the impact of the parish's mission
Week 5	Personal follow-up phone calls to major and mid-level donors who have not yet responded; check in warmly, not transactionally
Week 6	Digital and bulletin push; pledge cards distributed to all households; email reminder with link to online giving
Week 7	Pledge card collection Sunday; celebrate participation publicly and gratefully (not with pressure); share a running total if it motivates

Week	Key Activities
Week 8	Handwritten thank-you notes to all donors; campaign wrap-up meeting with team; reflection and lessons learned for next year

3.4 - Communicating the Campaign

A strong campaign communicates through multiple channels - pulpit announcements, bulletin inserts, personal letters, email, parish newsletter, social media, and one-on-one conversations. Each channel reaches a different segment of your community and reinforces the others. The key is consistency of message: whatever story you are telling, tell it the same way across every medium, with the same language and the same emotional core. Repetition is not redundancy in fundraising - it is how the message lands.

That said, the most powerful communication is always the most personal. A handwritten note from the rector, or a personal phone call from a trusted lay leader, will outperform any mass email by a significant margin. Donors give to people they know and trust, and personal outreach signals that they are seen as individuals - not just names on a list. Reserve your highest-touch communication for your highest-capacity donors, and make sure every donor, at some point in the campaign, hears from a real human being who is grateful for them.

3.5 - Making the Ask

Many parish leaders dread the moment of asking - it can feel pushy, presumptuous, or inappropriate in a sacred context. But consider it from the donor's perspective: they already love your parish. They already want to support it. What they need is a specific, clear invitation that tells them how. Vagueness is not more polite - it is less helpful. A specific ask gives the donor something to respond to. It shows that you have thought about them, and that you take their potential gift seriously.

When making a personal ask, be direct, be warm, and be specific. A good ask sounds like this: "Would you consider making a gift of \$[X] this year to support [specific ministry or vision]?" Then - and this is critical - stop talking. Let the donor respond. Never apologise for asking. You are not begging; you are offering someone an opportunity to participate in something meaningful. That is a gift in itself.

Key Principle The ask is a gift you offer the donor. You are giving them the opportunity to align their resources with something they care about. Approach it with confidence and warmth - not apology.

Section 4 - Major Gifts

Transformational Giving: Cultivating Major Donors in Your Parish

Major gifts - typically \$5,000 or more - have the potential to transform a parish's financial capacity in ways that no annual appeal or special event can match. They require a different approach: not a mass communication or a pledge card, but a personalized, relationship-based process that unfolds over months or even years. Major gift fundraising is not about technique; it is about genuine relationship, shared vision, and the courage to make a direct, meaningful ask.

Here is something many parish leaders are surprised to learn: your major donors are very likely already in your pews. They come to Sunday morning services. They help with the Christmas bazaar. They sit quietly in the third row. They give modestly to the annual appeal - not because they lack the capacity to give more, but because no one has ever invited them to. This is perhaps the most important insight in this entire Toolkit: the limiting factor in major gift fundraising is almost never the generosity of donors. It is the willingness of parish leaders to have the conversation.

The three keys to major gift success are relationship, vision, and a specific ask. Relationship means that the ask comes from someone the donor knows and trusts - the rector, a respected lay leader, or both. Vision means that the ask is connected to something compelling: a clear picture of what the gift will make possible that goes beyond operational continuity. And the specific ask means naming a dollar amount, framed not as a demand but as an invitation: "Would you consider a gift of \$10,000 to fully fund our youth ministry for the coming year?"

Many clergy feel uncomfortable navigating conversations about wealth, and that discomfort is understandable. But it is worth examining the assumption underneath it. It is not your job to judge someone's financial capacity or decide on their behalf what they can or cannot afford. Your job is to offer them an opportunity - to do something meaningful with what they have been given. Most people of significant means are looking for exactly this: a cause they believe in, a leader they trust, and a specific invitation to act. You are in a position to provide all three. The Foundation's donor prospecting service can help you identify those conversations before you begin. See Section 7 for more.

Foundation Tip: Donor Prospecting

The Foundation offers a donor prospecting service to help parishes identify potential major donors within their existing congregation - using publicly available wealth screening data to help you have more intentional, informed conversations. Contact the Foundation to learn more.

Section 5 - Planned Giving & Legacy Conversations

The Gift That Endures: Legacy Giving for Parishes

Planned giving - also called legacy giving - refers to gifts made through an estate plan or financial instrument rather than from current income. These include bequests in a will, charitable gift annuities, life insurance policy designations, RRSP and RRIF beneficiary designations, and other forms of estate gift. Unlike an annual gift, a planned gift is typically made once, often at the end of a donor's life, and may arrive at your parish years or even decades after the conversation that inspired it. This long timeline requires a particular kind of patience and pastoral sensitivity - but the impact can be extraordinary.

Consider this: a single bequest of \$100,000 - well within the reach of a modest estate - could endow a significant ministry at your parish in perpetuity or provide the seed funding for a capital project that transforms your building for the next generation. Legacy gifts are the single most powerful way for a donor of modest annual income to make a transformational contribution to an institution they love. Many of your most faithful and devoted parishioners have this capacity, and many of them have simply never been asked - or even had the conversation.

The good news is that opening the planned giving conversation does not require expertise in tax law or estate planning. It requires pastoral relationship and gentle curiosity. A natural entry point sounds like this: "Have you ever thought about what you'd like your parish to remember you for?" Or "We've been thinking a lot about the legacy of the people who built this place - and what we want to leave for those who come after us. Have you ever thought about what role St. [Name]'s might play in your own legacy plans?" These are not sales pitches. They are invitations to a conversation that many people are quietly hoping someone will start.

The Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation hosts planned giving seminars - educational events where parishioners learn about the tools available for legacy giving in a warm, non-pressured environment. These events can be tailored to your parish's size and context, from a small group conversation over tea in the parish hall to a larger, diocese-wide gathering. The Foundation also provides access to a free will-drafting tool, making it easy and affordable for parishioners to put their wishes in writing - and to include the parish

or Diocese in their estate plans. You do not need to be a financial advisor to have these conversations. You just need to show people that their legacy matters to you - and it does.

Foundation Services: Planned Giving

The Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation offers two key resources in this area:

- **Planned Giving Seminars:** hosted at the parish or diocesan level, tailored to your community's size and needs.
- **Free Will-Drafting Tool:** making it simple and affordable for parishioners to formalize their estate plans and include the parish or Diocese.

Contact the Foundation to explore either option for your parish.

Section 6 - Capital Campaigns

When the Vision Is Big: Running a Capital Campaign

A capital campaign is a time-limited, intensive fundraising effort aimed at raising a substantial sum for a specific, defined purpose - typically a major building restoration, accessibility upgrades, the creation of an endowment, or a significant expansion of ministry capacity. Unlike the annual appeal, which funds ongoing operations, a capital campaign funds a one-time or generation-defining investment in the parish's future. When the vision is genuinely compelling and the community is ready, a capital campaign can be one of the most transformative experiences a parish ever undertakes - financially, relationally, and spiritually.

Successful capital campaigns share several key elements. They begin with a quiet phase - a period of major donor cultivation and lead gift solicitation that takes place entirely before the campaign goes public. It is during this phase that you will secure 50 to 60 percent of your campaign goal from a small number of lead donors, before the broader congregation is invited to participate. This is counterintuitive but critical: campaigns that go public too early, without lead gifts in hand, are perceived as struggling, and momentum stalls. The quiet phase is followed by a public launch - a celebration of what has already been pledged, and an invitation for the wider community to join a campaign already well underway.

A professional or diocesan-supported feasibility study is an essential step before committing to a campaign. A feasibility study - conducted through confidential interviews with key stakeholders - tells you whether the

vision resonates, what the community's realistic giving capacity is, and what concerns will need to be addressed before you launch. Skipping this step is one of the most common and costly mistakes parishes make. The Diocese of Toronto recently completed such a study in partnership with M&M International, and its findings underscore the importance of grounding campaigns in parish realities and transparent, invitational communication.

The Foundation is not a campaign management firm - it does not run campaigns on behalf of parishes. But it walks alongside parish leadership at every stage: helping develop your campaign strategy, writing your case for support, connecting you with the right expertise, and providing the coaching and encouragement that sustains leaders through a demanding process. A capital campaign is a marathon, not a sprint. You will need partners. The Foundation is ready to be one of them.

Common Capital Campaign Mistakes to Avoid

- Going public before you have 50-60% of the goal in pledged lead gifts
- Skipping or shortcutting the feasibility study
- Treating the campaign as a one-time financial event rather than a long-term relationship-building process
- Failing to celebrate and thank donors meaningfully throughout the campaign
- Launching when the parish community is fatigued, fragmented, or in leadership transition

Section 7 - How the Foundation Can Help

You Are Not Alone: Foundation Support for Parish Fundraising

The Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation exists to strengthen the capacity of parishes to fulfill their God-given mission. Part of that work is financial: managing endowment funds, receiving gifts, and distributing grants. But another equally important part is relational and educational: walking alongside parish leaders who are navigating the often unfamiliar terrain of fundraising with integrity and hope. What follows is a description of the four primary ways the Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation supports parishes in their development work.

Donor Prospecting Service

Most parishes know their congregants as people - as friends, as fellow worshippers, as the woman who always brings the best squares to the potluck. What they often don't know is those congregants' financial capacity or

their philanthropic priorities outside the parish. The Foundation's donor prospecting service is designed to bridge that gap - not by invading anyone's privacy, but by using publicly available wealth screening data to provide parish leaders with a more informed picture of who in their community may have both the capacity and the desire to give more significantly.

This is not about reducing people to their net worth. It is about helping parish leaders have more intentional, respectful, and ultimately more fruitful conversations. A rector who knows that a quiet parishioner in the back pew has significant philanthropic capacity is better equipped to invite that person into a deeper relationship with the parish's mission - and to do so in a way that honours their dignity and their freedom.

The process is straightforward: your parish provides the Foundation with a list of congregants (with appropriate privacy considerations observed). The Foundation screens the list using publicly available data and returns a tiered prospect list with suggested engagement strategies for each tier. The result is a road map for more intentional donor cultivation - one that can significantly increase the effectiveness of both your annual and major gift programs.

Campaign Writing Support

Strong writing makes a measurable difference in fundraising outcomes. A case for support that is vague, overly institutional, or poorly structured will underperform a compelling, clear, and emotionally resonant one - even if the underlying mission is identical. Many parishes simply do not have the staffing or the specialized experience to produce polished development communications, and there is no shame in that. It is a distinct skill set.

The Foundation can help parishes write their case for support, annual appeal letters, major gift proposals, and other campaign materials. Whether you are beginning your campaign planning or already mid-campaign and struggling with a letter that isn't landing, the Foundation's team is available to help at any stage. Reach out - the earlier the better, but never too late.

Planned Giving Seminars

Legacy giving conversations can feel intimidating to initiate - both for parish leaders who don't want to seem mercenary, and for parishioners who haven't thought carefully about estate planning. The Foundation's planned giving seminars are designed to change that dynamic: creating a warm, comfortable, informative environment in which parishioners can learn about the tools available to them and begin to think about what their legacy might look like.

These events are entirely customizable. A small parish might host a tea-and-conversation afternoon in the parish hall for a dozen longtime members. A larger parish might co-host a diocese-wide evening event with other parishes in the deanery. In every case, the Foundation provides the content, the facilitation support, and the follow-up resources - including access to the free will-drafting tool mentioned in Section 5. Parishes interested in hosting a planned giving conversation are encouraged to contact the Foundation to explore options.

Parish Fundraising Coaching

Beyond this written Toolkit, the Foundation offers direct coaching support to parish leaders navigating fundraising challenges. Whether you are preparing for your first stewardship campaign, trying to strengthen a major donor program, working through the aftermath of a capital campaign that didn't meet its goal, or simply trying to figure out where to begin - the Foundation's team can sit down with you, listen, and help you find a path forward that fits your parish's unique context and capacity.

This coaching is not prescriptive. The Foundation's staff are not there to tell you what your parish should do. They are there to ask good questions, share what has worked in other contexts, help you avoid common pitfalls, and encourage you when the work feels hard. Which, sometimes, it will. You are not alone in it.

Summary: What the Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation Offers Parishes

Donor Prospecting

Wealth screening of your congregant list; tiered prospect list with engagement strategies

Campaign Writing

Help drafting case for support, appeal letters, major gift proposals, and campaign materials

Planned Giving Seminars

Educational events hosted at parish or diocesan level; free will-drafting tool access

Fundraising Coaching

Direct, personalized support for parish leaders at any stage of their fundraising journey

Section 8 - Practical Templates & Tools

Ready-to-Use Resources

The following templates are designed to be adapted - not followed rigidly. Every parish has a different voice, a different culture, and a different story. Use these frameworks as starting points, then make them your own.

Template 1: Annual Appeal Letter - Framework

- 1. Opening - Personal story or moment of impact:** Begin with a specific, vivid, true story from the past year. Not a statistic — a person, a moment, a detail that makes the reader feel something. "Last February, a woman named Margaret walked into our parish hall for the first time..." This is your hook. Make it real.
- 2. Paragraph 1 - What we accomplished together:** Briefly celebrate what the parish has done in the past year. Use the word "together" - it reminds the reader that they were part of it. "Because of your support, we were able to..." Acknowledge that none of it happened without the congregation's generosity.
- 3. Paragraph 2 - What we are asking you to help make possible:** Describe the coming year's vision. Be specific about what additional resources will enable. Frame it in terms of people served and mission advanced, not budget lines. "This year, we are hoping to..." and connect it to the story you opened with.
- 4. Paragraph 3 - The ask:** Make a specific, warm, direct request. "Would you consider making a gift of \$[suggested amount] this year?" Provide suggested giving levels if possible. Make it easy to say yes by being clear about how to give (pledge card, online link, cheque to [Parish Name]).
- 5. Closing - Gratitude and response mechanism:** Thank the reader before they have given anything. Express genuine, personal gratitude. Reiterate how to respond, and when. Sign the letter personally - from the incumbent and/or campaign chair, not from "the Parish" generically. A real signature from a real person matters.

Tip Keep the letter to one page - two at most. Donors read letters they feel are written to them personally. Long, dense letters feel institutional. Write as if you are writing to a specific person you know and respect.

Template 2: Major Donor Meeting Agenda - Framework

For a one-on-one or small-group meeting with a prospective major donor. Total time: approximately 30 minutes.

Purpose & Content

Opening - Personal connection:

Thank the donor sincerely for their time. Begin with genuine personal connection - ask about their family, their work, something you know about their life. This is not small talk; it is relationship.

Story - Impact:

Share one specific, true story of impact from the parish. Not a program description — a human story. This is your case in miniature. Let it land.

Vision - The opportunity:

Describe the campaign, project, or priority you are sharing with them. Be clear, be passionate, and be specific. This is your case for support in conversation form. Invite the donor's thoughts and reactions - listen as much as you speak.

The Ask - Direct and specific:

Make the ask. Name a dollar amount. "Would you consider a gift of \$[X] to make [specific outcome] possible?" Then stop. Do not fill the silence. The donor needs space to respond.

Listen - However long it takes:

The donor's response - whether yes, no, or not yet - is a gift of honesty. Receive it graciously. If they need time, agree on a follow-up date. If they decline, thank them warmly and maintain the relationship.

5 minutes

Next Steps - Clarity and gratitude:

Whatever the outcome, agree on a clear next step. Express genuine gratitude for the meeting. Follow up within 24 hours with a personal note. The meeting is not the end of the relationship - it is a moment within it.

Template 3: Planned Giving Conversation Starter

This language can be used by the incumbent, a lay leader, or anyone in a pastoral relationship with a long-time parishioner. It is designed to open a door, not close a transaction.

"We've been thinking a lot about legacy at [Parish Name] lately - the people who came before us and built this place, and what we want to leave for those who come after us. Have you ever thought about what role [Parish Name] might play in your own legacy plans? We're not experts in estate planning, but we have some resources available, and we'd love to have that conversation with you whenever you feel ready."

Important

Never pressure a donor to discuss their estate plans. This conversation is always an invitation, never a demand. Many donors will need to hear it more than once before they are ready to engage - and that is entirely appropriate. Plant the seed, and trust the relationship.

Section 9 - Frequently Asked Questions

Questions We Hear From Parishes

These are the questions that parish leaders ask most often - honestly, sometimes with a hint of relief that someone else has asked them too. You are not alone in having them.

1. We've never asked our congregation for anything beyond the offertory. Where do we start?

Start with story and gratitude, not with an ask. Before you launch any campaign, spend three months intentionally telling your parish's stories of impact - in the bulletin, from the pulpit, in conversation — and thanking the people who make them possible. Build the culture before you build the campaign. Then, begin with the annual appeal: a simple, personal letter from the incumbent, a clear goal, and a pledge card. The Foundation can help you design and execute your first campaign. Contact us early.

2. Our rector is uncomfortable talking about money. How do we work around that?

This is more common than you might think, and it is workable. First, consider reframing the conversation: clergy are often more comfortable talking about generosity as a spiritual practice than about fundraising as a financial mechanism. Lean into that frame — it is more effective anyway. Second, recruit a respected lay leader to serve as Campaign Chair and make the primary asks on behalf of the parish. The rector's role can be limited to pulpit moments, prayer, and personal cultivation rather than one-on-one solicitation. Clergy discomfort is real and should be respected — but it should not prevent the parish from making the invitation to generosity.

3. How do we know what to ask donors for?

For annual donors, a good starting point is to ask for a 10–15% increase over their previous gift. For major donors, the Foundation's prospecting service can help you calibrate asks appropriately. As a general rule, it is better to ask for more than you expect and allow the donor to give at their own level, than to under-ask and leave significant gifts unrealized. When in doubt, ask the donor directly: "What level of support feels right for you this year?" Donor-led conversations often produce the most authentic outcomes.

4. We're a small parish with limited volunteer capacity. Is this realistic for us?

Absolutely. The principles in this Toolkit scale to every parish size. A small parish may not run an 8-week campaign with a four-person team — but it can write a personal letter, make a handful of phone calls, and hold a brief campaign Sunday. In fact, small parishes often have an advantage: the relationships are deeper, the community is tighter, and a personal ask from the incumbent carries enormous weight. Start where you are, with what you have. The Foundation is happy to support small parishes with coaching and materials.

5. We tried a campaign a few years ago and it didn't go well. How do we rebuild trust?

Begin with honesty and humility. Acknowledge - from the pulpit, in a letter, in conversation - that the previous campaign fell short of its goals and take responsibility where appropriate. Then share what you have learned and what is different this time. Donors respond to vulnerability and transparency far more than to polish and optimism. Show them a specific, achievable goal with a clear plan, and invite them back in. Rebuilding takes time - budget two to three years for full restoration of momentum. The Foundation can help you develop a recovery strategy.

6. How do we engage younger donors who give differently than older generations?

Younger donors - broadly speaking, Millennials and Gen Z - tend to give in response to specific, verifiable impact rather than institutional loyalty. They prefer digital giving mechanisms (text-to-give, online platforms), appreciate transparency about how funds are used, and respond strongly to peer influence and storytelling. Engage them by sharing vivid impact stories through email and social media, making online giving easy and immediate, and inviting them to be part of the story rather than simply to fund it. Monthly giving programs (small automatic monthly gifts) tend to resonate strongly with younger donors who prefer consistency over large one-time gifts.

7. What's the difference between a stewardship campaign and a capital campaign?

An annual stewardship campaign funds the ongoing operational life of the parish - ministry programs, staff, building maintenance, and mission activities that recur year to year. A capital campaign is a separate, time-limited effort to raise a large sum for a specific one-time purpose — a building restoration, an accessibility project, or an endowment creation. The two should be kept distinct: running them simultaneously risks donor fatigue and confusion. A capital campaign should supplement, not replace, your annual giving program. Many parishes find it helpful to conclude a capital campaign before relaunching a refreshed annual appeal.

8. How do we contact the Foundation for help?

The Foundation's contact information is provided at the end of this Toolkit. We warmly encourage you to reach out - whether you have a specific project in mind, a question you are wrestling with, or simply a desire to have a conversation about where your parish is in its fundraising journey. No question is too small, and no parish is too small. The Foundation exists to serve you.

Section 10 - Begin Where You Are

Fundraising is hard. Let us acknowledge that plainly, without minimizing it. It requires vulnerability - the willingness to name what your parish needs and to ask for it openly. It requires vision - the capacity to articulate a future worth investing in, even when the present feels uncertain. And it requires courage - the courage to have conversations about money and generosity in a culture that often treats both as private, even uncomfortable, subjects. If this work were easy, you would not need a toolkit. The fact that you are reading this one suggests that you are already showing the first form of courage: the willingness to begin.

You are not doing this alone. The Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation is not simply a resource provider - a clearinghouse of templates and tools that you download and deploy. It is a partner in the truest sense: an organization that knows the terrain you are navigating, cares about the health of your parish, and will walk alongside you through the confusion, the setbacks, and the hard-won victories. Whether you need help writing a letter, identifying a major donor prospect, hosting a legacy conversation, or simply talking through a campaign strategy with someone who has seen it all before - the Foundation's team is here. Please use us. That is what we are for.

"Every gift given in faith is an act of trust in God's abundance. Your role is not to manufacture generosity — it is to create the conditions for it to flourish."

The conditions you create - the stories you tell, the relationships you cultivate, the vision you cast, the gratitude you express - these are the soil in which generosity grows. You already have more than you think you need to begin. Your parish has the people, the relationships, the history, and the calling. This Toolkit has given you the tools. The next step is yours. Begin where you are. Begin now.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

Contact us - we would love to hear from you.

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