

2. UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS



CULTIVATE
GENEROSITY
Growing a Culture of Joyful Giving

2. UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS

2.1

GENEROSITY

Generosity starts with God. “For God so loved the world that He gave...” (John 3:16) shows both the source and reason for giving—love in action. In this course, “understanding the process” means aligning our steps with that pattern: seek God’s vision, invite people to join, and steward every gift with integrity.

2.2

APPRECIATE INTENTIONAL ASKING

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

God’s love planted the first seed of generosity. When He gave His only Son, He modeled the giving that changes everything—sacrificial, purposeful, and rooted in love. This divine example reminds us that giving is not merely a financial transaction; it is a spiritual act of alignment with God’s mission. Whether we are fundraising for a school, collecting offerings at church, or leading a major campaign, every act of asking is an invitation for others to join in what God has already begun. We are not initiating generosity—we are responding to it.

In churches, schools, and campaigns, “the ask” is often misunderstood as an interruption to worship. But in truth, it is worship. It’s the moment we invite others to water the seeds that God has already planted. Just as gardeners can’t force a seed to grow, we can’t pressure people into generosity. But what we can do is prepare the soil—through clarity, gratitude, and relationship—and trust the Holy Spirit to nurture the harvest.

A faithful ask is not pressure—it’s partnership. When we invite someone to give, we’re not twisting arms or selling a product.

We’re extending an opportunity to be part of God’s redemptive work in the world. It’s not about guilt or obligation—it’s about purpose. Every invitation to give is a call to participate in the growth of something eternal. And when we make that invitation sincerely, prayerfully, and clearly, we are honoring both the mission and the giver.

Generosity, like a garden, needs tending. “The ask” is one of the most important tools we have—not to extract, but to cultivate. Because when we invite people into God’s work with authenticity and vision, we help them plant roots in something that will bear fruit for eternity.

2.3

A PARABLE: SAVORING A GARDEN RIPE TOMATO

Imagine plucking a sun-warmed tomato from your backyard garden—the vibrant color, the fragrant scent, the rich taste of something nurtured to life. That joyful moment didn’t begin that morning; it began months ago.

It started with Careful Planning: Choosing the right seed and preparing the soil. It continued through purposeful cultivation: Faithfully and consistently watering, pruning, protecting from pests and storms. And finally, after faithful tending, came the harvest.

Asking for support is much the same. You do not just “pluck” generosity in a moment. It grows through intentional storytelling, growing meaningful relationships, and consistent care.

Growing a tomato from a seed to a ripe fruit mirrors the phases of building donor relationships. This understanding leads us to explore the process, where preparation and relationship-building are key to achieving a joyful giving culture.

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2.4

THE PROCESS

Like gardening, generosity requires time, patience, and faith in the process. When we honor that process, asking for support is less about pressure and more about participating in God's natural rhythm of sowing, nurturing, and reaping.

Developing a joyful giving culture is much like nurturing a vibrant garden—it's not about quick wins, but about cultivating something meaningful over time.

There are five simple steps that nurture and grow a culture of generosity. It is called the "Cycle of Raising Funds". As you read the list, you will see a percentage - this is an estimated amount of time you will spend in each phase of the cycle.

- **Planning Phase (15%)** – Choose the right seeds. In our churches and schools, this means prayerfully identifying the purposes that matter most to supporters and aligning them with the organization's greatest needs.

These "seeds" may take the form of annual giving to support the local church or school budget, special projects that advance ministry initiatives, or capital campaigns that fund significant improvements and long-term growth. Focus on those whose hearts resonate with your mission and utilize the communication channels that reach them most effectively.

Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans." When we give our work to God, He blesses it. Psalm 90:17 reminds us, "May the favor of the Lord rest on us; establish the work of our hands." Deuteronomy 28:12 promises that the Lord will "open the heavens, the storehouse of His bounty," sending rain in its season and blessing the work we do. And in Colossians 3, we're told to "work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord." Because in every act of service, we serve Christ Himself. When our plans begin and end with God, they will flourish.

- **Cultivation Phase (30%)** — Relationships, like plants, thrive on consistent care. This is where we water the soil with inspiring stories, share meaningful updates, and nurture connection through personal engagement and prayer.

- **Asking Moment (10%)** — When the time is right, asking is not awkward—it's organic. It flows naturally from a relationship that's been faithfully cultivated. The ask is simply an invitation to participate in the harvest God is already preparing.

- **Stewardship Phase (35%)** — This section of the process is the intentional care after the gift: prompt thanks, regular reporting, visible impact, and ongoing relationship. Without stewardship, even generous gifts wither. With it, trust and joy deepen—and future harvests grow.

- **Evaluation Phase (10%)** — Healthy gardens are checked often. Look at outcomes, costs, and donor feedback. What stories resonated? Which channels worked? Where were you slow to thank or unclear in purpose? With data and facts, you can adjust The Formula and communication efforts to better connect with those whom you are asking for support.

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2.5

PURPOSE OF THE ASKING MOMENT

Even a simple offering call can plant purpose, water hearts with gratitude, and harvest joy.

These moments are not transactional; they are transformational—inviting people to align their resources with God’s work.

To be effective, every ask should include:

Clarity

Say plainly what this gift will do and why it matters. Replace generic appeals with specific impact: “Three counseling scholarships,” “Fifty food boxes,” “Two classroom sets of Bibles.”

Gratitude

Thank before, during, and after. Honor the giver’s intent and the spirit behind the gift, not just the amount. Gratitude softens soil and sustains momentum.

Education

Teach how giving advances mission. Close the loop: “Last month you gave; here’s what God did.” Over time, these small lessons shape a shared identity: We’re a church/school that gives—and God uses it.

In summary: Generosity begins with God and grows through a process: plan with prayer, cultivate relationships, ask with clarity, steward with care, and evaluate with honesty. Do this week after week, and you’ll watch generosity—like a well-watered garden—come alive in your church or school, bearing fruit that lasts.

Every asking moment—whether it’s a church offering, a school fundraiser, or an appeal is an opportunity to do more than request support. It is an opportunity to:

- Plant seeds of purpose
- Water hearts with gratitude
- Harvest joy through giving

QUIZ

2.6

QUIZ

1. Where is it made clear in the Bible that generosity reflects God's divine nature?

- ☐ A. John 3:16
- ☐ B. Proverbs 3:5
- ☐ C. Psalm 23
- ☐ D. Genesis 2:1

2. What percentage of the process is:

A. Planning

- ☐ 15%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 25%

B. Cultivation

- ☐ 45%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 30%

C. Ask

- ☐ 5%
- ☐ 8%
- ☐ 10%

D. Stewardship

- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 35%
- ☐ 40%

E. Evaluation

- ☐ 5%
- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 15%

QUIZ ANSWERS. Q1:A, Q2: A.15%, B. 30%, C. 10%, D. 35%, E. 10%

