



4. USE THE DONOR-CENTRIC APPROACH



CULTIVATE
GENEROSITY
Growing a Culture of Joyful Giving

4. USE THE DONOR-CENTRIC APPROACH

4.1

WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE?

Nonprofit organizations spanning the globe hinge their endeavors on the benevolence of donors who are propelled by a profound belief in the organization's mission, a cultivated trust, and an intrinsic call to make a meaningful contribution.

In 2022, The Barna Group unveiled "The State of Generosity" report, a seminal work that casts a revealing light on the landscape of Christian giving.

This report, echoing the findings of similar studies conducted over the past four decades, serves as a beacon illuminating the motivations that drive those who identify as Christian.

These four pillars provide a blueprint for crafting a compelling asking moment and a persuasive rationale for nurturing a culture of generosity within our church and school community.

1. **Give because of who they are;** it feels elemental to their identity. Giving springs from the essence of one's being; it becomes intertwined with one's identity, a natural extension of one's convictions and beliefs.
2. **Give when they feel appreciated,** which catalyzes generosity; when donors feel valued and acknowledged, their inclination to give is heightened.
3. **Give when they know their gift has meaning.** They are spurred to donate when their contributions are integral to a larger purpose.
4. **Give when they believe the organization will use their contributions wisely.** Donors are more inclined to give when they harbor confidence in the organization's utilization of their contributions.



4.2

GIVER-CENTRIC APPROACH

A giver-centric approach looks at ministry through the donor's eyes. It removes our biases ("what we want to say") and focuses on what the giver needs to hear to participate with joy. Practically, that means:

- Speak to values (identity),
- Lead with gratitude (appreciation),
- Prove results (meaning/impact), and
- Report with clarity (trust).

Scripture frames this beautifully: "You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion... and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:11–14). Asking invites people into God's work—it blesses recipients and givers, producing gratitude, prayer, and praise.

This can be found in 2 Corinthians 9:11-14 before which affirms this concept:

"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you."

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4.3

IMPORTANCE OF THE ASK

Leaders sometimes avoid asking because it can feel awkward, salesy, or risky. Some churches have eliminated the offering call because they find it to be burdensome. One church found that by not asking for support, more members began attending.

If the offering call became a moment filled with pressure and guilt to give because the need was so great, then we can see the rationale behind doing away with it. But when we filter our communication through the four pillars, the ask becomes an invitation to purpose, not pressure:

- Identity: “This is who we are together.”
- Appreciation: “Thank you—your faithfulness matters.”
- Meaning: “Here’s what your gift will accomplish.”
- Trust: “Here’s how we’ll steward it and report back.”

People long to belong to something bigger than themselves. Clear, respectful invitations provide a concrete way for them to live their faith and experience the joy of generosity.

Quick Checklist for Every Appeal

- Open with mission/identity (who we are; why it matters).
- Name a specific need (one clear objective).
- Connect gift to impact (this → does that).
- Invite participation (simple next step).
- Express gratitude (before and after the gift).
- Prayer

When we honor how God has wired us with generous hearts—identity, appreciation, meaning, and trust—our moments of asking become pathways to discipleship. As generosity flows, both the impact of ministry and the well-being of the giver flourish.

Regardless of their background or past experiences, people want to feel part of something bigger than themselves. They want to make a difference in a cause or mission they care about. Asking them to participate meaningfully brings them joy and satisfaction and opens them up to experience a more abundant life in Jesus Christ.



4.4

QUIZ

1. *Based on research, why do people give? (Check all that apply)*

- ☐ A. A sense of identity
- ☐ B. Feeling appreciated
- ☐ C. Knowing their gift has meaning
- ☐ D. Trust in the organization's wise use of contributions
- ☐ E. Receive a tax deduction

2. *The reasons for creating a culture of generosity are: (Check all that apply)*

- ☐ A. Our members want to feel part of something bigger.
- ☐ B. Members want to make a positive impact on a cause or mission they care about.
- ☐ C. Giving brings joy and satisfaction to their lives.
- ☐ D. Giving brings an abundance of blessings.

3. *True or False: A donor-centric approach to raising funds deepens the givers' relationship with the organization and, in a religious setting, connects them to a more abundant life with Jesus Christ.*

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False