

INTRODUCTION



CULTIVATE
GENEROSITY
Growing a Culture of Joyful Giving

CULTIVATE GENEROSITY: GROWING A CULTURE OF JOYFUL GIVING

This course is designed for pastors, administrators, development officers, and volunteers who are ready to plant seeds of generosity, nurture growth, and cultivate a culture where giving is truly good.

It is inspired by 2 Corinthians 8, where the Apostle Paul highlights the example of the Macedonian churches. Though facing great trials and extreme poverty, they gave generously and joyfully “entirely on their own,” Paul writes, “they urgently pleaded for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people” (2 Cor. 8:3-4). Their giving was not driven by obligation but by overflowing joy, sincere love, and a deep desire to participate in God’s mission.

Cultivating generosity means intentionally growing a **joyful giving culture that is transformational** in your church or school. But before we can foster it, we must understand what it is. That is why we start by defining our purpose clearly and ensuring everyone understands it. Our journey toward building this type of culture begins with three basic steps:

1. **Establish Clarity** – Define what cultivating generosity means to churches, schools and ministries.
2. **Understand the Process** – Learn how generosity grows over time.
3. **Accept the Reason** – Embrace the spiritual and practical purpose behind generosity.

Once this foundation is set, we turn our focus to understanding the people who support our ministries. This is known as **the donor-centric approach**, representing the fourth step in our journey.

It means we plan with the donor’s perspective in mind—honoring their values, motivations, and experiences.

From there, we introduce **“The Formula”**—a practical, repeatable tool for crafting impactful appeals.

In a church setting, it’s known as the offering call; in a school, it may be called a donor appeal. When used consistently, **“The Formula”** can transform the giving experience in your church or school. In places where **“The Formula”** is being used, local giving has doubled because it taps into the hearts of each person present.

It includes six core elements that align with the principles presented in this course. One of those elements is **storytelling**. Compelling, heartfelt stories are essential to shaping a culture of joyful giving. Mastering this skill takes time and intentionality, but it’s worth the effort—stories inspire, embed values, and move hearts.

After we understand what cultivating generosity means and how to nurture it using the donor-centric approach, we get to the basic practices, tools, and timelines that help leaders plan effectively and stay focused.

At the end of this course, you will learn the importance of following ethical standards for raising funds. Ethical fundraising is more than good practice—it is an expression of faithful stewardship. In both Seventh-day Adventist and other faith-based educational and congregational settings, upholding these standards builds trust, strengthens relationships, and glorifies God through the ministry of giving.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Welcome to Cultivate Generosity — Grow a Culture of Joyful Giving

I'm Laurie Trujillo, CFRE and Director of Communication & Development for the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

This multi-part training—an online course, videos on the Adventist Learning Community, a practical workbook, a one-page formula handout, and personalized support—shows you how to build a joyful giving culture in your church or school. It's hands-on, mission-focused, and ready to use right away.

This isn't another stewardship course; it's an invitation to **transformation**. The course will move giving from a moment in the service to a way of life—shifting hearts from obligation to **joyful devotion**—through simple, field-tested steps that sustain ministry and draw people closer to Jesus.

I've served in philanthropy for more than 20 years and spent the last three adapting proven best practices specifically for Adventist churches and schools. The tools you'll learn here have been tested, refined, and built to fund the mission while nurturing a lasting culture of generosity.

The Holy Spirit led me to the story of the Macedonian's found in 2 Corinthians 8: 2-4, "And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people."

What struck and inspired me was Macedonians "overflowing joy" was born out of an abundant life with Jesus Christ. This abundance was not material; it was the **experience of God's grace in their lives**.

Imagine your members and community responding with that same joyful generosity because of the transformational gift from God - Grace.

Let's begin cultivating generosity and growing a culture of joyful and transformative giving.

A SIMPLE PLANT WITH EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES

There is a plant that grows in every part of the world and in every climate. From the dry deserts to the wettest jungles. From the snow-covered tundra to your backyard. It uses a unique genetic code to come back to life, no matter how dead it may look. Do you know what plant this is? MOSS.

MOSS	CULTURE OF GENEROSITY
<i>Dormant but not dead — Moss can survive without water for long periods. It appears lifeless but springs back to life when moisture returns.</i>	<i>A culture of generosity may seem quiet or inactive in a church or school, but it is never truly gone. With the right nurturing, it can come alive again.</i>
<i>Needs just a little to thrive — A few drops of water can revive moss. It is resilient and responds quickly.</i>	<i>Small acts of generosity—one inspiring story, a heartfelt offering call, or a thank-you—can reignite generosity and spread hope throughout the community.</i>
<i>Grows quietly and steadily — Moss does not bloom loudly. It expands quietly, covering ground with time and care.</i>	<i>Generosity grows through consistent encouragement, not flashy campaigns. Steady reminders of mission, gratitude, and impact help it spread.</i>
<i>Thrives in hard places — Moss grows on rocks, trees, even concrete. It finds a way in challenging environments.</i>	<i>Generosity can grow even when resources are scarce, or people feel tired. When it is rooted in mission and compassion, it finds a way.</i>
<i>Spreads without forcing — Moss spreads naturally through spores. It does not need to be forced; it multiplies when conditions are right.</i>	<i>A joyful spirit grows organically when people see its impact. Inspire, do not pressure. Create the right environment, and it will flourish.</i>

Moss has a built-in genetic program that enables it to revive after drying out. This DNA code has special instructions that tell the genes to shut down all processes during dry spells. This same code also has instructions to revive the plant as soon as water is present.



ACTIVITY

Look around your home and see if you can find some moss on a tree, in the grass, on a rock. If it is dry and dead looking, take a little bit of water and drop it on the plant. Watch how it transforms before your eyes. Then continue with this course.



REVIVAL AND RENEWAL

If you have ever walked through a damp forest after a long dry spell, you may have noticed something magical: the moss that once looked brittle and brown suddenly comes back to life. Just a touch of water, and its deep green color returns. It unfurls, spreads, and thrives—even in the darkest, rockiest places.

Moss teaches us something powerful: life can return to dry places with just a little nourishment. So too, a culture of generosity can be revived in our hearts, homes, churches, and schools when the living water of the Holy Spirit flows through us.

Generosity isn't a transaction—it's the natural outflow of a living relationship with God. In every church and school, generosity is already present, like dried moss waiting for water.

As a leader, when you learn and apply the practices in this course, you "turn on the tap"—and that living water revives what's there, helping a culture of joyful giving come to life.

REFLECTION

Luke 6:38

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."

Psalms 1:3

"That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers."

Isaiah 58:11

"The Lord will guide you always... You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

Galatians 6:9

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Proverbs 11:25

"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

Reflection

Like moss, we sometimes "dry" out. We get tired. Our sense of purpose wilts under pressure. But just as moss does not die—it waits—so our God-given desire to give, bless, and participate in His mission is never lost. It only needs refreshment.

God promises in Isaiah 44:3 to pour out water on dry land—His Spirit, His love, His energy. That promise is not just for individuals. It is for communities. It is for congregations. It is for those who want to lead their families and ministries with generosity again.

Jesus said in Luke 6:38, "Give, and it will be given to you." That is the sacred cycle of giving; we pour out, and God fills up. Just as moss spreads when rain falls, generosity grows when the Spirit flows.

