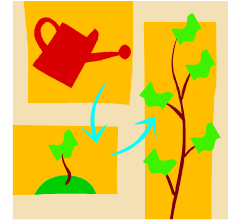


grow your giving



Using an envelope scheme

Numbered envelopes provide Church members with a way of giving each week to the Church. They usually come with 52 envelopes in tear-off book form, dated with each Sunday's date. Each Church member has their own number printed on their set of envelopes.



The system has great advantages:

- It enables you to be consistent about your giving – to be regular and planned.
- It enables the church to know what to expect, making it much easier to meet expenses and plan properly for the future.

Confidentiality

The amount of your gift is known only to you, the person who keeps the records (usually the Treasurer, but sometimes a Gift Aid or Giving Secretary) – and God.

- The person who passes the plate round cannot see how much (or how little!) you have put in.
- The people who count money after the service know that 'envelope number 27' contained (say) £5.00, but they do not know who has envelope number 27.

Consistency

A regular weekly envelope encourages you to plan your giving – to put aside an amount each week for the mission of the Church, whether you are there every week, or indeed, whether there is a service every Sunday. This is exactly in line with what St Paul said to the first Christians:

'On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come.' (1 Corinthians 16: 2)

Practicalities

Going over to an envelope scheme provides an opportunity for the church to remind every member of the responsibilities of proper Christian stewardship of their money.

If you are introducing envelopes, it may be worth considering a sermon and other teaching opportunities on this subject, as well as an opportunity for every Church member to consider their own giving to the life of the Church.

Getting the right envelopes

It is very easy to get supplies of envelopes which will suit your parish – ring us for details. The main firms offer several sizes of envelope. They can be plain and simple, or overprinted with the church name and a text. The cost varies with the number you order and with any overprinting, but most parishes find the envelopes pay for themselves because they increase the regular giving from Church members.

It is probably worth avoiding the very small envelopes that only hold a 50p coin. They encourage small gifts, and make it very difficult to give, or to count, £5 and £10 notes!

Counting up after services

You will need to keep a simple register each week so that when the cash is counted, the counters can keep a log of how much has been given in each envelope each week. It only needs to be a small pocket book. This is particularly important if people are using Gift Aid (see below) to increase the value of their gift.

Opt-in or opt-out?

You will need to decide how you encourage Church members to use envelopes. In some parishes, people 'opt-in' by asking the Treasurer for a set of envelopes. In others, every member of the Electoral Roll is issued with a set, and it is up to them whether to use them or not.

Gift Aid and envelopes

Gift Aid is the Government scheme for increasing the value of gifts made to charities. It means that HM Revenue & Customs will add 28 pence to every pound which a taxpayer donates.

giftaid it

Every taxpayer in the congregation should be asked to sign the simple Gift Aid Declaration. They must pay an amount of tax during the tax year which at least equals the tax being reclaimed on their donations. They then need to do nothing more, but must make their gift using envelopes: the church Treasurer (or Gift Aid Secretary) is then able to reclaim the tax money direct. This is proving a major boost to Church finances. Parishes in the Bath and Wells diocese receive a total of more than *£1.6 million* from the taxman in this way.

You can also use un-numbered special yellow Gift Aid envelopes for gifts made by occasional worshippers and visitors. These are available from the Parish Resources office at Wells.

Further information

There is a wealth of useful information about ways of growing the giving in your church available from our own website www.bathandwells.org.uk – click on 'parish resources'.

You will also find a mine of material at the Church's national site for PCC officers www.parishresources.org.uk