

## 16 Ways to Connect Faith and Money

1. As an individual, whenever you receive any money--paycheck, gift, inheritance, loan, "windfall"--pray for the wisdom and guidance to use that money for good, in witness to God's vision of human community.
2. As a congregation, whenever you receive bequests, receive and honor them liturgically during a Sunday morning worship service. This can honor not only the person who gave the gift, or the person to be remembered, but also God who is the giver.
3. Find many ways to regularly and repeatedly thank people who give--through notes, spoken words, prayers of thanksgiving.
4. Provide prayer cards and giving cards to be used at each place at church meals or for home use. The prayer cards might thank God for gifts and ask God for help in using all gifts. The giving cards might invite us, as we receive God's gifts of food, to decide what gifts we can give others who need to be fed or helped or healed or guided.
5. When children give, always name for them that God is a giver and they are doing what God does and what God hopes we will do.
6. Mark a large Z on a sticker label and stick it on a dollar bill. Put that bill in your purse or wallet and keep it there, reminding you each time you get out money of how Zacchaeus used his money, after he changed, for good.
7. When giving money to children, don't call it an allowance--call it perhaps "some family money" and ask the child each time how they can use or give some of that money for God's family.
8. For a period of time in your congregation, have an effort called "Making Change." Invite everyone to collect their loose change at the end of every day. Prior to that, decide as households or as a congregation or group in the congregation, what you want to do with the money that will make a change in someone's or some community's life.
9. Gather a group of people together to do Bible and culture study, using the biblical text (Luke 20:20-26) and the inscription on U.S. money, "In God We Trust."
10. Periodically, perhaps once a month, ask worshipers to indicate on a card all the people and groups they have given money to as a direct gift and an expression of their personal ministry. Then collect, or ask such cards to be brought forward, so that all the giving of God's giving people can be received and blessed and honored. The act itself will be a witness to the whole congregation.
11. Periodically during worship, have checks that the church treasurer has written, especially those that are clearly in support of ministry and mission, be brought forward for blessing before being sent, hand-delivered, or mailed to the recipient.

12. Do a children's sermon on using money, suggesting that money the children have and receive can be used in three ways. First is sharing, and offer the open hand as a symbol of that. Second is spending, and put an item in a hand to symbolize that we spend for what we need to get--like food or clothing. Third is saving, and put money in a bank to symbolize that, reminding the children that money saved can later be shared or spent.
13. Plan a confirmation class session on money and how the Christian uses it. Perhaps a field trip to a local mall or shopping center would set the stage. Talk about family budgeting and giving. Invite the church treasurer to share how the church uses its money.
14. During worship, commission members and friends of the congregation for their unique ministry through their jobs. Include the commissioning of their use of time and self and wealth. You may want to do this periodically, each time focusing on a particular segment of employment. Be sure to keep this open-ended enough so that any member can feel free to come forward (or stand) for commissioning or not, depending on how they see their own work in relation to faith.
15. Take the offering after the reading of scripture, the sermon, and the intercessory prayers--in this way the offering symbolizes the people's response to the grace of God and represents the commitment of self and substance to stewarding that grace. The offering is a high point in the service, not a routine chore.
16. Talk about money in church: gather people for discussion groups on practical matters like overspending and debt, trying to save for childrens' educations, the pressures of the two-career family, financial disasters, any other kind of money anxiety—and see how people can relate their experiences to biblical texts on money (see p. 15 for one example). Make it a support group (that may meet only once) that draws support from the participants AND the Bible.