Planned Giving Reprintables

*WELS Ministry of Christian Giving has edited and approved the following resources for your church to customize (when necessary) and use as needed. They are intended to encourage members about good stewardship practices and to inform them about ways to make planned gifts to benefit your church and other WELS ministry. Consider using them at your website, in bulletins or newsletters, etc. To use, modify as you’d like. Then highlight the text and copy and paste it (Ctrl-C, Ctrl-V) where you want it to go.*

*The first resource is from Stewardship Advisors. To learn more, visit* [*www.stewardshipadvisors.org*](http://www.stewardshipadvisors.org) *or call Ron Chewning at 888-783-2790. WELS Ministry of Christian Giving obtained permission to share this.*

The Gifts of Cain and Abel

The first gifts that we read about in Scripture are the offerings made by Cain and Abel, who were the sons of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 4:2-4 we read, “Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.” Cain and Abel, having been instructed by Adam in the knowledge of the LORD, brought offerings or gifts for the LORD. Because one worked the land and the other raised animals, their gifts were different. We read that Cain “brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering,” whereas Abel “brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.”

Between the two brothers there is also an indication of a difference in the attitudes of their hearts. The New Testament tells us, “By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did” (Hebrews 11:4), and Cain “belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother . . . because his own actions were evil [while] his brother’s were righteous” (1 John 3:12). God looked into the hearts of both Cain and Abel as he looks into our hearts. He saw Abel’s humble faith. In his gift, Abel showed his sincere gratitude for all that God had done for him as well as his dedication to the promised Savior.

We need to understand that it’s not the size of our gifts and offerings that makes them acceptable to the Lord, but rather it is the attitude of our hearts and minds toward God. God wants our gifts to be an expression of our love for him who loved us and gave himself for us. He wants us to give cheerfully rather than grudgingly. He wants us to give from faith-filled devotion in keeping with this word of Scripture, “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6).

May this story of giving by Cain and Abel help us to examine our attitude toward our offerings so that we, by God’s grace, give faithfully, lovingly, and generously!

Life Insurance Gifts

Fred was a 75-year-old bachelor. When his WELS Christian giving counselor visited, Fred mentioned he had a life insurance policy for $75,000, but had no idea who the beneficiary was. After finding the policy, they discovered that Fred’s mother was the beneficiary. She had been dead for 22 years.

Fred needed another beneficiary—and immediately said, “My church!” Fred was told there were two different ways of doing this. One was to obtain the form from the insurance company and simply make the beneficiary, “Zion Lutheran Church.” Doing it that way Fred could change his mind at some point in the future.

However, Fred knew he wouldn’t change his mind, so he decided to gift the policy, signing it over to WELS Foundation. At the same time, his church was listed as the beneficiary. By doing that, Fred’s gift was irrevocable. Because he made a gift of an asset that had value, he was given a charitable gift deduction—a number calculated by the insurance company. Any further premiums would be given to WELS Foundation and would be considered charitable donations and tax deductible.

Ten years after arranging for this gift, the Lord called Fred home to heaven. His special gift was a blessing to his congregation. Zion had just built a new school and was also in the process of remodeling their Sunday school and Bible class areas. The money went to help pay for those costs. “The money came at a pivotal juncture,” says his pastor. “Through Fred, God provided exactly what we needed.” Through the gift of a life insurance policy, Fred helped teach the message of eternal life to children.

To learn more about how you can support the Lord’s work with a gift of a life insurance policy, please call Christian Giving Counselor [Counselor Name] at [phone number] or e-mail him at [e-mail address].