

PERSONAL WITNESS STORIES A POWERFUL TOOL FOR STEWARDSHIP CONVERSION

As part of an annual appeal campaign, personal witnesses are one of, if not the most powerful tool we can share with members of our congregation. They should be written, with prayer and discernment (ask for God's help in putting your story on paper), by any individual who is willing to share their personal stories about why they give to the church. Stories should be able to fit on one side of a piece of paper, three to four paragraphs.

In writing your personal stewardship story, try to base it on the following:

- 1) What you believe**
- 2) What you do in response to what you believe**
- 3) What difference it makes in your life**
- 4) Witnesses should issue an invitation to others to join them in their journey**

Once written, a witness story can be shared verbally, often at the offertory during a Sunday service. Witnesses can also be shared as a bulletin insert (don't forget to include a picture), and they can be collected for use in other publications as well. Recruit enough persons so that there can be a series of bulletin inserts and perhaps articles in your newsletter for four to six weeks prior to "Commitment Sunday." You can also share stories throughout the calendar year.

The more stories that are shared, the more likely it is that one will connect with folks in the pews. For that reason, ask a wide variety of folks to share their stories.

It is recommended that a volunteer stewardship leader or clergy receive the witness statements and read them prior to the person sharing verbally or printing. This not a critique, but it is an opportunity to help the person re-focus on the four points above, if any have been missed.

Lastly, stories are welcome to be submitted to the diocesan stewardship office. To do so, email them to: stewardship@ecww.org