



**COMMUNITY PROJECT PLANNING GUIDES**  
FOR USE WHEN PLANNING LENT 2017

40ACTS 2017

WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH TO SATURDAY 15 APRIL 2017

40ACTS THEME 2017: ROMANS 12 – A LIVING SACRIFICE

[40acts.org.uk](http://40acts.org.uk)



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## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome to 40acts!

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Thanks for downloading our community project planning guide, which we've put together to help you get the most out of your 40acts experience.

Since 40acts began in 2011, hundreds and thousands of churches, small groups and Christian Unions have taken part in the challenge, supporting one another in communities to explore the daily generosity challenges together.

The purpose of this guide is to help you get started as a group. We've gathered up good ideas and suggestions from others who have taken part to map out a plan of action for you to get the most from your 40acts experience.

As well as this guide, you'll find plenty of other free teaching materials and downloads on the website, to help you teach, learn and practice many facets of biblical generosity as you journey through Lent together.

Wishing you a blessed and generous Lent!

The 40acts team

P.S – we love to hear what groups are doing so please keep in touch with us on social media (@40acts), whatsapp (+447468 40 40 40) or by email to [40acts@stewardship.org.uk](mailto:40acts@stewardship.org.uk)



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## PREPARATION GUIDE

### First Steps

- Download Sermon notes/small group notes, read through them and schedule them in.
- To prep for 40acts you may want to gather a small team from the congregation to take ownership of it; a month before Lent, invite the group for a planning evening to get them excited for the challenge, and get ideas flowing.
- Pick a good time to launch or share this with your church or group. We've found the group experience works best if everyone has also signed up individually on [www.40acts.org.uk](http://www.40acts.org.uk) so they receive the daily thoughts and challenges directly.

### Pick your team

Doing 40acts together can be such a rewarding experience to share with friends and can be done very informally, but for larger groups, whole churches, or for those with big ambitions to impact their communities, agreeing some key roles can be a big help.

1. **Champion** – the person who'll lead your community through this experience. They'll lead by example and be excellent at motivating and exciting people in the lead up to 40acts, and be the encourager and energizer through the course of the challenge.

2. **Teacher** – who can take the lead with the sermon materials and small group resources to ensure that 40acts becomes a powerful learning and growth opportunity for your group. They'll take the free materials and frameworks we've created for you and help shape it for your context.

3. **Facilitators** – who can help get the practical things done, like preparing venues for time together, creating 40acts spaces on church noticeboards and more! Depending on the nature of your community, you may have many people in this role.

4. **Communications** – this person will keep the group updated. They'll be the glue holding your 40acts experience together and also your voice to others outside

your group. They might work with the champion to provide encouraging updates throughout the 40acts challenge; for bigger initiatives they might also share your experiences on social media, or even with local press.

### Hold a planning evening

Once you've assembled a team, find time to get together as early as possible and start planning your 40acts experience. This is particularly important if you've got grand plans for community projects during Lent.

### Agenda

Here is a handy list of talking points to guide your conversation and planning:

- What resources/parts of the 40acts challenge would you, as a church, like to engage with (Sermon notes, Bible study, individual challenge, youth resources, family resources, school resources)?
- How can you get your church on board?
  - Ideas to try:
    - announce it several weeks before Lent to your congregation;
    - use the customisable leaflets and posters available on the [CPO website](#);
    - play our promotional film (which will be released two weeks before the beginning of 40acts);
    - encourage your church to pray about upcoming potential community projects;
    - use social media to create a buzz (create an online group specifically for 40acts);
    - ask your congregation to commit/pledge to the challenge as individuals and sign up for the daily emails;
    - circulate the bible study notes resources amongst group leaders and hold a pre-planning meeting so that they can get to grips with the content before Lent begins;
    - hold a launch event – this could be a special announcement in a service on the Sunday before Lent, or could be a 'stunt' on Shrove Tuesday or Ash Wednesday (we've seen churches give out free pancakes and muffins at their local railway stations before – very effective!).



- Think about your community outside the church. Is there any apparent need in the local area that you could serve directly for the 7 weeks of Lent?
- Read through our list of suggestions, and provided community projects plans in the *During 40acts: Community Projects Guide*. Are there any that the church could engage with?
- Do you want to focus on one particular project, or several one-off events? Determine your timeline and scale of project (this may also be affected by the size of your church).
- Discuss whether or not you need a budget for 40acts, if so look at our fundraising suggestions below.
- Assign roles within your team, such as community project leaders and helpers, social media manager and overall marketer within the church for 40acts, spokesperson and advisor etc.

## Marketing

### Marketing tools available

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- Customisable leaflets and posters found [here](#)
- Promotional Film (can be found [here](#) two weeks prior to the beginning of Lent)

### Social Media advice

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- Set up a specific Facebook group (and be sure to invite us @40acts to it) to share the experience together. Create a secondary hashtag, whilst still using #40acts. Make one specifically for your church.
- Ask questions and engage through social media with your congregation on a daily basis about how they are getting on.
- Follow the official 40acts social media accounts and repost the challenges and conversations each day.
- Ask for ideas and begin conversations about how to tackle the daily challenge.

- Use the group to plan your community project, set up events and keep your congregation in the loop with progress and needs they can meet.

## Fundraising

### Ideas

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- Hold a sponsored event for the whole congregation to get involved with, or recruit members of your congregation to commit to a personal sponsored activity. Use [www.give.net](http://www.give.net) to set up a simple and easy to use fundraising page (find out more here: <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/fundraise/fundraise>)
- Hold a Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday to kick off 40acts and raise funds for your projects. Work out an entry fee/pancake price that will cover your set up costs and allow you to fundraise. Advertise to your congregation and flyer your local community. Put on some music for people as they mingle/eat their pancakes. Provide a 'pancake tossing' station for prizes (i.e. how many times can you successfully toss in a row), a guess the flavour station, and of course a topping station. If you want to add even more of a fundraising feel to it why not add a raffle, a quiz, or provide some entertainment and increase the entry cost. Don't forget to send us photos/videos of your Pancake Party!
- Purchase 40acts [Christmas Card/Easter Card packs](#) from CPO to sell in your church etc. These come in standard designs or can be customisable with a photo/design you can upload which might be personal to your Church. Why not do a drawing competition with the kids and print the winner's design on the cards?
- Car Wash – nice and simple.
- Cake sale after the church service. Ask members of your church to bake and bring cakes, biscuits or sweets for sale.
- Supermarket bag pack—Get in touch with the Manager of your local supermarket to ask permission first. Pack properly (no tins squashing loaves of bread or hot chickens going in with frozen peas) and remember to ask each customer if they would like



your help. Have a supply of spare (unused) bags on hand for those shoppers who haven't brought their own.

### Quick tips to help with planning both fundraising and community projects:

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- Plan well in advance.
- Get the congregation on board. Ask as many as possible to help out whether that's with the event/project or through spreading the word. Use our customisable leaflets and posters available for purchase/download [here](#).
- Spread the word –contact everyone you and your congregation know and ask them to contact everyone *they* know.
- Be creative –something unique and quirky will draw interest from the general public. It's also a great way to catch media attention and encourage people to sponsor your event.
- Contact your local paper – feel free to use the draft press release template on the 40acts website (found on the 'Extras' page) and enter your own details.

## DURING GUIDE: IDEAS

### Introduction

To make things easy, we've broken down the weekly themes from the sermon notes, and highlighted some of the acts corresponding to the particular theme. We have also suggested some ideas for community projects you might like to develop as part of your church's 40acts journey. In addition, there are three more in depth plans at the end to help you organise a more detailed community project.

### Week One: Preparing to give our very best. Commencing Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March.

#### Act 1: Set Out (01.03.17)

This act is all about preparation. What baggage do you carry which might prevent you from seeing what you have to offer? Hold a preparation evening to explore what your congregation has to offer the community as individuals and collectively over the next seven weeks. Alternatively take five minutes on Sunday morning to do a speedy version and write down what their baggage is and what they have to offer as individuals and collectively. CPO have an [adaptable postcard available](#) in their 40acts catalogue which allows church members to highlight and offer up their skills/highlight a friend's need etc. for the congregation to respond to/post through neighbours' doors.

#### Act 3: Local (03.03.17)

This act will be encouraging people to look closely at their community and where there might be holes. Is there a pressing need in your local area that your congregation can meet, perhaps as part of a bigger community project? Get everyone to put their thinking caps on, pray about it and come up with a few initiatives you could be getting involved with. If you need a starting place, why not look on <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk> and type in your church's postcode to find out what local neighbourhood statistics for your area might reveal about needs in the community.

### Week Two: Giving our best to others in the Church. Commencing Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March.

#### Act 5: Captive (06.03.17)

This act looks at how we can engage with prisoners and those going through the justice system, as well as the families and friends of those on the outside.

Working with prisons is naturally complex (unsurprisingly you can't just walk up to the gates with a bag of free muffins to share out!), so we recommend taking some time to read up on the issues by visiting <http://www.prisonhope.org.uk/>.

If you are already in touch with your local prison chaplain, you could start discussions with them ahead of Lent, to find appropriate ways for your church to support prisoners, prison staff and others connected to prisons during Lent.

#### Act 9: Lean (10.03.17)

This act aims to help people who need a shoulder to lean on, or a practical pair of hands to carry their weight for them. Take this literally and it's a perfect excuse for a supermarket bag pack- much like our suggested fundraising idea but this time free of charge and with the aim of offering a helping hand for no other reason than to connect with those in your local community. Get down to your local supermarket and offer to pack/carry people's bags to the car (a great opportunity for conversation and a quick explanation about 40acts). Be sure to get the store manager's permission, and pack purchases properly. Want to go one step further? Buy some [40acts Tote Bags](#) to give away to shoppers caught without a bag.

#### Act 10: Shared Spaces (11.03.17)

This act looks to encourage 40activists to look after and take ownership of the shared spaces within their local communities. This is an excellent one to get everyone involved with.

Check out the detailed plan for this one in the next section of this document.



## Week Three: Giving our best with our gifts. Commencing Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March.

### Act 11: Talent (13.03.17)

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This act is all about sharing your skills and talents for the benefit of those around you. Why not put on a talent show/entertainment night using the gifts and talents of your congregation? Plan it well and leaflet the local neighbourhood with invitations. You could even turn it into a fundraiser for a local community cause. Or put on a skill share event where those with particular talents can teach others and share their expertise and knowledge. Why not open it up to your local community groups too? Help create a bit of a buzz with these [festival style wristbands](#) available from CPO.

### Act 12: Chocolate Tuesday (14.03.17)

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This act has become a firm favourite during each 40acts challenge because it is such a simple and effective way to connect with people in our communities. The act is simple – share chocolate with those you come into contact with today. Invite your congregation to come together either in one big 'chocolating flashmob', or in smaller groups to leave anonymous chocolate bars everywhere with a post it attached with #40acts written on it. Saturate your neighbourhood with chocolate and watch the tweets roll in.

## Week Four: Giving our best when serving others. Commencing Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March.

### Act 17: Generation (20.03.17)

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This act focuses on the benefits of inter-generational interaction. Loneliness can be one of the biggest yet most overlooked problems facing people from older generations. So how can your church provide company for this marginalised group? Read our in-depth plan below.

### Act 18: Pray (21.03.17)

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Plan a date and time which is generally most convenient for the majority of your congregation. Make sure to tell your church about the prayer meeting in advance. Plan the format – will you be praying all together, or do you

want to divide across different prayer stations which focus on particular areas of the community? Who will set up these stations, and how will they be presented? Perhaps you need a handful of individuals to take ownership of each station to coordinate each session. Consider the key areas for prayer in your community.

Invite your congregation to add their own prayer points/concerns/wishes for their local community in advance and on the day make sure everyone is included. There is a [40acts wall banner](#) available for your congregation to stick their post it prayers to. Be sure to encourage those that attend to keep these issues in their prayers past the end of the meeting.

### Act 20: Restock (23.03.17)

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As we hit the half way stage of the challenge we'll be inviting people to revisit what they discovered about the things they could be giving during Act 1 'Set Out'.

As a half time refresher why not find a selection of volunteers from the congregation to offer their talents to others outside of the church. You could send a leaflet round the local neighbourhood, or post the offers on a local Facebook group, offering up their services for free. E.g. we have a plumber/electrician/sewer/cake baker/decorator/photographer who wants to bless you with our skills for free, if you need them get in touch..."

### Act 21: Refuge (23.03.17)

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Your response to this will largely be determined by what is already happening in your area. Read our in-depth plan below to help you get started with this one.

## Week Five: Giving our best despite our feelings. Commencing Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

### Act 25: Stuff (29.03.17)

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During this act we're challenging people to think about all the stuff they might be blessed with already, and commit to giving some of it away.

It could be clothes, bedding, furniture, electronics – but not just the old tatty stuff, the good stuff too.

To coordinate this as a church you might want to get in contact with some local projects to see if there are any particular needs you can collect for (local homeless



projects, women's refuges, children's centres, old people's homes etc.).

### Act 27: 2:1(31.03.17)

2:1 is our BOGOF (Buy one, GIVE one free!) challenge -all about giving one extra when getting something for yourself. In its simplest form it might be bargain hunting in your local supermarket for those 2 for 1 offers in order to benefit others. One such organisation which can most readily benefit from this act is the Trussell Trust's Foodbanks, and there are several ways in which your church might be able to get involved:

- Hold a collection in church for your local foodbank. Find your nearest one here: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>
- Find out what they are specifically in need of and share this with your church.
- Find out when is most appropriate to deliver your church's collection, and even enquire about the possibility of your church volunteering for a morning or afternoon to help out with organising the warehouse.
- Or you could start a foodbank in your church. Find out more here: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-involved/start-a-foodbank/>

## Week Six: Giving our best when it hurts. Commencing Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April

### Act 30: Step Out (04.04.17)

This act is all about stepping out and sharing your faith. Whilst many of these suggested community acts have been very 'faith-by-works', with this particular act how can you as a church reach out to your local community in a more spiritual way?

You might want to put on a community-friendly Easter service especially for those local to you that may not ever enter the church. Organise and plan the service, and in the meantime send your congregation out to leaflet the area and invite neighbours to this special Easter service using [these customisable flyers](#).

### Act 31: Gulp (05.04.17)

Often when we talk about giving we can gloss over the financial stuff and talk about being generous with everything but the cash in our pockets.

This act will be challenging people to consider making a sacrificial financial gift, perhaps to their church or another local project. But the key here is sacrificial – the challenge is to make a financial commitment that will cause you to gulp! It may need saving up for, or may mean diverting money from other things to achieve it.

If teaching about giving is a bit stale or challenging in your church you might like to check out some of our other resources by visiting the 'be inspired' section of our website at [www.stewardship.org.uk](http://www.stewardship.org.uk)

## Week Seven: Giving our best with our whole lives. Commencing Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April.

### Act 39: Testimony (14.04.17)

Hold a testimony evening. This could be testimonies from 40acts or from members of your Church sharing their individual faith journeys. Fill it with entertainment, poetry, art, music etc. good coffee/cake/food.

If you've got the resources, you could take some extra time and have some people record their testimonies and share them online, on the church website or social media channels.

As an extra encouragement, challenge the church to share their testimonies on Facebook – many may never have told friends or colleagues about their faith before and 40acts is the perfect excuse to do that.

### Act 40: Delivery (15.04.17)

To conclude 40acts as a group, you could think about how to celebrate Easter in a generous way by delivering gifts to others in your community.

You could arrange to deliver Easter eggs to some of the local groups who use your church buildings, or those you've interacted with during Lent. Think about attaching [a customisable 40acts postcard](#) to each gift with a note of encouragement and details of our church meeting times, or an invitation to come along to an upcoming service.

## DURING GUIDE: IN DEPTH PLANS

### Introduction

Here we look at three different community project suggestions from the previous section but in more depth, with detailed plans to help you get your community activities underway.

## ACT 10: SHARED SPACES

### Community Clean Up

- Start by thinking of an area—or perhaps walk around your local community looking for an area—which most needs tidying. Perhaps there is a particular space which has become notorious for rubbish or graffiti, or maybe the general surrounding areas and streets of your church or a local park could just use a tidy up.
- Once you have an idea, get in touch with your local council. They can provide helpful advice, permissions (if required) and even special equipment such as litter pickers. You could even order some [40acts clothing](#) (t-shirts and high viz jackets) if you want to give your project a unified and professional look!
- Consider health and safety, especially if you plan on cleaning up a heavily littered area. Think about providing gloves, first aid kits and any other precautionary gear. Your local council may also be able to provide or advise you on this.
- Once you have settled on your area and have confirmed you have permission, let your congregation know. Set a date and time for your community clean up, recruit volunteers, inform them on what the project will entail. Use the marketing tools and social media advice provided in our *Preparation Guide* in order to promote the event and raise interest with your congregation.

To get in touch with your local council plug '[your local council] community clean up' into a search engine. See if a guide comes up and follow their helpful instructions.

If there isn't a specific guide for your local council we have found three great outlines from London, Newcastle and

Thurrock Councils which can be adapted to your area (with the exclusion of key contacts):

- [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/capital\\_clean-up\\_toolkit\\_2016\\_v1.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/capital_clean-up_toolkit_2016_v1.pdf)
- <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/communitycleanup.pdf>
- [https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/wwfileroot/communities-and-neighbourhoods/volunteering-for-newcastle-city-council/amended\\_ncc\\_safety\\_guidance\\_vs2\\_2.pdf](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/wwfileroot/communities-and-neighbourhoods/volunteering-for-newcastle-city-council/amended_ncc_safety_guidance_vs2_2.pdf)

To find your local council contact click here:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

For waste pick up (if you can't get to a tip, and would like to enquire about litter picking packs and pick up) click here: <https://www.gov.uk/collection-large-waste-items>

## ACT 17: GENERATION

### Connecting with isolated elderly in your area

Here are a couple of ways for churches to connect with the elderly, particularly those who might feel isolated.

Let's start with care homes. Care homes will all have their own policies regarding safeguarding for adults, CRB requirements and rules/regulations for outside volunteers to come in and host activities/spend time with residents. As a starting place it's best to get in touch with your local care home or local authority to find out what your church might be able to offer in terms of company or entertainment for the residents. Whilst activities will be shaped by individual policies and confirmed by arrangement, here is a starting list of ideas to get the ball rolling:

- Weekly visits with a group from your congregation to host different interest groups. Utilise the skills or interests you already have: it could be anything from art/music classes' right through to flower arranging or board games.
- Host weekly tea parties perhaps with some music to bring back memories.
- Find out if it's appropriate for your church to host a prayer group or put on a service for the residents.
- Or simply ask the care home if there is a particular need they have that your church could meet.

There are also many elderly people who live at home-often alone. This presents more of challenge in finding out what help they might appreciate. The NCVO works closely with voluntary organisations to match up volunteers with community needs and has links with various age-related organisations.

You can get in touch with your local NCVO volunteer centre (found here <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/find-a-volunteer-centre?view=map>) and have a chat with them about what gaps there might be in services for isolated elderly people that your church might be able to fill.

You may be able to offer weekly visits from individuals from your Church to those who are less mobile or host a coffee morning once a week. ([40acts Mugs](#) available).

You could add a little extra by introducing scrap booking sessions as a way of sharing memories – perhaps about the local area; show a classic film or play a selection of old favourite songs.

If you do choose to run a community project which engages with the elderly, here is a great bit of advice from James Mumford in the *HOPE, Heartbeat of mission* book:

“We made mistakes; we underestimated things – the challenge of dementia, for instance; and we learnt lessons. Not least that serving in this kind of way requires teamwork and you can only reach/engage with as many people as you take in (i.e. you need a high number of volunteers, because communication can be challenging. But it has been a huge honour.”

## ACT 21: REFUGE

### Supporting Refugee's in your area

#### A starting place- Inform yourself:

- Inform yourself with these Refugee resettlement factsheets from the Church of England: <https://ctbi.org.uk/refugee-resettlement-factsheets-from-church-of-england/>
- Also check out the Refugee Support Network for additional advice and resources for faith communities.

#### Where you can find already established groups:

- Rather than going it alone, see who else is already helping refugees in your area. You'll find a helpful list of local/regional 'Refugees Welcome' Groups across the country, with training dates, here. <https://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/refugeeswelcome-groups-training-action/>

#### Providing practical gifts of kindness for refugees in your area:

- The 'Offering Welcome' page on the Refugees Welcome site has some practical suggestions of how you can either set up mentoring or host a welcome dinner. <https://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/mentor/>
- Check out the Welcome Boxes project, which provides wonderful boxes of essentials for refugee families in your area. You might want to invite someone in your church to consider becoming a Welcome Box coordinator on behalf of the church. More details at [www.welcomeboxes.org](http://www.welcomeboxes.org).

#### Further education for your church:

- If your church is feeling called to support refugees, or perhaps you feel they should be learning more about the situations faced by refugees, you might like to schedule in this small group series by the Bible Society, once Lent is over. <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/articles-about-the-bible/what-does-the-bible-say-about-refugees/>



- In Scotland, there is the Scottish Refugee Council <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/> who launched a campaign in October 2016 called 'a cup of tea with a refugee' to encourage people to take time out to share experiences and stories with refugees.
- Think about ways your church can offer a welcoming space and a chance for people to connect. Think about offering coffee/tea and conversation; a playgroup for toddlers where mums and dads can mix; a larger event with food and music?

### KEEP IN TOUCH!

We'd love to hear what you are up to, and equally support you on your mission.

Be sure to connect with us by email at [40acts@stewardship.org.uk](mailto:40acts@stewardship.org.uk) or on any of our social media channels:

Facebook/40acts

Twitter/@40acts

Instagram/@40acts

Whatsapp/+ 447468404040

You might also want to add us into your own Facebook or Whatsapp groups and can do so using the above handle/number.

### RAISING AWARENESS WITH LOCAL PRESS

If you would like to inform or advertise in your local news about what you have been up to as a church in the community feel free to use the draft press release template on the 40acts website ('Extras' page) and fill in the blanks.

## POST 40ACTS GUIDE

If you would like to keep your community projects running, here is a handy checklist to make sure you have everything under control:

- Review how the project is going with the team.
- Confirm that the team who are currently running the projects are okay to maintain ownership and keep the project running.
- Find out if there is any budget/upkeep requirements that might help sustain the project. If so, is this something you could support by a special offering in church?
- Make sure the team always have a plan for a month or two ahead.
- Keep your church updated with progress, developments and stories.
- Remind about the need for new volunteers from time to time
- Keep the enthusiasm alive!

If you would like to try more one-off community projects, take another look at our list of one-off ideas (which can also become ongoing projects).

Enjoyed our sermon note series? Take a look at other sermon notes we have available, such as [Advent Wonder](#), or our small group studies – [Seasons of Giving](#).

Want to encourage your church to find out their generous identity as individuals? Why not mail out our [Generous ID](#) survey

Keep in touch with us at [40acts@stewardship.org.uk](mailto:40acts@stewardship.org.uk) or on any of our social media channels:

Facebook/[40acts](#)

Twitter/[@40acts](#)

Instagram/[@40acts](#)

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### About Stewardship

We help people give. Since 1906 Stewardship has provided advice, guidance, inspiration and practical tools to make it easy for people to give easily and tax effectively.

Stewardship giving accounts are currently used by over 25,000 people in the UK with more than £53 million distributed to charitable causes from Stewardship accounts every year. Over 19,000 registered churches, secular and Christian charities and full-time Christian workers are currently supported with Stewardship.

Stewardship is a charity that helps people to give. If you would like to find out more about how we can help you to give then visit

[www.stewardship.org.uk/give](http://www.stewardship.org.uk/give) or find us at [www.facebook.com/stewardship](https://www.facebook.com/stewardship) or [www.twitter.com/stewardshipnews](https://www.twitter.com/stewardshipnews).