

Freed-Up For Later Life Facilitator's Guide

Dear Facilitator,

Way to go! You have stepped forward to play a very important role in a very important ministry. We have done our best to provide you with a resource that will be life-changing for those who engage in it. Your role as facilitator of the experience will significantly increase the likelihood of that life-change taking place.

This Guide is designed to be helpful to you as you facilitate the *Freed-Up From Debt* workshop. Take its guidance to heart and then adapt your role to your unique circumstances. May you be blessed as you are a blessing to the participants.

Sincerely in Christ,

The Good \$ense Movement Team

Why The Topic of Money is Important

Just about everyone today laments the lack of basic education about personal money management and the increasing materialism in our culture. Most of us are deeply concerned about the resultant problems of consumer debt, marital conflict and the shame and embarrassment that many feel over poor financial decisions they have made. And, of course, when personal finances are in disarray it seems impossible to be a generous giver.

What is less understood, even among church leaders, is the spiritual impact of how we handle and relate to the money with which we have been entrusted. We really cannot serve God and money (Matt. 6:21) and for many people money has become their idol; the chief rival god in their lives. There is a huge relationship between how we relate to money and how we relate to God. Teaching and training folks in this key arena of life should be a priority for every church.

Your Key Role as Facilitator

You have an important role to play. Money is an emotional subject and you can be instrumental in helping folks feel safe and at ease. You can do so with the assurance that a core value of all the Good \$ense resources is a grace-filled, non-judgmental approach.

Welcome participants warmly and encourage them to introduce themselves to one another. Perhaps have an ice-breaker question to discuss at their tables – “What is a hope you have for this time together?”

Because money is a very sensitive topic many people are reluctant and fearful to talk about any aspect of it. You are the live presence that sets the stage and helps create a welcoming and “safe” environment. Do whatever seems appropriate to accomplish that.

At the beginning of the workshop, assure folks that no one will be asked to share anything about which they are not comfortable in sharing. You should also stress that confidentiality is key and that whatever is shared in the workshop will be treated with strict confidentiality.

You will also be facilitating and “time keeping” some individual and group activities. While the suggested time for each activity is noted on the DVD, you can adjust to the needs of your audience if more or less time is required. Be sure to make a note of the time at the beginning of each exercise so you can track the amount of time that has passed.

Make sure the setting is comfortable and distraction-free. Lighting should be such that notes can easily be taken and the DVD can be clearly seen. Appropriate background music can be helpful prior to the beginning of the sessions and during breaks and work times. Check beforehand that the audio-visual equipment is working and that you are familiar with its operation. Seating should preferably be at round tables to facilitate a sense of community.

Announce that you (and others from your team, if that's the case) are available for questions.

Be Familiar with the Course Content

It is perhaps obvious that if you are to facilitate the course you should be very familiar with it. Watching the DVD and following along in the Participant's Workbook several times is a requisite before facilitating the course. Read the material in the appendix as well. Be sure to be familiar with the "Ball Park Estimate" used in the workshop.

Anticipate questions that may arise. If you have any questions of your own feel free to email the Good \$ense Ministry at VivianHayes@goodsensemovement.org and we will respond promptly. Include your phone number as well — some questions are best answered through discussion rather than email.

Registration Suggestions

Before initiating registration, determine whether or not to charge a fee for the course. We have found that people are more committed to following through on their attendance when they pay at least part of the cost up front.

You may elect to not require registration. If so the publicity for the event should remind folks that it will be helpful if they come to the workshop knowing how much they currently have saved toward "retirement." (We like the term "later life" for reasons explained in the workshop.)

Gathering personal information other than name at the time of registration or during the class allows for follow-up after the class is completed. Make registration as quick and easy as possible

Promoting the Course

Stress that the class is for folks of every age and that if later life is still a long way off, that's great! Thinking ahead is a good idea!

Also stress that the workshop will help one think through what later life might and should look like. It is about creating and carrying out a plan that frees you to follow God's calling for your later years. It's a new way to look at what most folks call "retirement" and

to do so through a biblical lens that raises questions about some of the oft held beliefs about that period of life.

Course Evaluation and Follow-Up

We strongly encourage the use of an evaluation form by which you can judge participants' response to the course. You may also wish to have follow-up to the workshop by having a reunion in 4-6 weeks for folks to ask further questions, share insights since the workshop or to re-emphasize certain teaching points.

The Vision for a Broader Ministry

A few closing words about stewardship ministry. The fact that your church is offering this workshop puts you ahead of the large majority of churches that do nothing to teach and train their people in biblical financial stewardship. So good for you!

But this workshop is only addressing one area of financial stewardship. Ideally, it is part of a year-round, ongoing financial stewardship ministry of the church that ministers to people in a very sensitive and often very difficult area of their lives. And a deeply spiritual area as well!

To do that effectively the ministry needs to be built upon three activities that take place on a regular basis:

1. **Teaching** — Teaching is the “what and the why.” Teaching presents the biblical basis for what you ought to do and why you ought to do it.
2. **Training** — Training is the “how to.” It’s about how to implement the biblical principles you’ve been taught into your day-to-day financial life and decisions.
3. **Encouraging** — A significant number of people who have been taught and trained and desire to change their financial behavior will find it difficult to do so. Often they must attempt to change the habits of a lifetime in the face of a culture that continues to send very seductive messages to the contrary. They have a need for ongoing help, encouragement and accountability from trained stewardship ministry volunteers.

Ultimately, stewardship ministry touches most other ministries within the church and a successful stewardship ministry reaches across ministry lines. For example:

Membership — becoming a member has responsibilities as well as rights. One of those responsibilities is financially supporting the ministry of the church. Thus part of the membership process is going through a course like Freed-Up Financial Living – the core Good \$ense curriculum.

Discipleship – because a key question is whether we serve God or mammon, stewardship of our financial resources is fundamentally a discipleship issue. Thus

a logical place for the stewardship ministry to reside is under the discipleship ministry.

Pre-marriage — since money is one of the top 2 or 3 conflict areas within marriage and a major contributor to divorce, part of pre-marriage preparation is going through a course like Freed-Up Financial Living..

Benevolence — because we want to “teach folks to fish as well as giving them a fish,” a prerequisite of receiving financial assistance from the church is to go through the basic stewardship course.

Children and Youth – there’s a huge need to teach children and youth to be God-honoring and responsible with their finances before they embark on their own. (An excellent resource for parents in this regard is the G\$ 3 hour workshop *Raising Financially Freed-Up Kids.*)

The list could go on as stewardship cuts across almost all ministry lines.

An integrated stewardship ministry needs the support of top church leadership and has a thought-through and prayed-through annual plan of multiple teaching and training opportunities.

The FREE download of the Good \$ense **Implementation Guide** found [here](#) on the Good \$ense website provides a step-by-step process for the formation of such a ministry. You and your church leadership are encouraged to avail yourselves of it.