

church monies and consider it casting bread upon the waters. It'll pay off in the long run.

8. Do keep the menu simple; don't get elaborate or tricky in food preparation. No one wants to be burdened in the kitchen all the time, watching over temperatures, timing, etc. Just have good food, lots of it, and make sure it is familiar. Don't go in for the exotic or "indigestible."

9. Do enlist the services of your "kitchen genius." Every church is blessed with at least one individual who knows almost intuitively -- and, sometimes, through years of experience -- how to manage and bring off a church dinner, or breakfast, or a "feeding of the masses" in general. This is the person, as overworked as he or she may be, that you would like to have manage your church stewardship banquet. Promise, and supply, lots of help and cooperation and gratitude, and turn over the culinary reins right away. With much thanks -- both before and after!

10. And ... THE MC

What's a banquet without a Master or Mistress of Ceremonies? And how do you select one for your Stewardship Banquet? As a guideline, let me suggest that you read the next couple of sentences and see who, in your church, first comes to mind:

You'll need a genuinely, from-the-heart, cheerful member, who will be enthusiastic about the gathering and the opportunity for giving, and who already personifies enthusiasm for the church itself, and for the Lord and His work.

Also, this person is loved and respected by fellow members -- and has the self-confidence to feel completely at ease on feet talking to, and back and forth with, the audience. A strong affability and sense of humor helps, too, in creating the cheerfulness atmosphere that is so essential to the success of the banquet.


A tall order to fill? Not really! Just as with a kitchen genius, every church is also blessed with a leader -- titled or not -- of this sort. And this is the one you want to act as your MC.

Is experience in the financial, or business, end of the church necessary? No! Absolutely not. One thing the MC is not required to do is to get out the slide projector or pass out bar charts or budget statements -- for reasons we discussed earlier (middle of page 2). Remember: this is not the annual corporate meeting; it's a cheerful giving gathering!

Most importantly, the MC is to introduce and lead all the "giving" discussions and activities at the banquet. Ideally, there should not be an abrupt switch-over from party atmosphere to discussion atmosphere. Fold them in together, if possible, throughout. How?

Next month, that's exactly what we will go into: a number of specific approaches and workable techniques -- themes and variations -- that have proved successful.

Meantime, set the date, contact your kitchen genius, think about an MC, and ... be of good cheer!


Robert E. Leigh, Jr.