

One of the most effective ways to support Christian education for all families who desire it is to find ways to help fund Christian education for those who cannot afford it.

Parents seeking a Christian education for their children and needing financial assistance should consider several available options:

- Inquire at the school that you are considering. Many Christian schools provide need-based financial-aid programs and/or scholarships.
- 529 plans can now be used to fund K12 education, a potential source of tax savings. Check with your tax advisor.
- School choice programs vary from state to state. Check at EDchoice to see if your state has a Tuition Tax Credit program. This program allows parents to withdraw their child(ren) from the government system and choose Christian education, providing them access to funds if they qualify.
- There is now a version of the Tuition Tax Credit program in 18 states and some parents are able to receive significant scholarships (half of the tuition or more) through this program.
- There are state plans for funding K12 education to which grandparents and others are allowed to contribute.
- **Inquire about Church scholarship programs.** This will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Church scholarship programs are not widespread in America, but *together we can change this!*

Every church is interested in the biblical discipleship of its children. A church Christian Education Scholarship Program (CESP) is an excellent way for churches to assist in this critical task. The idea is simple and easy to implement and can have a tremendous impact over time.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I will share my own experience to demonstrate how powerful this program can be in blessing and encouraging Christian education in one congregation. I have been a member of my church since 1998. The scholarship program was first envisioned by a church elder who had attended a series in the church that carefully explained the mandate for biblical Christian education. God gave this elder a vision for a church program that could assist needy parents financially to be able to afford Christian education. He approached the church leadership with this vision and a plan for implementation.

Our church's Christian Education Scholarship Program was approved by the session of ruling elders and started in 2005 to assist family members to receive a distinctively biblical education at the elementary, high school or college level. Many families in our church are persuaded that Christian education is a biblical mandate according to passages of Scripture such as Matthew 22:21, Colossians 2:3,8, Isaiah 54:13, Proverbs 10:27, Jeremiah 10:2, Proverbs 13:20, I Corinthians 14:20, Proverbs 9:10, II Corinthians 6:14, Proverbs 6:20-22, II Timothy 3:14-17.

To read parent testimonies, go to www.Christedu.org and click on CESP.

How this program works

Tax-deductible contributions are made to the CESP by donors and distributed to the schools chosen by qualified church members and their families for use for Christian elementary, secondary, homeschool and higher education expenses. Applications for assistance are submitted to a committee that approves and distributes assistance according to session-approved guidelines.

CESP is a means of connecting those in the church family who wish to support Christian education with those families who are in need.

The goal is to lessen the financial obstacles for those parents sincerely seeking biblical Christian education for their children.

Results? This program has impacted a significant number of families in the twelve years (2005-2010 and 2013-19) when these scholarships were offered. Since 2005, scholarship awards have been made totaling over \$383,000 to 309 students, with an average award of \$1,239.

The Christian Education Scholarship Program idea is simple and has profound results. Once a program is approved and a committee is formed to administer the program, churches market the program and collect funds from the congregation that will be used exclusively to fund Christian education for eligible church members. This can include Christian education in K12 schools, homeschooling and colleges.

CESP is similar to fundraising campaigns that churches run regularly for efforts, such as mission

trips, outreach programs, building needs, etc., except that the CESP fund is open all year to receive funding. Assuming that the church is tax exempt, givers will receive a tax deduction. The church forms a small scholarship committee to administer the program and gives annual reports to the church leadership.

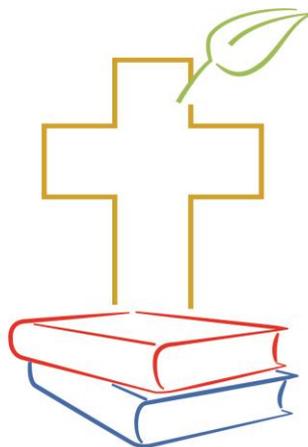
Steps to Implement the Program

1. An individual in the church approaches the church leadership regarding implementing a Christian Education Scholarship Program as a regular part of the church's ministry. This document can serve as an outline for advocating for this program.
2. The church decides to begin this program. (See *Description and Guidelines*, and *Statement on Christian Education*.)
3. A small committee of 4 or more is formed by the church, with a leader appointed to administer the program.
4. The church markets the program and receives donations to the scholarship fund. (See sample marketing timeline, bulletin notice and marketing PowerPoint presentation.)
5. The scholarship committee makes applications available in the early spring for the next school year. (See sample application.)
6. The scholarship committee receives applications by the deadline and meets to award the scholarships.
7. The committee notifies families of the scholarships and requests the thank-you letter. (See Award Notification.)
8. Funds are dispersed to schools chosen by the families receiving scholarships.

9. Thank-you letters are used for making reports to the church leadership and for marketing the program for the next year. (See sample report to church leadership.)

RESOURCES

To see referenced documents, parent testimonies, and more information, visit www.Christedu.org and click on **CESP**. If you have questions or would like to discuss this idea further, please, don't hesitate to call Max Lyons at 757-488-6601 or email max@face.net (The Foundation for American Christian Education, www.face.net).



Christian Education Initiative

Because Education is Discipleship

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. - Luke 6:40

www.Christedu.org

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How to Begin a Church's Christian Education Scholarship Program (CESP)

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