

CRITERION INSTITUTE

BLESSING FOR THE GRANTING AND RECEIVING OF A LOAN FROM A 1K CHURCHES AFFILIATED CONGREGATION OR GROUP

Leader: We are gathered here to honor and bless a new relationship between _____ (congregation/group) and _____. For (small business), both forces for good in this community of _____. For some time now, we have been getting to know each other and discovering how we can be of help to each other in furthering our respective missions. Today this congregation/group will make an investment in this business in the form of a loan, trusting that these financial resources, along with their prayers and good will and support, will help this business to flourish and better serve our community.

INTRODUCTIONS

Leader invites representatives from the congregation/group and the business to introduce themselves briefly.

STORY TELLING

Leader calls on one church representative to share their story: how their faith calls them to take action to engage in the economy, why they chose this business and how it fits with their mission priorities, what they are hoping from the relationship.

Leader calls on the small business owner or his/her spokesperson to share their story: what their business does and how it serves the community, how this loan will help their business thrive, what they are hoping from the relationship.

PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray.

God, the creator, who placed Adam and Eve in the first household in the first garden,

You place us in communities and give us neighbors to serve and to love.

You bless us with peace and freedom to build an economy that works for all:

an economy where families thrive, where all are fed, where the sick find care, where the arts and learning flourish, where workers get just reward for their labor,

where honest men and women do their jobs and build their businesses so that abundant goods and services flow.

The communities we build fall short of your vision of abundance and justice for all. Forgive us and empower us to try again. Help us now in this small act of granting and receiving a loan between neighbors to act fairly and in good faith, tempered by kindness and mercy, built on trust, reflecting our mutual reliance on one another.

Amen

THE COVENANT

- *Leader describes the purpose and provisions of the loan agreement.*
- *Representatives of the congregation/group and the business sign the agreement.*
- *Leader calls on representative of the congregation/group to present the check.*

INTENTIONS BEYOND THE FORMAL AGREEMENT (optional)

Congregational representatives may offer to pray regularly for the new partners, provide support in the form of advice or technical expertise, encourage patronage of the business, or other signs of neighborly good will.

Representatives of the business may express their thanks, indicate their intention to speak well of the church in the community, make themselves available to meet with the congregation at some point, or other signs of neighborly good will.

Gifts or tokens may be exchanged as appropriate.

Leader: We give thanks for these solemn agreements and intentions to build a just, gracious, and mutual relationship between partners. We also acknowledge our human frailty and the likelihood that we may disappoint or offend one another as we grow in this relationship. I invite you now to promise that you will be open and honest when things go wrong, stay in communication, seek resolution, and come together again at the end of this process for a brief time of mutual forgiveness and reconciliation.

*Representatives of the congregation/group and of the business: **We will.***

BLESSING

Leader: Gracious God, we ask your blessing on this new venture begun in trust. By your help:

- May this business prosper and grow to serve more people in this community.
- May the people of this congregation/group grow in faith and love as they seek to discover God's economy.
- May this partnership between _____ and _____ become a blessing to each of us and to the wider community.

Leader: Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ dignified our labor by sharing our toil. Guide us with your justice in the workplace, so that we may never value things above people, or surrender honor to love of gain or lust for power. Prosper all efforts to put an end to work that brings no joy, and teach us how to govern the ways of business to the harm of none and for sake of the common good; though Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Leader: Go in peace. Remember the poor.

*People: **Thanks be to God.***