



Stewardship Manual

A Guide for Individuals and Parishes Developing Stewardship as a Way of Life

Prepared by **the Diocese of Charlotte Office of Development**
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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dear Friends in Christ:

The Gospels are filled with numerous examples of stewardship. From the “widow’s mite” to the “rich man and Lazarus,” to the “parable of the talents,” Jesus reminds us of our calling to follow a stewardship way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure we have received.

Stewardship is an important concept for our spiritual growth as Catholics, both as individuals and as parishes. In a spiritual and temporal sense, adopting stewardship as a way of life changes people and changes the life of parishes as a whole. As baptized members of the Body of Christ, we should take every opportunity to live and promote stewardship as a way of life in our families, parishes, and community.

Many parishes in our diocese began a stewardship journey in 1989 when we celebrated the first Stewardship Awareness Sunday. They found that it led them to a new level of understanding and living their faith. They discovered that yearly stewardship renewal of commitments to time, talent and treasure were spiritually revitalizing to the entire parish. More people were attending daily Mass, Holy Hours, and sacramental celebrations. More time was spent in individual and group prayer. Parishioners began to recognize their talents and share them gratefully with the parish and community. The parish offertory began to increase. All of these are fruits of a well-planned stewardship effort.

This manual is a great resource published by our diocesan Office of Development that will help parishes seeking to promote stewardship as a way of life. It contains educational material, information for implementation of a stewardship effort, a list of resources, and numerous sample letters, brochures, bulletin announcements, prayers, and materials to help make your parish stewardship effort a success. The Office of Development exists to assist parishes in their efforts to promote a stewardship of time, talent and treasure as way of life. I am grateful for their work, and I encourage you to call upon their expertise often. I hope that you will use this manual as a guideline in promoting stewardship in your parish.

Grateful for your generous sharing of time, talent, and treasure, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis, J.C.D.
Bishop of Charlotte

INTRODUCTION: STEWARDSHIP IN THE PARISH

This Stewardship Manual has been created to help you conduct an annual parish stewardship effort. It is based on the experiences of many parishes in the Diocese of Charlotte, as well as other dioceses in the country that have been willing to share their experiences with us.

The diocesan Office of Development will provide the parish with:

- Educational materials to help parishioners understand stewardship
- A model of how stewardship should be conducted
- Samples of direct mail pieces
- Samples of brochures and commitment cards
- Training for lay witnesses and stewardship committees
- Regular communications about stewardship
- Other counsel with the parish, as needed

The manner of promoting stewardship may vary from parish to parish.

A large metropolitan parish such as St. Matthew in Charlotte has a stewardship convener who is also a member of the Pastoral Council, a large and multi-talented Stewardship Committee, an extensive list of stewardship opportunities that is updated often and available on their website, and a director of volunteer ministries. St. Matthew conducts their Stewardship of Time and Talent in the Fall and Stewardship of Treasure in the Spring. For more information on stewardship at St. Matthew, including the pastoral plan of goals and objectives for stewardship, go to their website at www.stmatthewcatholic.org.

A smaller more rural parish such as St. William in Murphy and mission parish, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Hayesville each have a dedicated stewardship committee with separate 2-3 weekend stewardship efforts. However, they combine their efforts for some of the activities. Many of their parishioners are seasonal summer residents who live in Florida during the colder winter months. Once thought as too rural and distant an area to promote stewardship, this parish and mission have found that stewardship brought them together into thriving faith-filled communities of believers. Outreach through communication to the seasonal parishioners at their winter residences keeps them informed about happenings in their summer parish year-around.

As part of their annual renewal weekend, the Stewardship Committee at St. Pius X in Greensboro planned and hosted a parish ministry fair, “Boardwalk at Pius,” that was complete with its own beach, shag band, children’s activities, and ministry opportunities. The youth of St. Pius X are actively involved in stewardship as a way of life, including sharing their own time and talent with the parish Youth Stewards in Action. Pius X is the winner of the 2009 Archbishop Thomas Murphy award for the most outstanding stewardship parish in the nation.

St. Barnabas in Arden used the suggestions found in this manual as a blueprint for promoting stewardship as a way of life. Parishioners have been asked to “take another step” in their stewardship of time, talent, and treasure each year. Stewardship is promoted as a way of life that involves gratitude and is encouraged through a series of on-going awareness activities and written materials. From stewardship homilies to faith formation to the parish bulletin, St. Barnabas promotes the “attitude of gratitude” that is part of stewardship as a way of life.

The common thread that all of these parishes have is a real desire to promote a way of life that embraces stewardship. They all have active Stewardship Committees and enlist the on-going help of the diocesan Office of Development. All of these parishes have found the fruits of their stewardship efforts to be a deeper life of prayer and sacrament among the parishioners, increased ministry participation, and increased offertory.



STEWARDSHIP—WHAT IS IT?

Discussion of Concept

The Diocese of Charlotte has developed an explanation of stewardship to provide an overall perspective, context and direction for this important area of the Church. It is impossible to explain all there is to stewardship, for stewardship is also part of each individual's personal conversion process.

- Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus; and where it has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed.
- Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.
- Stewardship engenders a spirituality that deepens our relationship with the Lord. Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.
- Stewardship addresses both individual parishioners as well as parishes themselves.

Stewardship has been a high priority in our diocese since 1988 when the Diocesan Synod sited stewardship of time, talent and treasure as a major focus. The Bishops' Pastoral Letter of 1992, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, reinforces our commitment to work toward educating and assisting parishes and individuals in adopting this way of life.

In the Introduction to the Pastoral Letter, the bishops explain three convictions that are at the heart of stewardship:

1. Mature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves.
2. Beginning in conversion, change of mind and heart, this commitment is expressed not in a single action, not even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life. It means committing one's very self to the Lord.
3. Stewardship is an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives. Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be. They are deeply aware of the truth that "The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it." (Ps 24:1). They know themselves to be recipients and caretakers of God's many gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another. (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*)

The Pastoral Letter defines stewardship in the following way:

"A Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others and returns them with increase to the Lord."

"Each member of the Church shares in responsibility for its mission; each is called to practice Stewardship of the Church. Christians are also called to look outward and to place themselves at the service of the entire human community, especially those who are most in need."

The International Catholic Stewardship Council reiterates the bishops' statement.

“To practice Christian stewardship, we must share with others, both people and institutions, by giving them our God-given time, talent and treasure as an act of thanks to God for all His gifts to us. Our parish—our local Christian community—provides one focal point where we can express our faith in worship and through acts of charity. The parish is more than just a church building or a geographic boundary. It is a community of faith and action, where we can see the face of Jesus in the face of a neighbor. That neighbor might be a toddler or a senior citizen, an immigrant or a fifth-generation American, a pre-schooler learning to count or an adult learning to read.” Regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, financial status, or education we are called as members of one Body of Christ to share what the Father has given us with those in need. Just as the Apostles dropped their fishermen's nets and followed Jesus 2000 years ago, so we are called to follow His example in today's ever-changing world. Jesus was a person of faith and action and, as He indicates in Matthew 7:21, He expects the same of us:

“None of those who cry out, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

Jesus made it clear in the Scriptures that being stewards of our time, talent and treasure is part of the will of His Father. By addressing stewardship directly, He made it clear how He wants us to live. Stewardship is based on God's Word, not on the fundraising needs of the Church. Stewardship is based on an individual's need to give back out of gratitude, not on the Church's need to receive. Stewardship is based on the premise that all that we have and all that we are comes from God and, as a way to thank Him for all His blessings, we are called to return a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.

Giving of time, talent and treasure is not limited to the Church. Many people will give of their time and talent as volunteers to community agencies in addition to volunteering in their parish, and they will give money to other community, national, and international agencies in addition to supporting their parish.

So, as one can readily see, stewardship is not a fundraising gimmick. It is a way of life based on spiritual principles.

Characteristics of Stewardship

Christian stewardship can be identified by several meaningful characteristics, according to *Stewardship*, a national newsletter written by Parish Publishing:

- Christian stewardship provides spirituality that the lay person can take home from church, exercise at work and express through personal involvement in the community and church.
- Christian stewardship successfully bridges the material world around us and the world of the Spirit within us.
- Stewardship enables Christians to measure the extent of their faith in and love of Jesus by the kind and quality of the stewardship they perform.
- Stewardship gives joy! Those who voluntarily give their time and abilities for work in the parish and community will always experience joy if they give them for Christ. They are not, however, guaranteed freedom from frustration.
- Stewardship is not job-oriented or project-minded. It is a way of life for a lifetime.

- Christian stewardship takes a positive view of money. It sees money not only as a medium of exchange but also as a symbol of the person who has it. The way we acquire it, use it, and share it, we are revealed in those actions.
- Christian stewardship helps us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. To give to God should be from the top—not from what may be left over.
- Stewardship teaches Christians to be concerned about where and how to share their parish financial overflow. Stewardship is not giving just to meet the budget needs.

Jesus Christ is God's greatest gift to us. Stewardship tells us to share a portion of our time, talent and treasure so that the Gift, Jesus Christ, may be given to those who do not know Him.

Stewardship of Time, Talent & Treasure– Not a Matter of Chance

Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure. The following further explains this concept:

- **Intentional** - A deliberate decision is made to live out the Christian life in a certain way. That way is to thank God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of our time, talent and treasure.
- **Planned** - At the beginning of every year, each Catholic household in the diocese plans and makes stewardship of time and talent a part of its lifestyle and stewardship of treasure a part of its budget.
- **Proportionate** - A decision is made to give a certain percentage of one's time and one's income to the church and other charities.

Giving of time involves being with God in prayer and worship, sharing our love with family and friends, and volunteering our time in church and community activities that help others and promote justice.

Sharing our talents arises from the fact that God has given each of us the ability and gifts to do certain things well and we are to develop those talents for the good of others. Many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to prayer and charitable activities.

Giving of our treasure is equally as important as giving of our time and talent. Since God does not hold back on any area of His giving, we are not to hold back on any area of our giving, especially in the crucial area of supporting our parish, diocese, Catholic schools and community organizations.

CONDUCTING A STEWARDSHIP EFFORT IN YOUR PARISH

In conducting a stewardship effort, parish leaders will find that parishioners will be more apt to share their gifts because of the blessings they have received than because of the needs of the parish budget or the need for volunteers. When people are motivated to give out of a feeling of gratitude rather than guilt, recognition, reward, need, or sacrifice, they begin to give the gift that God wants them to give—the gift of themselves. In doing so, they will experience the joy that accompanies this giving.

Placing a greater emphasis on the financial and volunteer needs of the parish serves to encourage only minimal giving. However, emphasizing the personal need of the parishioner to give out of gratitude, enhances both the giving and its spiritual benefits while deepening faith. Does it work? Yes, it does—as seen by the experience and testimony of many, many Christian stewards across the country. And, it works best if there are no compromises in its presentation and without altering or diluting the basic stewardship message. The results are dramatic. Parishioners respond to stewardship efforts because they are based on sound theological principles with God as our Creator and us as His stewards.

It is more effective in the parish if the message of stewardship is repeated throughout the year—in homilies, in lay witness presentations, at parish activities and events, in Sunday bulletins and in other forms of parish communication. The most important reason for the Stewardship effort is to reach out and touch individuals and families with a message that helps deepen their faith and bring them closer to God.

Organizing Your Parish Effort

Key Elements—Overview

A parish stewardship effort should involve several key elements: information, education, witness, invitation, commitment, and follow-up. Those responsible for the effort need to become informed authorities on the subject of stewardship. They should then spend time educating the rest of the parish on the meaning of stewardship. Beginning with the pastor and lay leaders, they should witness to the fruit of living a stewardship way of life. The rest of the congregation should be invited to join them in making stewardship a way of life. The parishioners respond by making a personal commitment to giving of their time, talent and treasure as a gift of gratitude for God's blessings. The pastor's gratitude is expressed through a message of Thank You. The ministry leaders follow up to contact, train and involve the new ministers as soon as possible.

The first step in organizing a Stewardship effort is to develop a realistic timetable. (See appendix, page 27.) The best way to do that is for those responsible for the parish effort to meet with the pastor and liturgy committee to determine which weekend should be designated as Stewardship Commitment Sunday. Once this is decided, then the rest of the schedule should be worked backward from there.

While most of planning activities must take place well in advance of any of the public activities of the Stewardship effort, as far as parishioners are concerned, the effort is conducted over a three week period.

We divide our Stewardship effort into three weekends of intense communications because this maximizes the time and effort of the volunteers. It also gives parishioners ample opportunity to give prayerful consideration to their stewardship decision.

Stewardship communications begin with bulletin announcements three weeks before the first mailing and continue for six weeks.

After Commitment Sunday, the Time and Talent cards collected on that day are sorted, entered into a ministry database and the results are distributed to the relevant parish groups and organizations for follow up. Treasure cards are given to the person who maintains the parish's financial records. A thank you letter is sent to all those who made a commitment.

Role of the Pastor

The pastor's commitment is necessary in all phases – participating in the selection of the volunteer laity to conduct and be involved in the Stewardship Effort, helping coordinate the effort and delivering homilies that motivate parishioners to understand stewardship and to respond in a meaningful way.

Generally, people will be lifted to the level of stewardship in the Bible to the extent the pastor and stewardship leaders inspire them. The success of the effort rests to a large degree on the pastor.

Some suggestions for the pastor include, but are not limited to:

- Spend time reading about and studying stewardship so as to understand its meaning and its focus. A good resource for pastors is the bishops' Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*.
- Examine your own lifestyle to consider what kind of stewardship life you are living. If necessary, make some adjustments in your own life, and consider the impact it has on your spiritual life.
- Encourage the pastoral council to read about and study stewardship, to examine their lifestyle and make any necessary adjustments.
- Working with the pastoral council, form a stewardship committee and attend meetings for the first six to twelve months.
- Along with the pastoral council, commit the parish to conduct an annual stewardship effort of time, talent and treasure for the parishioners.
- Along with the pastoral council, commit the parish to carry out stewardship awareness efforts throughout the year, every year.
- Along with the stewardship committee, select lay witnesses who can speak to the importance and impact of stewardship in their lives.
- Prepare stewardship homilies for the stewardship weekends.
- Incorporate stewardship thoughts in your Sunday homilies when presented in the Scriptures for the day. (19 of Jesus' 36 parables deal with possessions, time and talent)
- Encourage the parish to set an example for the parishioners by giving a portion of its offertory to community agencies and by committing to provide volunteers for community projects.
- Thank people for all they do to serve God by serving others.
- Pray that people in your parish will grow spiritually as a result of their embracing stewardship as a way of life.
- Help your parishioners discern between their wants and their needs.
- Focus on being faithful, not successful, in stewardship.

Role of the Pastoral Council

The role of the pastoral council in stewardship is important to its success. The work of conducting a stewardship effort in the parish is a shared responsibility of lay members and clergy under the leadership of the pastor with the advice of pastoral council. Pastoral counselors need to avail themselves of every opportunity to grow in an understanding of stewardship as a way of life.

The members of the council and the pastor recruit and appoint the leadership of the stewardship committee and ensure that the stewardship effort is not just a one-time activity but continues as a permanent part of parish life.

Role of Parish Commission and Ministry Leaders

The parish leadership in Liturgy, Evangelization, Parish Life, Community Life, Education, and Administration are important to the successful stewardship effort. They should be included in the planning phase of the stewardship effort. Some parishes host an appreciation dinner for the various ministry leaders with a keynote speech on the spirituality of stewardship. Parish leaders are reminded of the important role they play in promoting stewardship as a way of life. They learn that stewardship is not necessarily about recruiting more volunteers for their various ministries. Instead, it is about providing opportunities for parishioners to express their gratitude to God by giving of their time, talent, and treasure in service to others. Responsibilities of the Commission and Ministry leaders include, but are not limited to the following:

- provide information on each parish organization or ministry for a list/catalogue of parish ministries
- assist in updating the ministry list on a regular basis
- participate in the parish ministry fair by setting up a table or booth, manned by a member of their organization, for the purpose of educating parishioners on the focus and responsibilities of the particular ministry
- provide a pamphlet or brochure describing the mission of their ministry, the benefits of participating in the ministry, the type of training (if any) needed for the ministry, and the contact information
- personally contact those parishioners who express an interest in their ministry
- invite those who express an interest in their ministry to a training session or initial meeting as soon as possible after Commitment Sunday
- assist the Stewardship Committee in an evaluation after the parish stewardship effort
- provide on-going awareness of stewardship as a way of life for members of their ministry

The Parish Stewardship Committee



In order for stewardship of time, talent and treasure to be understood, practiced and nurtured in the lives of your parishioners and in the life of the parish itself, it is important to have an active stewardship committee. In fact, surveys have found that having a stewardship committee is one of the primary factors contributing to the long term "success" of stewardship in a parish.

Forming a Stewardship Committee

We suggest the parish form a stewardship committee that reports directly to the Parish Council with the general responsibility for stewardship awareness and the annual stewardship effort. Placing the Stewardship Committee under the Pastoral Council rather than the Finance Council keeps a spiritual focus on stewardship.

The size of the Stewardship Committee will depend on the size of the parish family. A smaller parish or mission may even need to add stewardship responsibilities to an existing committee or council. Stewardship Committee members, much like the Pastoral Council, should be selected to serve for a specific (preferably 3-year) term, with the option of renewing for a second term. To assure having new members, who will bring new ideas, ask your original committee members to commit for 1, 2, or 3 years for their first term. Always select both a chairperson and vice-chairperson to insure the presence of qualified, experienced leadership.

In recruiting parishioners to serve on a stewardship committee, consider the following qualifications or criteria:

1. Spiritually Motivated - It is important that members be people of prayer and be concerned about parishioners' relationship with God. If their primary concern is raising more money for the church or getting more volunteers for the church, then they would not be appropriate to serve on the stewardship committee. Look for people who are Eucharistic, who have a deep relationship with Jesus, who are grateful for that relationship and who act on that gratitude. Such persons spend time in prayer, studying Scripture, and often are people who go to Mass daily.
2. Exemplify and Live Out Stewardship - Look for members who are already personally committed to stewardship as a way of life. They may not call it stewardship but they live it. Those committed to stewardship volunteer their time in various parish and community activities. The pastor will certainly know or can find out about people's volunteer activities at the parish and may even know about a person's involvement in the community. Those committed to stewardship will also be committed, regular and generous givers to the offertory. Again, the pastor will know or can find out about people's giving levels.
3. Envision Where Stewardship Can Take the Parish - It is important that all members of a stewardship committee have the same understanding of stewardship in a general way before they join the committee and, more specifically, after they join the committee and are educated. Some may see stewardship only as tithing your money; others may see stewardship as recycling paper products; others may see it as volunteering your time to church organizations only. Developing a working definition of stewardship will help consolidate the diverse viewpoints of the committee members. It is also important that the members be able to develop a vision of where the parish can be 5, 10 or 15 years from now.

4. Have Personal Qualities that Contribute to Success - Look for people who are accountable (they do what they say they are going to do when they say they are going to do it), persistent, optimistic, organized, patient, creative and willing to share their faith with others.

Responsibilities of a Stewardship Committee



1. **Carry out the Stewardship Effort of time, talent, and treasure on an annual basis.** These efforts usually run two or three weekends every year. On the first weekend of a two weekend effort and on each of the first two weekends of a three weekend effort the pastor would deliver a homily on stewardship and a lay person or couple would give a personal testimony on how stewardship is lived out in their life or lives. The last weekend would always be a Commitment Sunday, where parishioners would bring their commitment cards of time, talent, and treasure to Mass and place them in the basket.
2. **Recruit individuals and/or couples to share their personal testimonies about stewardship with the parishioners.** The lay witness testimony is one of the most educational, motivational and important parts of the stewardship effort. The lay witness talk makes stewardship very real and practical for the people in the pews. Lay witnesses should be individuals from the parish who believe and practice the principals of stewardship in their own lives—those who give of their time, talent and treasure. *Parishes that have been doing stewardship efforts for several years might want to consider producing a parish video with a focus on people and ministries instead of a single lay witness.*
3. **Prepare a time and talent list or catalog of parish activities and organizations, and keep the list or catalog current.** A time and talent list or catalog gives parishioners an opportunity to become aware of the number and type of volunteer ministries available in the parish. Some parishes may have ten volunteer opportunities; others may have fifty. They may range from altar server to youth group counselor. Some parishes develop an actual pamphlet or catalog that provides a detailed description of each group or activity. Others may use a simple listing with little details. While the primary emphasis is on current groups or activities, items that you would like to start, such as welcoming committee or a homeless shelter crew, can be added. *Many parishes have a stewardship ministry fair to promote the many parish and community groups that provide volunteer opportunities to parishioners.*
4. **Ensure that those who volunteer are contacted and asked to become involved.** It is important that the stewardship committee works with the appropriate parish commissions and groups to ensure that those who commit of their time and talent are personally invited to become involved. This activity of the committee is probably its most challenging task. It takes planning before the two or three weekend effort and follow-up after commitment Sunday to make sure people end up actually volunteering for committed. If people are not contacted and instead just have their names put in a book or in a computer, then they will not get involved in future stewardship efforts. They will also start to believe that stewardship is only about money. *Some parishes bring the ministry leaders together for an appreciation event combined with an opportunity to present the stewardship message and the importance of the follow up procedures. When ministry leaders understand the importance of their position and the follow-up and training of new ministers, they are more likely to respond to the stewardship effort in a positive and timely manner. One pastor in our diocese insisted that the training sessions for new ministers be scheduled and “on the books” prior to the stewardship commitment weekend. Therefore ministry leaders had to respond in a timely manner.*

5. **Evaluate the stewardship and awareness efforts on an annual basis.** All elements of the stewardship effort in the parish need to be evaluated. Review comments, criticisms and questions received with commitment cards. Evaluate the written materials used throughout the year—letters, brochures, bulletin announcements, newsletter articles, etc. discuss the verbal presentations—are the homilies and lay witness testimonies getting the stewardship message across? What more could we be doing to get stewardship information out to people? What kind of results are we getting from the stewardship effort? Always look to the spiritual life of the parish when evaluating stewardship. Do these efforts bring people closer to God? What symptoms of spiritual change are evident in the parish? (See appendix, p.83 for sample evaluation form.)
6. **Publicize stewardship thoughts throughout the year in the parish bulletin on a weekly basis.** It is very easy to put a few lines about stewardship in the bulletin each week. With little effort, it can be one way to keep the stewardship message in front of people on a regular basis. These reflections can include Scripture quotes; quotes from books, magazines and newspapers; or ideas that you jot down while going about stewardship work in your parish. The Office of Development from the Diocese of Charlotte includes two months worth of bulletin announcements in the *Stewardship Bulletin*, which is sent to all parishes every other month. (See appendix, p. 59-65 for two years of announcements.)
7. **Make appropriate stewardship literature available in the parish booklet racks.** Including stewardship brochures or pamphlets in the booklet rack gives people an opportunity to read and learn more about stewardship apart from any brochures that may be used for the annual effort. You may want to rotate three or four brochures throughout the year. There are several companies that produce good stewardship materials. (See Appendix p.86-87 for resources for stewardship materials.)
8. **Publicize stewardship reflections in the parish newsletter on a quarterly basis.** Stewardship reflections could include profiles of individuals or couples in the parish who are committed to stewardship, questions and answers on stewardship, thoughts on stewardship, commentaries on stewardship, ministry spotlights, etc. You may also want to consider producing a special newsletter each year that focuses only on stewardship.
9. **Incorporate comments about stewardship in the Sunday homilies.** The committee could suggest that the priest(s) incorporate comments about stewardship in the Sunday homilies on a monthly basis. In looking at the three-year cycle of gospel readings, there are opportunities to convey a stewardship-related message almost every month. In some instances, the whole homily could focus on stewardship. In others, a few sentences can be incorporated into the context of the entire homily.
10. **Encourage support for stewardship through the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.** The committee can develop Prayers of the Faithful with a stewardship message that can be prayed at regular intervals throughout the year. Typically one stewardship prayer among all the other Prayers of the Faithful would be sufficient. (See appendix p. 31 for examples of Prayers of the Faithful.)
11. **Develop a welcoming program for new parishioners.** Work with the appropriate parish commissions to develop programs for welcoming parishioners, whether it is by personal visits, in group meetings, or through the mail. Be sure to include information about stewardship in the presentation and/or packet.
12. **Develop a commissioning service for those who volunteer in the parish ministries.** Work with the Liturgy Commission to develop and plan a commissioning service to be held at all Masses on commissioning Sunday. Be sure to check with all ministry leaders to ensure that the new volunteers have been contacted and formed in their individual ministries. This is best done after the homily as part of the Prayers of the Faithful. (See appendix, p.80 for sample commissioning service.)
13. **Show appreciation for those who are involved in parish volunteer ministry.** Gratitude is an important element of stewardship. Find a way to say “thank-you” to those people who volunteer in

the parish. This could involve something as simple as an appreciation reception after Mass or as elaborate as a catered dinner.

14. **Develop a program of stewardship education to be incorporated into the faith formation program for children, youth and adults.** Work closely with the Education Commission and Director of Faith Formation to ensure that the stewardship message becomes a part of the faith formation process. In many cases, incorporating stewardship language and terminology into the existing curriculum is all that is needed to promote stewardship among children and youth. The Archdiocese of Louisville has two stewardship curriculum books—*Good Things Are For Sharing*, for elementary grades, and *From the Heart*, for the High School grades. Preparation for Confirmation should have a stewardship component. Work with your RCIA director to ensure the catechumens and candidates have a good understanding of stewardship. The adults of the parish might appreciate a stewardship presentation by a motivational speaker.
15. **Add a children’s component to your parish stewardship effort.** In addition to including stewardship education in the faith formation curriculum, include children in your 2 or 3 weekend stewardship effort. Consider forming a sub-committee to address the entire field of children’s stewardship.
16. **Provide opportunities for gifts discernment.** Parishioners should be given an opportunity to help discover their own spiritual gifts and then use those gifts in service to others. Parish stewardship efforts can include programs and workshops on the discernment of gifts to better help parishioners find the ministry best suited for them. (See appendix, p.86-87 for resources on gifts discernment.)
17. **Provide in-service and continuing education for your stewardship committee.** The chairperson of the stewardship committee should make sure each member receives the most current awareness information sent by the Office of Development. Committees should plan to attend diocesan, regional and national stewardship events. The five dioceses of the Atlanta Province will sponsor a regional Stewardship Day Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on March 28, 2009.
18. **Develop an annual plan.** Each committee should develop a detailed yearly plan that includes the organization and preparation for the 2 or 3 weekend effort as well as monthly awareness activities. (See appendix, p. 82 for sample annual plan.)
19. **Expand your focus beyond the parish.** Consider spreading the message of stewardship beyond the parish. One way to do that is to encourage your diocesan newspaper to print stewardship profiles or stewardship questions and answers. You may even want to supply the paper with your own profiles and questions and answers.

The Stewardship Lay Witness

An important aspect of the stewardship effort consists of the stories and testimonials delivered to the entire congregation by individuals whose lives have changed as a result of stewardship. These lay witnesses are important to the success of the parish effort. There are many reasons for this. Stewardship is a part of the internal change of heart, or conversion process, we know so well from the Scriptures. The Old Testament and the New Testament are full of stories of real people who became aware of the need to put their faith into action. The Gospel writers, themselves, are witnesses to the life of Jesus.

Lay witnesses send a strong message to the faithful about giving of oneself and one's possessions and time in gratitude for what God has given them. People are motivated by hearing that it is working for other people, and can relate to others, just like themselves. Christians throughout history have been raised to a new level of awareness by hearing how a deeper sense of spirituality has taken over the lives of people just like them.

NOTE: We suggest that the same lay witness(es) speak at all Masses on a particular weekend. Everyone in the parish hears the same message. When parishioners sit down in small groups to discuss the talk, they have the same frame of reference. When the pastor refers to something said by a lay witness, he knows that everyone heard the same message, regardless of which Mass they attended. If the committee recruits several individuals the first year, the pool of effective lay witnesses diminishes within the first couple of years.

Selecting Lay Witnesses

Lay witnesses should be individuals from the parish who believe and practice stewardship as a way of life—those who give of their time, talent and treasure in an intentional, planned and proportionate way. They also should relate well to other parishioners, feel comfortable speaking to a group about their personal experiences, and who will be enthusiastic about their mission. A potential lay witness may say, “Yes, I believe in giving back to God in gratitude but I don't want to stand up and tell everyone what I am doing because it sounds like I'm bragging about myself.” The response to that person could be, “By sharing with us how you arrived at your decision for stewardship, you will be testifying to the generosity of a good and gracious God and reaching out and touching individuals like you to come forward with their gifts.”

Responsibilities of a Lay Witness

The lay witness or witnesses need to meet with the pastor about how to present the concept of stewardship and discuss the pastor's expectations of the stewardship effort. Prospective lay witnesses might find it helpful to read Scriptural passages about stewardship. Many are contained in the Appendix section of this manual. We also recommend that they read other material about stewardship included in this manual and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter. The lay witnesses should write out a 5-7 minute presentation sharing their personal experiences of how they relate their faith to their gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure. (See the Appendix p. 42-44 for Guidelines for the Lay Witness with examples of presentations and helps in preparing the talk.)

The Involvement of Others

The act of helping conduct a parish stewardship effort is in itself an act of stewardship. There are many tasks that need to be performed when a stewardship effort is planned, executed and followed up. In conducting a parish effort, the parish will need the time and talents of individuals for:

- designing artwork, posters and brochures
- printing cover letters
- affixing labels and postage and stuffing envelopes
- tabulating results and entering the data into the computer
- providing Time and Talent reports of volunteers to coordinators of the parish ministries
- telephone follow up with parishioners and ministry coordinators to assure that those who volunteer are contacted
- reporting results to the stewardship committee and pastoral council

Begin building a list of people who have special talents in these areas and who can give their time when it is needed to help the parish.

When to Conduct Your Parish Stewardship Effort

There is no particular liturgical season that is more appropriate than another for doing a parish stewardship effort. However, there are two times during the year more suitable for reaching parishioners. A parish stewardship effort is best conducted in the spring months of April or May or the fall months of September, October or November. During other months, there may be less attendance by regular parishioners due to vacations, weekend trips, and holidays. The effort should not be conducted over weekends of important Church feast days or special liturgical celebrations. Thanksgiving weekend should also be avoided because many parishioners and their families travel out of town during these times. Generally, the best times are those when:

- No other major activity is going on in the parish, such as parish capital campaigns, the annual Diocesan Support Appeal campaign, a high school or grade school capital fund-raising campaign, a school annual fund campaign
- No special liturgies are planned such as First Communion, Confirmation, RCIA Rites, Sacramental Preparation Rites, etc.
- Schools are in session
- The pastor, parochial vicar, and office staff are all available

In addition, during the three weeks in which the effort is conducted at Masses, there should be no other major collection for the diocese especially on the weekend in which Commitment cards are being collected. In other words, the schedule must be such that for several weeks, parishioners can focus on their personal decision about Time, Talent and Treasure.

Sequence of the Stewardship Effort

Conducting the Stewardship Effort effectively is based on organizing and implementing the procedural steps outlined here. It should not be attempted without ample planning time nor should it be shortened from three weekends to only one or two weekends. It takes several weeks of communications, homilies and lay witness presentations to communicate what stewardship is all about. It cannot be done effectively in one or two weekends. Once the parish has begun a stewardship effort, it should be continued year-round under the leadership of the Stewardship Committee.

Timetable/Checklist for Conducting a Stewardship Effort

When conducting your parish's stewardship effort, a reverse calendar will be helpful. Included in the Appendix is a timetable for you to use in planning your parish effort. To use the calendar, first establish the date of Stewardship Commitment Sunday, then fill in the dates working backward from there. (See Appendix, page 27 for the timetable.)

Preparation

A good mailing list of registered parishioners is the lifeline of any parish communications effort. Since mailings are made on a regular basis to parishioners at most parishes, it is assumed that the mailing list is relatively up-to-date. If it is not, the parish should take the time to make the parish list more accurate. In larger parishes a roster of names and addresses will become out-of-date rapidly. In many cases, nearly 25 percent of the names and addresses change annually. A parish needs to have a mechanism for correcting and updating its mailing list, such as "Address Service Requested" from the U.S. Post Office which automatically forwards the mail to the new address while sending the parish the corrected address for a small charge.

While mailings will reach registered parishioners, a number of those attending the church are not registered and will be missed by the mailings made by the parish. The stewardship effort provides a wonderful opportunity to invite new parishioners to register. During the Stewardship Effort it would be helpful to have extra brochures and commitment cards in the pews or in the back of church, and to announce from the pulpit that they are available for those who have not received a mailing at their home.

It is recommended that parishes use envelopes for their mailings rather than attempting to save money by using self-mailers. The most current research on direct mail indicates that the best response traditionally comes from a mailing that includes an outside envelope, cover letter and brochure. When addressing the envelopes, print addresses as close to the mailing date as possible so that the new parishioners who register during that period will receive the stewardship materials, and those who have moved will be deleted from the mailing.

One technique of successful direct mail is to have the mailing look as personal as possible. In fact every element of the mail campaign should have a personalized look about it, if possible, such as:

- the address printed on the envelope rather than on labels
- the letter individually addressed with a personal salutation.
- first class stamp indicating personal attention

Mailings with attention to the personal details have a higher chance of being opened and read. While it is not always possible to take all these steps, it should be understood that this is the best way to get the highest response. In some cases, the parish's mailing may be just one of 50 to 100 pieces of mail the parishioner will receive during the week, so the parish should do what it can to make sure the envelope is opened and read.

The First Week of the Effort (Weekend #1)

A letter from the pastor with accompanying brochure should be mailed to the home a few days before Weekend #1. At all Masses that weekend, the pastor delivers a short homily along with a presentation by a lay witness or couple. Depending on the tradition in your parish, this presentation takes place either prior to the start of Mass or at post-Communion.

As far as parishioners are concerned, this is the first week of extensive parishioner awareness about stewardship beyond the bulletin announcements. It is one of the most important weeks for the stewardship effort to date because parishioners have received a mailing at home the previous week, and because this is the first time the pastor will give a homily and lay presenters will be giving their testimonies.

Generally, the parishioners' reaction will be favorable. However, some parishioners might react along these lines. "If they just wanted money from us, why didn't they just ask for it?" or "Stewardship just means they want us to tithe or give 10 percent to the Church." That is why a positive consistent message is so important.

When this message is presented in a personal way by people who have made their own commitment to this way of life, then parishioners will begin to understand that stewardship is not just a short-term effort but rather a foundation for a deepening of faith and a way of life. Through the letters, brochures, the pastor's homilies and presentations of the lay witnesses, the parish will begin to have a sense of the life-changing and life-enriching concept of stewardship for them as individuals and the parish as a whole.

The Second Week of the Effort (Weekend #2)

A second letter and brochure are mailed to all parishioners a few days before Weekend #2. At all Masses that weekend, the pastor delivers a short homily along with a presentation by another lay witness or couple.

This week precedes Commitment Sunday. During this week, the communication phase of the effort continues. Parishioners are becoming more aware of what stewardship means and how it can affect their lives in a positive way. During the week, a third mailing is made to all registered parishioners. This mailing contains the important commitment cards. Announcements are made in the parish bulletin of Commitment Sunday which is the following weekend and that parishioners are asked to return their commitment cards at all Masses.

The Third Week of the Effort (Weekend #3 –Commitment Sunday)

A third letter and commitment brochure are mailed to all parishioners a few days before weekend #3. All parishioners bring their completed cards (one for Time and Talent; the other for Treasure) to Mass on Commitment Sunday. At all Masses on that Sunday, the pastor delivers a stewardship homily and parishioners offer their commitment cards.

This is the week when the entire effort comes together. Parishioners are invited to make a personal commitment of giving their time, talent and treasure in response to God's blessings in their lives. There are several ways in which the stewardship commitment cards can be presented to the parish.

Listed below are three ways to present commitment cards to the parish:

- One method is to invite parishioners to come forward at the offertory or other time during the Mass, as if they were going to receive Communion, and present their cards in the form of a gift by leaving them in the sanctuary area.
- Another way is for the ushers to collect the cards during a special collection.
- A third is to ask parishioners to present their cards at the same time they make their regular weekly offerings.

The rate of response will greatly increase by having extra commitment cards in the pew this weekend. Whatever method is used to present the commitment cards, it should be done in a sense of giving out of gratitude, in keeping with the spiritual meaning of stewardship.

After the cards are received, the pastor should invite those who have not signed and returned commitment cards to do so, placing them in the offertory collection the following week or mailing them to the parish office. The pastor should also remind parishioners that their commitment of time, talent and treasure, if possible, begins right away. He should announce to the entire parish that ministry leaders will be contacting those who committed to a specific ministry as soon as the data is gathered. The pastor should also thank the parish family as a whole for their generous sharing of their time, talent and treasure.

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION DURING AN INITIAL THREE-WEEK STEWARDSHIP EFFORT

Printed Stewardship Communications

There is no one best way to communicate with parishioners to ensure that the greatest number have been reached but it is important to have a comprehensive communications effort that includes the use of a number of forms of communications, particularly printed communications.

Each of the elements of printed communication should be assigned a specific role. For example, the cover letter should be used as an introduction from the pastor that describes the parish's stewardship effort and introduces more information in the accompanying brochure. The brochure should be assigned the role of explaining further the concept of stewardship. The recipient often keeps a brochure while discarding the accompanying letter, so the brochure should be as complete as possible in the event that a parishioner goes back and looks at it separately.

Letters

Letters are very effective in reaching a broad base of parishioners. They are more effective when combined with a brochure. (See the Appendix, pages 27-29 for letters which may be used through the course of the effort for specific mailings.)

Brochures

Brochures that accompany a cover letter are commonly used and effective ways of presenting the concept of stewardship. Many parishes choose to design their own. Others order educational brochures from publishing companies. Three brochures (one being the commitment cards) should be used in the initial stewardship effort. The Office of Development has created a series of brochures in Microsoft Publisher that can be personalized for your own parish. Contact Barbara Gaddy at 704-370-3302 or bagaddy@charlottediocese.org for electronic copies of these brochures. (See Appendix, pages 86-88 for additional resources for brochures.)

Banners/Posters

Parishes have always used banners, posters, embroideries and drawings to communicate the message of God in a visible way in the Church. They range from montages of pictures of parishioners to poster boards created by young students to express their feelings about their religion. If it is appropriate, the parish communications plan might include banners or posters which help explain the spirituality of stewardship.

Bulletin Announcements during the Effort

During the stewardship effort, there should be regular announcements in the parish bulletin. (See Appendix, p. 32 for examples of announcements for use during the effort.)

List of Opportunities for Time and Talent

In the early planning phase of the stewardship effort, the parish Stewardship Committee should begin preparation of a list of parish activities, ministries, and community programs that provide avenues for parishioners to give of their time and talent. One way of compiling this information is to involve the leadership of the many parish groups through a written survey or a ministry leaders retreat / meeting.

A brief description of the ministry/organization should be part of the commitment mailing. A list of the special skills that are needed by the various parish groups should also be included. (See Appendix, p.37 for examples.)

Commitment Cards and Envelopes

The commitment card is an important element of the Stewardship Effort. Parishioners are asked to complete both the Time and Talent portion and the Treasure portion of the commitment card, and put them in an envelope. The third mailing should include an envelope for the parishioners to use in turning in their cards. The portion for Time and Talent should have space for the parishioner to indicate specific ministries or areas of interest, and the Treasure portion should have a space to indicate their level of financial commitment.

When the envelopes are received, they should be opened and the cards separated by Time & Talent portion and Treasure portion—making sure that the parishioner has written his or her name on each of the cards.

Thank-You Letters

Once the commitment cards are received, all those who made a commitment should receive a thank you note from the pastor. Time and talent respondents receive an additional note from a commission chair, ministry leader or other appropriate personnel. (See Appendix, p. 52 for examples of thank you notes.)

Stewardship Presentations at Mass

During the Mass, there are a number of communication opportunities to enhance the message of stewardship. Among them are:

Prayers of the Faithful

Sample Prayers of the Faithful to be used during the two or three-week effort are included in the Appendix, page 31.

Homilies

The role of the spiritual leader of the parish is one of the most important elements of stewardship success. Parishioners look to the pastor and assistant pastors to help them understand stewardship and motivate them to accept stewardship as a way of giving back to God in gratitude for His gifts to us. (Examples of homilies are included in the Appendix, page 33-35.)

Lay Witness Presentation

The testimony of individual parishioners or couples is an important part of the presentation of the stewardship message. The sharing by parishioners of their own faith stories and experience about their returning to God their gifts of time, talent and treasure with the congregation is an effective way of communicating the message of stewardship. (Guidelines for the lay witness presentation and sample talks are included in the Appendix, pages 42-51.)

Pulpit Announcements

These are valuable reminders for those at Mass about key steps in the Stewardship Effort. (Examples are included in the Appendix, page 36.)

AFTER COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Parish Evaluation

The effectiveness of the Stewardship Effort cannot be judged on the basis of financial results and volunteer commitments only. Because it is spiritually based, the results will be in the hearts of those who have responded to the stewardship message. While it is difficult to see the evidence in quantitative terms, we can see it in qualitative terms, e.g., more enthusiasm, increased joy, deeper individual commitment, a different outlook, and increased attendance at Mass and special liturgies.

Commitments of time, talent and treasure, on the other hand, can be measured. Offertory giving should be analyzed by looking at comparable periods in previous years, particularly of the year prior to the stewardship effort. Review of the numbers should include factoring in or out special situations such as one year having a month with five Sundays and another comparable period with four Sundays. The results should also compare the number of volunteers participating from year to year, if the data is available.

It is important that several members of the parish leadership meet with the pastor and associate pastors to formally evaluate the results of the Stewardship Effort. This should include the chairpersons of the Stewardship Committee, Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council. (See Appendix, p. 83 for sample evaluation form.)

Follow Up on Commitments

One of the most critical roles, and yet one that is neglected by some parishes, is adequate follow-up. It is important that a follow up effort start with those who have already made commitments. The first step is to separate the Time and Talent commitment cards from the Treasure cards. The Treasure cards should be turned over to the appropriate person as designated by the pastor—the Finance Council chair, the parish bookkeeper, or the staff member who is responsible for recording of parishioner contributions. The Time and Talent information should be entered into a database, and a report of all new and continuing volunteers should be given to the appropriate ministry leaders.

Time and Talent Commitment Follow Up

The information collected on the Time and Talent commitment cards from the parishioners should be disseminated as quickly as possible to the various parish commissions and groups that match up with the talents of the parishioners. The most efficient way of compiling the information is through use of a computer database. Many parishes find the “Family Screen” on Parish Data Systems (PDS) to be a good place to input the ministry information. Other parishes use a simple Access database. Smaller parishes may put the information into a table, or simply make enough copies of the time and talent cards to share that information with the ministry leaders. As soon as the ministry leaders receive their list of new and continuing volunteers, they should contact the parishioners, thank them for their stewardship gift of time, and invite them to the next meeting of the ministry. (See Appendix, page 53-54 for sample letters.)

The Stewardship Committee should follow up with the ministry leaders to assure that parishioners who have made time and talent commitments have been contacted. Individuals who have volunteered but have not yet gotten involved should be contacted.

Treasure Commitment Follow Up

A summary of the commitments should be prepared for the Stewardship Committee and Finance Council as an indication of the level of commitment being made to the finances of the parish. It is important to note that returned cards will not indicate the total income to be expected. The Finance Council cannot use the totals from treasure commitment cards in preparing the church budget. For the individual, signing a treasure commitment card is a reminder of the spiritual commitment to give back out of gratitude.

When the thank-you note is sent, it should include a reference to the amount (or percentage) of giving by the parishioner. The amount can be presented on a weekly, monthly and annual basis, depending on how they have stated it on their treasure commitment card. One of the purposes of the note is to acknowledge the gift and make sure the amount (or percentage) is correct. (See Appendix, page 52 for a suggested thank-you letter.)

Follow Up With Those Who Have Not Committed

Non-Respondents and New Parishioners

The Stewardship Effort is never really over during the year because the parish is a dynamic, growing organization. It is necessary to follow up with those who have not responded as well as those who join the parish during the year.

It is important to make contact with parishioners who have not responded. A comparison of those who did respond with the total parish roster will identify the non-respondents. Then, they need to be separated for follow-up mailings as well as telephone contacts.

New parishioners represent a significant opportunity for adding many gifts of time, talent and treasure to the parish. And yet, because they are not members of the parish during the stewardship effort, they tend to be neglected. Someone on the Stewardship Committee or Pastoral Council should be assigned the responsibility of contacting these individuals, as part of a welcoming committee, including making a presentation on stewardship and presenting commitment cards to them. Often, these individuals bring a new source of energy and leadership to parish life.

These methods of presenting stewardship to new parishioners will depend on the traditional way the parish welcomes them. It may be best to make stewardship materials part of a welcoming kit that is presented to new parishioners, to pass it out when the parishioner comes to the church office to register or to hand it out at the parish's monthly reception of newcomers.

Letter

See the Appendix, p. 56 for a sample letter to those who have not responded.

Telephone Contact

See the Appendix, p. 57 for a sample "script" for telephone contact.

PLANNING THE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

The Annual Stewardship Renewal is conducted in much the same manner as the initial effort. The essential components include:

- 2 brochures (See Appendix, p. 86-87 for resources for brochures.)
- 2 letters from the pastor (See the Appendix, p.40-41 for sample letters.)
- Updated "Time and Talent" opportunities
- Lay witness presentation (one or two weekends)
- Pastor's homily - Commitment Sunday

See Appendix, p. 38 for a Time Table for the Annual Stewardship Renewal.

PARISH STEWARDSHIP EFFORT FOR CHILDREN

~A Component of the Parish Stewardship Renewal Effort

Parishes that have completed a successful first-time stewardship effort, and are committed to promoting on-going stewardship awareness, should consider the value of introducing stewardship as a way of life to the children and youth of the parish. They have been eager and interested observers of the adult effort over the past year, and many of your young people already practice stewardship as part of their family's commitment. A focus on Children's Stewardship should be done in addition to the adult stewardship effort with youth lay witnesses either on a separate weekend from the adult lay witnesses, or as part of a Children's Liturgy of the Word.

Suggestions for implementing Children's Stewardship in your parish

- **Support**--It is vital to enlist the support of the pastor, pastoral staff, Pastoral Council, Faith Formation Director, and (in parishes with a school) the school principal.
- **Education**--Include a 3-5 week mini-lesson on stewardship in your faith formation classes. Feature some of these children's activities such as posters, banners, essays, etc. during the weeks preceding Commitment Sunday. (See Appendix, p. 86-87 for resources on children.)
- **Compile a children's time and talent list.** Be sure to include adult ministries that would welcome participation on the part of children. (i.e. housecleaning, lawn and garden care, visiting the elderly, etc.) Make that list available to the children.
- **Communication**--Introduce the idea of children's stewardship early through bulletin announcements, parish newsletter articles, and bulletin board materials. Include a note on children's stewardship in the letter from the pastor.
- **Children's Commitment Card**--Provide commitment cards for the children to complete their pledge of time talent, and treasure as their gift of thanksgiving for all of God's blessings in their lives.
- **Children's Envelopes**--Consider implementing use of a children's envelope that includes a space for sharing their weekly time and talent as well as treasure. (see Appendix p. 86-87 for resources for children's envelopes)
- **Lay Witness**--Ask a young person who is involved in ministry in your parish (altar server, children's lector, children's usher, etc.) to share with the other children what stewardship means to him/her.
- **Follow-up**--See to it that each child who completes a commitment card receives a "thank-you" and an invitation to participate in the ministry they indicated. Contact should also be made with parents regarding their role in the child's commitment.
- **On-going awareness**--Include a children's corner in your weekly bulletin, highlighting some of the time and talent items mentioned by them in their weekly envelopes. Include children's stewardship notes in parish newsletters, prayers of the faithful, faith formation classes and newsletters, and (when appropriate) in children's Liturgy of the Word or homilies for children.
- **Children's Stewardship Committee**- Consider forming a sub-committee of your Parish Stewardship Committee to address the current and on-going needs of children's stewardship.

Children as Lay Witnesses

Helpful suggestions for using children to present the Stewardship message to other children in the form of a Lay Witness Talk or dialogue

Just as the adult Lay Witness Testimony is one of the most effective means of presenting the stewardship message to the adults of the parish, a well-done children's Lay Witness Talk can be an effective tool in presenting the stewardship message to the children and youth of the parish. Such a talk should be given by a young person who is already practicing stewardship on a child's level in his or her own life. The talk should be directed to the other children in the parish as a means of inspiring them to become cheerful givers of their time, talent, and treasure, and to share real life examples of how stewardship is lived. **This talk should be done in addition to the adult Lay Witness talk, on a separate weekend.**

Tips in choosing a child as Lay Witness

- Invite a child who is already actively practicing stewardship in the parish. Children who are altar servers, youth ushers, youth lectors, nursery aids, etc. often show an understanding of stewardship in their lives.
- The child should be someone who attends Mass every weekend with his or her family. Often the entire family is involved in stewardship on both a parish and community level
- Invite a child who is mature, articulate, and somewhat at ease in front of large groups.
- The child should be willing to work with the pastor (or his designate) in preparing the stewardship talk.
- The child should be willing to speak at all of the weekend Masses on the specified Sunday.

Consider a dialogue or an interview rather than a talk.

Even the most articulate and mature child can sometimes freeze in front of a large congregation at a weekend Mass. To help put the child at ease and make their testimony more effective, consider the following suggestions.

- Invite the children of the parish to come forward and gather around the pastor and the child lay witness. The child who is doing the lay witness talk is now speaking to a much smaller "congregation" of peers, and the adults are privileged to listen without putting undo pressure on the child
- In parishes that do a children's Liturgy of the Word (separate from the adult Liturgy of the Word), the child's lay witness presentation could take place at that time.
- Introduce the Lay Witness to the group and include a little information on the child's family. Many of the children may already know the lay witness, but some may not.
- Using a dialogue format, "interview" the lay witness with regard to his or her practice of stewardship. Ask the child to explain what stewardship means to him or her, and to share with the group real life experiences that relate to stewardship. The interview should cover all three aspects of stewardship--time, talent, and treasure. The child should be given a copy of the interview questions and ample time to prepare answers **from his or her own experiences** well ahead of time. Then a time should be scheduled with the pastor or catechist to actually rehearse the program.

Some sample questions for a child's lay witness interview

- We have been promoting stewardship here at Our Lady of Perpetual Help for many years. I know you have watched the adults come up here and talk about stewardship. What do **you** think stewardship is all about?
- Since stewardship is really all about “thanking” God for all the wonderful things He has given to us, what are some ways you use your **time** to thank God.
- We are reminded that all that we have and all that we are is a gift from God. He gives everyone special **talents**--that's just how God makes us--with special talents. “Billy”, what are some of the special **talents** that God has given you?
- How do you use those talents here at our parish as a part of stewardship? How do you use your talents in the community?... in your school?
- When you share your gifts of talent and time with everybody here at church, how does that make you feel?
- In stewardship, we are told that our money (or **treasure**) is one part of the many gifts God has given us. How can your treasure be given as a gift of gratitude for God's many blessings?
- You seem to really enjoy living as a good steward of God's many gifts. Do you have anything more you would like to say to your friends?
- How would you encourage the other children to get started in stewardship?

The pastor (or other adult “interviewer”) will help guide and direct the lay witness testimony. Using this format, the child won't have to worry about what comes next. He or she can speak from the heart in a relaxed and comfortable manner.

At the conclusion of the dialogue, the pastor should thank the lay witness for sharing his or her thoughts on stewardship and encourage all the children to think about their own special gifts and talents, and how they might use them to serve God and one another.

Tell the children that they will have an opportunity, just like the adults, to fill out a commitment card on Commitment Sunday. Explain that those children who do wish to make Stewardship a way of life, **and fill out a commitment card**, will soon thereafter receive a box of envelopes. The envelopes will have a place for them to write down those special things they do each week in thanksgiving for everything God has given to them. Children always have time and talent to share with others as a way of thanking God, and many children have treasure to share as well.

APPENDIX

Materials contained in the appendix fall into five categories: (1) Primary Stewardship Effort Materials, (2) Additional Material for the Annual Stewardship Renewal, (3) Lay Witness Materials, (4) Follow-up Materials, and (5) On-going Stewardship Awareness Materials.

Each topic can be found on a separate page to allow ease of copying and distribution to individuals and committees as needed. Simply highlight the selected page(s), copy and paste into a new document. You can then personalize it, make any changes to it, and use it for your own purposes.

The following materials can be found in the Appendix:

Primary Stewardship Effort Materials

Timetable for Conducting an Initial Stewardship Effort	27
Cover Letter for First Total Parish Mailing	28
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Timetable for Conducting an Initial Stewardship Effort



To use this calendar, first establish the date of Stewardship Commitment Sunday then fill in the dates working backward from there. On this calendar, the “X” represents Commitment Sunday. The designation “X-10” in the calendar signifies “Commitment Sunday minus 10 weeks.”

X-10	Week of:	Pastor and stewardship committee begin recruiting lay witnesses or couples to speak at all Masses on Weekend 1 and Weekend 2. If the parish is not able to recruit volunteers from the parish, the diocese will help find lay witnesses from other parishes. Generally speaking, it is much more effective to use individuals from your own parish.
X-9	Week of:	Mailings to parishioners are planned and scheduled beginning this week. Brochures are either designed by the stewardship committee or ordered from a company that publishes stewardship resources. The Office of Development has a number of brochure templates in Microsoft Publisher that can be personalized for your parish.
X-8	Week of:	Envelopes and letterhead for cover letters are ordered from local printer. Lists of time and talent opportunities are finalized. Time and Talent Brochures and commitment cards are created and sent to printer.
X-7	Week of:	If parish has a newsletter, article about stewardship is written and included in the next issue.
X-6	Week of:	Special activities, such as making posters or banners, are planned and assigned.
X-5	Week of:	First bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin. Labels for four full parish mailings are ordered.
X-4	Week of:	Lay witnesses meet with pastor to coordinate their remarks. Second bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X-3	Week of:	Mailing #1 is made to all parishioners following this weekend. Third bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X-2	Week of:	WEEKEND #1. Pastor’s homily #1. First lay witness presentation. Mailing #2 is sent to all parishioners after Weekend #1. The fourth bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X-1	Week of:	WEEKEND #2. Pastor’s homily #2. Second lay witness presentation. Mailing #3 is made to all parishioners after Weekend #2. The fifth bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin, announcing that commitment cards will be mailed to homes during the week and they are to be returned to church the following weekend.
X	Week of:	WEEKEND #3 – COMMITMENT SUNDAY. Pastor’s homily #3. Cards are presented at Mass. Sixth bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X+2	Week of:	Commitment card information entered into the database and a thank-you mailing is made to those parishioners who have responded with time, talent and treasure commitment cards.
X + 3	Week of:	Ministry leaders should receive a list of names and contact information. All those who make a commitment should be contacted within one month of Commitment Sunday.

Cover Letter for First Total Parish Mailing



(Date)

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner:

Spiritual growth and renewal are a continuing part of the life of any Christian. They are also vital to the life of our parish. An important aspect of this spiritual growth is embodied in the principle of stewardship. Through stewardship, we thank God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has given to us.

During the next few weeks, you will be hearing more about stewardship and what it means in terms of your personal spiritual lives. You will be asked to reflect on three areas of stewardship and how they are lived out in your life. Among the important questions are:

- Time. How much time do you set aside each week in prayer and involvement in volunteer activities in your parish and in our community?
- Talent. How you are using your talents for the betterment of our parish family and for the community as a whole?
- Treasure. What percentage of your yearly income do you presently give to support your church and community activities?

This weekend at all Masses you will be hearing from me and from (name/names of lay witnesses) who will talk about their personal experiences with stewardship. During the next several weeks, I suggest that you and members of your household spend time in prayerful thought about stewardship and your relationship with the Lord. The enclosed brochure will help you understand the true meaning of stewardship. Please take the time to read it prayerfully.

Sincerely,

(Pastor's Name)

Cover Letter for Second Total Parish Mailing



(Date)

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner:

“Give and it shall be given to you...For the measure
you measure with will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6: 38)

In the letter and brochure you received last week, I asked you to reflect on the many blessings you have received and consider this as a time for personal renewal in your relationship with the Lord. I asked you to think about stewardship of time, talent and treasure and how you and/or your family might make a new commitment to giving.

Your Time - For many of us, time is our most precious commodity. The demands of work, school, community, parish and family are overwhelming at times. Occasionally, when we feel out of control, we must get off the merry-go-round and rethink what life is all about. We must seek to balance our time against what we know we must do. I would hope that you consider reexamining your priorities to give more of your time to our parish and the larger community.

Your Talent - Everyone of us is talented in some way. It may be in music, art, writing, organizing, planning, driving a car, supervising a project, and even making other people laugh. Our parish provides each and every one of you with an opportunity to use any talent you have. I hope you will consider committing a greater share of your talents to our parish and community.

Your Treasure - Your financial support is a major reason why we are able to continue to provide our religious, educational and social ministries. The primary source of our parish's financial support is the weekly offertory collection. Stewardship of treasure involves committing a regular portion of our income to our church and our community. It is important that a portion of this go to our parish. I hope you will consider committing a percentage of your annual income to our parish and making your contribution on a regular basis.

This weekend at all Masses you will hear from me and from (name/names of lay witnesses) who will talk about their personal experiences with stewardship. Next week, I will ask you to make your renewed commitment of your stewardship gifts to your parish. Then, all of us will be asked to place our commitment cards in the offertory collection (or place it on the altar.) It will be a great day for all of us in the parish as we continue to build a community of faith.

The enclosed brochure describes more specifically how stewardship relates to our Christian life. Please take the time to read it prayerfully.

In the name of Christ,

(Pastor's Name)

Cover Letter for Third Total Parish Mailing



(Date)

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner:

For the past several weeks, we have been asking you to think about making a commitment to the parish based on what the Lord has given you. Now, we are asking you to acknowledge your commitment of TIME, TALENT and TREASURE in a more formal way. I am asking you to:

1. Study the Stewardship Opportunities for Time and Talent sheet included. Select those best suited to you and write them (or place a √ by them) on the Time and Talent card. If you are already committing your Time and Talent, include your current parish involvement.
2. Complete the Stewardship of Treasure card included in the brochure. Consider a percentage of your annual income as your level of giving. The financial commitment between you and the parish is a confidential matter.
3. Use the envelope that is included to return both your Time and Talent commitment card and Treasure commitment card. Bring the envelope with you to Mass this weekend.

Please be generous with your time, talent, and treasure commitments. For your own spiritual growth and also for the parish's spiritual growth, it is important that everyone in the parish be involved in stewardship. We need your commitment to continue building a community of faith.

Please be assured that you and your loved ones are in my daily prayer.

In Christ's name,

(Pastor's Name)

Sample Prayers of the Faithful for Stewardship

Prayers of the Faithful help remind us of our faith and our values. The following may be used written or adapted to better fit the needs of the parish.

O, God, our loving Creator and Giver of all good gifts, bless our parish, strengthen our faith and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship so that we may give generously of our time, talent and treasure to spread Your kingdom here in our church and throughout the world. For this, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, God, Creator of the universe, we thank you for the gifts, talents and abilities You have given to each of us. These are represented by the treasure we are about to collect and offer at the altar, and by the personal commitments of time and talent that are being made. May these gifts enable us more effectively to carry out the mission of the parish and the mission of the church in the world. For this, we pray to the Lord.

All that we are, all that we have, and all that we will become is a gift from God. May Christians everywhere recognize the need to respond with gratitude to God's many gifts. For this we pray....

God created the world and everything in it. As stewards of this world, may we work toward a deep appreciation of all creation, respect for all human life, preservation of the environment, and development of this world through noble human effort, we pray.....

God calls each of us—clergy, religious, lay person; married, single; adult, child—to play a unique role in carrying out the divine plan. In answering that call, may Christians everywhere become good stewards of their personal, God-given vocation, we pray.....

For all Catholics, who give generous support through time, talent and treasure to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church, in thanksgiving we pray.....

Many caring stewards here in our parish give generously of their time, talent and treasure in response to God's gifts. With gratitude for their stewardship, we pray.....

Suggested Bulletin Announcements during the Stewardship Effort

First Bulletin Announcement: Our Parish will begin a Stewardship Effort on (date). Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus. It is a way of thanking God for all the blessings He has given us by returning to Him a portion of time, talent and treasure. Stewardship can change the spiritual lives of both individuals and the parish as a whole.

Second Bulletin Announcement: Stewardship is based on our need to give back to God out of gratitude, not on the Church's need to receive. It is based on the premise that all that we have and all that we are comes from God and, as a way of thanking Him for all our blessings, we return a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has allotted to us. Soon, we will begin a Stewardship Effort at our parish. Please be generous in giving of yourself.

Third Bulletin Announcement: Christian stewardship provides spirituality that you can take home from church, exercise at work and express through personal involvement in the community and church. Please pray that our stewardship effort, which begins next weekend, will enlighten our entire parish. At all Masses next weekend, we will be hearing from parishioners (name) who will describe how stewardship affects their lives.

Fourth Bulletin Announcement: Our Stewardship Effort begins this weekend. At all Masses this weekend, you heard from me and from our parishioners (names) about their personal experiences with stewardship. Next weekend you will hear from (name) parishioners. Please continue to give prayerful thought to your commitment of time, talent and treasure to the Church and the community.

Fifth Bulletin Announcement: We continue our Stewardship Effort. Where stewardship has been implemented, it has changed the lives of both givers and receivers. At all Masses this weekend, you heard from me and from our parishioners (name) about their personal experiences with stewardship. You will receive a commitment card in the mail later this week asking you to make your stewardship commitment of time, talent and treasure.

Sixth Bulletin Announcement: This is stewardship Commitment Sunday. Please return your time, talent and treasure cards at Mass today. If you did not bring them to Mass today, please bring them next week or mail them to the church this week.

Examples of Homilies for the Total Stewardship Effort

The following presentations serve as examples. Pastors are encouraged to utilize any of these homilies or material found elsewhere in this manual or to develop original homilies, using methods they find most suitable.

Sample Pastor's Homily #1

In the first letter of St. Peter he reminds us, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." Throughout Holy Scripture there are constant reminders that we are called to be stewards of all of God's gifts...Our time, our talents, our financial resources, our communities, the earth we live on with its natural resources, and our relationships with family and others. We must truly recognize that everything belongs to God, and we are stewards or caretakers who are expected to use the gifts in service to one another. Simply put, stewardship is about how we use those gifts.

Today, we are beginning a stewardship effort here at our parish. It is an important and significant event in our parish life. It is one that will change the lives of each of us and which will change the life of our parish.

At the end of the three-week stewardship effort, you will be asked to make a specific commitment to our parish of your time, your talent and your treasure. We ask for your commitment in writing for each of these important elements of stewardship. And, we will ask you to return your commitment cards on Commitment Sunday.

In the meanwhile, you will hear from (or have heard from) two of our parishioners about how stewardship affects their lives. This week, I am happy to announce that you will hear from (or have heard from)* (name of presenter). And next week our presenter will be (name). We thank both of these parishioners for their act of stewardship in standing before our parish and sharing with us how stewardship is affecting their lives. **(The Lay Witness presentation may be done either before the processional at the beginning of Mass or after Communion.)*

We greatly appreciate their willingness to come forward and explain stewardship because for many Catholics it is a concept that may be difficult to understand. This is one of the reasons why you received a mailing this week and will be receiving two more over the next two weeks. Please read the letters and brochures when they arrive at your home.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the old Testament and the teachings of Christ. Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the Time, Talent and Treasure allotted to us.

We are asking all of you to spend the next two weeks praying and thinking about what stewardship is and how it can affect our lives. For individuals, it means thinking about stewardship and the commitments we make. For others, it means having a discussion with family members about the family's total stewardship commitment. In either case, we are asked to look at stewardship as the joyful return to God of the first fruits of what He has bestowed upon us.

In Stewardship of Time and Talent, we are called on to give of ourselves and our time to the church and to our community. In Stewardship of Treasure, we give back to God by giving of our financial resources to our Church, to the diocese and to charitable organizations in this community.

We look to Jesus for help in understanding what stewardship is and what it means. Jesus points out that we reveal our values by our actions just as a tree reveals what kind of tree it is by the kind of fruit it bears. This is very similar to what Our Lord says in the Gospel of St. Luke about the things we value, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Stewardship will make a difference. The difference is seen in several areas of our lives. First, the difference is in the focus of giving. Instead of focusing on the needs of the group to whom we're giving

financial support or helping with time and talent, the focus is primarily on God and our relationship with Him. And, the focus is on us and our need to give back out of gratitude.

Second, the difference is in the motivation for giving. Stewardship is an integral part of our spiritual life and we give because we are grateful to God for what He has given us. We give freely because we want to, not because we have to. Third, the difference is in the result of the giving. As we practice stewardship, we find we grow spiritually and that our faith is deepened. In fact, we find that our lives are changed for the good.

Please take the next two weeks to read the letters and brochures we are sending you and to listen carefully to what your fellow parishioners have to say about their commitments from the pulpit. Then, I hope you will give prayerful consideration to your personal commitment of your time, talent and treasure.

Sample Pastor's Homily #2

“For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it.”
I Timothy 6:17-19

This passage is one of many in Scripture which helps us understand and become aware of what the concept of stewardship is all about, and how, by discovering its true meaning, we will undergo a personal transformation. We are reminded that all of the “things” of this world are gifts from God, and should be used to bring us closer to God—the end for which we are created. In the words of Bishop Robert Morneau, “I’ve never seen a U-Haul following a hearse.”

Contrary to what many people feel or assume, stewardship is not a hidden term for fund-raising. It is a powerful concept that will change our faith life and the faith life of our parish. For stewardship is a way of life. It is based on the biblical view of God as Creator and us as His servants. We are accountable to Him for the use of our gifts of time, talent and treasure that He gives us during our life on earth.

Stewardship means that we are not owners of all that we have on earth but we are only stewards of our time, our talent and our treasure. Stewardship provides us with the foundation for a deepened faith, for all of us, and our parish. Stewardship begins with an awakening of the need that we have that no one can dispute, because it is universal and ever-present. It is the personal need of each one of us to return to the Lord, a portion of the gifts He has given us of time, talent and treasure...in gratitude for what He has done for us.

Stewardship is the giving of the “first fruits” of what we have received, not the portion of the gift that is left over. You will find when you decide to give to God the first portion of your time, talent and treasure that what, at first, seemed difficult soon becomes easy for us to do. What we have left over is often more than enough for our own needs. Putting God first in our lives by practicing stewardship deepens our faith in a way that we never dreamed possible.

As you are aware, we are conducting a stewardship effort at our parish, and I hope you are giving prayerful consideration to how you might commit your time and talent, and your treasure to our parish. This coming week you will receive the third and final mailing of our stewardship information. And, we will ask you to consider making a covenant of stewardship. By committing yourself to be a wise and prudent steward of your time, talent and treasure, you will enhance and enrich the quality of your faith and the faith of this parish community.

Let us prayerfully reflect on the power of stewardship and let this concept transform our hearts so that we may live a life of greater fulfillment and peace.

And, let us use the opportunity we have today of listening to one of our parishioners who has found the personal value of stewardship. Today, we will be hearing from (or have heard from)* (names of parishioners). **(The Lay Witness presentation may be done either before the processional at the beginning of Mass or after Communion.)*

Sample Pastor's Homily #3

“Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” These words of St. Paul to the Corinthians remind us that our giving ought to be planned and determined in a prayerful way...Welcome to Commitment Sunday. Our three week stewardship effort concludes in our parish today. We have all spent some time over the last several weeks reading about stewardship, studying how it changes our lives and giving consideration to our responsibility to share our gifts with our parish.

We have heard from our fellow parishioners about what stewardship means to them, and how they live their lives based on stewardship.

Later in the Mass today, we will be presenting our stewardship gifts. The ushers will come forward and collect our Time and Talent, and Treasure commitment cards. (Or -You will be asked to bring your commitment cards forward and place them in the stewardship basket.) Our parish thanks all of you for your commitment of time, talent and treasure.

Just a reminder: If you have not brought your cards with you today, please do so next Sunday. (Or-There are additional commitment cards in the pew for those who forgot to bring theirs today.)

Stewardship as we have learned is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus. We have learned that those who have adopted stewardship have had their lives changed.

And, we have learned that stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by our returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure given to us. Stewardship deepens our relationship with the Lord and brings each of us a sense of peace and joy. Jesus promises us that by practicing stewardship we will grow spiritually. There are many references in the Bible to stewardship. In one of those, Jesus tells us, “You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of my followers, will certainly receive a reward.” (Matthew 10:37-42) That reward also involves a growing trust in God’s divine will. Symbolically we give a drink of cold water when we make our time and talents, and our treasure available to our parish and to our community. Every parishioner is called to give a drink of cold water by supporting the parish as it brings Christ’s healing touch to our faith community and to those it serves.

Our parish family is blessed with many different members, each of whom has special talents and abilities that can benefit our parish. Today, we bring forth our gifts in God’s name. I hope that you as individuals and we as a parish will grow spiritually because of giving our stewardship gifts.

Thank you.

Suggested Pulpit Announcements

During the Stewardship Effort, the following pulpit announcements about stewardship can be made.

Weekend Number 1:

You should have received a mailing from the pastor this week. During the next few weeks, you will be asked to look at your giving of time, talent and treasure. You will be asked to make a commitment of your time and specific talents to our parish. You will also be asked to decide the portion of your income you plan to give as a sign of gratitude to God for what you have been given and as a way of expressing your faith and trust in God. Please give prayerful consideration to your response.

Weekend Number 2:

As you are aware, our parish is in the midst of a stewardship effort. During the past week you will receive a letter from Father along with a commitment card for your giving of time, talent and treasure. Please spend some time this week prayerfully considering your response. Next weekend you will be asked to make a commitment to gifts of your time, talent and treasure to our parish.

Weekend Number 3:

Over the last few weeks, we have asked you to give prayerful thought to your commitment of time, talent and treasure. Today is Commitment Sunday and today during Mass we will be asking the ushers to come forward and collect our commitment cards. (If the parish decides to have parishioners come to the altar with their commitment cards, explain this method.)

List of Time and Talent Opportunities

The following list of stewardship opportunities for time and talent, while not totally complete, does give a broad view of the many ways that one can give of his/her time and talent.

Adult day care volunteer	Liturgy Commission member
AIDS effort volunteer	Masonry work
Altar server	Men's club
Adult education facilitator	Migrant ministry volunteer
Altar guild	Minority ministry volunteer
Arts and crafts teacher	Mothers' morning out volunteer
Artwork for publications	Musician
Auto repair	Newcomers' coffee
Auxiliary minister	Newsletter work
Baby-sitting	Office work
Baptism/marriage preparation	Outreach to inactive Catholics
Bereaved/terminally ill	Outreach to the unchurched
Bible study leader	Painting
Board member of community agency	Parish dinner preparation
Budget planning	Pastoral Council member
Campus ministry volunteer	Phone answering
Capital campaign volunteer	Photographer
Carpentry	Plant and shrubbery care
Choir member	Plumbing work
Clothing ministry volunteer	Prayer group leader
Community Life Commission	Printer
Computer Programmer	Pro-Life volunteer
Crisis pregnancy volunteer	Public relations assistance
Driver	RCIA sponsor or team member
Education Commission member	School volunteer
Electrical work	Scout leadership
English as a second language teacher	Sewing
Evangelization Commission member	Social service agency volunteer
Family Life Commission member	Sound systems/electronics
Faith Formation Teacher	Social outreach
Finance Council member	Soup kitchen volunteer
Food deliveries to sick/shut-ins	Sports team coach
Habitat for Humanity volunteer	Stewardship Committee member
Homeless shelter volunteer	Sunday morning coffee
Hospital/hospice volunteer	Teacher's aid
Kitchen help	Teacher's substitute
Knights of Columbus	Telephone ministry
Catholic Daughters	Typing
Lawn care	Usher/greeter
Lector	Visiting sick/shut ins
Legion of Mary	Young adult minister
Literacy effort volunteer	Youth group counselor



Timetable for Conducting the Annual Stewardship Renewal

This calendar is designed for use by parishes that have been conducting an annual stewardship effort for several years. The stewardship committee begins by determining the date for commitment Sunday “X” and filling in the dates backward from that point.

x-6	Week of:	Brochures ordered. Lay witness identified. Banner, bulletin boards or other appropriate promotional materials planned.
x-5	Week of:	Check supply of envelopes/letterhead/labels. Make sure Time and Talent opportunity listings are up to date. Make copies or send to printer.
x-4	Week of:	Article in parish newsletter or bulletin
x-3	Week of:	Lay witness meets with pastor to coordinate remarks.
x-2	Week of:	Mailing #1 made during this week. Bulletin announcement #1.*
x-1	Week of:	Renewal Sunday - Pastor’s introductory and endorsement remarks. Lay witness Presentation all Masses. Mailing #2 during this week. Bulletin announcement #2.*
x	Week of:	Commitment Sunday - Pastor’s homily. Cards are presented at Mass. (Remember to have extras in pews for those who forget to bring them). Bulletin announcement #3.*
x+1	Week of:	Week after Commitment Sunday - Bulletin Announcement #4
x+2	Week of:	Commitment card information entered into the database, and thank you letter mailed to those who returned commitment cards.
X + 3	Week of:	Ministry leaders should receive a list of names and contact information. All those who make a commitment should be contacted within one month of Commitment Sunday.

* See Appendix, p. 39 for samples of bulletin announcements.

Suggested bulletin Announcement for Stewardship Renewal

#1 (Two Weeks Before)

This week you will receive in the mail a list of Time and Talent opportunities available in our parish, a brochure asking you to TAKE ANOTHER STEP on your Stewardship pilgrimage. Please take the time to read them carefully as you consider your response to the Lord.

#2 (One week before)

Today we have heard from _____ (lay presenters), who have shared with us their experience of Stewardship and how it has changed their lives. We thank them for sharing their story with us. Please pray for them and for all of us, that our hearts may be open and our response generous when we receive our commitment cards in the mail this coming week. Bring it to Mass with you next week on Commitment Sunday.

#3 (Commitment Sunday)

On Stewardship Commitment Sunday it is a good time to ask ourselves the following: The question is not “How Much of what is mine will I give to God?” Rather “How much of what is God’s shall I keep for myself?”

#4 (Week After Commitment Sunday)

Our thanks to all those who returned their Commitment cards last weekend. If you have not done so, you may bring them with you to church next weekend, put them in the mail or bring them by the church office at your convenience.

Sample Letter to go with 1st Renewal Mailing

(with brochure)



Date

Dear _____,

Again this year those of us here at <name of parish> will have an opportunity to renew our commitment to living the life of a good and faithful steward. As we reflect on the many blessings in our lives, we prayerfully ask if our corresponding gifts back to the Lord are in proportion to what we have been given. Many members of our parish family are making a most generous response and can attest to the sense of peace and the deepening of faith that they have experienced. I am confident that many others would like to respond more fully, but don't know where they will find more time or more money to give. Perhaps the theme of this year's renewal, TAKE ANOTHER STEP, will help. If you find that you are presently sharing two hours of your time each week on a volunteer basis, could you TAKE ANOTHER STEP and share three? If you are currently giving one or two percent of your income to the church, could you TAKE ANOTHER STEP and increase it to two or three percent?

We have all been blessed in many and various ways and have a basic need to give thanks. Will you TAKE ANOTHER STEP in gratitude to God for what you have been given? He has promised that he will not be outdone in generosity.

My thanks to each of you for all you have done in the past, and for your continuing generosity of time, talent and treasure.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

PASTOR

Sample Letter to Go With 2nd Renewal Mailing

(with commitment brochure)



Date

Dear _____,

Over the past week I hope you have had the time to look over the brochure, the Time and Talent sheet, and the Treasure work sheet and prayerfully consider your commitment for the coming year.

Each of us is blessed in different ways. We are asked to look at our blessings, our talents, our monetary resources and see if what we are returning to the Lord is proportionate to what He has given to us. It is a very individual decision to be made by each person or family.

Please fill out the Time and Talent portion of the enclosed commitment card. Indicate those current ministries you wish to continue and any new ones you would like to begin for the coming year. Remember, also, that your community involvement is also part of your time and talent even though it is not on the commitment card.

As you complete the Stewardship of Treasure included with the brochure, please consider "taking another step" in the level of your gift. Bring both your Time & Talent and your Treasure commitment card with you to Mass this coming weekend or bring them by the church office.

I am touched by the past generosity of all of our parishioners here at <name of parish> and I am confident of your continued commitment to stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

PASTOR

A Guide for the Stewardship Lay Witness



Stories—we are all captivated by stories. Magazines and newspapers are always looking for good human-interest stories. Every good homilist or preacher includes a story. In the late Archbishop Murphy’s last talk on stewardship at the Northwest Regional Stewardship Conference in Seattle he shared a story of his own life and struggle with leukemia, and the importance to him of the “gift of life” in the form of donations of blood. Jesus, too, used stories to teach others. And finally, the Gospel writers, through their own stories that witness to their lives with Jesus, still bring about life-changing conversions to millions of people—now 2000 years later. Everyone can identify some moment when the life-story of another brought about a change for the better in their own life. It might be a major conversion or just an attitude adjustment, but it made a difference in how you live your own life. Archbishop Murphy’s story made hundreds of people regular blood-donors.

Far from “tooting our own horn,” every time we share our own story we are witnessing to the generosity of a loving God. It is one of the most powerful and effective means of presenting the stewardship message. Properly prepared, it has the potential to change peoples’ lives.

One of the most effective means of presenting the stewardship message is through the Stewardship Lay Witness Talk. This talk can be given either before Mass begins or at the completion of Communion by people who are already practicing stewardship in their own lives. It may be given by an individual, or a couple. In some cases, even children may participate. The talk has two purposes: (1) to inspire people to become good stewards; and (2) to share real life examples of how stewardship is lived.

Sample Outline for composing Lay Witness Talk

Introduce Yourself - While many of your fellow parishioners will know you, some may not. Give a description of your family, the number of years in the parish, etc.

Properly Define Christian Stewardship - It is a response we make in gratitude to God for What He has given to us. It is an intentional, planned, proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

Discuss How You Began Practicing Stewardship - When did you first become aware of the concept? Did you have reservations? Be honest about your first reactions. People will relate to any feelings of “discomfort”. How did your family react to the idea? Was the initial “plunge” difficult? How did you go about it?

When did you begin to experience the benefits? Speak of the effect that Stewardship has had on your faith life. Use anecdotes from your own family life if possible. How do you and your family give of our time and talent? Where you able to give a full tithe (10%) right away? If not, how are you working toward that goal?

Urge your fellow parishioners to get involved. - Invite the congregation to join you and your family in making your parish a stewardship parish. Ask them to look at all that God has given to them and make a generous response to his many gifts.

Tips for Presenting Lay Witness Talk

An important part of people's acceptance of the concept of stewardship is the personal witness and individual testimony you provide with your presence and the way you give your talk. The following are tips you should consider in preparing your comments:

- Prepare your personal remarks so you are comfortable with them. Use your own style, wording and delivery. Write Out Your Talk Word For Word. Then, if you feel comfortable with the approach, use notes or key words to guide you through your presentation so that is more natural.
- For you to give a good presentation, it is best for you to rehearse your talk aloud. If you just practice reading it silently, you won't have the same effect. If it is possible, practice it in the church when no one is there, using the sound system. Be comfortable enough with your material so that you can look up from your notes and make eye contact. In a large church, remember to turn to the sides occasionally to include everyone.
- If you are doing a renewal, ask the person who did the talk last year to listen to your talk and make suggestions from their experience. Ask the pastor to listen to you deliver your talk in the church and offer suggestions.
- Nervousness can make your throat dry. If you think this may happen, have a glass of water in an unobtrusive place...and use it if you need it.
- Above all, be sincere, enthusiastic and friendly.

Some Do's and Don't for the Lay Witness

DO *(If time permits and if any of these fit into your talk):*

- Explain that stewardship means giving of the "first fruits," not what is left over.
- Talk about the personal need of each Christian to give back in gratitude.
- Say "Many of you know from your own giving experience that what I have told you is true." (Acknowledging that you are not in this alone.)
- Stress the sense of joy and fulfillment that comes to those who give God the first share of the time, talent, and treasure as a way of expressing their gratitude and trust in God.
- Talk about intentional, planned and proportionate giving. Explain what it means to you to give from your substance.
- Emphasize that it is important to give all three "time, talent and treasure".
- Explain that stewardship involves not only church (parish and diocese); it also includes community.

DON'T

- Talk in bargaining terms. (e.g. “I gave this much time or treasure and God gave me this in return.”)
- Stress church needs or budgets.
- Talk in dollar or time amounts: “If everyone could give \$10 a week”...”we need \$2 more a week”...”give our fair share”...”if everyone could give 3 hours per week”
- Use threats of possible consequences stemming from the failure to give: “We won’t be able to heat or air-condition the church”...”We’ll have to close the school”.
- Suggest that Parish Stewardship is an obligation.

To the Lay Witness:

The most important goal of living a life based on the principles of stewardship is a deepening of faith...a real spiritual conversion. Your sharing your spiritual journey with others members of your parish family is a unique gift and a true statement of your commitment to stewardship. You are showing your gratitude by this sharing. Thank You.

Getting Started ...and Ending Up

Many find that the hardest part of a talk is getting started and winding up. To open your stewardship talk simply introduce yourself: “Good morning, (evening) I’m Jane Doe and this is my husband John. We are parishioners here at St. Mary’s along with our three children, Manny, Moe and Jack. We’d like to share with you what stewardship means to our family and how it has affected our lives...”

The following is a suggested closing paragraph: *(If done at the beginning of Mass)* “As we continue with our liturgy this morning (evening), and our gifts are brought forward, let each of us ask ourselves if this gift of our treasure which we offer today, is truly a measure of the gratitude we have for what we have been given. Let us look at what we give to our church and the community in terms of time and service, and ask ourselves if this, also, is proportionate to God’s gifts to us. Let us remember that the God who takes care of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, will likewise take care of each of us when we give generously and trust in His love.

(If done after Communion)

As we conclude our liturgy this morning (evening), let each of us ask ourselves if this gift of our treasure, which we gave today, is truly a measure of the gratitude we have for what we have been given. Let us look at what we give to our church and the community in terms of time and service, and ask ourselves if this, also, is proportionate to God’s gifts to us. Let us remember that the God who takes care of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, will likewise take care of each of us when we give generously and trust in His love.

Examples of Lay Witness Presentations

The following are actual presentations given by lay witnesses. While these presentations are individualized and cannot be used as they are, they serve as models for how lay witness presenters can express their thoughts.

Lay Witness Sample Presentation #1

Stewardship means different things to different people. Let me share with you what stewardship has come to mean to me. Reflecting back on the time spent growing up in Ohio, I've realized more and more not only how loving my parents were but also how wise they were. I learned a lot from my parents, but there are four things I learned from their example that have had a particular impact on my life. First was that God loves us. He is good and we can trust Him. Second was that each of us is given certain gifts and talents and one of our responsibilities in life is to discover what those gifts and talents are, develop them and use them to benefit others. Third was that to whom more is given, more is expected. Fourth was that having a job and spending time with your family is important but not enough. We also need to spend time being with and helping others.

With that kind of learning and my parents' kind of example, I did not have a great deal of difficulty in grasping the concept of stewardship of time and talent. I didn't call it that, but I did it. From the time I was in high school onward, I made sure I spent time doing things for and with other people, mostly through different types of volunteer work. As I continued to give of my time and talent, I realized that I was growing spiritually. God and other people became a more important part of my life.

After graduating from college and moving to Charlotte, I continued to give of my time and talent through various church groups and community boards. Yet something was still missing. You see, I gave of my time and talent but not my treasure. I reasoned that I spent so much time in church and community activities that I didn't need to give regularly to the church or other community groups. Sure, I gave some, but it was sporadic and unplanned.

It wasn't until my wife and I made an "Engaged Encounter" seven years ago that I started to look even more seriously at my relationship with God. We realized that we couldn't hold back on any area of our giving because God wasn't holding back on any area of His giving. We also decided that we wanted God to be the center of our marriage. That led us to a decision to start giving of our treasure in a planned and proportionate way. We started giving two percent of our income to the church and other charities in 1984. Five years later, we are giving at eight percent of our income to the church and other charities.

As we continued to give, we've learned that we are growing more spiritually and that our faith is deepening. By giving as we have, we have tried to place material things and money in their proper perspective. That has caused us to look at what we need versus what we want. For example, when we bought a new home almost two years ago, we bought a somewhat smaller house than we might have if we hadn't been practicing stewardship of treasure.

Stewardship has become a way of life for us. It's not always easy, but we try to live it. Presently, I am spending eight hours a week in volunteer work outside of my job and my wife is spending three hours per week in volunteer work. In the area of treasure, 80 percent of our

giving is church-related while the other 20 percent goes to community agencies. My wife and I are planning to move to the biblical tithe, 10 percent of our income, next month.

Stewardship of time, talent and treasure has been and will continue to be an important part of our lives.

Lay Witness Sample Presentation #2

Stewardship: What is it? How do we do it? Will we like it? Does it hurt? Will it work for us? Why should we do it?

These are many of the questions that passed through my mind as we first considered stewardship as a program in my parish. We looked at various programs in existence and the more I looked at them the more I became convinced stewardship was something our parish should do. I guess I was really experiencing my own conversion to stewardship as a way of life. I kept seeing that the Church could never flourish and grow if everyone was supporting it like it was, with a contribution each week that I would never miss.

As I look back at my own decision on stewardship and its maturation in the last five years, I notice that my ideals have changed some. There were lots of reasons that I felt we should begin stewardship in our family. God has been very good to us. My husband and I have two healthy, happy children.

We have finally passed through the struggling years in our own business and now had time to think about other things. As I began to think about the church and what it meant to me, I realized that if everyone was making the kind of limited volunteer and financial commitment that I was then the church would not be here for my children. There was no other way it could continue with no higher level of support from me and other parishioners.

Besides, I had great expectations of the Church. It should be well equipped to teach my children all about the wonders of God. It should be able to care for the sick, feed the needy, care for the elderly.

If my expectations were right, then I had to do my part to make them a reality. I was already giving some time to the church and with that time my talents. But there had to be a strong commitment of time and a commitment of treasure if the church was going to be able to do all the things I wanted it to.

Once I decided that perhaps stewardship was something our family needed to think about, I was rather hesitant to bring it up for family discussion. My husband is non-Catholic. Would he feel the same as I do? How would we handle contributions of time and treasure to two churches? After we talked about how we felt and agreed that it was something we would try, my husband offered a simple solution. We would give one-fourth of our treasure and time to his church and three-fourths to my church since our two children were members of our parish. We have never had a problem with this method.

Since we made our decision on stewardship, I think our outlook on lots of things has changed. We have become more supportive of various worthwhile needs and organizations in the community. I think it opened an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

I came to embrace stewardship through the church but I have grown in stewardship to include the entire community. I feel that God expects us to minister to all people. My gift that fulfills my stewardship may be given to anyone who needs it. It is the giving and the support of God's children that is important. The spiritual rewards, the feeling of accomplishment that you are following God's way are the important things that you will reap from stewardship. You will know you are succeeding when the spirituality and feelings of stewardship far surpass the questions of how much you should give.

Lay Witness Sample Presentation #3

My first encounter with Stewardship was in 1987. I sat in my parish church in Columbus, Georgia and listened to two people from Jacksonville, Florida tell us their story and ask us to consider giving a percentage of our income and more of our time to the church and community.

Up until that time, I had thought I was doing pretty well. I had always given what I thought was generously to the church...especially in terms of money. I had been taught to "contribute to the support of the church", both in the parochial school I attended in Philadelphia, and by my parents. When we were growing up, there was no Saturday Vigil Mass. Saturday night was the time to get ready for Sunday. Baths, polishing shoes, washing and curling hair and getting our church envelopes ready were all part of the ritual. My Dad put \$5.00 in his envelope in the 1950's and each of us four kids put \$.10 in ours. These were placed on the mantle behind my mom and dad's wedding picture, ready to be picked up on our way to church on Sunday morning. When I grew up and got a job, I put \$5.00 in my envelope. I figured that was what grownups did.

We never consciously thought about the giving of time. It was just sort of expected that we would run errands for our neighbor who had only one leg, or cut the grass of the elderly lady across the street. It was just part of what you did when you took food to a family who had a death or someone in the hospital. These were the things I continued to do as an adult without ever giving much thought as to how much time was involved or why I was doing it.

It was only after listening to the folks from Jacksonville that I began to realize I wasn't even close to giving in proportion to what I had. My dad's \$5.00 in the 1950's and mine in the 1980's were entirely two different things. The little "good deeds" for other people were nice, but kind of sporadic.

My life has been richly blessed. I had a family who loved deeply, parents who sacrificed to bring up four children and instilled in each of us a strong sense of church and morality. I was well educated, had a job, a home, friends and reasonably good health. God had given me many blessings...and I had to give serious thought as to how I was responding to his gifts. It took a while for me to do something, because I didn't think I could raise my level of monetary giving, and I was pretty sure I didn't have any "spare time" to volunteer. I eventually decided to "take the plunge", but only on a trial basis of three months. I would give a tithe of 10% to my church and other charities, and I would find two more hours each week to volunteer for something. I fully expected to be able to say at the end of three months, "OK, Lord. I tried, but it doesn't work." That way, I figured I would be "off the hook".

Well, at the end of three months, I found that all of the bills had been paid, I wasn't suffering from malnutrition, and I saved some money, bought clothes and went to the movies a few times.

I also found out that I wasn't worrying about money nearly as much as I had been. I had become a reading tutor in our county literacy program and loved it. I obviously wasn't "off the hook", but was hooked.

Since that summer in 1987 the one overwhelming change in life has been a deepening of my faith. I really trust that God loves me and will take care of me. He has done it...even when I wasn't sure it could be done.

I guess my response to those who question the concepts of Stewardship, or who are hesitant, is this: At least give it a try. Give God the opportunity to show you that He is a loving and generous God. He can only do that when we give up control and take that step in faith.

Sample Lay Witness Presentation #4

—If I had to choose one word to describe stewardship that word would gratitude... stewardship is about gratitude to God for all the gifts He gives us each day, the big gifts and the small ones. Like many people, until recently, I misunderstood stewardship. Quite frankly, I thought it was a "politically correct" way to ask for more money, and that they threw in "time and talent" as a smokescreen. I have come to understand that is not what stewardship is about. The focus is not on the church's need to receive, but rather the individual's need to give. Stewardship is not a one-time contribution to a capital campaign or a series of good deeds. It is about a way of life, it is a way of seeing and being in the world where we see everything as gift from God, and from that realization comes a desire to say thank you to God by sharing the gifts He has given us with others. More than that, stewardship is not just something that happens, it is planned, proportionate and intentional.

My name is _____. and I have been a member of this parish for 11 years. I am married and my husband is _____. We have three children— ____, _____ and _____. It is my privilege to talk to you about stewardship this morning/evening and what a gift it has been in my life. I will talk about it in terms of the three words we usually associate with stewardship: time, talent and treasure.

Time: There are two questions I would like to consider with regard to time and stewardship. The first one is "How much time will I commit to spending with God?" This is probably the most important aspect of my stewardship. I have found that time spent in prayer and receiving the sacraments is how I am filled. We cannot give what we do not have. I love the analogy of a glass of water in the sink...if we turn on the faucet and let the glass fill up and we keep the faucet running then the glass remains full and the water spills over the top. It is that overflow from which my stewardship comes, at least on my good days! At Mass I receive the love of God through the Eucharist and then I have love to share with others I meet. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation I receive mercy and then I can be merciful to others. In quiet prayer of adoration I find peace and joy, which I can bring to others. I attend daily Mass, spend 30 minutes a day reading scripture and meditation and I try to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation once a month. That is what works for me, which is the time I have committed to spending with God.

The second question is: How much time am I willing to commit to sharing my gifts with others? This has been an important question for me to look carefully at how much time I am giving to others, and to ask myself is it planned and proportional, and am I spending my time wisely? I estimate on average I give eight hours a week to the church and other volunteer activities and I feel that is reasonable in my circumstances as a stay at home mother with older children. But as

I have prayed about it, I believe I can give about 10 hours a week. Some weeks I have given less than that, and maybe I can call up the office to see if they need help with some project or stop by and help set up chairs one weekend. Some weeks I have given more than that and perhaps I need to evaluate my commitments to determine if I have balance in my life, keeping in mind my first responsibility is my vocation as wife and mother.

Talent: When I first thought about what talents God has given me, I drew a blank because I was limiting myself to the "usual" talents we think of relating to church, such as singing or ironing altar cloths or heading up a committee. Everyone has been blessed, everyone has a talent they can share with the community. After much reflection, it occurred to me... there is one thing I can do...I CAN CRY!!! I am a fabulous crier, I cry easily, I cry often and as I tell my children, "I'm a professional, don't try this at home."

As you might imagine, crying does not feel like a gift most of the time. But I realized that I cry because I am a deeply compassionate person, I have the gift of empathy and I use that gift in bringing communion to the hospital and the homebound. While many times we share a story and a laugh, or rejoice with them in their healing, sometimes all I can do is cry with people. It is in those difficult moments I have realized my ministry is offering my presence, my compassion and most importantly the Eucharist. I jokingly refer to myself as "Jesus' chauffeur."

As always, I find that when I give, I get so much more in return. I want to share with you one story of how a visit to the hospital changed my heart, helped me to know more deeply how much we are all loved and cared for by God. I visited a woman a couple of years ago. I didn't know her. She was not from this area. She was about my age and she shared with me that she had a number of chronic medical problems and had been in and out of the hospital often over the past couple of years. We prayed a little bit together and then she received communion. After a few moments of silence she said to me, "There is a song that I love, I learned it in CCD (faith formation) many years ago. I have asked several people, and I have never met anyone who knows this song. She began to sing it...and I knew that song and, in fact, I remembered most of the words. As I began to sing along with her, the tears rolled down her cheeks, as they did mine. I will never forget the look on her face. We were both overwhelmed with God's love in that moment. What an amazing God we serve! I knew that the scripture verse "God counts the hairs on our heads" was true. He heard her prayer and found someone who could sing that song with her. He hears all of our prayers, big and small, God knows what is important to us, and delights in answering our prayers. In that moment I thought maybe if he counted the hairs on that woman's head, maybe he counts the hairs on mine as well. That scripture is now part of my story, and whenever I hear that verse, I will think of that woman and how God made His love known to her. As a postscript to that story, I have to tell you, the reason no one knows that song is because it is terrible! It is a hokey song from the 1970's and I for one am grateful that it has disappeared from the songs that we teach our children.

Treasure:

I want to begin by thanking this parish for your generosity. This is an amazing parish! When the financial committee presented the numbers on what we needed to build the church, you came through with a significant increase, which has continued week after week without the first stone being put into place. Now that is faith!

Actually those presentations in November helped Bill and I to look at our giving more carefully. In the past, I made all the decisions about finances and it was not something Bill and I talked about very much. I felt pretty good about our giving, figuring Bill and I gave more than most

people, so that was good enough. That presentation helped us to look at our giving in another way. Instead of comparing ourselves to others, maybe we should look at how much God has blessed us and give accordingly. As a result Bill and I increased our giving from 6% to 10% of our income.

Another important aspect of stewardship is giving our first fruits, not what is left over (which in our case is not much after the grocery bill with all our growing boys and their friends.) The amount we give each month is a commitment we made to God and to our community. It is one we take very seriously. At the first of the month when Bill makes a deposit, I write a check for 10% of the amount, whatever that might be. Bill gets paid once a month, and so does the church. That is what has worked best for us. Each time I drop the envelope in the basket I say thank you to God for a specific gift in my life that month. It helps to reinforce the connection between giving and gratitude in my own mind. So if you see me holding the basket for a couple of minutes it is because I can't decide what to thank God for this month.

Finally, tithing of our treasure is teaching us about trust. Some months when we have a large amount of unexpected expenses I say to God, "Okay, I want to see how you are going to pull this one off. There is no way that we will be able to make ends meet this month." But He has always come through for us, sometimes in surprising ways. With our tithing, we are trying to put into practice : "Seek God first and the rest will follow."

To summarize:

I have talked about what stewardship is and is not, and what how I have tried to practice stewardship in my own life. Now I want to get to WIIFM: (What is in it for me?) Why should you consider being a steward of your time, talent and treasure?

1. Stewardship has helped me to know more deeply how much I am loved and cared for by God.
2. Stewardship has helped me to know myself better. I found strength and courage I did not know I possessed. If you told me a couple of years ago that I would be involved in hospital ministry I would have laughed.
3. Stewardship has helped me feel more connected to the community. I have come to know more people as a result of volunteer activities. It feels like home to me. When I am out of town and attend Mass at another church, I miss all of you.
- 4.. Stewardship has helped me to see the hand of God more clearly in my life. As I begin to see everything as gift from God, I begin to look for His blessings in my ordinary day. As Nate, a very wise 8th grader reminded us when saying farewell to Sr. Gert, he believed it is not that she experienced more miracles than the rest of us, it was just that she was better at recognizing them. That is what stewardship has done for me, helped me to recognize the miracles in my own life. We see what we expect to see.

Very simply it feels good to be grateful, to know the source of my blessings and to thank God each day for those gifts. I can hear you now saying to yourself..."Okay, that sounds pretty good for someone else. I would love to be a steward but I can't because..(.fill in the blank.)

I am too old...

Ann was an RCIA sponsor at 94 years old and continued to lector until she was 95.

I am too young...

14 year old Sean was an impromptu cantor at the 8:30 Mass one Sunday.

I am too busy...

Maybe you can commit to greeting visitors personally at Mass when they introduce themselves at the "Good News".

I can't get out in the evening...

Maybe you can commit to sending a card or calling someone from the parish who is sick or whom you haven't seen in awhile.

We can all do something, we all have gifts to share. The great news is that God meets us just where we are. I ask you to prayerfully reflect on stewardship and how you can say thank you to God. I will leave you with a final question to ponder:

“What kind of church would this be, if in response to God's generosity, we asked ourselves each day "What can I do to bring the love of Christ to others?"

Sample Thank-You Letter to Parishioners



(Date)

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner:

I am most grateful for your generous response to our first parish stewardship effort. I thank you and am confident that the benefits of embracing a stewardship way of life will be a source of blessing for you. More than (number) households responded with commitment cards. While this is an excellent response for a first-time effort, we will be contacting those who have not yet returned their commitment card.

It has been encouraging to see the number of people who responded to our Time and Talent opportunities. Your name and contact information has been given to the coordinators of ministries you selected. You will be contacted soon and given the opportunity to become involved in your chosen ministry. If you are not contacted, please let me know!

You have responded that you will contribute \$_____ (or ____%) of your income for the year. This indicates your strong financial commitment to our parish, and it helps me and our Finance Council make responsible budget decisions for our parish. I am confident that you will honor your financial commitment.*

Again, thank you for your response to our Stewardship Effort. You have been a great help to me. And, I hope it has helped you in giving thanks for what you have been given by sharing with others.

Gratefully in the Lord,

(Pastor's Name)

****Note: If a parishioner responds to time and talent only, eliminate paragraph three in the above letter.***

Sample Family Life Commission Letter to Time and Talent Respondents

(The following letter can be edited to reflect any of the parish councils, commissions, committees or ministries.)



To: Respondents to Stewardship Effort
From: (Name), Family Life Commission
Date:
Subject: Your Time and Talent Stewardship Commitment

Thank you for your response to the Time and Talent portion of our Stewardship Effort, and for your willingness to commit your time and talent to the Family Life Commission.

If you are currently involved with one of the Family Life Commission groups or organizations, please accept my thanks on behalf of our pastor and our parish for all that you do. Our commission could not function without your involvement.

If you are interested in being involved in the Family Life Commission for the first time, please refer to the attached sheet. You will find the name of the contact person for the group in which you have expressed an interest. Please call that person to find out when the next meeting is being held so that you may attend. You can also refer to the bulletin for information on meeting times. I have also forwarded your name to the chairperson of the group to which you have offered your time and talent, and that person will contact you in the near future.

Again, thank you for your generosity. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at telephone xxx-xxx-xxxx or email at stewardship@ourparish.org.

THE FAMILY LIFE COMMISSION
(Chairperson's name and telephone number)

The Family Life Commission is responsible for supporting existing and developing new efforts that promote quality family life; the primary focus is on Christian living and loving. Activities include the following:

CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT (CFM) A national Catholic family organization, providing a place to share values, life, faith and a place to experience Christ. CFM is a family support system that develops Christ-centered families, calling forth individual and family gifts moving families to action. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

HAPPY TIMERS Meets the first Wednesday of every month, meeting locations vary, offering fun and fellowship for senior citizens. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Endure) Volunteers reach out to help the sick, elderly and shut-ins of the parish with visitations, needed transportation, etc., Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

MEN'S CLUB Meets the first Sunday of every month in the Parish Center. Open to all men connected with the parish (including non-Catholic spouses) interested in fellowship and services through sponsorship and support of parish-wide events and activities. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

MOTHER'S MORNING OUT Wednesday mornings, 9:00-11:00 at the Parish Center. This is a co-op child care arrangement for young mothers of the parish. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

NEWCOMERS COFFEE First Sunday of every month following 10:15 Mass in the rectory. Priests and parish representative welcome new parishioners and those wishing to register. This social hour offers an opportunity to learn more about the parish. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

SCOUTS Several groups are available for the youth of our parish:

BOY SCOUTS- Mondays, 7:30 pm in the parish center for young men in grades 7-12. This group welcomes and is in need of adult volunteers. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

CUB SCOUTS- Open to boys in grades 1-6 with several dens in operation. Meeting times and locations vary. This group welcomes and is in need of adult volunteers. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

BROWNIES- Open to all girls in grades 1-3 to learn about the worlds of People, Today and Tomorrow, the Arts and the Out of Doors. Meeting times and locations vary. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

YOUTH GROUPS Senior High Youth Groups. Social, spiritual and service opportunities provided to all students grade 9-12 in public or parochial schools, meeting on Sunday evening from 7-8:30 pm in the parish center. This group welcomes and is in need of adult volunteers. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

WOMEN'S CLUB Three general meetings a year, open to all women of the parish interested in fellowship and service through sponsorship of various parish-wide events. Within the club, small circles meet once a month, offering a different approach to fellowship and service. All the circles work together for parish events. All women of the parish as well as non-Catholic wives of parishioners are invited to become members. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

Sample Communications Commission Letter to Time and Talent Respondents



(Date)

Dear (Name):

Thank you for responding to our parish's call for stewards. I was asked to join the Communications Commission just over a year ago, and from my experience I must admit that I always seem to get more out of stewardship than I give. And, I haven't found a more friendly, helpful and appreciative group than the parishioners and staff of our parish.

Through advertisements, bulletins, inserts, newsletters, mailings, articles, posters and news releases, the Communications Commission is responsible for the publishing and release of information to the parish and community about the people and events of our parish. Our accomplishments over the past year include the publishing of the parish news, a directory of parish ministries and organizations and the parish pictorial directory.

Our needs in communications involve many talents and tasks. Your response to the stewardship effort indicated an interest in some of the areas and the questionnaire enclosed is intended to get a better idea as to what specific areas you feel you can best contribute, and the level of involvement with which you feel comfortable.

Please fill out the form as completely as possible and return it in the envelope this week.

And thank you again. Call me at (Phone Number) if you have any questions.

(Chairperson's Name)

Letter to Those Who Have Not Responded



(Date)

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner,

The response to our Stewardship Effort has been very encouraging. More than _____ individuals and families have responded and committed their gifts of time, talent and treasure.

I am most grateful to all those who have made their commitment, but our parish family will have even greater cause to rejoice if more of our households participate in the stewardship effort. If you have not received or perhaps have mislaid your stewardship commitment cards, the parish office would be most happy to provide you with another.

If you still have your stewardship materials and are now in a better position to make a Time, Talent and Treasure commitment but thought it might be too late....it is not too late! Please spend some time in a prayer of gratitude for God's gifts in your life. I encourage you to sign the Stewardship Covenant and make your commitment of time, talent and treasure. You can mail or take your stewardship cards to the office today or drop them in the offertory collection at any Mass. Thank you for your commitment to our parish and the community.

In the name of Christ,

(Pastor's Name)

Stewardship Telephone Follow-Up

The following is a suggested approach to your telephone calls to parishioners who have not responded. Use it as a guideline in developing your parish's approach.

Talk to the person(s) whose name is on the list, not to another member of the family. If they are not home, ask for a time when you can reach them. Leave a message that you are a fellow parishioner who is calling on behalf of the parish.

The purpose of the call is to follow up on the homilies and mailings and get the person to respond to the request for their time, talent and treasure commitment. Most of the calls will be very positive. Not all parishioners will respond the same way and, regrettably, a few will be negative.

Your responsibility is to talk to them about the stewardship effort, listen to what they say, give them enough opportunity to state their feelings and then ask them if they will give special consideration and respond to the cards they have received in the mail. Signing the cards is an outward sign of making a commitment. No one will call them to task if they fail to live up to their commitment. Conditions may change, causing them to be unable to fulfill their commitment.

Please make sure that parishioners know we appreciate the contribution of time, talent and treasure they make to the parish. They may respond that they are already doing as much as they can. We would like them to list those current involvements on their cards. The issue here is for everyone to think about their blessings from God and take a fresh look at their time, talent and treasure contributions. They may decide there is no need to change their existing level of contributions and, of course, that is perfectly all right with us.

A suggested approach to the telephone calls:

“Hello, Mr., Mrs. or Ms. _____. My name is _____. I am a member of the parish and I have donated some of my time to the stewardship effort. How are you tonight? Fr. _____ asked me to call you to see if you have received the mailings from the parish in the last couple of weeks about stewardship. Have you received the mailings? The most recent one was sent with a letter and a brochure with response cards in it.

IF “YES”...Have you had a chance to read them?

IF “YES”...I hope you will be responding to Fr. _____'s request for your commitment. The cards can be brought to Mass this weekend. [If they are undecided, try to get them to respond and complete the cards.]

IF “NO”...I encourage you to read it and consider making a commitment to the parish. Thank you.

IF “NO” OR “NOT SURE”...Let me give you an idea of what it is all about with the hope that you will respond to it. For the last several weeks, the parish has been conducting a Stewardship Effort. Mailings that went out the last couple of weeks were asking all of us to make a renewed commitment of the time we have to work for the parish. It is also asked us to commit our talents to the parish. And, finally, it asked us to make a commitment to the financial support of the parish through the weekly offertory collection. We are inviting parishioners to fill out the Time and Talent card and a Treasure card for the weekly offertory collection. I hope that you will respond by completing the cards and bringing them with you to Mass this weekend. If you would like us to send another card, we will do so.

(If a person wants another copy, verify their name and address and give it to the church secretary to be mailed to them.)

Letter and Card for Quarterly Reporting to Individual Parishioners

(Date)

Dear (Parishioner’s Name):

*“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have:
God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind. (Hebrews 13:16)*

(Parish Name) is benefiting from the results of the stewardship effort. Our parish depends upon the generosity and sense of stewardship of the many parishioners who contribute their time, talent and treasure.

Enclosed please find a record of your financial contribution for the past three (or six) months. If you find any error in these figures, please contact the parish office as soon as possible.

All of us at (Name of Church) thank you for your gift of time and talent and your continued financial support for the work of our parish. Please remember to continue to use the weekly offertory envelopes.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Pastor’s Name) / (Finance Council Chairperson’s Name)

The following card is suggested to go with a letter to parishioners:

(Parish Name)	
<i>Three Month Report of Sunday Offertory Collections</i>	
Name _____	
Reporting months: _____	
Amount Received:	
Quarter (or half year) _____	Yearly Average Per Week _____
Your Weekly Parish Stewardship Treasure Commitment was: \$ _____	
<i>Thank you for being generous in returning to our parish a portion of the many gifts God has bestowed on you.</i>	

Suggested Bulletin Announcements for two years

January (Year One)

The Blessed Virgin Mary was the model steward with her unqualified, “yes” and complete trust in God’s will. When I put God first in my life, everything else falls into place.

The Magi brought the child Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. What gifts do I place before Jesus? My time? My talent? My treasure?

As we begin a new year, let us take time to plan and make stewardship of time and talent a part of our lifestyle and stewardship of treasure a part of our budget.

Your first responsibility is to take care of your needs and the needs of your family – not necessarily all their wants. In looking at what we need versus what we want, we end up placing material things and money in their proper perspective.

“Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (II Corinthians 9:7)

All too often, stewardship is presented only with the Church support or the funding of other charities as the goal. This is too limiting. Stewardship also involves time and talent.

“For your heart will always be where your riches are.” (Matthew 6:21)

February (Year One)

Stewardship involves a willingness to give from the very core of who we are and what we have; from substance rather than abundance.

“None of those who cry out ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven”(Matthew 7:21). Jesus made it clear that being stewards of our time, talent and treasure is part of the will of His Father.

Stewardship of treasure asks only a percentage of income. Many people find that when they trust God and return a certain percentage of their income to the Church and other charities, they can live adequately on the rest of their income.

“Always seek to do good to one another and to all.” (II Thessalonians 5:14)

March (Year One)

Lent is a time to reflect on our relationship with God. We are called to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in our Lenten stewardship.

“Your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts.” (Matthew 5:16)

Giving of our time, talent and treasure mainly involves a change of attitude about giving. It’s important to think in terms of giving in gratitude to God, of considering how blessed we are, of using our gifts and talents for the good of others.

In the area of time and talent, many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to prayer and charitable activities.

In the area of treasure, some Christians choose the biblical norm of giving 10 percent of their treasure. Some, because of circumstances, give more than that. Others might start at two, three or four percent, and work upward.

April (Year One)

Stewardship opens an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

Every one of us is talented in some way. Stewardship encourages us to use any talent we have to benefit an individual, the Church or the community.

“What shall I return to the Lord for all the Lord has given to me?” (Psalms 116:12)

Jesus asks us to demonstrate our love for Him through our generosity to others. In our everyday lives, He calls us to share our gifts of time, talent and treasure with others.

“While we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people – but especially to those of the household of the faith.” (Galatians 6:10)

May (Year One)

Jesus asks us to commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our treasure as an outward sign of the love and gratitude we have for Him.

How much time have you spent this week in prayer for others and for the work of the Church?

Have you ever thought about how many of your free hours you spend doing things for yourself versus how many you spend doing things for others?

“Let him with two coats give to him who has none.” (Luke 3:11)

June (Year One)

Giving of our time, talent and treasure is not about giving until it hurts. Rather, it is about giving until you feel good about what you have given.

How much you have has nothing to do with generosity to God. If you don't give of your time, talent and treasure with what you have, you most likely won't do it if you have more.

“Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones.” (Luke 16:10)

You are just one person but you are important to God and His work. Be faithful as you give of your time, talent and treasure.

July (Year One)

Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus; and where it has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed.

Stewardship engenders a spirituality that deepens our relationship with Jesus. Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

“Give and it shall be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will they pour into the fold of your garment. For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38)

“Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be mutually hospitable without complaining. As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure you have received.” (I Peter 4:8-10)

August (Year One)

Have you ever taken a moment to figure out how much time, on the average, you spend a week volunteering in your church or in your community?

“Do not neglect good deeds and generosity. God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.” (Hebrews 13:16)

Have you ever taken some time to figure out what percentage of your income goes to the church and other charitable causes?

Stewardship is planned giving and does not leave giving to chance. It challenges us to plan. It asks us to appraise – deliberately – what we are doing with our time, our talent and our treasure.

September (Year One)

Christian Stewardship provides a spirituality that you can take home from church, exercise at work and express through personal involvement in the community and church.

Stewardship is not job-oriented or project-minded. It is a way of life for a lifetime.

Christian Stewardship takes a positive view on money. It sees money not only as a medium of exchange but as a symbol of the person who has it. The way we acquire it, use it, and share it, we are revealed in those actions.

Christian Stewardship trains us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. To give to God should be “from the top” –not what may be left over.

October (Year One)

“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or be attentive to the one and despise the other.” (Luke 16:13)

Stewardship is an important concept for our spiritual growth as Catholics. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure we have received.

Giving of our time involves being with God in prayer and worship and volunteering our time in the church and community activities that help others.

“Wherever your treasure lies, there your heart will be.” (Luke 12:34)

Sharing our talents arises from the fact that God has given each of us the ability and gifts to do certain things well, and we are to develop those talents for the good of others.

November (Year One)

“Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful to his gifts.” (I Corinthians 4:1-2)

As we practice stewardship, we find that we grow spiritually and that our faith is deepened.

As we approach Thanksgiving Day, let us take a moment to consider all the blessings we receive from God and how we in turn thank God for His blessings.

Stewardship of our time and talent and treasure is not limited only to the Church. Many people give time and money to other groups in the community as well.

December (Year One)

“Be generous, sharing what you have.” (I Timothy 6:18)

We are all stewards – managers of the many gifts God has bestowed upon us. Our challenge as Christians is to make good use of those gifts.

Some of the obstacles that keep us from “making a straight path” for the Lord are the same obstacles that keep us from embracing stewardship as a way of life. John the Baptist calls us to reform our lives and let go of the selfishness and greed that keep us from following God’s will.

“Happiness lies more in giving than in receiving.” (Acts 20:35)

In our daily lives, we manage our family and work responsibilities. But to become occupied with these important matters to the exclusion of the need of others outside our home or work, is a mistake we could carry into eternity.

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### JANUARY (Year Two)

The Blessed Virgin Mary was the model steward with her unqualified, “yes” and complete trust in God’s will. When I put God first in my life, everything else falls into place.

The Magi brought the child Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. What gifts do I place before Jesus? My time? My talent? My treasure?

It is important to measure our generosity not by what we give, but by what we have left.

Stewardship involves a change of heart, embodied not just in a single action, nor even a series of actions, but in one's entire life.

"... none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions." (Luke 14:33)

Stewardship involves the conscientious, firm decision, carried out constantly in action, to conduct one's self as a follower of Jesus, regardless of the cost.

### FEBRUARY (Year Two)

As Catholics, we are not to focus only on ourselves but are called by our Baptism to reach out and share our time, talent and treasure with our brothers and sisters.

"But let our people, too, learn to devote themselves to good works, to supply urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive." (Titus 3:14)

We don't give because we have an abundance of resources and can afford it; we give because of a desire to share what we have with others out of love and gratitude.

St. Paul is often misquoted as saying "Money is the root of all evil." He said no such thing. Money helps feed the hungry, helps clothe the naked; it helps build homeless shelters, schools and churches.

### MARCH (Year Two)

Lent is a time to reflect on our relationship with God. We are called to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in our Lenten stewardship.

If we give according to God's principles, God will give back to us. The young man, who gave his loaves and fishes to help feed the multitude, didn't have to go without dinner.

Stewardship reminds us to count our blessings, acknowledge God's gifts to us and express thanks to Him by a proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

"God can multiply His favors among you so that you may always have enough of every thing and even a surplus for good works." (II Corinthians 9:8)

The decision to give has not so much to do with calendars and budgets. Rather, the decision to give is really a matter of putting your life with God into perspective.

Stewardship is God's invitation to a way of life. It helps us to overcome our selfishness and love of things.

### APRIL (Year Two)

Stewardship of time, talent and treasure is chiefly a way to deepen our spiritual life, not a way to increase our giving, although living out stewardship results in both.

"...For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for many."  
(Mark 10:45)

God has taught us that you cannot love without giving. Love is not a feeling. It calls for action, which includes giving of our time, talent and treasure.

If we give ourselves to God and let Him use our talents to serve others, we will be amazed by the results. Not only will our lives be changed but so will the lives of others.

### MAY (Year Two)

Do we ever take the initiative in giving our time, talent and treasure, or do we always wait to be asked?

"In generous spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts." (Sirach 35:7)

Whatever time we have is a gift from God and we are asked to use it wisely, to serve God and others.

Stewardship of time, talent and treasure faces certain obstacles: greed, selfishness, irresponsibility and a lack of trust.

All of us are called to be good stewards of our time, but to different causes or activities according to God's specific call. What is God's call to me?

### JUNE (Year Two)

"With each contribution, show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy."  
(Sirach 35:8)

It is important that we budget our hours as we budget our income so we are able to give our time to be involved in church and community activities.

Stewardship of treasure is based on giving a percentage of our income. If we have little income, we will give little. If we have greater income, we will give more. Whether we are poor or rich, we can each give a percentage of our income to church and other charities.

Why not keep a record for one week of how you spend your time? How much do the church and community organizations get of that time?

### JULY (Year Two)

The heart grateful to God needs to find a way to express that gratitude. Some important ways to do that are through prayer, through service and through giving of one's resources.

It is only the hand that is open to give that is open to receive. God cannot give us what we refuse to take and God cannot give to us when our hands and hearts cling to things.

"For everything is from you, and we only give you what we already have received from you." (I Chronicles 29:14-16)

If we accept the challenge of putting God first in our time and treasure, our attitudes, priorities and spiritual lives will definitely change.

### AUGUST (Year Two)

Have you given real thought lately to how good God has been to you? Do you give in proportion to what God has given you?

Christ makes it quite clear that he expects us to be different. One of the ways he expects us to be different is by practicing stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

"They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. (II Corinthians 8:3)

"Love one another as I have loved you... I have chosen you to go forth and bear much fruit." (John 15:12,16)

### SEPTEMBER (Year Two)

Use what talents you possess: The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.

Those who practice stewardship see themselves as caretakers of God's gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and are eager to share their gifts out of love for God and one another.

Stewardship calls us to share what we have with others generously as members of one Christian community. Stewardship focuses on our dependence on God which goes against society's focus on independence.

Those who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all that they have and all that they are.

In a life committed to stewardship we are called to "possess lightly". Jesus taught about the dangers of clutching to material possessions, and pointed to the real treasures available to us in life.

## OCTOBER (Year Two)

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (John 20:21)

Giving and sharing are learned responses. It is our responsibility to teach our young people this lesson.

Stewardship is opening our hearts, schedules and hands to others -- being available and willing to listen and give our time and our love. Those we give to can be neighbors, fellow parishioners, as well as those who are hurting.

The meaning of money is attached to its use. God never condemned money, as such, but rather insisted that it be used to further the Kingdom of God.

## NOVEMBER (Year Two)

God has given each of us some special abilities. It is important that we use them to help one another, passing on to others the many blessings that God has given us.

"They gave their surplus wealth, but she have from her want, all that she had to live on." (Mark 12:44)

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on God's many blessings in our lives and to give "thanks" to our loving God, who will never be outdone in generosity.

How much of your time, other than an hour on Sunday, do you give back to God for the many blessings that you have received?

Give of your time, talent and treasure until you feel good about your gift, and your heart knows that you have done something for God.

## DECEMBER (Year Two)

Develop your talents to the fullest so that you can use them to benefit your church and community. Your abilities will grow with use; unused, they may wither away.

"Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your labors." (Proverbs 3:9)

Your church and community offer many opportunities for using your time and talent in God's service.

Stewardship of treasure involves trust in God. You have to really believe in God's Providence and trust that, if you give 10% of your income to church and charity for example, He will help you live on the rest.

No one is ever poorer for giving to our God who is so rich in love, mercy and goodness.

## ***Scriptural Texts with a Stewardship Message***

*The following passages from Holy Scripture are particularly suited to preaching or teaching the stewardship message.*

| <b><i>Old Testament</i></b> | <b><i>Stewardship Message</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Chronicles 29:14-16       | “For everything is from you, and we only give you what we have received from you.”                                                                                                                          |
| Deuteronomy 14:22, 29       | “Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows in the fields you have sown...so that the Lord, your God, may bless you in all that you undertake.”                                                   |
| Deuteronomy 16:10, 16-17    | “...No one shall appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each of you with as much as he can give, in proportion to the blessings which the Lord, God has bestowed on you.”                                 |
| Deuteronomy 26:1-4          | “...you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest ...and putting them in a basket go to the priest (who will) set it in front of the altar of the Lord, your God.” |
| Leviticus 27-30             | “All tithes of the land, whether in grain from the field or in the fruit from the trees, belong to the Lord, as sacred to Him.”                                                                             |
| Malachi 3:8-10              | “...Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me in this, says the Lord of Hosts.”                                                                             |
| Proverbs 3:9                | “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all you produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow.”                                                  |
| Proverbs 11:24              | “...He who confers benefits will be amply enriched, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”                                                                                                 |
| Sirach 35:7-10              | “...Give to the Most High as He has given to you, generously, according to your means.”                                                                                                                     |
| <b><i>New Testament</i></b> | <b><i>Stewardship Message</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Matthew 3:1-12              | “Reform your lives...Give some evidence that you mean to reform.”                                                                                                                                           |
| Matthew 5:1-12              | Beatitudes                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Matthew 5:13-16             | “In the same way, your light must shine before others so that they may all see goodness in your acts.”                                                                                                      |
| Matthew 6:24-34             | “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one or love the other or be attentive to one and despise the other.”                                                                                     |
| Matthew 10:37-42            | “You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of my followers, will certainly receive a reward.”                                                                       |
| Matthew 13:4-23             | The Parable of the Sower                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Matthew 13:24-43            | The Parable of the Mustard Seed                                                                                                                                                                             |

|                  |                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Matthew 14:13-21 | “Give them something to eat yourselves.”                                                                                               |
| Matthew 16:21-27 | “...He will repay each man according to his conduct.”                                                                                  |
| Matthew 22:34-40 | “You shall love the Lord your God... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”                                                        |
| Matthew 25:14-30 | Parable of the Silver Pieces                                                                                                           |
| Mark 10:21       | “Go and sell what you have and give to the poor; you will then have treasure in heaven.”                                               |
| Mark 10:43-45    | “...Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all.” |
| Mark 12:44       | “They gave from their surplus wealth, but she gave from her want, all that she had to live on.”                                        |
| Mark 13:34       | “He leaves home and leaves his servants in charge, each with his own task.”                                                            |
| Luke 3:11        | “Let the one with two coats give to the one who has none. The one who has food should do the same.”                                    |
| Luke 6:38        | “Give and it shall be given to you.”                                                                                                   |
| Luke 10:25-37    | Parable of the Good Samaritan                                                                                                          |
| Luke 11:5-8      | Parable of the Friend at Midnight                                                                                                      |
| Luke 12:32-48    | “Wherever your treasure lies, there will your heart be... When much has been given a man, much will be required of him.”               |
| Luke 14:25-33    | “...none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions.”                                                       |
| Luke 15:12       | “A man may be wealthy but his possessions do not guarantee him life.”                                                                  |
| Luke 16:1-13     | “You cannot give yourself to God and money.”                                                                                           |
| Luke 16:19-31    | Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus                                                                                                    |
| Luke 19:1-10     | “I give half my belongings, Lord, to the poor.”                                                                                        |
| John 9:1-41      | “We must do the deeds of Him who sent me while it is still day.”                                                                       |
| John 20:19-31    | “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”                                                                                            |
| John 14:15-21    | “He who obeys the commandments he has from me is the man who loves me.”                                                                |
| John 15:12,16    | “This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you... it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit.”                   |
| John 20:21       | “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”                                                                                            |
| John 21:15-17    | “Jesus said, ‘Tend my sheep... Feed my sheep.’”                                                                                        |

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Acts 2:42-45        | “...Those who believed shared all things in common; they would sell their property and goods, dividing everything on the basis of each one’s need.”                         |
| Acts 4:34           | “...to be distributed each according to his needs.”                                                                                                                         |
| Acts 20:35          | “...recall the words of Jesus: “There is more happiness in giving than receiving.”                                                                                          |
| Romans 12:6-8       | “We have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed on each of us.”                                                                                                  |
| 1 Corinthians 4:1   | “Thus should one regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God...Moreover, it is required in stewards, that someone be found faithful to his gifts.” |
| 1 Corinthians 16:2  | “On the first day of each week everyone should put aside whatever he has been able to save.”                                                                                |
| 2 Corinthians 8     | Paul’s instruction about the collection of the church in Jerusalem.                                                                                                         |
| 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 | “...Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver...”                                             |
| 2 Corinthians 9:8   | “God can multiply His favors among you so that you may always have enough of every thing and even a surplus for good works.”                                                |
| 1 Timothy 6:7-9     | “We brought nothing into the world, nor have we the power to take anything out...”                                                                                          |
| 1 Timothy 6:17-19   | “...Charge them to do good, be rich in good works and generous, sharing what they have...”                                                                                  |
| Titus 3:14          | “But let our people, too, learn to devote themselves to good works, to supply urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.”                                          |
| Hebrews 13:16       | “Do not neglect good deeds and generosity. God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.”                                                                                      |
| James 2:14-17       | “...If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day and you do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that?”                                          |
| James 4:3           | “You ask and you do not receive because you ask wrongly, with a view to squandering what you receive on your pleasures.”                                                    |
| 1 Peter 4:8-10      | “...As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received.”                                   |

## ***Questions and Answers about Stewardship***

*These questions and answers on stewardship can be incorporated into the educational material during the stewardship effort or used in the parish bulletin or newsletter as an ongoing awareness activity.*

### **#1**

**Question:** What is Stewardship?

**Answer:** The Diocese of Charlotte has developed a definition of stewardship to give a context to all our efforts in stewardship. While a definition certainly can not explain all there is to stewardship, it can provide direction for our work in this important area of the Church.

"Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus; and where it has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed. Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us. Stewardship engenders a spirituality that deepens our relationship with the Lord. Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure. Stewardship addresses both individual parishioners as well as parishes themselves."

### **#2**

**Question:** Is stewardship of treasure only a gimmick for raising more money for the Church?

**Answer:** No, not even close! First, stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible has dozens of references to stewardship and Jesus specifically talks about stewardship in a number of His parables. He made it very clear how he wanted His followers to live out their Christian life by becoming involved with others and share with them what we have, not only our treasure, but our time and special talents as well. So, stewardship is based on God's Word not on fundraising to meet the needs of the Church.

Second, stewardship is based on the individual's need to give thanks not on the Church's need to receive. Stewardship is based on the premise that all that we have and all that we are comes from God and as a way to thank God for all His blessings, we return a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us. So, a person's decision to give of his or her time, talent and treasure is based on a need to give thanks. For example, in the area of treasure, a person would give the same amount of money whether their parish was \$200,000 in debt or had \$200,000 saved in the bank because he or she gives in gratitude to God.

Third, giving of time, talent and treasure is not limited to the Church. Some people will give some of their time and talent as volunteers to community agencies in addition to volunteering in their parish. Some will give money to other community organizations in addition to supporting their parish. As you can see, stewardship is certainly not a fundraising gimmick but a way of life based on spiritual principles.

### **#3**

**Question:** What do you mean by stewardship of time and talent and how important is it?

**Answer:** Giving of time involves being with God in prayer and worship, sharing our love with family and friends, and volunteering our time in church and community activities that help others and promote justice. Sharing our talents arises from the fact that God has given each of us the

ability and gifts to do certain things well and we are to develop those talents for the good of others.

Just as in stewardship of treasure, it is important that the giving of time and talent be intentional, planned and proportionate. Many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to prayer and charitable activities.

Giving of our time and talent is just as important as giving of our treasure. God does not hold back on any area of His giving so we are not to hold back on any area of our giving.

#### #4

Question: How are we to give of our time, talent and treasure?

Answer: Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure. Following are some comments that further explain what we mean by intentional, planned and proportionate giving:

Intentional - A well thought out deliberate discussion is made to live out the Christian life in a certain way. That way is to thank God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.

Planned - At the beginning of every year, each Catholic household would plan and make stewardship of time and talent a part of their lifestyle and stewardship of treasure a part of their budget.

Proportionate - A decision is made to give a certain percentage of one's time and one's income to the church and other charities.

#### #5

Question: What difference will stewardship make in our lives?

Answer: The difference can be seen in several areas of our lives. First, the difference is in the focus of giving. Instead of focusing on the needs of the group to whom we're giving financial support or helping with our time and talent, the focus is primarily on God and our relationship with Him and also on us and our need to give.

Second, the difference is in the motivation for giving. Stewardship is an integral part of our spiritual life and we give in that context because we are grateful to God for what He has already given us. We give freely because we want to not because we have to.

Third, the difference is in the result of the giving. As we practice stewardship, we find that we grow spiritually and that our faith is deepened. In fact, we find that our lives are changed for the good.

#### #6

Question: How do our needs or the needs of our family fit into the concept of stewardship?

Answer: Your first responsibility is to take care of your needs and the needs of your family - not necessarily all their wants. In looking very carefully at what we need versus what we want, we end up placing material things and money in their proper perspective. For example, when someone buys a new house, they may buy a somewhat smaller house than if they hadn't been practicing stewardship of treasure. That smaller house can still meet their needs and may also meet many, but not all, of their wants.

Stewardship of treasure asks only a percentage of income - not the whole thing. Many people find that when they trust in God and return a certain percentage of their income to the church and other charities, they can live adequately on the rest of their income. The percentage of income is something that people prayerfully decide after due consideration of their needs and the needs of their family.

#7

Question: What are some examples of stewardship of time and talent?

Answer: The following list of stewardship opportunities for time and talent, while not comprehensive, does give a broad view of many ways that one can give of his/her time and talent.

|                                   |                                          |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Adult day care volunteer          | Liturgy Commission member                | Adult education facilitator      |
| Masonry                           | AIDS effort volunteer                    | Men's Club                       |
| Altar guild                       | Migrant ministry volunteer               | Altar server                     |
| Minority ministry volunteer       | Arts and crafts teacher                  | Mothers morning out volunteer    |
| Artwork for parish publications   | Musician                                 | Auto Repair                      |
| Newcomers coffee                  | Extraordinary minister of Holy Communion | Newsletter writing/editing       |
| Baby-sitting                      | Office work                              | Baptismal/Marriage preparation   |
| Outreach to inactive Catholics    | Bereaved/Terminally Ill ministry         | Outreach to the unchurched       |
| Bible study leader                | Painting                                 | Board member of community agency |
| Parish dinner preparation         | Budget planning                          | Pastoral Council member          |
| Campus ministry volunteer         | Phone answering                          | Capital Campaign volunteer       |
| Photographer                      | Carpentry                                | Plant and shrubbery care         |
| Faith Formation teacher           | Plumbing work                            | Choir member                     |
| Prayer group leader               | Clothing Ministry volunteer              | Printer                          |
| Community Life Commission member  | Respect-life volunteer                   | Computer programmer              |
| Property/real estate assistance   | Crisis pregnancy volunteer               | Public relations assistance      |
| Driver                            | RICA sponsor or team member              | Education Commission member      |
| School volunteer                  | Electrical work                          | Scout leadership                 |
| English as a 2nd language teacher | Sewing                                   | Evangelization Commission member |
| Social service agency volunteer   | Family Life Commission member            | Sound systems/electronics help   |
| Finance Council member            | Soup kitchen volunteer                   | Food deliveries to sick/shut-ins |
| Sports team coach                 | Habitat for Humanity volunteer           | Stewardship Committee member     |
| Homeless shelter volunteer        | Sunday morning coffee                    | Hospital or hospice volunteer    |
| Teacher's aid                     | Kitchen help                             | Substitute teacher               |
| Knights of Columbus               | Catholic Daughters                       | Telephone ministry               |

|                             |                       |                      |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Ladies' Club                | Legion of Mary        | Typing               |
| Lawn Care                   | Usher/Greeter         | Lector               |
| Visitation to sick/shut-ins | Youth group counselor | Young adult ministry |
| Literacy effort volunteer   |                       |                      |

### #8

Question: What portion of my time, talent and treasure should I give?

Answer: Giving of our time, talent and treasure mainly involves a change of attitude about giving. It's important to think in terms of giving in gratitude to God, of considering how blessed you are, of using your gifts and talents for the good of others. Once you have this change of attitude, you will be able to more readily determine, through prayer and planning, the portion of your time, talent and treasure that you will give. In the area of time and talent, many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to prayer and charitable activities. That prayer can be by yourself, with your family or with others. Those charitable activities can include working in your parish, with various community agencies or with an individual in need.

In the area of treasure, some Christians choose the biblical norm of giving 10 percent of their treasure. Some, because of circumstances, give more than that. Others might start at two, three or four percent. When you are at peace about the size of your gift, when you do not find yourself making excuses for its size, when you know in your heart that you have been completely honest with God and yourself, then your gift is the proper size.

### #9

Question: If we are already committed to paying tuition because we have children in a Catholic school, does that tuition count as part of our commitment to stewardship of treasure?

Answer: Each person ultimately decides for him or herself what they count as their stewardship of treasure. In looking at the true meaning of stewardship, however, tuition would not be included in stewardship of treasure because it is a payment made for services received, namely Catholic education. Stewardship is giving in gratitude to God with no expectation of receiving anything concrete, like an education, in return.

While tuition may not be included in stewardship of treasure, it can affect the percentage of income that some families can give to the church and other charities.

### #10

Question: How can we make our fellow parishioners and our families more aware of Stewardship?

Answer: In your parish you can use the church bulletin and parish newsletter, if you have one, to publish the stewardship thoughts, questions and answers, and stories about good stewards. You can use the same means to highlight the many activities that are available in the parish.

You can become actively involved in community service as a parish group or as an individual . . . working at a homeless shelter, Crop Walk, etc. You can ask your Parish Finance Council to give regular reports on your parish Stewardship of Treasure. Banners, bulletin boards and materials in the bookrack are additional means of reinforcing the stewardship message.

In your family, you may want to look at your life style, at your accumulation of “things”, and at the time you spend with your family and for other people. This could mean taking an inventory

of all of the “stuff” each member of your family possesses. It could mean taking your personal calendars and looking at where your time is being spent. Or, it could be as simple as going through your checkbook and seeing where your money goes. Someone once asked the question: “If someone found your lost checkbook, could they tell weather or not you were a Christian?”

Doing one or all of these things could lead to some hard questions. The answers to which could lead us to truly become better stewards of the gifts we have been given.

One family of seven, in an effort to start tithing, decided to “give up” their usual Friday night pizza dinner. (To the surprise of the parents, it was the teen age son’s suggestion). This freed up almost \$25 each week to be given to the church. They missed their pizza and began making their own. An event, according to the mom, that has become a real family time...members trying to outdo each other with their “originality” in the field of pizza making.

We must constantly, whether on the parish or family level, be aware that all we have are the gifts of a generous and loving God. He asks that we use His gifts wisely and return them generously for the benefit of one another. This awareness takes effort on our part. We belong to a very materialistic and consumer oriented society—a society that tells us that we should put ourselves first; that we’ve worked hard for what we have and it is ours to use for our own pleasure. The message of stewardship, however, is very different.

## #11

Question: How important is it for children to be taught about stewardship of time, talent and treasure?

Answer: It is very important and the earlier we can begin teaching them, the better. We teach children while they are very young about Jesus, about prayer and about love. We take them to church every week. We help them understand the difference between their “needs” and their “wants.” These are all important parts of the Christian life.

Giving of ourselves is also an important a part of our Christian life, and we need to start teaching children the meaning of giving while they are young. More and more parishes are encouraging children to return a percentage of their allowance or other income by putting a children's envelope into the collection basket. Parents are encouraged to take a child along with them when they visit shut-ins or people in nursing homes. Religious education programs and youth groups are providing opportunities for their children to mail cards to sick parishioners or make food baskets for the poor. Many parishes now have stewardship commitment forms for children and youth as a part of the annual stewardship renewal.

## #12

Question: Doesn't the Church talk about money too much?

Answer: Individual churches will vary regarding the amount of time spent speaking about money, but the reality is that the daily operation of the parish requires money for everything from the utilities to salaries to outreach. In fact, it is a duty of the Church to ask for money, not only for its work but for the work that is done by charitable organizations in the community. The Church sees so much suffering and so many needs to be addressed and has a responsibility to address that suffering and those needs.

On a number of occasions St. Paul urged the early Church to give money to help those in need. He even had very specific instructions on taking the collection for Jerusalem in his second letter to the Corinthians.

Today the focus of the Church is much more on stewardship than on "talking about money". Stewardship is based on the individual's need to give thanks, not on the Church's need to receive. Stewardship is based on the premise that all that we have and all that we are comes from God and, as a way to thank God for all His blessings, we return a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.

## #13

Question: Isn't committing to stewardship of time, talent and treasure asking a lot of us?

Answer: Yes it is. Committing to stewardship of time, talent and treasure is an important part of living a Christian life, and real Christian living asks a lot of us and is not easy. Jesus never said that it would be easy.

Making a commitment to stewardship is a particular challenge with the current emphasis on materialism, consumerism and leisure time. We realize that we are involved in a gradual on-going conversion process. It involves a change of heart, of mind, of values, of budget, of pocketbook, of calendar and of time. We are called to say "yes" to God and to a way of life he has spelled out for us in the Bible. We are called to say "no" to the influences in our society that emphasize materialistic values that are selfish, thoughtless and opposed to stewardship as a way of life.

## #14

Question: Am I expected to give my time, talent and treasure exclusively to the church?

Answer: No, giving of time, talent and treasure is not limited to the church. In addition to volunteering in the church, many people give of their time and talent as volunteers to human service organizations in the community. Volunteer work in the community could still be done in conjunction with the church such as when a group of parishioners commit to prepare meals at a homeless shelter or to build a Habitat for Humanity house. It could be done separate and apart from the church such as when an individual serves on an agency board. Many people will give money to other community groups in addition to supporting the Church. Some may give 80% of their stewardship of treasure to church related causes and 20% to community groups, such as a soup kitchen. Others may give 50% to the church and 50% to groups in the community.

## #15

Question: Why give thanks?

Answer: (Used with permission from *The Charlotte Observer*) We humans are arrogant cusses. Our vocabulary is full of phrases of self-praise. You've heard them: He's a self-made man. She pulled herself up by her own bootstraps. Everything they've got, they earned.

To hear us talk, you'd think we might spend this Thanksgiving Season patting ourselves on the back.

Individual initiative and determination do play a large role in human life. But we tend to exaggerate. A self-made man? Hardly; we all work with materials given us by birth and circumstances. And try pulling on your bootstraps. All you'll get is a sore back and, if you pull hard enough, broken bootstraps.

It is true, we do best if we do our best. But that is only the beginning of the story. Our own efforts did not enable us to be born in this land of opportunity. The way we take care of ourselves and others has a great impact on whether we live healthy and happy lives, but we have hardly any control over whether illness or accident will hit us or our loved ones. Our own inner resources have a lot to do with how we deal with adversity, but little to do with whether we will experience it.

So on this day, as all days, it is worth taking a few moments to think about things that we have no control over that make our lives worth living. Life itself.- Life in a nation whose freedom, wealth and opportunity to live free and prosperous lives were bequeathed to us by preceding generations. - The unearned, unconditional love of family. - The warmth and support of friends.- The generosity of strangers.

Whether you thank God or good fortune, you know that much of what you value most in life you have not earned. It is a gift. Once we understand the importance of the gifts we have received, we are able to see the importance of gifts we give - to family and friends, of course, but also to fellow human beings less generously blessed by birth and circumstance, and to future generations. The best way to give thanks for the priceless gifts we have received is to give generously in return.

## #16

Question: What if we don't have enough time to volunteer to help in church or community activities?

Answer: The immediate, almost natural, reaction of most people to the prospect of volunteering to help in a church or community activity is "I don't have the time." For some of us that may be a valid excuse but for the large majority of us it's not a question of having the time but of using the time we have. A recent study showed that the average American over 18 spends his or her time during the 168 hours available each week as follows:

|                                               |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sleeping 53.0 hours                           | Working 26.0 hours          |
| Eating 8.0 hours                              | Watching TV 26.4 hours      |
| Listening to radio 21.3 hours                 | Newspaper 4.2 hours         |
| Magazine 3.3 hours                            | Records and tapes 1.3 hours |
| Movies, sports and cultural events 18 minutes | Reading books 12 minutes    |
| All other activities 24.0 hours               |                             |

Why not keep a record for one week and see where all your time goes. How much time is spent in volunteering in church and community activities?

## #17

Question: Why is it important to renew our commitment to stewardship of time, talent and treasure on an annual basis in the parish?

Answer: It is important for a number of reasons. First, the message of stewardship like other messages in Scripture and teachings of the Church needs to be presented on a regular basis. Without those regular reminders and encouragements regarding Bible messages and Church teachings, we have a tendency to revert back to old ways. Second, just like in our spiritual life, we can always grow in our stewardship life. Renewing our commitment to stewardship gives us the opportunity to take the next step in increasing our giving of time, talent and treasure. Third, there are those current members of the parish who did not participate in the previous year's stewardship effort. Renewal gives them another opportunity to become involved in stewardship. Fourth, new people arriving in the parish since the last effort will have the chance to commit to stewardship, many for the first time.

## #18

Question: How do special efforts such as capital campaigns fit into stewardship of treasure?

Answer: If you are already committed to stewardship of treasure and have already made your annual commitment of a specific percentage of your income to church and the community, then a capital campaign can present you with the opportunity to increase that percentage. In fact, many people use a capital campaign as a way to move, for example, from giving four percent of their income to giving six percent of their income. Then when the campaign pledge is completed (usually after 3 years), that money is then available to go to other church or community causes.

If you are not already committed to stewardship of treasure, then making a pledge to a capital campaign can give you an opportunity to become involved with stewardship. For example, in most parishes, only 30-35 percent of the people will contribute to the offertory but 60-85 percent of the people will commit to a capital campaign.

## #19

Question: In the area of stewardship of treasure, don't Catholics already give more than other religious groups in this country?

Answer: In fact, they don't. Catholic giving lags behind other religious groups. According to a 1990 Gallup Poll conducted for a study by Independent Sector, Catholic households contributed on average less money to the church and charities than members of all other religious groups in the United States.

Catholic households contributed, on average, less money to the Church and charities than members of all other religious groups in the United States

CATHOLICS - \$515 = 1.3%

PROTESTANTS - \$842 = 2.4%

JEWS - \$1,854 = 3.8%

ALL OTHER RELIGIONS - \$1,075 = 2.7%

Percentages show the percent of household income given

## #20

Question: "What if I can't afford to give of my treasure?"

Answer: The message of stewardship invites each of us to give our time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God for our abundant blessings. For some of us, giving of our time and talent goes without saying. We recognize our giftedness and respond to the invitation to participate in the community of faith by sharing of ourselves.

Giving of our treasure may seem unfeasible for many faithful Catholics, especially during these trying economic times. One might ask "How can I give when I can't even make ends meet as it is?" This is where we are invited to an understanding that stewardship involves trust.

With trust and confidence in God we respond to the challenge to give of our treasure and abandon ourselves to the providence of God. We accept that God is the controller of our lives. In trust and confidence we find that as we share, we shall be cared for in our needs; maybe not all of our wants, but certainly our needs.

Regardless of our circumstances, a life committed to stewardship includes giving of our treasure as well as our time and talent. Our giving may begin small in size, and may be increased over time, but the key to our giving lies in our trust. When we give back to God from our "first fruits", we find that He will provide for our needs.

## #21

Question: How do our assets fit into our stewardship commitment of treasure?

Answer: For most people assets have not been a part of their stewardship commitment of treasure. Today, however, more and more people are considering assets as part of their stewardship of treasure.

The primary focus of our stewardship commitment of treasure has been our income. That income for some is limited to their salaries, but many also include sources beyond that such as investment income, income from things we sell, such as a house, or other sources of non-salary income.

As people grow in their stewardship life, however, more of them are realizing that limiting their stewardship of treasure to just their regular salary doesn't really reflect giving all that they have. Hence, more and more people are including their assets in their long range plans related to stewardship of treasure. This includes, among other things, leaving part of one's estate to the church or other charities through a will or making the church or other charities a partial beneficiary of an insurance or retirement plan.

## #22

Question: "I already support government efforts through my taxes. Doesn't that count as part of my stewardship?"

Answer: Fulfilling your government obligation would not be considered an act of stewardship for two reasons. First, a person committed to stewardship is not motivated by laws and obligations. Rather, the person committed to stewardship views giving as a gesture in gratitude to God for the blessings that he or she has received.

Second, the Bible clearly treats giving to the government as very different from giving to God through the church and charities. One it treats as a civic obligation and the other it treats as a

Christian responsibility. In fact, the Bible speaks of giving of our "first fruits" to God. This suggests that we give to God before we pay anyone or anything else, including the government.

Stewardship, then, asks us to give to church and charities above and beyond what we give to the government through taxes.

### #23

Question: "What about all the people in my parish who give nothing at all?"

Answer: The question is not "What about them?" It is "What about me?" As we grow in our Christian faith, we learn to become more honest with ourselves before God. Rather than scrutinize those around us regarding their giving, we turn within ourselves and ask "Is my giving enough? Am I truly giving to God from my first fruits, or am I giving God what is left over after all of my needs are met?"

While it is natural for us to compare what we do to what others do, our Christian faith calls us to consider how our actions conform to what God would have us do. In comparing ourselves to others we are missing the mark because as Christians we are called to be different than other people. Living a life committed to stewardship is part of that different way of living.

Each of us can find in our own hearts the seeds of faults we spot so easily in others. Our giving should not be based on what others give. Giving, rather, involves a personal decision we must make for ourselves, and then we offer our gifts to our parish and the community.

### #24

Question: How can I commit to stewardship of my talents if I don't have any talents?

Answer: It would be difficult if you indeed had no talents but the truth is every one has at least one talent. Most people in fact have several talents and a few people have many talents. Some people have musical or artistic talents. Others are good at teaching, cooking, organizing things or encouraging others. Some people work well with children or the elderly while others are good writers or good listeners.

The number of talents we have is not the important thing. What is important is that we take time to discover the talents we have, develop those talents and use them for the benefit of others.

In looking at our talents it is important not to confuse having a talent with excelling in a specific area. For example, you don't have to have the best voice to join the choir and remember, you can always do one thing better than everyone else and they can always do something better than you.

## ***Stewardship Prayers***

Lord God, you alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life. We praise you and we thank you for your great power and your tender, faithful LOVE.

Everything we are and everything we have is your gift, and after having created us you have given us into the keeping of Your Son, JESUS CHRIST.

Fill our minds with HIS truth and our hearts with HIS love, that in HIS Spirit we may be bonded together into a community of faith, a parish family, and a caring people.

In the Name and Spirit of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our material gifts as an outward sign of the Treasure we hold in Jesus. AMEN

### **Prayer for Generosity**

LORD JESUS, you came to tell us that the meaning of life consists in giving. YOU told us that those who cling too tightly to what they have--without thought for YOU or others--end up losing everything. YOU gave us new values by which to measure the worth of a person's life.

Help us to realize it is not temporal success or riches or fame that gives life meaning. Rather it is the service rendered to YOU and others that brings fulfillment and makes our lives worthwhile.

May all our activity help build GOD'S kingdom: our obedience bring true freedom, our generosity increase love, our sacrifice bear generous fruit, our death lead to eternal life.

### **Stewardship Prayer for Those in Ministry**

Creator God, life is your gift to us.

Through Baptism, You invite us to share the gift of life in service to others.

Be with us as we choose each day to show Your presence in our world.

Give us the courage and generosity to respond to Your love—to Your call.

We pray especially for those who serve You in ministry in our parishes. (diocese).

May we bear the Good News to those in need.

Keep us close to you.

Open the minds and hearts of many other men, women, and young people

that they may accept Your challenge and call

to build the Kingdom in our parish(es).

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*If not us, who? If not here, where? If not now, When? If not for the Kingdom, why?*

## Commissioning Sunday

*Adapted from Commissioning Service of St. Gabriel Catholic Church  
Charlotte, NC*

### **To be done at time of General Intercessions or other appropriate time.**

**Celebrant:** Loving God, you gave us Faith as a means to know you and your Son. We have joined together here today to demonstrate to you and our brothers and sisters in faith at \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Church ) \_\_\_\_\_ that we hear your call to serve each other.

There are no small tasks in your vineyard. Each and every effort we make as individuals is made “in Communion” with our entire community. Each task receives value by your grace upon those who give and those who receive.

Inspire each of us to know that genuine faith in you and in your Son is best expressed by our love for and commitment to each other.

**Deacon or Lector:** As leaders and members of councils, commissions, and organizations are identified, please stand and remain standing as you are joined by other groups in acknowledgement of your commitment and good works. Our response is:  
“Lord, bless your faithful people.”

*(Each parish should adapt this service to include their own names of active organizations and ministries.)*

Will those who serve our parish as members of the staff, the Pastoral Council, the Finance Council, Building Committee, or Tithing Committee please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they may have the gifts of good judgment, openness to all, courage and fortitude to discern your will.....Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve on the Education Commission, our faith formation teachers, Catholic school teachers, Bible study leaders, and those who volunteer in any way in our Faith Formation program please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they may have zeal to present the teaching of scripture and tradition to all and that they may live these teachings in their own lives....Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve on the Liturgical Commission and those men, women, and children who help to bring the liturgies to life: announcers, lectors, the Eucharistic ministers who assist during Mass and who bring Communion to those who are homebound, altar servers, the Perpetual Adoration volunteers please stand and remain standing. (Pause) we pray that they will make our time of prayer and worship a time of growing closer to the Lord so that we may be nourished with God’s word and the Body and Blood of Jesus...Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve at our liturgies as, ushers and greeters, Sacristans, Altar Society, and art and environment designers please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they will continue to offer us the spirit of friendship, hospitality and love and that they will provide us with the reverent physical atmosphere to worship....Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve in Music Ministry: the cantors, the parish choir, contemporary ensemble, youth choir, the children’s choir, and the instrumentalists please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray they will use their talents to lead us in song and prayer through the lifting up of our hearts and voices....Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless you faithful people.*

Will those who serve on the Evangelization committee and the RCIA process stand and remain standing. (Pause) we pray that they will truly spread the Good News of Salvation and peace to all who search for union with God...Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve in the Family Life Ministries...Cluster Leaders, Wednesday Night Gathering, Scouting, Young Singles, Marries Ministry, Christian Mothers, Morning woman's Club, Men's club, Handmaids of Mary, the OWLS, the Memory Makers, Round Robin Bridge, and the Athletic Association please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that through our organizations we may experience a stronger sense of family based upon our common faith...Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve in our Community Life Ministries...Cropwalk, Friendship Trays, Habitat for Humanity, Men's Shelter, Pathfinders, Bereavement, COPING, Adult Tutoring, Blood Mobile, Crisis Assistance, Hospice, Respect Life, St. Vincent de Paul Society, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray they will have the dedication to reach out to others in our city and county and that they will truly assist the many needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who are in service to our parish as church office volunteers, coffee & donut servers, drivers who provide rides, parish newsletter, registration Sunday welcomers, stuffers and folders, reception servers, visitors to homebound, nursery workers please stand and remain standing (Pause) We pray that the tasks of communications, service and fellowship within our parish will truly be an extension of the hospitality that Jesus, himself, provides to all who call upon him.. Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will all of those whose talents and service often go unrecognized in our parish, those who pray daily for the people of this parish, please stand and remain standing. We pray that all of us recognize our calling to pray for the people our parish, especially those who are serving the parish in active ministry, those who are sick and homebound, and those who lead us in ministry, prayer and worship. Let us pray.  
*R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

**Celebrant:** Loving and Gracious God, we are blessed and we thank you for the richness you place in our lives. Fill our hearts with gratitude so that we may joyfully share our wondrous gifts of time, talent and treasure. Help us to be ever mindful of the needs of our parish family. Teach us to be good and faithful stewards. Show us how to take good care of each other and the world that you have entrusted to us. We ask all of this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL PLAN

We encourage Stewardship Committees to make a detailed yearly plan that includes the organization and preparation for the 2-3 weekend effort as well as monthly awareness activities. There are many ways to do this and someone in your group who is good with computers can be a big help. A sample follows.

- Use Stewardship Thoughts in Bulletin on Weekly basis
- Use Stewardship Prayer of the Faithful on bi-monthly basis
- Pastor to incorporate Stewardship in homilies as appropriate to readings

| MO.   | DAY   | ACTIVITY                           | PERSON RESPONSIBLE |
|-------|-------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jan   | 6     | Evaluation of Renewal weekend      | David/Trish        |
|       | 13    | Article in Parish Newsletter       | Judy               |
|       | 20    | Ck to see volunteers contacted     | Phyllis/Becky      |
|       | 27    | Stew. Committee Meeting 7:30       | Emily & Fr. B      |
| Feb   | 4     | Order Stew materials for bookrack  | Marcelle           |
|       | 6     | Commissioning of Volunteers        | Liturgy Comm.      |
|       | 13    | Question and Answer in Bulletin    | Bernadette         |
|       | 24    | Stew. Committee Meeting 7:30       | Emily & Fr. B      |
| Mar   | 6     | Welcome Breakfast for Newcomers    | Stew. Committee    |
|       | 13    | Article in Parish Newsletter       | Judy               |
|       | 24    | Stew Committee Meeting 7:30        | Emily & Fr. B      |
|       | 24    | Plan Stew. Appreciation Dinner     | Committee          |
| April | 7     | Mail invitations to Stew Dinner    | Susan              |
|       | 21    | Stew Committee Meeting 7:30        | Emily              |
|       | 29    | Stew. Appreciation Dinner 7:00     | Stew. Committee    |
| May   | 15    | Question & Answer in Bulletin      | Bernadette         |
|       | 24    | Article in Newsletter              | Judy               |
|       | 25    | Evaluation of entire Stew. Program | Carol              |
| June  | 9-30  | Revise Time and Talent Booklet     | Susan/Greg/Trish   |
| July  | -     | TAKE A REST!                       | EVERYONE!          |
| Aug   | 14-15 | Begin planning Renewal Weekend     | Committee          |
|       | 20    | Article in Newsletter              | Judy               |
|       | 21    | Stew. literature in bookrack       | Marcelle           |
| Sept  | 1     | Stewardship Bulletin Board Up      | Trisha/Becky       |
|       | 10-11 | Plan Ministry Fair                 | Greg/Trish         |
|       | 12-15 | Announce Children's essay contest  | Phyllis            |
|       | 22    | Stew. Committee Meeting - 7:30     | Emily/Fr. S        |
|       | 25    | Children's Stew in F. F. Classes   | Carol              |
| Oct   | 7     | Renewal materials to printer       | Carol              |
|       | 18    | Art. in Newsltr.re:Renewal Weekend | Judy               |
|       | 17-18 | Recruit Lay Witness Presenters     | Bob /Phyllis       |
|       | 29    | Train Lay Witnesses                | Trisha/Becky       |
| Nov   | 1-4   | Prepare mailing for Renewal        | Cassie             |
|       | 6     | Article in Bulletin                | Fr. B              |
|       | 7-8   | Put up Stew. Banners               | Bob                |
|       | 12-13 | Renewal Weekend - All Masses       | Fr. & Committee    |
|       | 15    | Mailing of Brochure/Commit. card   | Mailing Comm.      |
|       | 20    | Commitment Sunday                  | Fr. B              |
| Dec   | 5     | Send TY cards                      | David/Susan        |
|       | 12    | TY in Bulletin                     | Bernadette         |



## Parish Stewardship Evaluation

Effectiveness of the Stewardship Committee *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the effectiveness of the Stewardship Committee.*

1. The parish has an active committee that nurtures a year-around stewardship effort. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The parish stewardship committee has a detailed annual plan. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The stewardship committee has detailed responsibilities on an on-going basis. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Stewardship Education *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the quality of the parish stewardship education program.*

1. stewardship education program for children \_\_\_\_\_
2. stewardship education program for youth. \_\_\_\_\_
3. a stewardship education program for young adults. \_\_\_\_\_
4. stewardship education program for adults. \_\_\_\_\_
5. a stewardship education program for seniors. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Annual Stewardship Renewal *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the elements of the parish stewardship renewal.*

1. mailings from the pastor \_\_\_\_\_
2. educational materials \_\_\_\_\_
3. time and talent ministry booklet \_\_\_\_\_
4. ministry fair \_\_\_\_\_
5. lay witness testimony \_\_\_\_\_
6. time, talent, treasure commitment cards \_\_\_\_\_
7. on-going awareness activities \_\_\_\_\_
8. overall stewardship renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Commitment and Growth *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the growth and change in the parish as a result of stewardship.*

1. The parish shows signs of a long-term commitment to stewardship. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The parish shows signs of spiritual growth. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The parish has grown in the area of community outreach. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Children's Stewardship Song

Kimberly Kay Kocmoud

## REFRAIN:



Eve-ry-thing I have is a gift from God, a gift from God, is a gift from God.



Eve-ry-thing I have is a gift from God, my Time, my Tal-ents and my Treas-ures.

## VERSES:



1. Time is how I spend my days. Do I wor-ry or do I praise?
2. Tal - ents are the spe - cial things that God has giv - en for me to do.
3. Treas - ures are the gifts from God like food and mon - ey and cloth - ing, too.



1. Do I give some time to God for all the time that He has giv - en me?
2. Can I draw or can I write, sing a song \_\_\_ or \_\_\_ smile so bright?
3. If I give I soon will see God will al-ways give me all I need.

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St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 401 South Parker, Bryan, TX 77803, (409) 823-8145.

## A STEWARDSHIP SONG

Refrain

Anonymous  
Text: Psalm 24:1-6



O make us faith-ful stew-ards of your boun-ty. Give us the



grace to bring your love to birth. We place our time, our



tal-ent, and our trea-sure, we place our work and wor-ship with-out



mea-sure all at your ser-vice, God of all the earth.

- Verse 1: The Lord's is the earth and all it holds,  
the world and all who dwell in it,  
for God founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.
- Verse 2: Who may ascend God's holy hill?  
And who may stand in God's dwelling place?  
They whose hands are pure, whose hearts are clean;  
those who do not seek for what is vain.
- Verse 3: You shall receive a blessing from the Lord,  
a reward from the God who saves you,  
when you serve your God with all your heart,  
see the face of God, the God of Jacob.

**SOME DO'S AND DON'TS  
WHEN PLANNING A MINISTRY FAIR**

**Do**

---

- Get the support of your pastor, staff and parish leadership. Ask them to promote the fair at their gatherings, meetings, etc.
- Form a team with as many volunteers as possible.
- Set a date well in advance of the fair. A successful fair takes a great deal of planning. Get the word out early!
- Personally invite every organization/ministry in your parish to provide information about their ministry—a brief description with goal of the ministry, activities, contact information, when they meet, training requirements, expectations, etc. You can use this to create your time and talent ministry booklet or list.
- Invite each organization/ministry to set up a booth/table/display for parishioners to visit.
- Make sure every table/booth has someone present during the hours of the fair to answer questions.
- Make sure the set up allows for maximum visibility, fluidity of movement, and easy accessibility.
- Provide some sort of food and beverage during the fair.
- Locate the ministry fair in a place that will attract a great deal of traffic without being obstructive. Some parishes use the social hall, gathering space or outdoor space.
- Promote the fair as a chance to explore the opportunities available at the parish. It is an educational and informational experience—a time to celebrate the good things happening in your parish!

**Don't**

---

- Allow soliciting and sign-ups to go on during the fair. This will work against you. In fact it often reduces the number of people attending the fair. The fair is never to be a substitute for your “Commitment Sunday.”
- Expect every organization to set up a table, and never try to coerce them into participating. Instead let them see the fruits of this for the other organizations. They will be more likely to participate in the future.
- Try to do it all yourself. You will find parishioners who love to help with this type of event....use them!
- Try to hold a big ministry fair every year. It is very labor intensive on the part of many people. And unfortunately, due to the frustrations and burn-out, many parishes end up making the ministry fair their only stewardship effort for the year. While it can be fun, educational and community building, it is not the most important part of your parish stewardship effort.

## Resources for Promoting Stewardship

The Diocese of Charlotte Development Office has created a series of six brochures in Microsoft Publisher. These brochures can be edited by the parish to reflect the parish logo, address and contact information, and ministries specific for each parish. The following brochures are available:

- Educational brochure #1 with specific examples of time, talent and treasure
- Educational brochure #2 based on a summary of the Bishops' Pastoral Letter
- General Commitment Brochure (Parishioner writes Time and Talent commitment)
- Specific Commitment Brochure (Parishioner checks Time and Talent from list)
- Stewardship Brochure for Teens
- Stewardship Brochure for Children

*If you do not have Microsoft Publisher, the Development Office can insert your parish information and send you the brochures in PDF.*

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.usccb.org/publishing/stewardship.shtml>  
(Publishing Services, USCCB, 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017-1197)

- *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* (Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, available in both English and Spanish)
- *To be a Christian Steward* (Summary of Bishops' Pastoral in pamphlet format)
- *Stewardship and Young Adults: An Invitation to Change the World* (Pamphlet geared to young adults in promoting stewardship)
- *Stewardship – A 3-D Way of Life: Not for Adults Only* (A videotape that explains and promotes stewardship among teens of your parish)
- *Stewardship – A 3-D Way of Life: Money Back Guarantee* (A videotape to explain and promote adult stewardship in the parish)

International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC): [www.catholicstewardship.org](http://www.catholicstewardship.org)

(202-289-1093) Materials are available in both English and Spanish.

- *Stewardship: Disciples' Respond – A Practical Guide for Pastoral Leaders* (A manual for parish and diocesan leaders for the purpose of promoting stewardship as a way of life)
- *Children's Stewardship Manual* (A manual for parish and diocesan leaders who are interested in promoting stewardship for children)
- *Keeping Stewardship Alive: Proven Stewardship Ideas* (A manual and CD of creative and practical ideas submitted by parishes, dioceses, and individual contributors for the purposes of promoting stewardship beyond the first years.)
- Matthew R. Paratore, Former Secretary General of the International Catholic Stewardship Council, has written a series of reflections on stewardship. They can be found on the ICSC website.

Liturgical Press at <http://www.litpress.org> (keyword: stewardship) (1-800-858-5450)

- *Called to be Stewards: Bringing New Life to Catholic Parishes* (A book by Patrick McNamara with examples of bringing a stewardship approach to funding and ministry.)
- *Creating a Stewardship Council* (A booklet detailing the development and formation of a stewardship committee)
- *Grateful Caretakers of God's Many Gifts: A Parish Manual to Foster the Sharing of Time, Talent and Treasure* (A manual by Msgr. Joseph Champlin to help foster stewardship in the parish)
- *The Heart of Stewardship: Sacrificial Giving* (A short video by Msgr. Joseph Champlin and Dutch & Barbara Schultz to promote stewardship as described in the Pastoral Letter)
- *Parish Stewardship Manual* (Step-by-step timetable with examples of letters, prayers, and bulletin announcements—packets with brochures, poster, sample mailings are also available)
- *Sharing God's Gifts* (A small educational brochure that explains the meaning of stewardship)
- *Sixty-second Stewardship Sermons* (A resource book for pastors and deacons in preparing stewardship homilies. These short "sermons" on stewardship can also be used in newsletters and parish bulletins.)

- *Sustaining and Strengthening Stewardship* (A book by Jim Kelley with bulletin announcements, stewardship Scripture passages, and questions and answers on stewardship)
- *A Way of Life* (A booklet by Msgr. Joseph Champlin with four faith-sharing sessions on stewardship)

Our Sunday Visitor: [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com) (1-800-348-2440)

- *Why Catholics Don't Give, And What Can be Done About It* (A book by Charles Zech, chair of the Economics Department at Villanova University)
- *Grace in Action* (Newsletters that can be used as bulletin inserts with feature stories on stewardship)
- *Best Practices in Parish Stewardship* (A study done by Charles Zech in conjunction with the International Catholic Stewardship Council)
- *Stewardship by the Book* (English and Spanish available in both CD Rom and Paperback, this book by Sharon Hueckel, has stewardship bulletin announcements that reflect the Sunday Scripture readings.
- *Living Catholic Stewardship: Joyful Generosity* (An informative brochure written by Sharon Hueckel on stewardship)
- *Living Catholic Stewardship: Discerning Your Gifts* (A brochure on discernment for discovering an individuals gifts and talents by Lorene Hanley Duquin)
- *What the Church Teaches: Stewardship* (A short concise brochure on the Church teachings regarding stewardship)
- *Taking Care of God's Gifts: Stewardship A Way of Life (K-2)* (A stewardship coloring and activity book for children in grades K-2 by Laurie Whitfield and Robert Cammarata)
- *Taking Care of God's Gifts: Stewardship A Way of Life (3-5)* (A stewardship coloring and activity book for children in grades 3-5 by Laurie Whitfield and Robert Cammarata)
- *Catholic Stewardship: Sharing God's Gifts* (An informative paperback booklet by Colleen Smith that is sure to motivate people to a better practice of stewardship)
- Living Catholic Stewardship Conferences, sponsored by Our Sunday Visitor, provide outstanding speakers and presentations on the various topics of stewardship. For more information go to: <http://www.osvenvelopes.com/StewardshipProductsServices/ConferencesEvents/tabid/72/Default.aspx>

Twenty-Third Publications: [www.twentythirdpublications.com](http://www.twentythirdpublications.com) (1-800-321-0411)

- *I Like Being in Parish Ministry: Stewardship* (A concise and informative booklet by Daniel Conway on stewardship with questions for reflection and prayer)
- *What Do I Own and What Owns Me?* (A book on the Spirituality of Stewardship written by Daniel Conway with a DVD of Archbishop Thomas Murphy and his reflections on the Pastoral Letter)
- *The Catholic Kid's Guide to Stewardship* (A book on children's stewardship written by Elizabeth M. Johnson)

St. Catherine of Siena Institute: <http://www.siena.org/Workshops.htm> (1-888-878-6789)

- *Called and Gifted* (A workshop facilitated by the St. Catherine of Siena Institute to help parishioners recognize their unique gifts and their response to God's call)

Trumbauer Consulting: <http://members.aol.com/trumbauer/> (612 823-7706)

- *Sharing the Ministry: A Practical Guide for Transforming Volunteers into Ministers* (A resource for helping parishioners recognize their unique gifts and call into shared ministry by Jean Morris Trumbauer)
- *Created and Called* (A program by Jean Morris Trumbauer for helping churches develop and manage a comprehensive approach to gifts-based ministry.)

Parish Publishing: [www.parishpublishing.org](http://www.parishpublishing.org) (1-888-320-5578)

- *Stewardship* (A newsletter, available in both English and Spanish, published monthly to help stimulate a better understanding of true giving)

Archdiocese of Louisville, Office of Stewardship and Development, (502-585-3291)

- *Good Things are for Sharing: A Curriculum Guide in Stewardship for the Elementary School Level*
- *From the Heart: A Curriculum Guide in Stewardship for Middle and High School Levels*

Resources for Children's Envelopes:

- Our Sunday Visitor: [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com) (1-800-348-2440)
- Cathedral Corporation: [www.cathedralstewardship.com](http://www.cathedralstewardship.com) (1-800-698-0299)
- National Church Service, Inc.-The Envelope Service: [www.envelopeservice.com](http://www.envelopeservice.com) (1-800-627-9900)

Resources for Parish programs, retreats and missions with a stewardship focus:

- The Marian College Center for Catholic Stewardship offers programs, parish retreats and missions by Fr. Dan Mahan. <http://www.marianstewardship.org/>
- Partners in Stewardship for Life offers retreats, missions, evenings of reflection and workshops with Ed and April Laughlin. <http://www.partnersinstewardship.com/index.html>