

Gifted

Called

Hospitality in a Stewardship Parish

“How do we begin the path to becoming a Stewardship Parish?” is a question we often hear when talking with staffs and committees about Stewardship. There are many different ways to answer this question, especially because parishes can be very different from one another in terms of personality. One characteristic, however, common to all parishes successful in Stewardship is *hospitality*.

It is important to keep hospitality and welcoming efforts in the forefront whether Stewardship education is just beginning or if it has been integrated throughout the parish over time. Fostering an environment that draws people in and keeps them connected by helping them feel special and cared for is a foundational piece to Stewardship. When people feel they are an important part of their parish, they are more likely to respond to the call to share their gifts of time, talent and financial resources.

A group of Stewardship professionals working in parishes throughout the Archdiocese recently met and shared their best practices in the area of *hospitality*. Please feel free to try any of these practices and fine-tune them to fit your parish. If you have something you would like to share with other parishes, please let us know and we will add them to this list.

Hospitality Best Practices:



Greeter Ministry

- * Invite families to be Greeters at Liturgies. This can be part of the religious education program or an established Greeter's Ministry. Schedule families who feel comfortable in this role and meet with them to train them in this ministry. Develop a job description outlining expectations along with a dress code.
- * Instead of leaving hymnals and Orders of Worship for people to pick up on their own as they enter church, have

greeters hand them out to encourage interaction.

- One way in which the pastor can show support and highlight the importance of the Greeter Ministry is to speak with all committees sharing the vision of Stewardship and how small steps in hospitality, such as greeters at Masses, can go a long way.
- Pastoral staff prepare parishioners to be Captains to head up the Greeter Ministry. The Captains are responsible for gathering new greeters, training and scheduling. It is important that the Captains know there are staff who will be supportive and helpful.



Welcoming New Parishioners

- Develop a Host Family/Parishioner Ministry – match up current parishioners/families and newly registered with similar backgrounds, interests, etc. Along with welcoming and meeting when first registered, make sure there are check-in points throughout the first year of membership.
- Welcome Brunch/Gathering – hold a gathering every other month for new members with an organized message tailored to who is attending. Include time for the Pastor to open and close the event and sharing from a new parishioner of a year ago to speak about Stewardship. Have a current parishioner(s) seated at each table whose role is to ‘talk up’ the parish, be a friendly resource.
- Send hand-written invitations with passes for all family members to parish events. Provide boutonnieres to identify new parishioners. Have in attendance parishioners to greet new members and introduce them to others.



Welcoming Presence/Atmosphere

- All pastoral and support staff work out of a philosophy of ‘welcoming.’ All are trained to be a welcoming presence to all who phone and enter the doors. First priority is the people who are on the phone and at the door.
- Have available at the front office coffee, soda, candy, stuffed animals and toys for visitors and their children. If possible, create a ‘family room’ for families with children who come to the parish offices.
- Stewardship Director/Pastor/Appropriate Staff Person meets with every newly registered parishioner/family

- Presiding priest invites people to greet and introduce themselves to those around them before Mass begins
- List new members and newly baptized in the bulletin and newsletter
- Post pictures of new members, newly married and baptized
- Pager for emergencies rotated among priests/staff exclusively for calls requiring an immediate response
- Bulletin insert 'thank you' with each staff member writing a thank you paragraph to the parish



Ministry to Elderly/Shut-In/Nursing Home Population

- Families send holiday/birthday cards
- Student pen pals
- Eucharistic ministers bring prayer requests from the parish each week along with the Eucharist
- Deliver Christmas cookies and decorations

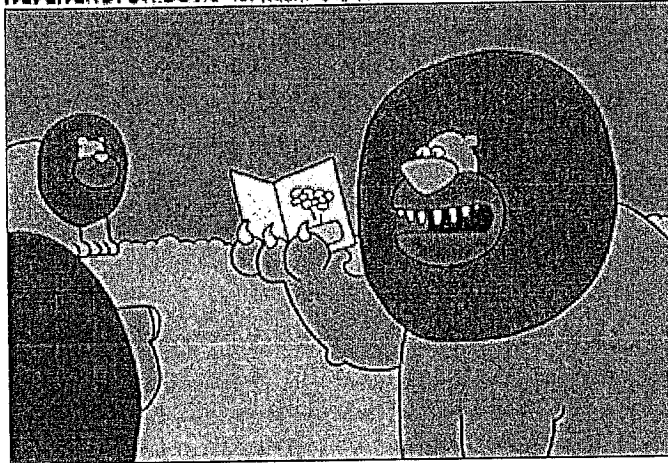


Youth Ministry

- Obtain email addresses of college students for Pastor to send weekly/monthly message
- Obtain college students' addresses for care packages/boxed blessings to be sent at exam time, etc.
- Youth as peer-helpers for religious education
- When youth do volunteer, make sure there is a place for them, their time and talents are used and the ways in which they contributed are reported/shared
- Take the opportunities to involve youth for whatever length of time they are able to offer

An integral part of that 'welcoming feel' is to show others gratitude for what they bring to the parish. Thanking people for not only their financial contributions, but for the time they have given the parish is so important. We all want to know what we offer is valued and appreciated. We may never know the impact a thoughtful gesture like a thank you note may have.

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(See Daniel 6)

07-09-2004

IT'S FROM THAT DANIEL GUY ... HE JUST
WANTED TO THANK US FOR A WONDERFUL VISIT