



The Vineyard

A quarterly publication from the Development Office of Archdiocese of Milwaukee and funded by the *Catholic Stewardship Appeal*

Tithing Time

or How I Spent My Summer Vacation

Those of us of a certain age remember that the first writing assignment of a new school year was most likely an essay about what we did during the summer months.

Sometimes we wrote about a special trip, or a family event. Many of these essays, though, focused on ordinary, everyday things. We wrote about the simple joys of spending time with family and friends sharing lazy days at the beach, picnics in the park and watching fireworks on the 4th of July.

Hopefully, as adults, we still think of summer in a special way. Stewardship calls us to nurture and care for God's gift that is ourselves. It is important that we are good stewards of the opportunities at this time of year for rest and renewal, a time to recharge our batteries as part of living a healthy, balanced life.

There is still time this summer to make leisure a priority. Take the opportunity to simplify activities and focus on relationships, resting, recreating and enjoying the wonder of God's world. Instead of stressing while planning the "perfect" barbecue, focus instead on the fun of everyone chipping in to spend time together.

Give yourself permission to spend time alone in the midst of summer's fun. Take time to bask in the glory of long days and beautiful nights. Make time for books waiting to be read, walks waiting to be taken, memories waiting to be made - and prayers waiting to be said. Take time to enjoy life, and to thank God for this most precious gift.

Adapted from the July 2013 ICSC parish newsletter

- A NEW STEWARDSHIP YEAR
- A PRAYER OF PRAISE FOR SUMMER
- STEWARDSHIP; ART OR SCIENCE?
- CONTACT UPDATE REQUEST
- BEST PRACTICES BOOKLET
- FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP SEMINARS
- ICSC EARLY BIRD DATE EXTENDED



In the lives of disciples...something else must come before the practice of stewardship. They need a flash of insight - a certain way of seeing - by which they view the world and their relationship to it in a fresh, new light.

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response
U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on stewardship

In this issue

Beginning a New School (& Stewardship) Year

It's hard to believe, but it's that time of year; the "back to school" ads have returned. Although it seems that we just threw the backpacks in the closet for the summer, it will soon be time to dig them out again. During August, we start thinking about scaling back bedtimes and getting the most out of the last few weeks of "freedom".

For many parents, it's a wistful time. "Can my baby possibly be in 4th grade?" "How could last year's gym shoes have gotten so tight?" But for many parents, a sigh of relief comes along with the school bell's first peal. Autumn brings back a welcome routine, a sense of order and discipline that summer lacks. "Thank goodness we're back on schedule!"

Christian stewards can take advantage of this "return to normal". Why not make a plan now to make a few resolutions for this "new" year to incorporate prayer and awareness of God into your kids' new schedule? For example, will you be driving your children to school? That morning journey can be a great time for a shared morning prayer. Even a walk together to the bus stop can be a time to pause and ask God to bless our day.

Perhaps a summer of eating on the fly is being replaced by more established family meal times. Why not start a tradition with a new blessing at the evening meal on the first day of school? Along with thanksgiving for our food, each member of the family could relate one person or event for which they were particularly grateful during the day.



At bedtime, each child can recall with a parent the best part of his or her day, and what was most challenging. How is God there through these events? This is a beautiful way to help your child become more conscious of the presence of God and a great way to learn more about your child's experiences.



By your own example, show your children that a sense of prayerfulness permeates your day, and that God has a special plan for each of us. Habits ingrained in a child's schedule can be retained for a lifetime.

Adapted from the ICSC August 2013 parish newsletter

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for Summer

Lord, all praise and thanks to you for this refreshing season of summer. We ask you to grant us time of leisure and relaxation, to give our body and mind the needed rest so as to be renewed for the coming autumn.

For the glorious morning sunrises, the warmth of the summer days, the refreshing cool rains, and for those quiet summer nights – all moments to see your awesome creativeness at work.

For the summer trips, vacations, and get-a-ways where we see new things, enjoy the company of others, and make joy-filled memories.

For bugs in the air, for birds of the trees, critters of the yard and blossoms of the field of all kinds, and the cycle of life they are all reminiscent of.

For recreation and activity – baseball games, fishing outings, rounds of golf, long walks, cool swims, afternoon drives, and backyard talks under the stars.

With each new season, Lord, you bless us in wondrous ways. Help us to be ever mindful of the delights each time of year brings to us. May we always take the time to enjoy them for the blessed gifts they are.

Amen





Reading Resource Corner

In each issue of *The Vineyard* I will be sharing excerpts from some of the many authors who have written about stewardship. Recounting their insights, experiences...and hopes, each author has something special to impart.

The reflection below is an excerpt from *Creating a Stewardship Council* by Marilyn Judd. Marilyn has been involved in stewardship education since 1982.

There is a streak in all of us that wants to approach life's issues scientifically. We want formulas, assurances that if we do A and B, we will get C. Unfortunately, stewardship is not a science. It is an art.

The difference between art and science was revealed to me in a homely way when my daughter gave me a day-long bread-baking course for my birthday. The male teacher said that bread baking is an art because the yeast is alive. It is affected by humidity, temperature, the quality of the flour, by the way it is kneaded, etc. You have to observe, make adjustments according to how the dough feels, be willing to experiment.

I saw in a flash why people avoid bread baking. We are all addicted to certainty. We hate those nasty surprises like a hole in the middle of the loaf or crusts that taste like shoe leather. Rather than experiment our way through failures to something delicious, we're prone to settle for the blah taste of Wonder bread.

In stewardship nurturing we are given certain raw ingredients: money, material things, spiritual gifts and talents, a body of knowledge which may include others' experiences. The live yeast is the people, temples of the Holy Spirit. They are affected by environmental conditions. Like baker's yeast, they can be deadened by careless handling. They resist formulization. Therefore, for leaders to shape a stewardship practicing parish, they must have:

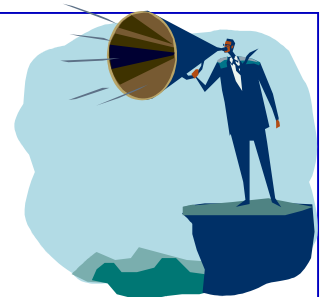
- 1) A hunger for stewardship, a hunger based on having tasted - somewhere, someplace, even for a brief period of time - the joy of the Body of Christ working in concert for the glory of God. This hunger shapes the vision.*
- 2) A willingness to lay aside All - or - None, Right - or - Wrong, Black - or - White thinking in favor of experimentation; a willingness to believe that nothing is a failure as long as it doesn't stop the [good] work.*
- 3) Perseverance to stick with the mixing and kneading process until they get the "feel" of the good dough of stewardship; patience to wait for the dough to rise and bake.*

Keep in mind that a steward's life is not a paint by number occupation. Let's take up our brushes and oils and splash bold strokes on the stewardship canvas. So what, if at first, people look at our pictures and say, "What is it?" or "Is this art?" In our heads, from reading scripture, we carry the vision of what is good and beautiful, and one day...

Calling All Committees!

As part of our efforts to expand our communication capabilities, the Development Office is updating our Stewardship Committee Contact list. We want to share this newsletter, along with resource updates, seminar announcements and other pertinent information with every parish stewardship committee member. Please take a moment or two to update the contact information for your parish stewardship committee roster.

Go to <http://www.archmil.org/Stewardship-Contact-Update.htm> to input or update your committee contact information.



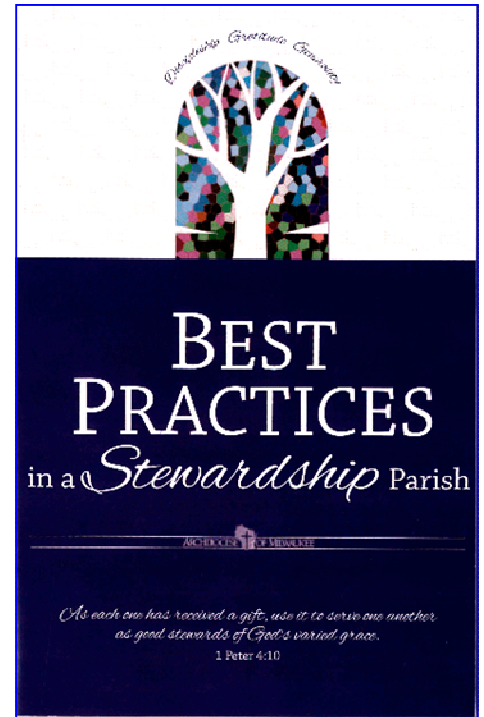
Help us spread the good news!

Best Practices Seminar Update

Over 300 parish leaders from 92 parishes across the archdiocese attended the *Best Practices in a Stewardship Parish* seminars. The feedback from participants was very positive and the *Best Practices* booklet, a component of the seminar presentation, was mentioned in many of the seminar evaluation sheets as a powerful and thought provoking resource.

There have been many requests for additional copies of the booklet which is now available on-line.

To access this resource, type *parish stewardship* into the search box on the Archdiocese of Milwaukee homepage (www.archmil.org). Click on the link to the booklet which will appear in the smart-search box to access a PDF file of the complete booklet. The booklet can also be found in the “Toolbox” on the parish stewardship homepage at www.archmil.org/offices/parish-stewardship.htm.

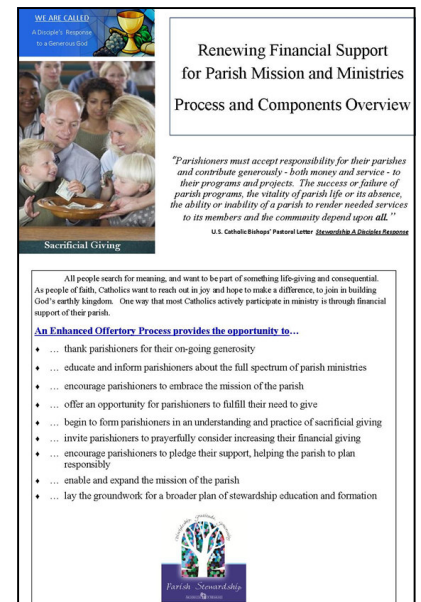


Increased Offertory Program Components

The way many Catholics participate in active ministry is through financial support of their parish. Conducting an annual renewal of pledged support is a “best practice” that has benefits for parishes *and* for individual parishioners.

If your parish is planning an annual renewal of “Treasure”, the *We Are Called* program components are available to help you maximize your efforts.

The process includes elements and timelines designed to be flexible according to parish needs and resources. Sample letters, brochures, bulletin articles and homily “helps” are just a few of the resources available. All of the components can be accessed from the “Toolbox” on the parish stewardship homepage of archmil.org. (Titan log-in is required.) If you would like additional information about the *We Are Called* program contact Barb Vite at (414) 769-3331 or viteb@archmil.org.



Learn more about the methods, tools and strategies to inspire parishioners, increase giving and build strong faith communities by attending an informative seminar;

Enhancing Offertory: Increasing Financial Support for Parish Mission & Ministries

This seminar will include new resources and techniques to engage parishioners in a long-term vision for parish ministry; helping parishes plant and grow fruit-bearing trees - parishioners who are grateful givers.

See Page 5 for complete details

Enhancing Offertory

Increasing Financial Support Parish Mission for Parish Mission and Ministries



Methods, Tools & Strategies to inspire parishioners and build strong faith communities.

An Increased Offertory Process, employing sound development and fundraising best practices, can have a significant positive impact on parish finances. Parish leaders who are engaged in the process and implement a comprehensive strategy can expect an increase in annual envelope/offertory contributions of 15% - 20% in the first year. A thorough Increased Offertory Process also provides the opportunity to expand the conversation about the full scope and meaning of living stewardship as a way of life.

This seminar will explore the Increased Offertory Process in detail:

- Rationale for annual renewals of financial support (*We only have to do this once, right?*)
- General communications (*Setting the stage, offertory from a holistic perspective.*)
- Best practices for solicitation letters (*Yes, segmenting works!*)
- Lead donor strategies (*Engaging your strongest supporters.*)
- Timeline options (*One size does not have to fit all.*)
- Follow-up & Thank You processes (*Securing the gift and building relationships.*)

When and Where? Each session will run from 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Wednesday, September 11th	St. Charles Parish, Hartland
Thursday, September 12th	St. Francis Cabrini Parish, West Bend
Tuesday, September 17th	Archbishop Cousins Center
Thursday, September 19th	St. Francis Xavier Parish, Brighton

Catholics typically participate in ministry through financial support of their parish. The Increased Offertory Process utilizes the science and tools of development to spark a faith response - engaging and encouraging parishioners to make prayerful, planned and proportionate financial commitments to the parish.

Pastors and Parish Directors, Trustees, members of Pastoral Councils, Finance Councils, Stewardship Committees, Business Managers, and all parish leaders interested in growing the financial resources necessary to secure and expand parish mission and ministries are encouraged to attend.

Register at <http://www.archmil.org/enhancing-offertory.htm>

For more information, contact Barb Vite, Parish Stewardship Director

(414) 769-3331 viteb@archmil.org



**INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is a professional organization recognized internationally as a source of education, networking and information to advance the ministry of Christian stewardship as a way of life.

Founded in 1962, ICSC has over 1,200 members representing over 800 dioceses and archdioceses, parish communities, Catholic organizations and professional firms internationally.

There is still time to register!

Early bird rate extended to August 15th.

ICSC has been offering stewardship conferences to parishes since 1965. Each year the conference draws hundreds of participants who gather to exchange ideas, listen to marvelous speakers, learn, share and participate in the Eucharist together.

At ICSC conferences participants...

Come together as a Eucharistic people

The annual conference is a wonderful time of grace; a time where you not only learn more about stewardship, but are inspired and spiritually nourished by the gathering, by sharing with one another and by celebrating the Eucharist as the summit of each day.

Are inspired by engaging and knowledgeable speakers

Over 70 presenters give of themselves and share their experiences of stewardship. A planning committee of faith-filled Catholics from parishes and dioceses in North America and beyond work together to assemble insightful and engaging speakers who address interesting and timely topics.

Exchange new ideas

ICSC conferences draw together Catholics from all over the world to cultivate friendships, network and share new ideas in parish stewardship.

Come away with a renewed sense of energy and faith

Participants return to their parishes refreshed and invigorated, ready to share the beauty and richness of the Gospel call to stewardship with others.

If you want to...

- ◆ learn more about stewardship best practices
- ◆ see examples of stewardship communications from parishes nation-wide
- ◆ hear some of the most inspiring, nationally known stewardship speakers
- ◆ share ideas, discover new methods and get recharged and reenergized

...then, come to Dallas for the ICSC conference in September!

**For more information about the 2013 conference, or about parish membership in ICSC
go to <http://catholicstewardship.com>**