



# Parish Stewardship Discipleship, Gratitude, Generosity

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## **What we DO after we say we BELIEVE!**

Often times when we hear the word “Stewardship” we associate it with money. Stewardship is more than money. It is more than the concept of giving of our time, talents and financial resources. Stewardship is a Way of Life. It is recognizing that ALL we have is a gift from God, and because we are SO grateful for what we have received, we freely share those gifts with others.

In becoming involved with Stewardship at your parish, you have a wonderful opportunity. You are joining an empowering ministry that assists the work of all church leaders. You are also benefiting more than your parish. You are introducing people to a way of life that encompasses all aspects of their lives: family, workplace, community, school, parish, and the larger Church.

This manual is designed to provide you with the resources to begin or enhance your Stewardship efforts. It is based in the 1992 United States Bishops’ pastoral, “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response.” The manual begins with the formation aspect of Stewardship and specifically addresses the formation of Parish leadership. From there, specific tasks and elements of a Stewardship plan are presented to assist you in the development of your plan for the education and cultivation of the gifts of time, talent and financial resources of your parishioners.

Our office of Parish Stewardship and School Development is here to assist you in any of your Stewardship efforts. We provide formation for new or seasoned Stewardship Committees and parish staff. We assist in the formulation of specific plans and tasks, and are always just a phone call away for any advice you may need. You can contact us at 800-769-9373 x331 or x485 OR (414) 769-3331 or (414) 769-3485.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with all the parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

*Parish Stewardship Staff*

*Spring, 2004*



## Life is Your Gift

*Creator God, Life is your gift to me.*

*Through Baptism, you invite me to share the gift of my life in service to others. Be with me as I choose each day to show Your Presence in our world. Give me the courage and generosity to respond to Your love, to Your call.*

*I pray especially for those who serve you in ministry throughout our Parish and Archdiocese. 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 to build the Kingdom in our parish, our community and our world.*

*For if not us, who?  
If not here, where?  
If not now, when?  
If not for Your Kingdom, why?*

*We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

*Taken from U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter,  
“Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response”*





## **A Disciple's Response**

*Excerpts from the United States Conference  
of Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*

### **Introduction to the Pastoral Letter**

Three convictions in particular underlie what we say in this pastoral letter.

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, nor 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.

### **The Challenge**

In some ways it may be harder to be a Christian steward today than at times in the past. Although religious faith is a strong force in the lives of many Americans, our country's dominant secular culture often contradicts the values of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This is a culture in which destructive "isms" – materialism, relativism, hedonism, individualism, consumerism – exercise seductive, powerful influences. There is a strong tendency to privatize faith, to push it to the margins of society, confining it to people's hearts or, at best, their homes, while excluding it from the marketplace of ideas where social policy is formed and men and women acquire their view of life and its meaning.



# *The Call to Stewardship*

## **The Choice**

Christians are part of this culture, influenced by it in many ways. In recent decades many Catholics in particular have entered into the mainstream of American society. That has been a remarkable achievement. Often, though, this process also has widened the “split” between faith and life which Vatican II saw as one of “the more serious errors of our age” (*Guadium et Spes*, 43). Thus American Catholicism itself has taken on some of the less attractive values of the secular culture.

For example, although religious people often speak about community, individualism infects the religious experience of many persons. How to use people’s gifts and charisms, how to empower the laity, how to recognize the role of women, how to affirm racial, cultural, and ethnic minorities, how to overcome poverty and oppression -- these and countless other issues remain vexing questions, as well as opportunities.

Also, while many Catholics are generous in giving of themselves and their resources to the Church, others do not respond to the needs in proportion to what they possess. The result now is a lack of resources which seriously hampers the Church’s ability to carry out its mission and obstructs people’s growth as disciples.

The pastoral letter recognizes the importance of church support, including the sharing of time, talent, and treasure. But it situates church support in its broader context – what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

This also is the context of stewardship. Generous sharing of resources, including money, is central to its practice, and church support is a necessary part of this. Essentially, it means helping the Church’s mission with money, time, personal resources of all kinds. This sharing is not an option for Catholics who understand what membership in the Church involves. It is a serious duty. It is a consequence of the faith which Catholics profess and celebrate.

This pastoral letter initiates a long-term, continuing process encouraging people to examine and interiorize stewardship’s implications. At the start of this process it is important to lay out a comprehensive view of stewardship – a vision of a sharing, generous, accountable way of life rooted in Christian discipleship – which people can take to heart and apply to the circumstances of their lives. Concentrating on one specific obligation of stewardship, even one as important as church support, could make it harder – even impossible – for people to grasp the vision. It could imply that when the bishops get serious about stewardship, what they really mean is simply giving money.



# *The Call to Stewardship*

## **The Vision**

Jesus' invitation to follow him is addressed to people of every time and condition. Here and now it is addressed to us – Catholic citizens of a wealthy, powerful nation facing many questions about its identity and role in the waning years of a troubled century, members of a community of faith blessed with many human and material resources yet often uncertain about how to sustain and use them.

As bishops, we wish to present a vision that suits the needs and problems of the Church in our country today and speaks to those who practice Christian stewardship in their particular circumstances.

What we say here is directed to ourselves as much as to you who read these words. As bishops, we recognize our obligation to be models of stewardship in all aspects of our lives. We must be stewards in our prayer and worship, in how we fulfill our pastoral duties, in our custody of the Church's doctrine, spiritual resources, personnel, and funds, in our life-style and use of time, and even in such matters as the attention we give to personal health and recreation.

As we ask you to respond to the challenge of stewardship, we pray that we also will be open to the grace to respond. We pray that the Holy Spirit, whose gracious action conforms us to Jesus Christ and to the Church, will enlighten us all and help us to renew our commitment as the Lord's disciples and as stewards of his bountiful gifts.





## Who is a Christian steward?

### The Disciple's Vocation

The Christian vocation is essentially a call to be a disciple of Jesus. Stewardship is part of that. Christians are called to be good stewards of the personal vocations they receive. Each of us must discern, accept and live out joyfully and generously the commitments, responsibilities, and roles to which God calls us.

Jesus not only calls each of us to him, but also forms us and sends us out in his service. He knows our personal histories, our strengths and weaknesses, our destinies; he has a purpose in mind for each one of us.

This purpose is individual vocation. "Only in the unfolding of the history of our lives and its events," says Pope John Paul II, "is the eternal plan of God revealed to each of us" (Christifideles Laici, 58). Every human life, every personal vocation, is unique.

And yet the vocations of all Christians do have elements in common. One of these is the call to be a disciple. In fact, we might say that to be disciples – to follow Christ and try to live his life as our own – is the common vocations of Christians; discipleship in this sense is Christian life.

### Responding to the Call

Jesus not only calls people to him but also forms them and sends them out in his service. Jesus' call is urgent. He does not tell people to follow him at some time in the future but here and now – at this moment, in these circumstances.

### The Call to Stewardship

Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities, discipleship and stewardship, then make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord.

*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.*







## **The Call to Stewardship (continued)**

Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step forward, one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God's will. Stewardship plays an important role in the lives of people who seek to follow Christ. Christians must be stewards of their personal vocations. Catholics have a duty, too, to be stewards of their church: that community of disciples, that Body of Christ, of which they, individually and together, are the members, and in which "if one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy" (1Cor 12:26).

## **The Cost of Discipleship**

The way of discipleship is privileged beyond any other. But discipleship is not an easy way. It is costly because it requires a disciple for Jesus' sake to put aside the craving for domination, possession, and control, and grace because it confers true liberation and eternal life. It is costly, finally, because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner.

But all this is very general. To understand and practice this way of life, people need models to imitate. These exist in abundance in the holy women and men who have gone before us in the faith; while our supreme source of guidance is found in the person and teaching of Jesus.

## **Questions for Reflection:**

1. What is my unique personal vocation to which God has called me?
2. What gifts has God given me?
3. How do I/can I recognize the Lord's invitation to share my gift with others?
4. What are the obstacles to my responding freely to the invitation to share my gifts?
5. What responsibilities do I have as a disciple of Jesus?
6. What personal experiences have I had that helped me live my life as a disciple?
7. How is stewardship more radical than just sharing of time, talent and money?
8. If I were to be the ideal Christian steward, what would it cost me in terms of personal sacrifice and hardship?
9. How am I reaching out to invite others to recognize their gifts?  
What opportunities do I provide for them to use those gifts in service of others?



## **Lord, Source of All Gifts**

*Lord and Source of All Gifts,  
we, your people,  
rejoice in the fullness of  
Your generosity.*

*We thank you for those  
whose lives are visible signs  
of your love and blessing to others.  
Give us the courage to do the same.*

*Make us good stewards of all  
we have received, generously  
sharing our time, talents and  
treasure to build your kingdom  
of love and justice.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ  
in whom we begin and end all things.*

*Amen.*

*Taken from “ ‘Pray Always and Never Lose Heart’  
Luke 18:1  
A Treasury of Private Prayers  
for the Christian Steward”*





## **Leadership Formation**

*God does not judge us by how much we give  
but by how faithful we are in making that gift.*

There are many gifts among us! When we embrace Stewardship and *call forth* and *nurture* the gifts of all people, our parishes can be thriving, living testimonies to our faith. The ministries our parishes would be able to offer and the number of people affected by those ministries can be an incredible witness to the Spirit working within and among us. We *do* have all the resources we need in our own communities to become vibrant parishes.

One of the first steps is to develop plans that educate people about Stewardship so they can begin to recognize the gifts they have to offer. A true sense of Stewardship involves giving from our first fruits. So often, the tendency can be to give from what we have left over. When we understand Stewardship, then it is easy to see the abundance of gifts we and others have to offer. Giving from that abundance, rather than from a sense of ‘this is all I have left to give’ becomes a natural part of our lives.

That is why Stewardship is a conversion of the heart. It is a way of life. Stewardship will change us. It is very rewarding and joyful, however, when we truly place our trust in the Lord and share our gifts out of the pure joy of sharing; the old saying does ring true, “you will receive more than you give.”

As leaders in our parishes, we have the responsibility to ask people to do just what Jesus asked of his disciples: to give up their attachment to all that they possess, to place their trust in the Lord and follow Him. Jesus’ disciples were changed when they said ‘yes.’ Each of us needs to be changed in some way when we say ‘yes.’ What attachments will each of us leave behind as we begin or continue on our journey of Stewardship?

*Our mission as  
Stewardship  
professionals and  
committees is to  
engage people in  
ministry; to set  
people on fire to  
live out their  
baptismal  
promise to love  
God and others  
above all else.*





## *Responding to the Call*

Our mission as Stewardship professionals and committees is to engage people in ministry; to set people on fire to live out their baptismal promise to love God and others above all else.

Stewardship education is a continual process. The message of Stewardship may reach people at various times and in different ways. However, when parish leadership embraces Stewardship, it is most likely to thrive and be successful. Parishioners who have the experience of their leadership living lives of Stewardship are more likely to recognize this as an attainable goal. When parish leaders ensure that parishes are places of hospitality and help make people feel appreciated and needed, then parishioners will respond to the call of Stewardship.

How can those in parish leadership roles foster the Stewardship message throughout the ministries of the parish?

### **Parish Leadership Roles:**

- Pastor/Parish Director
- Pastoral Staff
- Parish Council
- Trustees
- Stewardship Committee
- All Committees of the Parish Council





## **Pastor/Parish Director**

The Pastor/Parish Director's commitment to Stewardship as a way of life is critical in a parish. How parishioners respond to the Stewardship education offered in the parish and what will be asked of them as baptized Catholics may in large part be due to the importance the Pastor/Parish Director places on this way of life. Public support of all phases of Stewardship education is necessary.

### **Some ideas for pastors to help parishioners live a life of Stewardship are:**

- incorporate Stewardship thoughts in homilies throughout the year
- prepare Stewardship homilies for the Stewardship weekends
- encourage the Parish Council to read about and study Stewardship
- utilize Archdiocesan training and consulting services for parish staff, Parish Council and Stewardship Committee
- help select lay witnesses and assist with their training
- thank people for all they do to serve God by serving others
- pray that people in the parish will grow spiritually as a result of their embracing Stewardship as a way of life.
- publicly support all elements of Stewardship as a way of life for the parish
- model Stewardship by making a financial commitment to the parish
- share your own Stewardship journey



## **Pastoral Staff**

The pastoral staff's support is also critical, as Stewardship is essentially intertwined throughout all the ministries of the parish. The staff has an important role in creating a hospitable atmosphere in the parish, helping to ensure all parishioners feel welcomed to share their gifts. Staff are central in helping parishioners discern their gifts to make the best match of their talents and the needs in the parish and community. When our gifts are drawn upon and used well, we are more likely to have a joyful, positive experience when we share them. Partnerships with pastoral staff will help facilitate this process.

### **Ideas for pastoral staff to help promote Stewardship as way of life:**

- **Director of Liturgy:** incorporate elements of Stewardship into the Liturgies, i.e. intercessions, music, orders of worship, commissionings and blessings, Stewardship commitment/recommitment opportunities
- **Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministry, and Day School Religion Teachers:** blend Stewardship education for children and youth into the curriculum; promote opportunities for children and youth to share their time and talents with the parish community
- **Director of Administrative Services:** create and maintain the technological systems that allow the parish to track gifts and the ability to communicate with parishioners
- **Business Manager/Bookkeeper:** from a Stewardship perspective, create various materials and messages to show parishioners the ministries their gifts are supporting, as well as all the ways all gifts of time, talent and financial resources are being used
- **Director of Human Concerns:** communicate and promote outreach activities which allow parishioners to share their gifts with the wider community
- **Parish Secretary:** ensure communication pieces are shaped through the lens of Stewardship and an atmosphere of welcome is created in the parish offices; facilitates the full completion of the Status Animarum for the Archdiocese, so the Office of Parish Stewardship has the information necessary from throughout the Archdiocese to be better able to assist in this area



## **Director of Stewardship**

There may come a time when the parish will want to consider a paid staff position for Stewardship. Adding a paid staff member provides a measure of consistency, accountability and coordination that may otherwise be missing. The Director of Stewardship's main responsibilities are to oversee the parish Stewardship effort and to act as a resource to the Stewardship Committee, parish staff and parish members. Along with the Stewardship Committee, they create a framework to help parishioners understand Stewardship as an expression of discipleship, as well as opportunities to cultivate time, talent and treasure.

There are a number of paid Stewardship Directors in parishes throughout the Archdiocese. The Archdiocesan offices of Parish Stewardship and Human Resources have prepared a sample job description for a Director of Stewardship which can be found in the Resource section.

### **Some of the responsibilities of a Director of Stewardship include:**

- annual Stewardship commitment/recommitment process
- new parishioner welcoming process
- follow-up and acknowledgment of gifts
- Stewardship messages for various vehicles of communication
- Stewardship education for committee, staff, parish
- annual pastoral report
- time, talent, and financial resource cultivation





## **Parish Council**

The commitment of the Parish Council to Stewardship education for the parish is just as critical as the Pastor's commitment. Understanding Stewardship as our call as baptized is important to understanding our mission as Church. All Stewardship efforts flow from that. Generally, people will respond positively to those who inspire and challenge them.

The Parish Council, as the visioning and policy-making body, has a leading role in Stewardship efforts. When "Stewardship" is the vision of the Parish Council, the work of all committees and ministries will flow from that vision.

### **Some ideas for Parish Councils to help with Stewardship education**

**are:**

- spend time reading about and studying Stewardship in order to fully understand its meaning and focus
- commit the parish to conduct an annual Stewardship effort of time, talent and financial resources
- form a Stewardship Committee to develop and implement Stewardship efforts in the parish
- commit the parish to carry out Stewardship awareness efforts throughout the year
- thank people for all they do to serve God by serving others
- facilitate Stewardship discussions among committees
- ensure the Parish shows accountability for all gifts received – monetary and gifts of time
- encourage the parish to set an example for the parishioners by giving a portion of its offertory to community agencies and/or by committing to provide volunteers for community projects
- work to ensure that Stewardship is not just a one-time activity, but continues as an ongoing part of parish life
- publicly support all elements of Stewardship as a way of life for the parish
- evaluate "faithfulness" not "success"





## **Parish Council Standing Committees**

To be successful in Stewardship, the Parish Council as the leadership body must embrace Stewardship as a way of life in their parish community. This can then more easily become a vision of church all the committees and ministries share in. When Stewardship is the vision of the Pastor and Parish Council, all the committees then develop their mission statements to reinforce that vision through their ministries. While the Stewardship Committee's primary function is to facilitate this way of life throughout the parish, all committees have a role.

Regular communication between the Stewardship Committee and the other standing committees of the parish is very important. The Stewardship Committee should create ways to ensure that this happens. The key foundational element of Stewardship is that of building a caring and welcoming community. That is not the sole responsibility of one committee, but of everyone in the parish.

### **Some of the responsibilities of Standing Committees in the area of Stewardship:**

- assists in building a caring, welcoming community
- evaluates and responds to the needs of various populations within the parish, i.e. elderly, homebound, economically disadvantaged, young families, new parishioners, children . . .
- makes it a priority to respond to and thank people who share their gifts
- finds various ways to invite people into ministry
- creates ministry position descriptions
- develops ongoing training and formation for parishioners involved in their area of ministry



## **Stewardship Committee**

It is important to have an active Stewardship Committee to keep Stewardship integrated throughout the ministries of the parish, and to keep Stewardship education as a process that happens all year long, not just at certain times of the year. A Stewardship Committee devoted to this will ensure that proper attention is given to these efforts. The recommended committee model by the Archdiocese should be followed: The Stewardship Committee, as the standing committee of the Council, is the visioning/guiding body for this area of ministry. Subcommittees or task groups can be formed to help implement the work that flows from the vision.

The Stewardship Committee description taken from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Parish Committee Resource Book can be found in the Resource section.

### **Some of the responsibilities of the Stewardship Committee:**

- oversees the ongoing Stewardship efforts of the parish
- develops plans for educating the parish and harvesting the gifts of its parishioners
- collaborates with committees of the parish to incorporate Stewardship throughout all areas of ministry
- creates plans to ensure all parishioners, new and current, feel they are a valuable part of the parish



## **Stewardship Education for Children and Youth**

### *Stewardship Prayer for Children*

*Dear Jesus,*

*I thank you for everything you have given me.  
My gifts of time and talents are precious gifts,  
enable me to use them to do your will.*

*I offer you this day all my words, actions and  
good intentions to reflect my love for you and  
my neighbor.*

*Please help me realize that I need to share these  
gifts and all my gifts with the Church and others,  
help me to be generous, patient, forgiving and holy.*

*Amen.*

*‘Pray Always and Never Lose Heart’ Luke 18:1  
A Treasury of Private Prayers for The Christian  
Steward”*



If Stewardship is central to the way of life for our parish communities, then nurturing this in our children and youth as they grow into young adults is a natural part of the Stewardship plan. When our youngest community members have outward experiences of showing gratitude for their gifts and sharing to help others, they will most often carry that into their adult lives. Include Stewardship education not only in religious education programs, but in the parish school, as well. The Office of Parish Stewardship has many resources that can aid in developing plans for this. One very helpful resource is a curriculum guide for Stewardship education for children with grade-specific activities. The Resource Section of this manual also contains materials which can be helpful in this area.



## **Ideas for Children and Youth Stewardship Education:**

- enlist the support of the pastor, staff, Parish Council, principal
- educate the parish of the Children and Youth Stewardship effort; develop special communications to families with children and youth
- devote a special section in the bulletin to Stewardship for Children and Youth
- compile a separate time and talent list for children and youth; include adult ministries that would welcome their participation
- consider children's contributions envelopes with space for including how they have shared their time and talents
- form a Children and Youth Stewardship Committee as a subcommittee of your Stewardship Committee to address the needs of Children and Youth Stewardship
- train youth to serve as Eucharistic Ministers, Hospitality, Ushers, Lectors
- invite an articulate, involved young person to be a lay witness

All the faithful have a role in Stewardship, which is essential for carrying out the Church's mission. No matter how old, what level of income or vocation in life, we are all baptized into one Church. As the Bishops' state in their pastoral letter:

“We are . . . obliged to be stewards of the Church – collaborators and cooperators in continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church's essential mission. This mission – proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying – is our task. It is the personal responsibility of each one of us as stewards of the Church.

All members of the Church have their own roles to play in carrying out its mission:

**all Catholics**, who give generous support – time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances – to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church;

**parishioners**, who work in concrete ways to make their parishes true communities of faith and vibrant sources of service to the larger community;

**parents**, who nurture their children in the light of faith;

*U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter,  
“Stewardship: A Disciple's Response”*



## Increase our Awareness

*Dear Lord,*

*Thank you for helping us recognize and answer  
Your Call to be here today.*

*We pray for increasing awareness of Your messages to us:  
Through the people You send into our lives who need us.  
Through the struggles we face from day to day,  
And in the quiet moments when we pray.*

*We ask for Your guidance  
As we strive to answer our baptismal call to live as true  
disciples of Christ,  
Loving You,  
And in gratitude for all You have given us,  
Loving and caring for others.*

*Help us to recognize and help others to recognize,  
That we make a difference,  
In our own parishes, communities, the world and the  
larger Church,  
In how we use while we are here,  
The gifts You have given us:  
Earth and all of its wonders,  
Time – to pray, work, play, and love,  
Talents and abilities,  
And material resources.*

*Amen.*

*(Theresa C. Torricelli,  
Diocese of Knoxville in Tennessee)*

*Taken from “ ‘Pray Always and Never Lose Heart’  
Luke 18:1  
A Treasury of Private Prayers for the Christian Steward”*





## A Stewardship Plan

Stewardship formation and education and how it is central to our lives as baptized Christians is the foundation on which we should build our Stewardship plan. Whether a parish community or an individual, it takes an act of faith to make the decision to live as a steward of God's gifts. By sharing of our gifts of time, talent and financial resources from our first fruits, not from what we have left over, we are trusting that God will take care of us and will give us all that we need. There is a tremendous freedom that comes with letting go of the fear of not having enough.

We need to have practical steps in place, however, to harvest the gifts of our parish communities. Sometimes it is the action that helps transform our hearts. His Excellency, the Most Reverend Eugene J. Gerber, D.D., Bishop of Wichita in Kansas, explains "*We can't wait for our attitudes to change our behavior. Stewardship is a decision to change our behaviors NOW and our attitudes will change.*"

Bishop Gerber was instrumental in setting the direction for Stewardship to take hold throughout the parishes of the Diocese of Wichita in 1985. A conscious decision was made for the entire Diocese to begin no matter what point parishes were at in the Stewardship education process. Bishop Gerber explains that it was easy to trust because they had a living, breathing model of Stewardship in St. Francis of Assisi Parish, which was, and is to this day, a thriving Stewardship parish.

When Stewardship plans are formed, it is important to create ways to make visible members of our own parishes who are our models of Stewardship. We need to see that this is an attainable, joyful way to fulfill our lives. It is also important to remember to integrate Stewardship for children and youth in our plans. Messages and activities that call forth their gifts in service of the community are extremely important. If we take the time to form our young parishioners now, they will have the opportunity to grow into adulthood with the experience of living as a steward of God's gifts. What better gift could our parishes give to their youngest members?

So, where do we begin? How do we create a plan with action steps and timelines for our parish?



## The Seven Signs of Stewardship

*Bishop Robert Morneau, Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin, has been actively speaking about Stewardship as a way of life for many years. His poetry and other written works clearly demonstrate how Stewardship is alive and working in his life. Speaking at the Conference on Evangelization and Stewardship in April 1997, Bishop Morneau listed the following signs of a good Stewardship parish. He stresses when these seven elements are present, Stewardship not only works well, but renews parish life.*

- 1. Hospitality:** *Parishes need to welcome warmly all members. Everyone has something to contribute. Everyone is needed. Communities known for the vitality of their faith and for the quality of their service to people in need invariably inspire others to participate in ministry and to be generous in financial support.*
  - ? How do we welcome visitors as well as new parishioners?
  - ? Is there a process in place to welcome and orient new parishioners to the parish?
  - ? How do we involve current and new families?
  - ? Do we communicate that all gifts are welcome and appreciated?
  - ? Are the children and youth of the parish invited to share their gifts and to participate in parish Liturgies and activities?
  - ? How do we thank those who do share their gifts freely and generously?
  
- 2. Prayer:** *The authentic steward must be rooted in the sanctifying presence of Christ, which, when recognized, embraced and celebrated in prayer and in the sacraments, becomes spiritual nourishment and a bond of unity. The steward needs to be sustained, above all with constant contact with the Christian community, the parish, and with the opportunities that it offers for the nourishment of the faith.*
  - ? Are prayer opportunities that nourish and unite the entire community present?
  - ? Do our activities, events, meetings begin with and are they rooted in prayer?
  - ? Do we hold up prayer as a gift that is valued, even if that is the only gift someone can share with their parish?



## Creating the Vision

**3. Leadership:** *Parishes need a systematic way of infusing the theology and practice of Stewardship into the life of the parish, identifying opportunities for members of the parish to share their time, talent and financial resources, and establishing an ongoing process to recruit, recognize and thank those who share in all ministries.*

- ? Do we have a parish leadership structure in place that facilitates, models, and encourages Stewardship?
- ? Is there a process in place to form the lay leaders of our parish community?
- ? Are the youth represented in leadership groups?

**4. Recommitment:** *Stewardship is expressed not in a single program, but rather in a constant reminder to commit one's very self to the Lord. Annual recommitments inform and form in order to transform individual lives and the life of the parish.*

- ? Do we offer an opportunity of annual recommitment that informs and transforms individual lives and the life of the parish?
- ? What are the opportunities available to invite parishioners to prayerfully consider intentional, planned and proportionate gifts of time, talent and financial resources to their parish?
- ? Are there distinct time, talent and treasure opportunities for children and teens?

**5. Outreach:** *The parish as a whole needs to set aside a portion of its resources to serve persons in need in the parish, the community, the Archdiocese, and the universal Church. Ideally, parish outreach programs involve parishioners at the human level and create opportunities for human interaction.*

- ? How do we share our parish resources with the community and the greater Church?

**6. Lay Witnesses:** *A key ingredient is the personal witness of parishioners who have experienced a change of heart as a result of their commitment to Stewardship. Personal witness is essential to building a solid foundation for parish Stewardship.*

- ? Do we have an atmosphere that welcomes and calls forth our parishioners to witness their call to Stewardship?
- ? Is personal witness an ongoing component of liturgies or only at renewal time?





## *Creating the Vision*

**7. Accountability:** *Constant accountability is fundamental to good Stewardship. Parish Stewardship efforts require a visible commitment to accountability for the full range of parish activities – from the way decisions are made and carried out to the way resources are collected, managed, and used.*

- ? How do we care for the gifts of our parish community?
- ? Do we create communication pieces that reflect how we have used our parishioners' gifts?
- ? Have we shared the decision-making process with our parish community?
- ? How do we show we are responsible for the gifts shared with our parish community?
- ? Have we created Planned Giving opportunities for our parishioners to help in planning for the future?





## Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

A parish that places Stewardship as a priority will create an atmosphere of welcoming and hospitality that can be seen throughout all aspects of parish life. The following checklist will act as a guide in creating that atmosphere. Where is your parish in creating that atmosphere?

### 1. Our Parish Spiritual Environment

- The message permeating throughout the entire parish is one of **abundance** (as opposed to scarcity): **God has given us all the gifts we need in our parish community to thrive.**
- Our parish fosters an environment where we are encouraged to make the decision to live an *intentional spiritual life* – there is a **systematic plan for spiritual growth** for our parishioners.
- Our Pastor and Parish Leadership encourage and challenge us to live an **intentional spiritual life.**
- There is a **welcoming presence** throughout our Parish – at Liturgies, throughout ministries, through meeting one another. . .
- It is **easy** for people to get **involved.**
- Our staff and parishioners can be described as **friendly, helpful** and **welcoming.**
- People join for the sense of **belonging** and **community.**
- Prayer** is held up as a focal point in our lives.
- When new members join, parishioners, along with parish leadership, **welcome** and take the time to **orient** them to our parish, and describe the importance of Stewardship both in the parish and their own lives, and encourage them to share their gifts.



# Creating the Vision

## 2. Our Parish Physical Environment

- Our buildings are well maintained;  
well-lit;  
safe walkways and stairs;  
clean restrooms;  
clear signage (outside and inside);  
handicap accessible: entry ways (outside and inside), in church proper so all can lector, distribute the Eucharist, etc.
  
- The people involved in our **ministries** are a good representation of our **entire parish community**.

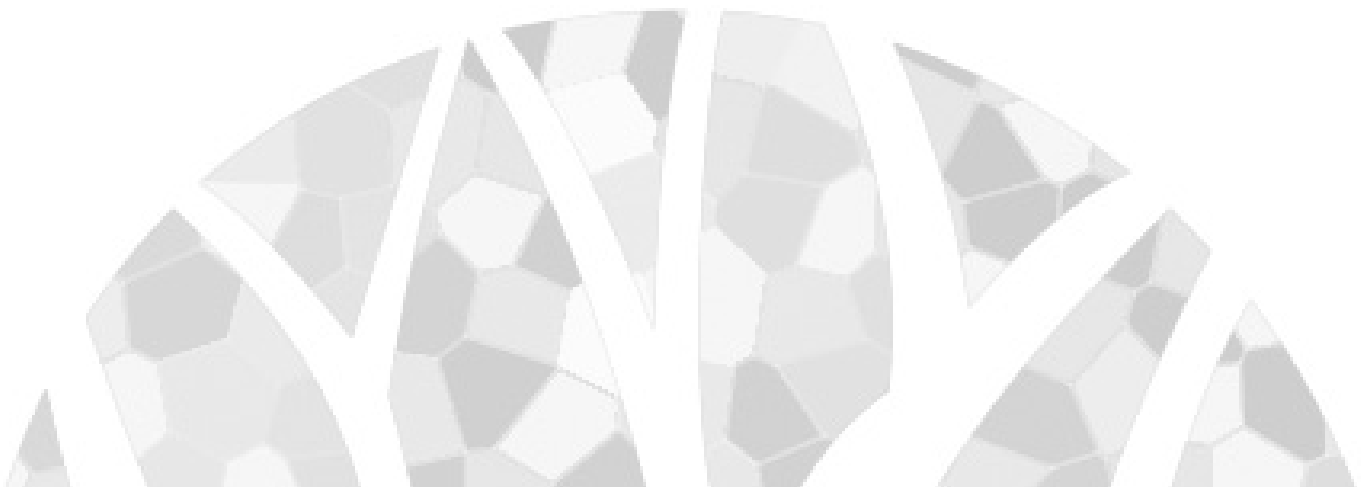
## 3. Our Parish Worship

- Our **Liturgy** is the **Source** (gives life to and nourishes our vision) and **Summit** (celebrates who we are becoming).
  
- The **homilies** break open the Scriptures and challenge us to live our baptismal call.
  
- Many parishioners** participate in our Liturgical ministries and a diversity of our parish membership is involved in our Liturgies.
  
- Participation** in our Liturgies from those in the pews is **overflowing**.
  
- Our **music** is varied, diverse and reflects the culture of our Parish.
  
- We recognize not everyone at our Liturgies are registered parishioners, and therefore create an atmosphere of **welcoming** and **inclusiveness** for our guests.



## 4. Our Parish Ministries

- Our Ministries **flow from our parish mission** and rely on the gifts of our members.
- Our Ministries **respond to the needs** of our Parish.
- When people come forward to **offer their gifts in service**, their gifts are honored, they are responded to quickly and a place for their gifts is found.
- People are **genuinely thanked** and **affirmed** for sharing their time and talents.
- When **we ask for participation**, the responsibilities and activities are clearly outlined with what gifts are needed and commitment time.
- Invitations are made in a variety of ways, with **personal invitations** always remaining in the forefront.
- There is an atmosphere that **everyone's gifts are welcome**.
- Formation, education** and **training** are important components in helping others succeed in using their gifts.
- We **publicly affirm** and **commission** those involved in our ministries.





## Welcoming New Parishioners

The way in which we welcome those into our parish communities speaks volumes of the parish culture. Oftentimes registering is the first opportunity people take advantage of to ask something of the parish. How the parish responds sets the tone for the parishioner's experience. Welcoming new members can be designed to best fit the parish community. This is a wonderful opportunity for current parishioners to connect with new members and help them feel a part of their new parish community.

A key part of a welcoming program for new parishioners should be an introduction to Stewardship. The staff member, parishioner, or team of parishioners who give the orientation to new members should include materials on the sharing of time, talent and financial resources.

When designing a welcoming program, it is important to include the following elements:

- have an *easy* registration process to become part of the parish community
- contact and welcome new parishioners in a very timely manner after registering
- include current parishioners and key leaders as part of the welcoming program
- introduce new parishioners to the parish community, i.e. through the bulletin, at Mass, special breakfast, post pictures of new members in high traffic areas
- introduce and explain the various ministries, including Stewardship as a way of life
- consider offering a small gift to new parishioners, such as a candle or bible
- design materials to explain the parish structure, ministries, staff, and opportunities for involvement



## **New Parishioner Welcome/Registration Packet**

The purpose of a welcome packet for new parishioners is to give information about their new parish, services offered and ways in which parishioners can offer their time in service of their parish. It is a way of saying, “this is your parish, here are the ways your parish can serve you, and here are the opportunities for you to be of service to others.” It is also an opportunity to thank parishioners for choosing this parish as their faith community.

### **Checklist of pieces to include in a packet:**

- Welcome Letter from the Pastor
- Parish Council/Committee Structure
- List of Council, Committees, Subcommittees, Ministries, Organizations with description of each, time commitment involved, when they meet. Also list how and who to contact for more information or to become involved.
- Liturgical Services  
Schedule of Masses and confessions; list of holy days; baptism and wedding guidelines
- Office Hours and Contact Information
- Parish Staff with Description of Duties
- Historical Information
- Parish Statistics
- Announcements of Special Events
- Financial Commitment Information with Pledge Card
- Parish School Information





## Parish Survey

A Stewardship parish identifies and responds to the needs of its parishioners. From time to time, it may be necessary to evaluate current ministry opportunities to determine if they continue to appropriately meet the needs of parishioners. It is also necessary to establish new ministries as needs arise. A parish survey is one tool that may help in evaluating current ministries and identifying new ministry opportunities.

When developing a survey, begin with the end result in mind. It is also important to know how you are going to tabulate the answers. Are you going to use a software program? Will it be feasible to ask questions that require a written answer? Knowing what information you want to gather will help in writing the questions. Be careful not to make the survey too long or too sparse.

The survey serves to communicate to each parishioner they are a valued member of the parish community because they are being asked for their opinion. Although survey questions will be based on the information each parish is seeking, sample questions are listed below:

***Rate the following elements of the Liturgy (Excellent = 5 Poor = 1):***

- Hospitality
- Sense of Community
- Ushers
- Lectors
- Eucharistic Ministers
- Music
- Homilies
- Appearance of Church
- Sound System
- Accessibility to church

Please list suggestions for improvement:

***What draws you to the parish?***

Community Music Homilies Location Mass Times School Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# Creating the Vision

**Have you, or would you, attend any of the adult education sessions?**

Yes No

If NO, why not:

- a. I was not aware of them
- b. The topics have not been of interest to me. I would attend sessions on the following topics: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. The time of the sessions do not fit into my schedule.  
I would attend at these times: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rate how well you believe the parish is serving the needs of the following (Excellent =5 Poor = 1 NA = not applicable)**

- Preschool Children
- Elementary School-age Children
- High School-age Teenagers
- Single Adults
- Families
- Single Parent Families
- Young Married Couples
- Retired

**My overall experience of the parish is:**

Very Negative Somewhat Negative Uncertain Somewhat Positive Very Positive

**The following questions can be answered by circling:**

**Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Uncertain, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree**

*I am familiar with the mission and goals of the parish*

*The parish offers a good balance of activities and programs for everyone*

*There is a strong sense of community among parishioners*

*The Pastoral Staff is responsive to the needs of parishioners*

*There is a need for more programs in the parish*

*Newcomers to the parish feel welcomed*

*Parishioners are encouraged and invited to become involved in parish activities*

*I would feel comfortable inviting a non-parishioner to attend Mass at the parish*

*The Masses appeal to the needs of all parishioners*

*The homilies are relevant and meaningful to my life*

*The music played during Mass creates an atmosphere of prayerfulness*

*The music played encourages me to sing*

**Open-ended questions could also be asked:**

*In general, what do you like most about the parish? Least?*

*What do you like most about the Liturgy at the parish? Least?*

*What do you like most about religious education programs at the parish? Least?*





## Ministry Fair

The Ministry Fair is an important component of the Annual Stewardship Plan. Planned as a celebration, the fair can accomplish the following goals:

- build community
- generate excitement about all the Parish ministries
- recognize and thank those who are involved in ministry
- educate parishioners and highlight the ministries

**The following checklist will aid in planning your Ministry Fair:**

### 1) Select Date and Times

- Schedule Time and Talent Commitment/Recommitment Weekend first
- Plan Ministry Fair to be held *before* Time and Talent Commitment weekend
- Consideration of timing of event: Some parishes are moving toward holding the Ministry Fair in the Spring to spark interest, and Treasure component in the Fall

### 2) Select Theme

- Promotes planning and focus

### 3) Layout of Hall/Grounds

- Decide set up of tables/booths/areas for each committee/ministry
- If planning to be held outside, plan for rain/inclement weather





# Creating the Vision

## 4) Communication

### Staff and Committees

- Before announcing the date, make sure there are no conflicts with the plans of other committees
- Invite representatives from committees to be part of the planning process
- Communicate theme with staff and committees
- Communicate purpose of the Ministry Fair
- Provide outline of Ministry Fair activities
- Find out if special equipment is needed for committees, i.e. VCR, electricity
- Let committees know where their booth or area is, amount of space for set-up
- Inform committees on what they need to provide for their booth
- Times of the Fair (when ministry booths should be staffed)

### Parish

- Bulletins
- Pulpit Announcements
- Special invitations sent to segmented groups, i.e. new members
- Lay witnessing by parishioner(s) on what it means to be involved and of service to their parish and community

### Liturgy Committee

- Incorporate something special into Liturgies during that weekend or in preparation, i.e. one representative from each committee of ministry processing in with one item that exemplifies their ministry, (banner, etc.) to place it at the altar or designated place
- Prayers of the Faithful
- Recognizing each committee/ministry and praying in gratitude for all they do
- Litany of ministries of the Parish



# Creating the Vision

## 5) Children and Youth

- Incorporate children's activities into the Fair, perhaps surrounding the theme
- Offer childcare; play activities at a specific area for the younger children
- Have youth as greeters, handing out name tags, etc.
- Invite ministries that involve youth/children to be represented

## 6) Follow Up

- Send thank you's to committees for participating and to all who were involved
- Evaluate the event: Planning Committee to debrief; feedback from attending committee members:
  - What worked well
  - What could be improved upon
  - How to get more people to attend
  - Comments heard from those who visited the Fair
- Report the results/successes/thank you's to the parish at large, through the bulletin, newsletters, pulpit





## **Time and Talent**

Inviting people to be Christian Stewards of their God-given gifts of time and talent is a major function of the Stewardship Committee. The Committee promotes Stewardship as a way of life within all aspects of the parish community. A comprehensive annual commitment/recommitment process is a critical part of the Stewardship plan. A checklist for Harvesting the Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure is located in the Resource Section. This lists all the elements needed for successful time/talent and financial commitment processes.

While many parishes conduct their time/talent and financial commitment campaigns together, others find it beneficial to conduct them separately, opting to hold the time and talent in the Spring, and Financial in the Fall. It is important that both of these components be conducted with the sense that parishioners are being invited into service and parish ministry. When Time, Talent and financial stewardship are part of the annual plan, the education and preparation necessary for successful campaigns naturally falls into place.

### **The following elements should be included to insure success:**

- communication of the plan with committees and ministries
- preparation of the parish community through communication tools such as bulletin, lay witnessing, ministry fair
- creation of written materials: ministry catalogue, letters of invitation and gratitude, forms for time/talent opportunities, annual pastoral report
- development of follow-up plans





## **Treasure**

Financial Stewardship is a very important component of any Stewardship plan. Without the financial contributions of parish members, parishes could not live out their mission through the many ministries that involve and serve parishioners and, in many instances, the larger community. In this area of Stewardship, more than any other, it is important that the foundation be properly laid and education has taken place. When people understand why they are being invited to share their financial resources, along with their gifts of their time and abilities, they will be more likely to give.

It is equally important that the Stewardship Committee develop ways to report back to parishioners how all of their gifts have been used in support of the parish – gifts of time, talents and financial resources. When people have been thanked and have been communicated with on how all of their gifts were cared for and used, they will know their investment is valued and makes a difference.

It is important that financial appeals in a parish always be made in the context of Stewardship – inviting parishioners to prayerfully consider what they can share with their parish out of their gratitude for what they have received from God.

The elements of the Treasure component of a Stewardship Plan are contained in the handout “Harvesting the Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure” found in the resource section.





## **Planned Giving**

A Stewardship Plan would not be complete without a Planned Giving component. When we think about *all* we have received from God, we are naturally deeply grateful. Everything we are and everything we have is a gift from God. How can we possibly give thanks for such incredible generosity? First of all, we can use those gifts well. We take care to manage God's gifts responsibly and wisely. We make sound decisions. We plan. We have a responsibility to pass on to future generations the blessings we have received.

Helping others plan for the future and make informed decisions is also practicing good Stewardship. The role of the Stewardship Committee is to raise parishioners' awareness of the opportunities that exist to leave a lasting legacy to the parish. Committee members need not be experts in the area of Planned Giving. They do not need to know all the practical aspects of the many giving vehicles available. There are attorneys and financial planners available to help people with that information. The Committee is responsible for incorporating Planned Giving education into the overall Stewardship plan for the parish. Experience and research show that significant gifts come from those who believe in the mission of the parish most often when they have become personally involved. Stewardship efforts are always geared toward helping people become involved in their parish.

### **Elements of a Planned Giving Plan:**

- Form a Planned Giving Advisory Committee.
- Develop (or review) policies and procedures for Gift Acceptance, Stock Gifts, Endowment Fund.
- Develop a Communication/Education Plan to build awareness.
- Discuss and Develop a Planned Giving Society.
- Incorporate planned giving education as part of your overall Parish Stewardship Plan.
- Screen and Rate Prospects to develop a Planned Giving Database.
- Inform prospects about Planned Giving and invite to a Planned Giving Seminar.



# Stewardship Education and Training of Parish Committees

The Bishops' pastoral letter "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response" is an invaluable and necessary resource for committees to use in their education. It is broken into manageable sections with reflection questions at the end of each section. Taking time at each meeting to reflect and discuss the pastoral letter section-by-section is a good way to begin Stewardship formation.

For a Stewardship plan to be successful, it will also be important to educate committees about the foundational elements of Stewardship: clear communication of the work of committees and ministries, the invitation to ministry, training and development, and appreciation of those who share their time and talents. Include committee education as part of your Stewardship plan.

**Clear Communication of the Work of Committees/Ministries:** It is to the benefit of all committees and ministries to have a written description of their work. The information will be useful to potential new members and is a source of information for the whole parish. The ministry catalogue created for new parishioners and the time and talent process is a good way to involve committees in developing descriptions for their work. In addition to explaining the work of the committee or ministry as a whole, it is important to explain what is expected of each member. A position description is strongly recommended. It shows the importance of the ministry that is needed in the parish and outlines exactly what is involved, including the time commitment. *A sample ministry position description follows this section.*

**Invitation to Ministry:** The way in which people are invited into ministry can make the difference to their becoming involved. Simply asking for help through the bulletin does not always get the best results. Recognizing the gifts others have to offer and personally inviting them to share their gifts in service of one another should be at the center of all Stewardship efforts. So often we don't realize or appreciate our talents and abilities as something that is valuable. However, if someone else tells us they see in us something they noticed we are good at (a gift), that can be the spark that is needed to set us on fire to begin to become involved.



## Creating the Vision

Asking someone personally to get involved, whether verbally or through a letter of invitation, will more likely produce a positive response. A welcoming attitude in the invitation is very critical, as well as identifying the reason why we are asking that person to become involved. Letting the person know of the gift that was noticed will help them make their decision in becoming involved and may put their mind at ease as to whether the ministry is a match for their talents. *A sample letter of invitation follows.*

**Training and Development:** Once people become involved in ministry, it is important to train them well and to give feedback along the way. This shows the value placed on those involved and their work. It also ensures the ongoing communication necessary to keep ministries developing. Once people know they will be trained in a particular ministry, not just when they begin but throughout their term, they may be more likely to participate. The type of training will need to be decided to fit each ministry. Training and formation for Eucharistic ministers will be different than for Parish Council members, but each should know the reason behind their ministry, expectations, and the practical information of the work of the committee or ministry. There is no ministry perceived as too small or insignificant that people should not have some type of formation. Proper training shows that all are critical to the parish living out its mission. It also shows that parish leadership is committed to supporting those involved in ministry.

**Appreciation:** Genuine gratitude shown to people goes a long way. Saying ‘thank you’ in various ways by key people helps those giving of their time to know it is recognized and appreciated. Signs of appreciation do not always have to be formal, such as an appreciation dinner. They can be simple acts of gratitude like a thank you card or recognition in the bulletin and from the pulpit. The many ways we have of saying ‘thank you’ ‘you are valued’ ‘you are needed’ are not only beneficial to the recipient. They also serve as reminders to the community that Stewardship is alive and well. They are opportunities to highlight those in our parishes who are living lives of Stewardship by sharing their gifts with the parish community.





# **Greeter at Liturgy Ministry Position Description**

**Purpose:** To create an environment of hospitality and welcome.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Be at your assigned station at least 20 minutes before Mass.
2. Greet people as they arrive.
3. Pass out worship aids as necessary.
4. Show people who are unfamiliar with the church location of the restrooms, nursery, etc.
5. Identify anyone who needs Eucharist brought to them in the pew because of illness or disability and notify Eucharistic ministry captain of their location.
6. Answer questions and assist people as necessary.
7. Arrange for a substitute from the greeter ministry list if you are unable to be at your scheduled Mass.

**Gifts Needed for this Ministry:**

1. Welcoming presence
2. Knowledge of the parish
3. Punctual
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

**Amount of Time Required:**

20-30 minutes, four times a year

**When Ministry is Performed:**

Before one of the weekend Masses: (list Mass times)

**Length of Commitment:**

One year. Renewable as desired.

**Training Provided:**

1. Greeter Hospitality training and orientation.
2. Printed guidelines, suggestions, greeter names and phone numbers, schedule.

**Responsible to:**

Greeter Coordinator



## **Letter of Invitation to Ministry**

Dear Tom,

We invite you to prayerfully consider the call to serve as a member of the Stewardship Committee. Your term would be for two years, renewable for one additional two-year term.

The Stewardship Committee is at an exciting point at this time in our parish. We have the wonderful opportunity, and challenge, of educating the parish about our baptismal call to use our gifts of time, talent and treasure in service of not only our parish community, but also the larger Church. Working to provide this communication and the tools for calling forth the gifts of others is what makes this so fulfilling. We are called to use our gifts to bring about the Kingdom of God, and we have Jesus as our model. How exciting as we come together for this common mission!

We are inviting you to serve in this area of ministry because of your commitment to the Church, the way you model a life of Stewardship, ability to follow through on tasks, organization skills, and skills in dealing with others.

We believe serving on the Stewardship Committee will give you the opportunity and satisfaction of using your gifts for the challenging task of bringing the Stewardship way of life to our parish. A position description is enclosed outlining the responsibilities and commitments. We know that since this involves investing your time and gifts, you will want to give this invitation serious thought and prayer.

I will call in a few days to discuss with you any questions you may have. It is our hope you say YES to this invitation to serve.

Sincerely in Christ,

Terry Duffy  
Stewardship Committee Chairperson



## **Preparing the Way**

There are many ways to harvest the gifts of time, talent and financial resources in a parish community. The methods contained in this section detail different approaches parishes can use to cultivate those gifts.

Because each of the parishes in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee has a distinct culture and circumstances, it is best that the parish choose its own method of securing commitments of time, talent and financial resources. What is universal and constant, however, is the meaning of Stewardship and the need to communicate that message to parishioners. The Office of Parish Stewardship and School Development conducts workshops and also works individually with a parish to tailor a program that is the right fit for its community.

Before a Time and Talent or Financial Commitment process gets underway, it is important to have a system for entering and updating parishioner information. Any time information is asked for it must be recorded and used in some way. A plan needs to be in place before responses are received. Having appropriate census software is part of that plan.

### **List Management:**

An accurate parishioner listing is essential for communication. Since mailings are sent on a regular basis at most parishes, your mailing list should be relatively up-to-date. If it is not, the parish should take the time to make the list more accurate. In the United States it is estimated that 20-25% of the population moves in any given year.

1. The most common mechanism for updating a list is to send “**Address Correction Requested**” mail twice a year. Because mail is forwarded for one year, each Address Correction mailing will catch those who have moved. When utilizing this service, parishes will receive back mail with new addresses. These pieces are not forwarded, and you will have to re-send them if they have moved within the area. Thus it is a good idea to utilize Address Correction when the information sent does not require an immediate response or does not announce an event that is to occur in the very near future. There is a per-piece charge for every letter that is returned.



## *Creating the Vision: Preparing the Way*

2. Another way to ensure an accurate list is to have **“We’ve Moved”** cards available in the church. Call attention to these cards in the weeks leading up to the Stewardship weekends.

3. The Archdiocesan Department for Development updates parish mailing lists every day based on the mailings we do for the Catholic Stewardship Appeal, Combined Collections, etc. If you update your list regularly with us you will also receive these corrections.

4. Finally, it is important to update addresses, all phone numbers (home, business, cell phone) and email addresses. Make sure all parishioner information is accurate. Updating sacramental information, births, deaths, job changes, etc. all show that the parish is on top of things. As soon as new information for parishioners is known, those changes should be updated in the system. Sometimes, however, information just does not reach the parish. For this reason, some type of parish census every two years is recommended. This can be done as simply as printing out the member information and asking people to mark any changes directly on the form provided, or as elaborately as designing a home visitation process. The goal is to have accurate information so the parish can serve its parishioners by knowing who they are.



# Methods for Time, Talent and Financial Commitments

Once the internal preparation is complete and Stewardship education has been taking place, the parish will need to determine how best to conduct their Time, Talent and Financial Commitment process. There are different methods and the parish will need to decide which is best suited for their particular circumstances. You may find that whatever method is chosen, some of the same components will be used for each.

Method 1: In-Church Commitment (*with mail and telephone follow-up*)

Method 2: Direct Mail (*with telephone follow-up*)

Method 3: Home Visitation (*with in-pew and/or mail and telephone follow-up*)

## Method 1: In-Church Commitment

### **Overview**

The In-Church Commitment Method provides an opportunity for the parish to collectively show support for Stewardship having an active part in each of everyone's lives. An important factor is preparing the community in advance of the commitment weekend. If people will be asked to prayerfully consider what they can return to the Lord in terms of their parish community, then they need to be given the time to do so. Therefore, asking people to do that before coming to church on commitment weekend will prove to be beneficial in their follow through to their commitment, because they will have taken the time to make the decision on what they can give back to their parish community.



# *Creating the Vision: In-Church Commitment*

## **Preparations**

Bulletin and pulpit announcements should be made the weekend before Announcement Weekend. These can be brief, simply pointing out the next two weekends will be Stewardship Weekends.

It will be necessary for the Stewardship Committee to meet with the Pastor, Director of Liturgy, and/or Liturgy Committee (whoever is responsible for coordinating the weekend Liturgies) in planning this weekend. Because collecting or bringing forward commitments of time, talent, financial resources will take place during Mass, it is important to have this coordinated so it becomes part of the prayerful atmosphere and ritual of the Mass.

Meeting with the ushers will also be important as they will be key in monitoring the process for each Mass. At least one member of the Stewardship Committee should be present at every Mass to ensure there are sufficient forms, cards, blank envelopes, and pencils, if needed. In addition, the Committee should make certain the responses are properly secured after each Mass.

## **Announcement Weekend**

A Stewardship Committee member should present a brief report at all Masses on Announcement Weekend, the weekend before Commitment Weekend. This could be tied in with a witness to their commitment to Stewardship. The bulk of the announcement should be short, approximately two minutes, and touch on the following:

- The purpose of the commitment of time, talent and financial resources.
- The date when all parishioners will receive the Stewardship brochure/information in the mail.
- A reminder that on Commitment Weekend, the completed Time/Talent forms and/or Financial Commitment card(s) should be brought to church.



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## **Lay Witness**

This is a natural time for lay witnessing to take place, but it should not be the only time of year the parish community has the opportunity to hear fellow parishioners share their Stewardship journey. The focus of the talk should be on the spiritual journey in striving to live as a disciple of Jesus. *Complete information on Lay Witnessing is available in the Resource Section.*

## **Homily**

The presider's homily, based upon the readings of the day, should touch on moving toward understanding Stewardship as a way of life; giving because we *need* to give and share of our resources to help build the kingdom of God as opposed to giving-to-a-need. It should stress that *all we have has been given to us by God* and as baptized we are responsible for caring for all the gifts we have been given, using them well, and sharing them generously. We all have something to share.

The homily should also explain that in preparation for Stewardship Weekend, it is an opportunity for parishioners to reflect upon the gifts they return to God. Parishioners should be asked to prayerfully consider if their gifts are in proportion to their gratitude for all they have received.

The homily should make the point that sharing of our time, talent and financial resources are part of a Stewardship way of life. We have Jesus as our model. Our act of giving is a step forward on our journey toward eternal life.

## **Liturgy**

Paying special attention to Stewardship through the various elements of the Mass such as the music selections for those Liturgies and petitions will help complete the special focus. Working with the appropriate person or committee to incorporate prayerful means of collecting the cards and forms will also enhance people's experience of offering their gifts in service of the parish community.



# *Creating the Vision: In-Church Commitment*

## **Stewardship Information Mailing**

The Stewardship information should be prepared well in advance of Announcement Weekend. The mailing should be stuffed, sealed, stamped and then mailed on the Monday following Announcement Weekend.

In preparing the letter, special care must be taken to adhere to the preparation instructions detailed above. Because the letter is the primary communicator of the Stewardship message, it must be personalized and mailed first class. Include a supporting brochure in the mailing that more fully describes Stewardship in the parish and the various ways to share gifts.

## **Suggestions for a Successful Mailing:**

- Consider changing the outside envelope in some way to catch the attention of parishioners. Look at adding a graphic or a tag line that communicates that this is a different sort of parish letter; it contains important information about Stewardship as a way of life. This type of envelope should then be used for all follow-up mailings about the Stewardship program. Parishioners will begin to associate this phrase or symbol with Stewardship and know that the message contained is important.
- Include with the letter a commitment card/form and giving guide. Parishioners should be instructed to fill out the card/form and return them the following weekend.
- Work with the appropriate person or committee to design a special way of collecting the cards/forms during the Liturgy. They can: (1) be placed in the collection basket at the Offertory; or (2) the presider can ask those who have their cards/forms to approach the altar and place them in a special basket. This latter option allows for a greater sense of community and shared experience and is highly recommended.
- Include on the commitment card/form the opportunity for people to check off that they are not able to make a financial commitment at this time, keeping in mind that it should not be seen as an 'easy out.' We have to acknowledge, however, that there may be exceptional circumstances that would not allow someone to commit. Also, because of the amount of people moving, you may want to consider adding a box that allows people to tell you they are no longer parishioners.





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- Also on the commitment card/form, include the opportunity to make a commitment to 'prayer'. This can take the form of public and private prayer on the form.
- Include a return envelope, even with this first mailing if you are encouraging parishioners to bring their completed commitment cards/forms to Mass, to insure confidentiality.
- Investigate opening a Business Reply Mail Account (BRMA) with the post office to help save postage on any number of mailings you might be doing. When a return envelope is printed with your BRMA account number, you will only pay postage on the envelopes that actually go through the postal system.

### **Acknowledgments**

Everyone who turns in commitment cards/forms for time, talent and financial resources should receive a personalized thank you from the Pastor or Parish Director which acknowledges their pledge and restates what they said they have committed to. It should be written with a sense of gratitude for the gifts they are offering to their parish. This letter ideally should reach parishioners within two weeks of receipt of the pledge card. This immediacy will help to reinforce their commitments.

### **Commitment Weekend**

An announcement should be made at each Mass as to how the collection of commitment forms/cards will take place. The ushers can collect them, or parishioners can be invited to place their commitments in a basket at the foot of the altar. If the latter is chosen, it is then critical that plans be made with the person or committee responsible for preparing the Liturgies to incorporate the appropriate music, ways of processing up to the altar, etc. Whatever is decided there should be short instructions given. Remember to thank people for their generosity.

Also remember parishioners will have been asked to prayerfully consider what they can commit to giving and to come to Mass with their completed commitment forms/cards. Extras will be placed in the pews if someone has forgotten theirs at home. This weekend at Mass should not be the first time parishioners are asked to make their commitments. If we are



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serious about wanting people to make a prayerful and thoughtful commitment, then they will need to be offered the proper time to do so. Asking people to pray about their commitment, making that decision at home, and coming prepared to Mass is the focus.

### **Follow-Up Weekend**

It is practical to assume you will not collect all commitment forms/cards during Commitment Weekend. Arrangements should be made the following weekend for another opportunity to return the forms, and parishioners should be told about this Commitment Weekend. A member of the Stewardship Committee could be on hand after all Masses to collect any forms. Parishioners should also be offered the opportunity to reply ‘no commitment.’ One of the goals should be to receive everyone’s form/card, so they will not be contacted during further follow-up procedures.

### **Mail Follow-up with Those Who Have not Returned a Card**

Reminders should be made from the pulpit and in the bulletin on Commitment Weekend and the following weekend to remind those who have not yet returned a commitment card/form. Three weeks after Commitment Weekend, a reminder letter with another commitment card/form and materials should be mailed to all nonrespondents. The letter should not be judgmental or accusatory, but explain why a response is asked for and offer another opportunity to respond. In this day of very busy lives and huge amounts of paper being given to us from every direction, it is possible that some parishioners may have misplaced their materials and have been away Commitment Weekend. This letter will also tell parishioners that a telephone campaign will be conducted in the coming weeks to speak with all of those who have not yet returned their cards/forms. This mailing gives them the opportunity to submit their commitment before the telephone efforts begin. A return envelope should be enclosed with this follow-up mailing.



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### **Telephone Follow-up**

After the initial follow-up mailing has been sent, but before any quarterly reminders are mailed, you may wish to use a telephone follow-up strategy to maximize the number of commitments and responses you receive. Effective telephone follow-up is best done in a group setting with ten to twelve callers. The telephone campaign should be scheduled for a Sunday and Monday night four weeks after Commitment Weekend. Good times to call on Sunday and Monday evenings are from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Over two nights with that number of people involved, you should be able to get through about 700-800 names. It is important to select nights that do not conflict with any scheduled parish, school, community or sports activities.

It is recommended that you *not* divide up the cards and send them out to parishioners to call from home. Callers will tend to procrastinate, not make the calls at all, or lose cards. There is a certain positive energy when calling in a group that makes a telephone drive much more successful.

Try to secure a facility for calling where the group can be in the same proximity. Banks, law offices, investment groups and telemarketing companies are all places that have loaned the use of their telephones for this type of effort. It is essential that, if you go outside the parish, clear directions must be given to callers regarding building access and parking. Definite arrangements should also be made with someone from the company to ensure that the offices are open and to secure any special instructions for the use of the phones. Also, be clear about the company's policy regarding food and beverages at the desks.

Another option is to ask parishioners to donate their cell phones for an evening and conduct the phone calling at the parish.

It is best to gather the volunteers at 6 p.m. for a half hour of training before calling begins. Consider providing sandwiches and beverages so that the callers can come right from work if necessary. During the training, you should review the script and a sheet describing common questions callers may receive. The following are a sample script and typical questions parishioners ask callers.



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## Sample Telephone Script for Stewardship Calls

Please Remember:

- Relax.
- Smile while you are talking (people will “hear” your smile).
- Speak sincerely.
- Speak slowly.
- Say the name of the person several times until you become comfortable with the pronunciation.
- You are a very special person and so is the person you are calling regardless of the outcome of the call.

### BASIC SCRIPT:

Hello. This is \_\_\_\_\_. May I speak with \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Be sure to speak with an adult Catholic — the names are highlighted on your information cards or sheets.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *(use the first name)*, this is \_\_\_\_\_ *(use your first name)*, a parishioner from \_\_\_\_\_ Parish.

Father \_\_\_\_\_ asked me to follow up with you on your return of your Stewardship commitment card. I am calling to see if you have any questions. *(Pause and wait for a response and/or questions.)*

Father \_\_\_\_\_ wants us to ask everyone to try and take an affordable, reasonable step toward increased giving, but that amount is entirely up to you. You know your situation the best.

I would just like to encourage you to fill out and mail the commitment cards to Father \_\_\_\_\_ in the envelope provided or bring it with you to church this weekend. Do you have any questions I can help you with, or do you need me to mail you another card? *(If another card is desired, verify the name and address and indicate that they will be sent information in the mail during the next few days. Notify the parish office accordingly the next day.)* Thank you very much for your time and have a good evening.



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If they would like to fill out a commitment card over the phone::

\_\_\_\_\_ (*use the first name*), thank you for your help; we really appreciate your commitment. Have a good evening.

If they state they will not be making a commitment:

I can respect your decision. Thank you for your time and support. Please keep our parish and the needs of our community in your prayers. I'll let the parish office know you are unable to make a commitment at this time so you will not be contacted again this year. Good night now. (*Mark "\$0" on your record keeping system so that the person will not be solicited again until next year.*)

If you reach an answering machine:

*Do not leave a message the first time through your cards. At the end of the session, if you still get an answering machine, please leave the following message:*

I am calling for \_\_\_\_\_ (*use the first name*). This is \_\_\_\_\_ (*your name*), a parishioner from \_\_\_\_\_ Parish. Father \_\_\_\_\_ asked me to follow up with you on your Stewardship commitment. I am calling to see if you have any questions. We will call back shortly. Thank you.

Callers should record the results of their calls on the calling cards. If the parishioner contacted mentions any special circumstances, those should be noted.

Calling should be scheduled to end by 8:30 p.m. Try to stick as closely to this schedule as possible. By respecting your parishioners' time, you will ensure their future participation.



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## **Suggested Remarks for Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why do I need to make a written commitment?**

“The commitment form is designed to help you make a financial decision based on faith as to how much you are going to give to the parish on a weekly basis. The pastor and Parish Finance Committee need to know the approximate amount of parish income in order to meet the parish budget for the coming year. Just as you know how much income you will have for planning for your expenses, the parish needs to have an idea, as well. This way we can adequately prepare to offer the ministries that are important to the mission of our parish.”

### **2. If someone suggests they are having financial difficulty and are unable to make a commitment:**

*Express empathy* — “I’m very sorry to hear that ... but I want you to know that we’re here to help. This is a two-way street. We don’t just ask for help, but we try to also be of assistance during tough times in people’s lives. May I have someone from the parish contact you?” *If the answer is no, let them know that if they change their mind they can receive help by contacting the Parish Office.*

### **3. If they ask for guidance about how much to commit:**

“That’s entirely up to you. You know your situation best. This year we’re asking everyone to try and take an affordable reasonable step from what they have been giving last year; but examine your heart. When you are at peace about the size of your gift (and do not find yourself making excuses for its size) and when you know in your heart that you have been completely honest with God and yourself, then your gift is the proper size.”

### **4. If the person is fearful of the unknown future (i.e., may lose their job, ill health, large medical bills, etc.) or is uncomfortable with signing or making a “legal commitment”:**



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“That is something you must decide for yourself. But this intention is not a legal obligation and we do not ask for a signature. Your commitment is simply a statement of your intention to provide support for our parish ministries. If your situation changes, just call Father or write the Parish Office to change your commitment. Through parishioners making financial commitments, our parish can plan for its ministries and better utilize the resources people have shared.”

### **5. What is Stewardship?**

Stewardship begins with the recognition that everything we have has been given to us by God — our time, our talents and our financial resources. Our Parish Stewardship education promotes an understanding of giving time, talent and financial resources as an essential part of a Christian lifestyle. It is planning our giving. It is giving first to God. It is giving proportionately in relation to what we have received. It is giving sacrificially, or from our substance, rather than from our excess. And, it's giving because we have a NEED to give because we are so grateful for all we have received.

### **6. What about all the people in my parish who give nothing at all?**

“This used to bother me until I realized that the real question here is not about others; the real question is: What about me? I had to ask myself whether my gift was a sacrifice, or was I giving only what is left over after taking care of myself?

I discovered that it is easy to find in my own heart the seeds of the faults I could so easily spot in others. I decided that my giving should not be based on what others give. Giving for me is going to involve a personal faith decision that I would have to make for myself based on my income and ability to give.”



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## **Following Up After the Telephone Campaign**

After the calls are completed, the calling cards should be divided into the following categories:

1. Will make a commitment and will send card back
2. Made a financial commitment over phone, recorded on a card
3. Unable to make a financial commitment at this time
4. Left message on answering machine
5. No answer
6. Special circumstances that need follow-up
7. No longer a parishioner

Each group needs to be followed up in special ways. Suggested follow-up includes:

### *Category 1: Will make a commitment and will send card back*

This group should be sent a note thanking them for considering a commitment and urging them to return their cards as soon as possible. Another card and return envelope should be sent with this note.

### *Category 2: Made a financial commitment over the phone*

This group should receive an acknowledgment letter similar to the one sent to those who returned their pledge cards before the telephone campaign. The letter should be sent out within one week of the phone drive.

### *Category 3: Unable to make a financial commitment at this time*

This group still needs to get a follow-up letter. This letter should insure that their parish membership is not contingent upon their financial contributions, while leaving the door open to future commitments. Be appreciative for whatever they may be able to contribute in the future, and assure them that if they need any assistance from the parish, to please contact the pastor or the parish office.





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### *Categories 4 & 5: Left message on answering machine or no answer*

Both of these groups should receive a letter saying that fellow parishioners attempted to call them during the telephone campaign but were unsuccessful in reaching them. A new pledge card and return envelope should be included. If there are parishioners on this list whom you suspect may have special concerns or who need extra attention, you should assign their cards to parish staff or trustworthy parishioners for follow-up from home.

### *Category 6: Special circumstances that require follow-up*

Some parishioners will relate special situations they are facing such as illness, unexpected job loss or dissatisfaction with some aspect of parish life. These cards should be given to the appropriate person on staff so that there is a professional follow-up. This is an ideal opportunity for the parish to show that the parish is not just interested in securing a time, talent or financial commitment, but also have care and concern for each individual member of the community.

### *Category 7: No longer a parishioner*

Even though they are no longer parishioners, this group should also be sent a follow-up letter. They should be thanked for their time as members of the parish, and assure them if they ever find themselves back in the area, there will be a place for them again as a member of the parish. Let them know they will be kept in the prayers of the community, and ask them to remember this parish in their prayers, as well.



## **Method 2: Direct Mail with Telephone Follow-up**

### **Overview**

Utilizing mail to secure Stewardship commitments has certain advantages. There are few parishioners to recruit, no special meetings and — other than postage and printing — few costs to consider. It also allows time for parishioners to thoroughly read the information presented, and the time to pray and consider at home what they are able to commit to for the year.

There are also certain disadvantages. The number of pieces of mail any one household receives in a year has skyrocketed. This information overload has caused many people to be very selective in the mail they actually open and read. There is also no sense of a communal experience when a parishioner is sitting by himself or herself reading about their call to Stewardship, the parish's needs and then making a commitment.

However, a mail program can be successful if certain guidelines are adhered to and certain key steps for the in-pew process are followed to prepare parishioners for the mailing they will receive. A telephone component as a follow-up is also a critical part of this method.

### **Announcement Weekend**

Because this method does not have the same type of personal or community impact as the home visit and in-pew methods do, it is most critical that an atmosphere of anticipation and excitement be generated before the letters are received. Thus, Announcement Weekend, which is the Saturday and Sunday prior to the letter mailing, must be focused on conveying the importance of the Stewardship effort that is being launched.

As in the in-pew method, the Stewardship Committee Chair should be prepared to give a "state of the parish" talk at all of the Masses. This will give the parishioners the practical information they need to make a decision about their gifts.



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- This talk should be Stewardship focused and not merely a listing of all the needs of the parish.
- It should describe the purpose of the commitment of time, talent and financial resources.
- It should also inform parishioners of the date when they will receive the Stewardship brochure/information in the mail.

### **Lay Witness**

This is a natural time for lay witnessing to take place, but it should not be the only time of year the parish community has the opportunity to hear fellow parishioners share their Stewardship journey. The focus of the talk should be on the spiritual journey in striving to live as a disciple of Jesus. *Complete information on Lay Witnessing is available in the Resource Section.*

### **Homily**

Even more importantly, the presider should focus the homily on the theology of Stewardship. The homily, based upon the readings of the day, should touch on moving away from giving to a need and moving toward recognizing our need to give. It should stress that Stewardship teaching obligates us to care for all of the gifts we are given, to use them well and to share them generously, all that we have has been shared with us by God. We all have something to share.

The homily should make the point that sharing of time, talent and financial resources alone does not make one a good steward. Stewardship is a way of life, and giving gifts is only one step in a very long journey.

The presider should also instruct the parishioners to pay special attention to a mailing they will receive in the coming week about the Stewardship efforts. Parishioners should be urged to read the information carefully and consider prayerfully the call to Stewardship.



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### **Liturgy**

Paying special attention to Stewardship through the various elements of the Mass such as selections of music and petitions for those Liturgies will help complete the special focus. Working with the appropriate person or committee to incorporate prayerful means of collecting the cards and forms will also enhance people's experience of offering their gifts in service of the parish community.

### **Stewardship Information Mailing**

The Stewardship information should be prepared well in advance of Announcement Weekend. The mailing should be stuffed, sealed, stamped and then mailed on the Monday following Announcement Weekend.

In preparing the letter, special care must be taken to adhere to the preparation instructions detailed above. Because the letter is the primary communicator of the Stewardship message, it must be personalized and mailed first class. Include a supporting brochure in the mailing that more fully describes Stewardship in the parish and the various ways to share gifts.

### **Suggestions for a Successful Mailing:**

- Consider changing the outside envelope in some way to catch the attention of parishioners. Look at adding a graphic or a tag line that communicates that this is a different sort of parish letter; it contains important information about Stewardship as a way of life. This type of envelope should then be used for all follow-up mailings about the Stewardship program. Parishioners will begin to associate this phrase or symbol with Stewardship and know that the message contained *is* important.
  
- Include with the letter a commitment card/form and giving guide. Parishioners should be instructed to fill out the card/form and return them the following weekend.



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- Work with the appropriate person or committee to design a special way of collecting the cards/forms during the Liturgy. They can: (1) be placed in the collection basket at the Offertory; or (2) the presider can ask those who have their cards/forms to approach the altar and place them in a special basket. This latter option allows for a greater sense of community and shared experience and is highly recommended.
  
- Include on the commitment card/form the opportunity for people to check off that they are not able to make a financial commitment at this time, keeping in mind that it should not be seen as an ‘easy out.’ We need to acknowledge, however, that there may be exceptional circumstances that would prevent someone to commit. Also, because of the amount of people moving, you may want to consider adding a box that allows people to tell you they are no longer parishioners.
  
- Also on the commitment card/form, include the opportunity to make a commitment to ‘prayer’. This can take the form of public and private prayer on the form.
  
- Include a return envelope, even with this first mailing if you are encouraging parishioners to bring their completed commitment cards/forms to Mass, to insure confidentiality.
  
- Investigate opening a Business Reply Mail Account (BRMA) with the post office to help save postage on any number of mailings you might be doing. When a return envelope is printed with your BRMA account number, you will only pay postage on the envelopes that actually go through the postal system.

### **Acknowledgments**

Everyone who turns in commitment cards/forms for time, talent and financial resources should receive a personalized thank you from the Pastor or Parish Director which acknowledges their pledge and restates what they said they have committed to. It should be written with a sense of gratitude for the gifts they are offering to their parish. This letter ideally should reach parishioners within two weeks of receipt of the pledge card. This immediacy will help to reinforce their commitments.



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### **Mail Follow-up with Those Who Have not Returned a Card**

Reminders should be made from the pulpit and in the bulletin on Commitment Weekend and the following weekend to remind those who have not yet returned a commitment card/form. Three weeks after Commitment Weekend, a reminder letter with another commitment card/form should be mailed to all nonrespondents. The letter should not be judgmental or accusatory, but explain why a response is requested and offer another opportunity to respond. In this day of very busy lives and huge amounts of paper being given to us from every direction, it is possible that some may have misplaced their materials. This letter will also inform parishioners that a telephone campaign will be conducted in the coming weeks to speak with all who have not yet returned their cards/forms. This letter gives them the opportunity to submit their commitment before the telephone efforts begin. A return envelope should be enclosed with this follow-up mailing.

### **Telephone Follow-up**

After the initial follow-up mailing has been sent, but before any quarterly reminders are mailed, you may wish to use a telephone follow-up strategy to maximize the number of commitments and responses you receive. The telephone campaign should be scheduled for a Sunday and Monday night four weeks after Commitment Weekend. Effective telephone follow-up is best done in a group setting with ten to twelve callers. Over two nights with that number of people involved, you should be able to get through about 700-800 names. When scheduling the nights, it will be important to select dates that do not conflict with any parish, school, community or sports activities that may be scheduled.

It is recommended that you not divide up the cards and send them out to parishioners to call from home. Callers will tend to procrastinate, not make the calls at all, or lose cards. There is a certain positive energy when calling in a group that makes a telephone drive much more successful.

Try to secure a facility for calling where the group can be in the same proximity. Banks, law offices, investment groups and telemarketing companies are all places that have loaned the use of their telephones for this type of effort. It is essential that, if you go outside the parish,



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clear directions must be given to callers regarding building access and parking. Definite arrangements should also be made with someone from the company to ensure that the offices are open and to secure any special instructions for the use of the phones. Also, be clear about the company's policy regarding food and beverages at the desks.

You can also ask parishioners to donate their cell phones for an evening and conduct the phone calling at the parish.

It is best to gather the volunteers at 6 p.m. for a half hour of training before calling begins. Consider providing sandwiches and beverages so that the callers can come right from work if necessary. During the training, you should review the script and common questions callers may receive. The following are a sample script and typical questions parishioners ask callers.

### **Sample Telephone Script for Stewardship Calls**

Please Remember:

- Relax.
- Smile while you are talking (people will “hear” your smile).
- Speak sincerely.
- Speak slowly.
- Say the name of the person several times until you become comfortable with the pronunciation.
- You are a very special person and so is the person you are calling regardless of the outcome of the call.

Continued



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### BASIC SCRIPT:

Hello. This is \_\_\_\_\_. May I speak with \_\_\_\_\_. *(Be sure to speak with an adult Catholic — the names are highlighted on your information cards or sheets.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *(use the first name)*, this is \_\_\_\_\_ *(use your first name)*, a parishioner from \_\_\_\_\_ Parish. Father \_\_\_\_\_ asked me to follow up with you on your return of your Stewardship commitment card. I am calling to see if you have any questions. *(Pause and wait for a response and/or questions.)*

Father \_\_\_\_\_ wants us to ask everyone to try to take an affordable, reasonable step toward increased giving, but that amount is entirely up to you. You know your situation the best.

I would just like to encourage you to fill out and mail the commitment card to Father \_\_\_\_\_ in the envelope provided or bring it with you to church this weekend. Do you have any questions I can help you with, or do you need me to mail you another card? *(If another card is desired, verify the name and address and indicate that they will be sent information in the mail during the next few days. Notify the parish office accordingly the next day.)* Thank you very much for your time and have a good evening.

If they would like to fill out a commitment card over the phone::

\_\_\_\_\_ *(use the first name)*, thank you for your help; we really appreciate your commitment. Have a good evening.

If they state they will not be making a commitment:

I can respect your decision. Thank you for your time and support. Please keep our parish and the needs of our community in your prayers. I'll let the parish office know you are unable to make a commitment at this time so you will not be contacted again this year. Good night now. *(Mark "\$0" on your record keeping system so that the person will not be solicited again until next year.)*





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If you reach an answering machine:

*Do not leave a message the first time through your cards. At the end of the session, if you still get an answering machine, please leave the following message:*

I am calling for \_\_\_\_\_ (*use the first name*). This is \_\_\_\_\_ (*your name*), a parishioner from \_\_\_\_\_ Parish. Father \_\_\_\_\_ asked me to follow up with you on your Stewardship commitment. I am calling to see if you have any questions. We will call back shortly. Thank you.

Callers should record the results of their calls on the calling cards. If the parishioner contacted mentions any special circumstances, those should be noted.

Calling should be scheduled to end by 8:30 p.m. Try to stick as closely to this schedule as possible. By respecting your parishioners' time, you will ensure their future participation.

### **Suggested Remarks for Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. Why do I need to make a written commitment?**

“The commitment form is designed to help you make a financial decision based on faith as to how much you are going to give to the parish on a weekly basis. The pastor and Parish Finance Committee need to know the approximate amount of parish income in order to meet the parish budget for the coming year. Just as you know how much income you will have for planning for your expenses, the parish needs to have an idea, as well. This way we can adequately prepare to offer the ministries that are important to the mission of our parish.”

#### **2. If someone suggests they are having financial difficulty and are unable to make a commitment:**

*Express empathy* — “I’m very sorry to hear that ... but I want you to know that we’re here to help. This is a two-way street. We don’t just ask for help, but we try to also be of assistance during tough times in people’s lives. May I have someone from the parish contact you?” *If the answer is no, let them know that if they change their mind they can receive help by contacting the Parish Office.*



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### **3. If they ask for guidance about how much to commit:**

“That’s entirely up to you. You know your situation best. This year we’re asking everyone to try and take an affordable reasonable step from what they have been giving last year; but examine your heart. When you are at peace about the size of your gift (and do not find yourself making excuses for its size) and when you know in your heart that you have been completely honest with God and yourself, then your gift is the proper size.”

### **4. If the person is fearful of the unknown future (i.e., may lose their job, ill health, large medical bills, etc.) or is uncomfortable with signing or making a “legal commitment”:**

“That is something you must decide for yourself. But this intention is not a legal obligation and we do not ask for a signature. Your commitment is simply a statement of your intention to provide support for our parish ministries. If your situation changes, just call Father or write the Parish Office to change your commitment. Through parishioners making financial commitments, our parish can plan for its ministries and better utilize the resources people have shared.”

### **5. What is Stewardship?**

Stewardship begins with the recognition that everything we have has been given to us by God — our time, our talents and our financial resources. Our Parish Stewardship education promotes an understanding of giving time, talent and financial resources as an essential part of a Christian lifestyle. It is planning our giving. It is giving first to God. It is giving proportionately in relation to what we have received. It is giving sacrificially, or from our substance, rather than from our excess. And, it’s giving because we have a NEED to give because we are so grateful for all we have received.

### **6. What about all the people in my parish who give nothing at all?**

“This used to bother me until I realized that the real question here is not about others; the real question is: What about me? I had to ask myself whether my gift was a sacrifice, or was I giving only what is left over after taking care of myself?

I discovered that it is easy to find in my own heart the seeds of the faults I could so easily spot in others. I decided that my giving should not be based on what others give. Giving for me is going to involve a personal faith decision that I would have to make for myself based on my income and ability to give.”



## *Creating the Vision: Direct Mail*

### **Following Up After the Telephone Campaign**

After the calls are completed, the calling cards should be divided into the following categories:

1. Will make a commitment and will send card back
2. Made a financial commitment over phone, recorded on a card
3. Unable to make a financial commitment at this time
4. Left message on answering machine
5. No answer
6. Special circumstances that need follow-up
7. No longer a parishioner

Each group needs to be followed up in special ways. Suggested follow-up includes:

#### *Category 1: Will make a commitment and will send card back*

This group should be sent a note thanking them for considering a commitment and urging them to return their cards as soon as possible. Another card and return envelope should be sent with this note.

#### *Category 2: Made a financial commitment over the phone*

This group should receive an acknowledgment letter similar to the one sent to those who returned their pledge cards before the telephone campaign. The letter should be sent out within one week of the phone drive.

#### *Category 3: Unable to make a financial commitment at this time*

This group still needs to get a follow-up letter. This letter should insure that their parish membership is not contingent upon their financial contributions, while leaving the door open to future commitments. Be appreciative for whatever they may be able to contribute in the future, and assure them that if they need any assistance from the parish, to please contact the pastor or the parish office.



## *Creating the Vision: Direct Mail*

### *Categories 4 & 5: Left message on answering machine or no answer*

Both of these groups should receive a letter saying that fellow parishioners attempted to call them during the telephone campaign but were unsuccessful in reaching them. A new pledge card and return envelope should be included. If there are parishioners on this list whom you suspect may have special concerns or who need extra attention, you should assign their cards to parish staff or trustworthy parishioners for follow-up from home.

### *Category 6: Special circumstances that require follow-up*

Some parishioners will relate special situations they are facing such as illness, unexpected job loss or dissatisfaction with some aspect of parish life. These cards should be given to the appropriate person on staff so that there is a professional follow-up. This is an ideal opportunity for the parish to show that they are not just interested in securing a time, talent or financial commitment, but also have care and concern for each individual member of the community.

### *Category 7: No longer a parishioner*

Even though they are no longer parishioners, this group should also be sent a follow-up letter. They should be thanked for their time as members of the parish, and assure them if they ever find themselves back in the area, there will be a place for them again as a member of the parish. Let them know they will be kept in the prayers of the community, and ask them to remember this parish in their prayers, as well.



## Method 3: Home Visitation

Home visitation provides an effective opportunity for all members of the parish community to receive an invitation to experience a personal contact regarding their commitment to Stewardship as a way of life. Even those who attend liturgies regularly and participate in parish life will benefit by a few minutes of Stewardship contact. Also, the simple act of visiting provides a significant sign of Christian witness to our being disciples of Christ.

Some parishioners who will be visited will not have been actively involved in parish life. In studying parish records, it is not unusual to find that 40 to 50 percent of parish households show no record of participation. Contact with inactive Catholics serves an important evangelization function. It represents an effective way to facilitate additional contact with them.

Home visitation is designed to reach beyond the simple task of giving people an opportunity to commit their time, talent and financial resources. It is also a way to make personal connections, parishioner-to-parishioner, to bring the 'parish' into the homes of church members.

Materials are sent in advance to those parishioners who will be visited. A brochure explaining the home visitation program is mailed, along with a parish census form, personal concerns card, time and talent forms, a financial commitment card, and return envelope to assure confidentiality.

If a Personal Concerns Card is submitted "Personal Concerns Card" will be written on the envelope by the family member. These envelopes will be opened by a member of the parish staff. Visitors will also be asked not to tell people that they *should give or how much they should give*.

Most visits occur during a 2-3 hour period on the Sunday afternoon of Commitment Weekend. Visitors are training in the morning, commissioned at the last morning Mass on Sunday and asked to contact approximately 10 parishioners (from a pre-set list per Visitor) prior to a specific hour, usually 3:00 p.m., when the Visitors are asked to return completed materials to the parish.

If the parish is unable to recruit enough Visitors to contact its entire community, the parish can be divided in half, thirds, or quarters. The parish can then conduct an in-pew solicitation



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

on the weekend following the Visitation Weekend. Mail and/or telephone follow-up methods can also be used.

Parishes engaging in home visitation will be equipped with and encouraged to use a follow-up letter, a gift acknowledgment letter and reminder processes that are identical to the in-pew materials.

### **Home Visit Rationale**

William C. McCready, Ph.D., a noted Catholic sociologist, has worked on several survey research projects. His view is that the normal resistance to home visitation programs finds at its core several basic elements.

The first element might be titled the moving syndrome. Many in our society find the need to relocate somewhat frequently. At some point, the pain of leaving good friends causes us to stop making them. In short, we cease wanting to get to know our neighbors.

The second element could be called the fund raiser stigma. Most active parishioners have been drafted into capital campaign processes which have required them to visit parishioners in their home to solicit large amounts of money. Some do not welcome this opportunity and therefore parishes sometimes find it difficult to recruit Visitors.

The third element is the church is for weekends fallacy. It comes as no surprise to parish staff members and very active parishioners to find that average active Catholics, especially in larger parishes, are reluctant to take the parish to their own neighbors.



# Creating the Vision: Home Visitation

## **Program Outline**

The Home Visit program will involve the following steps:

1. Recruitment and training of leadership.
2. Identification and recruitment of prospects as Area Coordinators, Neighborhood Coordinators and Home Visitors.
3. Preparation of material including financial reports for the brochure.
4. Preparation of materials to be delivered and mailed.
5. Home visitations.
6. Completion of a mailing to parishioners who were not contacted.
7. Initiation of new giving levels.
8. Initiation of quarterly reminders and contact made with new parishioners.
9. Annual update of commitments.

## **Organization of The Visitor Network**

Your visitor network ideally should be assembled as follows:

- Area Coordinators .....1 for every 250 families
- Neighborhood Coordinators ...1 for every 50 families
- Home Visitors .....1 for every 10 families

In other words:

- Divide the number of visits desired by 10 to determine how many Home Visitors you will need.
- Divide the number of Home Visitors by 5 to determine how many Neighborhood Coordinators you will need.
- Divide the number of Neighborhood Coordinators by 5 to determine how many Area Coordinators you will need.



# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

## **Recruiting Visitors**

When developing a home visitation program, many parishes decide that they will recruit visitors only from the pool of parishioners who are not currently involved in other parish programs. This is not necessarily the best approach.

First of all, Home Visitors should have a good sense of the mission and ministry of the parish. Second, the programs supported by parishioners currently involved in ministry will certainly benefit from the additional funding and people resources that will be generated by the home visitation program. Finally, the efforts of individual Home Visitors are narrowly confined so that only a limited amount of time is required to fulfill them.

If the parish focuses on home visitation as a priority, it will be able to secure more than enough Home Visitors. In order to highlight this focus, parishes should consider clearing their calendars for the full week prior to Home Visitation Weekend. The Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director and Stewardship Committee Chair should promote this program to all ministry leaders. For example, they should appear at least once before all parish groups to discuss the program and answer questions.

## **Home Visitor Prospecting**

Eight weeks before Commitment Weekend, the Stewardship Committee Chair, Clerical Assistants and the Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director should meet to identify and discuss a recruitment plan.

Names of Area Coordinators are usually very apparent to parish leadership. You may or may not require a recruiting letter as suggested in the Master Calendar. If you wish to send a letter, simply adapt the letter included within these materials that is intended to be sent to Neighborhood Coordinators. Typically, Area Coordinators are directly recruited by the Stewardship Committee Chair and the Pastor/Administrator/Director.

Then, you will need to identify at least twice as many prospective Neighborhood Coordinators as actually needed. This will allow for the fact that at least half of these individuals will say "no" when called. It would also be a good idea to identify several additional prospects and hold them in reserve in the event that any one of your Area Coordinators has a failure rate greater than 50 percent in their recruiting efforts.





## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

The goal of this initial effort will be to make a complete prospect list of the names, addresses and phone numbers of ten Neighborhood Coordinator prospects for each of the Area Coordinators.

Your group should then continue through the parish census and indicate the names of the best Home Visitor prospects. Since five Home Visitors are needed for every Neighborhood Coordinator, this list should contain at least ten prospective Home Visitors for each Neighborhood Coordinator. Again, your prospect list should be double the number of required Home Visitors. Make copies of these lists as explained above.

### **Recruitment of Neighborhood Coordinators**

The first task for the Program Coordinator will be to assure that all of your Area Coordinators are in place. You may wish to follow the mail and telephone recruiting process shown in the Master Calendar or you may wish to work with the Pastor to contact potential Area Coordinators individually. In any event, all Area Coordinators must be available no later than one month before Announcement Weekend in order to begin Neighborhood Coordinator recruiting. Any effort that can be made to advance this schedule will allow additional time for recruitment of Neighborhood Coordinators and Home Visitors.

As the parish recruits Neighborhood Coordinators, you will need to be working on the development of the Neighborhood Coordinator Prospect List. Once those lists are ready and you are about to mail the Prospect Letters, you should meet with the Area Coordinators to review recruiting ground rules with them:

1. Area Coordinators should be mailed a sample of the Prospect Letter at the same time the letter itself is mailed. This will be their signal to begin recruiting.
2. Each Area Coordinator should have a sample of the letter, his/her Prospect List and a copy of the Neighborhood Coordinator Job Description.
3. Area Coordinators should attempt to do most of their recruiting in person.
4. Area Coordinators should assure that the Neighborhood Coordinators' time commitment will be carefully managed.



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

5. Area Coordinators should share the Neighborhood Coordinator job description with their prospects so that they can read it on their own.
6. Area Coordinators should assure Neighborhood Coordinators that they will be provided with a Prospect List of Home Visitor candidates and that those candidates will receive a letter prior to the time that they are recruited.
7. Area Coordinators should assure each Neighborhood Coordinator prospect that this effort is going to be very different than any home visitation effort they may have experienced in the past. The responsibility of the Home Visitor is to hand parishioners a parish support commitment card and a blank envelope. Parishioners will then seal their Census Forms, Personal Concerns Cards, Time and Talent Forms and the Financial Commitment Card in the envelope to assure confidentiality of the information provided.
8. Prospective Neighborhood Coordinators should also be assured that Visitors will not be required to answer questions regarding the parish budget. On Commitment Sunday, Finance Committee members will be available by telephone to answer questions of this nature.

### **Neighborhood Coordinator Training**

Neighborhood Coordinators will be trained by the parish committee four weeks prior to the beginning of visitation. In order to meet this deadline, you will need to train your Area Coordinators two weeks before this date. Again, if this deadline can be advanced, you should make every attempt to do so.

Included with this manual is a Neighborhood Coordinator Training Packet. This packet should be reproduced for all committee members, Area Coordinators and Neighborhood Coordinators. The sample kit should be carefully checked for items which need specific information. For example, the parish must indicate the time and location of Home Visitor training. It must also insert the time of the Home Visitor Commissioning Mass.



# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

The parish is also responsible for the following activities:

1. Completing the Home Visitor Prospect Lists.
2. Assuring that the appropriate number of Neighborhood Coordinators are in attendance.
3. Mailing the Home Visitor Prospect Letter.
4. Assuring that Area Coordinators contact Neighborhood Coordinators shortly before the training workshops, making certain of their attendance.
5. Filling in the time and place in the appropriate spaces on the Neighborhood Coordinator Training materials.

The parish is encouraged to schedule Home Visitor training on the morning of Commitment Sunday. Experience has shown that training Home Visitors on Friday or Saturday can result in a significant loss of Visitors by Sunday afternoon. Further, it is easier to get people to commit to a specific block of time.

Thus, Visitors should be trained 1-1/2 hours prior to the last Mass on Commitment Sunday. Training will take a little more than an hour, and Visitors will have time to join their families in the church. Visitors are commissioned during the course of the last Mass. Visitors then return to the training site to pick up their materials and depart from there to make visits.

## **Recruiting & Training Materials**

The following items are contained in the Resources section:

1. Neighborhood Coordinator Job Description: Be sure to provide a copy of the job description to each Area Coordinator for use during recruiting.
2. Prospect List for Neighborhood Coordinators: A blank copy of this list is included with these materials. The Prospect List is to be completed during the prospecting meeting of your committee. One list should be prepared for each Area Coordinator. Copy distribution for record keeping purposes is noted on the form.
3. Neighborhood Coordinator Prospect Letter: During each phase of recruiting there is an introductory letter sent to every prospect. Prospect letters are to be mailed to Neighborhood Coordinator prospects six weeks before Commitment Weekend.



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

4. Neighborhood Coordinator Roster: As Area Coordinators recruit a Neighborhood Coordinator, this name should immediately be given to the Key Clerical Assistant. He/she should then begin to fill in the Area Coordinators' Neighborhood Coordinator Roster. Please note that, upon conclusion of recruiting, three copies of this form should be made and distributed as noted on the bottom of the form.
5. Home Visitor Job Description: Please complete the information and give one copy to each of the Neighborhood Coordinators for use in recruiting.
6. Prospect List for Home Visitors: Home Visitor Prospects need to be selected for each Neighborhood Coordinator required. Earlier, we suggested that this process be accomplished during the same time that you are developing Prospect Lists for Neighborhood Coordinators.

Once again, the Prospect List needs to be completed and the four copies need to be distributed as noted on the bottom of the form. These lists should be given to the Neighborhood Coordinators at their training session.

7. Home Visitor Prospect Letter: These Prospect Letters are to be mailed four weeks before Commitment Weekend. A copy of the letter sent to each Home Visitor should be sent to that Home Visitor's respective Neighborhood Coordinator. When the copy of the letter arrives, the Coordinator is assured that their Home Visitor received it as well. This will serve as the Coordinator's signal to begin contacting his/her prospects.





# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

## **Neighborhood Coordinator Training**

The period of time allowed for recruitment of Neighborhood Coordinators is very brief. It will be important for the committee to be ready to implement the Neighborhood Coordinator training meeting on a timely basis. This meeting should be held three to four weeks before Commitment Weekend. Please try to schedule the training meeting as early as possible during that week. Several tasks must be implemented simultaneously.

First, the Home Visitor Prospect Lists must be completed and appropriate copies must be made. Second, the Home Visitor Prospect Letter must be mailed to arrive the day after training occurs. Third, a copy of the Home Visitor Prospect Letter must be sent to every Neighborhood Coordinator's home in order to serve as a signal to begin recruiting. Fourth, Neighborhood Coordinator Training Packets must be reproduced in sufficient quantity in order to provide one copy for each committee member, Area Coordinator and Neighborhood Coordinator.

On the Thursday or Friday prior to the Neighborhood Coordinator training meeting, the Regional Coordinator should call each of the Area Coordinators in order to ask them to call all of their Neighborhood Coordinators and notify them of the meeting time and location. The Area Coordinators should complete their calls over the weekend.

In the event that a Neighborhood Coordinator cannot attend the meeting, the Area Coordinator must take responsibility to deliver the Neighborhood Coordinator's materials to him/her and explain the activities that occurred at the training meeting, deadlines, etc.

## **Meeting Room Arrangements**

The meeting room should be arranged with a head table, podium and one table for each Area Coordinator. It is helpful to have the appropriate Area Coordinator's name visible on his/her table. Area Coordinator tables should be arranged so that everyone is facing the front of the room.



# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

## **Organization**

The committee and the Area Coordinators should arrive at least thirty minutes prior to the meeting. Some Area Coordinators should be asked to serve as “ushers” to point out where each Coordinator’s table is located. They should greet the Neighborhood Coordinators as they arrive and direct them to the appropriate table.

Home Visitor Prospect Lists should be pre-assigned to each Neighborhood Coordinator and should be attached to their training materials. Each Area Coordinator should be given their Neighborhood Coordinators’ packets. However, Area Coordinators should be instructed not to hand out these materials until the meeting begins.

Please do not allow Neighborhood Coordinators to select their own Home Visitor prospects. This results in a logistical nightmare and the meeting will take much longer.

## **Training Meeting Agenda**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Pastor/Administrator/<br>Parish Director | The Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director should begin with welcoming remarks, open the meeting with a prayer, and introduce the Program Coordinator.  |
| Program Coordinator                      | <p>The Program Coordinator should review the background materials that will be provided in the Neighborhood Coordinator Training Packet. It is up to each Program Coordinator to select which background materials he/she wishes to highlight. The Coordinator should be sure to indicate the important responsibility that each Neighborhood Coordinator has accepted.</p> <p>Then, he/she should go through the Program Overview, the Neighborhood Coordinator Job Description, and the section entitled “Neighborhood Coordinator’s Keys to Success” which will detail all of the information necessary for each Neighborhood Coordinator to do his or her job effectively. The Coordinator will then review the Home Visitor Job Description.</p> |



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

Area Coordinators	The Program Coordinator will allow Area Coordinators ten minutes to review the Home Visitor Prospect List and to inform the Neighborhood Coordinators about the mailing of the Home Visitor Prospect Letter. The Area Coordinators and their Neighborhood Coordinators will mutually agree on deadline dates and any arrangements that are to be made in the event that a Neighborhood Coordinator needs more prospect names.
Conclusion	The Program Coordinator or Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director will reconvene the meeting, ask for questions and direct them to the appropriate committee member, then offer a final thank-you and a closing prayer.

### **Additional Prospect Names**

Some Neighborhood Coordinators will be more successful than others in their recruiting tasks. Occasionally, Neighborhood Coordinators will receive an affirmative response from the first five people they call. It is important to stress to all Neighborhood Coordinators that they must call everyone on their list, since everyone received a letter. If a Neighborhood Coordinator is able to recruit more than five Home Visitors, these individuals can make up for Neighborhood Coordinators who ended up with less than five.

On the other hand, occasionally a Neighborhood Coordinator will call all ten prospects and receive mostly negative answers. It is important to advise Neighborhood Coordinators who receive a negative response to their first three phone calls that they should get in touch with their Area Coordinator and practice their “pitch” on the Coordinator before making additional calls.

Quite often people who are not used to asking others for help will start with a negative opening: “I don’t suppose you would like to be a Home Visitor.” It is important to catch these habits early and correct them.

Each parish should come up with an additional list of Home Visitor prospects who do not receive the initial mailing. These prospects can be given to Neighborhood Coordinators who



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

have gone through all ten of their names and have not succeeded in getting five Home Visitors. Since these names will be given out late, there will be no time to send them a Home Visitor Prospect letter. Therefore, any Neighborhood Coordinator who is given “extra” names must be sure to adjust their approach to the prospect to recognize the fact that they have not received a letter.

If a parish has exhausted its recruiting procedures and still is unable to secure all of the visitors that are necessary, a final direct request should be made to all parish staff, school staff, ministry directors and ministry volunteers. This approach should stress the critical importance of the visitation process and the absolute need to have each one of them participate.

### ***Route Preparation (Logistics Coordinator)***

The following steps should be taken to prepare walk/drive routes for the Home Visitors:

1. Print out labels for each of your parish families.
2. Affix these labels to each Commitment Card. Hopefully you have left room for the label on the side of the card that the parishioner will be completing.
3. Using your grid system, the 9-digit zip code or your local knowledge of the geography, stack the cards in walk/drive route order. There should be no more than ten cards in each stack.
4. Rubber band or paper clip each stack.
5. Go back through the cards and determine which walk routes will need to be less than ten houses. Remove the appropriate number of cards from that stack and assign them to adjacent stacks. The effort should be to have fewer visits in rural areas and as many as twelve visits in well-populated areas.
6. The Neighborhood Coordinators will call or send in the names of the confirmed Home Visitors. Each Home Visitor's Commitment Card should be found in the appropriate geographic stack. The Home Visitor's card should be moved to the top of that stack and marked (in a specific location) with an initial or colored dot to indicate that the individual is the Home Visitor.





## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

7. The Commitment Card stacks should be placed in 9x12 brown envelopes with the appropriate Home Visitor's name and the name of the Neighborhood Coordinator clearly indicated on the envelope.
8. The envelope should be given to one of the Clerical Assistants. This individual will be charged with the responsibility of completing the visit list by typing, printing or using labels (a sample visit list is on page III-26 and in the What section). You will need to type up your own master copy of the visit list since you will need to fill in the appropriate hotline schedule at the bottom of the form.
9. The Clerical Assistant should have an alphabetized printout of labels for every family in the parish. Upon completing preparation of the visit list, the Clerical Assistant should place the one label on one blank No. 10 envelope for each of the Commitment Cards. If a parish is providing a Parish Census form, Personal Concerns Card with the Time and Talent Forms to each family, you may wish to consider using a larger envelope.
10. The Clerical Assistant should retain one copy of the master list so that a checklist of returned materials can be kept.
11. The Clerical Assistant should place the appropriate Commitment Cards (still rubber banded), the Visit List, and the appropriately-labeled No. 10 envelopes into the 9x12 brown envelope.
12. The brown envelope should be returned to the Logistics Coordinator.
13. Once the additional materials (listed on the next page) have been assembled, the Clerical Assistants, Logistics Coordinator and Area Coordinators should complete stuffing the envelopes.
14. All of the brown envelopes should be grouped by Area and Neighborhood Coordinator, then closed (not sealed) and placed in a box to be held for the training meeting. The Area and Neighborhood Coordinators' additional copies of the Visit Lists should be kept in the same box with their Home Visitors' Kits.



# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

## **Observation Form & Hotline**

It would be difficult to attempt to train Home Visitors to be able to answer all of the questions that they will be asked during home visitation. Home Visitors will have an Observation Form (page 5 of Home Visitor Instructions) on which they can note important items after the conclusion of each home visit. It is suggested that Home Visitors note any ministry questions or suggestions that they are asked during their visits.

On occasion, questions will arise about the parish budget. Experience indicates that most of these questions are an attempt to deflect making a commitment. Therefore, we suggest that each parish ask a member of the Finance Committee to monitor a phone hotline to which parishioners may call and ask questions regarding the budget. In this way, Visitors will not have to learn budget details and legitimate questions can be accurately answered. In a parish of 1,000 families, one can expect only three to five calls on Commitment Sunday.

## **Parish Mailing**

The following is a list of materials that should be mailed to every parish family.

- ONE (1) Brochure
- ONE (1) Census Form
- TWO (2) Time & Talent Commitment Forms
- ONE (1) Personal Concerns Card
- ONE (1) Visit Notification Slip





# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

## **Home Visitor Kit Materials**

Each kit should contain the following items:

- ONE (1) set of Home Visitor instructions
- TWO (2) peel-off nametags
- THREE (3) copies of the brochure
- THREE (3) blank Financial Commitment Cards
- FIFTEEN (15) blank Time & Talent Commitment Forms
- ONE (1) pen or pencil
- SIX (6) “While You Were Out” cards
- THREE (3) blank Parish Census Forms
- FIVE (5) Personal Concerns Cards
- ONE (1) Observations Form

Note: The Stewardship Committee should make sure that the Visitor’s List, labeled Commitment Cards and labeled envelopes have already been included in the Home Visitor Kits.





# Creating the Vision: Home Visitation

## The Home Visitor's List

Home Visitor \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Coordinator Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



# Creating the Vision: Home Visitation

## Hotline Schedule

If you have questions between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. Sunday, call a member of the Parish Finance Committee at (phone) \_\_\_\_\_.

## Personal Concerns Cards

Each parish is asked to develop its own Personal Concerns Card from the sample provided below. Personal Concerns Cards should be printed on paper that is the approximate weight of index card stock. These cards should fit in a No. 10 envelope (letter size).

<p>Church Address City/State/Zip</p> <p><b>PERSONAL CONCERNS CARD</b></p> <p>Please note any personal concerns that you would like to relate directly to the parish staff. All items will be kept strictly confidential. In the event that you use this card, please write "Personal" on the front of the response envelope to assure that it reaches the parish staff.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
---

Your parish may wish to develop a card that is more in the form of a questionnaire. In the event that you choose to ask questions of your parishioners, please be sure that you are equipped to answer them. If you adopt the questionnaire format, simply add a personal concerns segment and provide appropriate blank space for responses.



# Creating the Vision: Home Visitation

## Visit Notification Slips

In order to enhance the likelihood that the person to be visited will be at home, it is recommended that the following slips be printed on brightly colored paper and inserted in each envelope with the brochure, census form, etc. A parish can edit this form to accommodate the times during which visits will be made. No mention should be made of follow-up visits, since this will encourage people not to be at home on Commitment Sunday.

These slips should be printed on 16-pound paper and should fit inside a number 10 envelope (letter size).

Church  
Address  
City/State/Zip

### COMMITMENT SUNDAY SCHEDULE

A Home Visitor will come to see you between the hours of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. Please make every effort to be at home during these hours.

Prior to the arrival of the Home Visitor, please complete the enclosed Parish Census Form and the Time and Talent Form. Please prayerfully consider the level of weekly support that you wish to provide to our parish. Your Visitor will bring your Commitment Card and an envelope to seal all of your information.

In the event that you have any personal concerns, please feel free to note them on the card enclosed.

All of the responses you provide will be kept confidential.

In the event that your parish finds that you were not able to visit all of your families, please use the following card to notify those families who will not be visited.



# Creating the Vision: Home Visitation

Church  
Address  
City/State/Zip

## IN-PEW COMMITMENT

We will not be able to visit your home on \_\_\_\_\_. Since we did not have enough volunteers to visit the entire parish, we have randomly selected those homes that will be visited and those that will be visited in a subsequent year.

We apologize for being unable to make a personal contact this year.

Please complete the Parish Census Form and Time and Talent Form at your convenience and bring them with you to church on the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_. At each Mass, we will ask those families that were not visited to complete a weekly support card and to insert that card, with your other information, into an envelope to be collected at each liturgy.

Once again, we apologize for not being able to visit with you.

### *“While You Were Out” Cards*

The following blank notes should be provided to each Visitor. The parish will have to type in its name at the top and cut them once they are printed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parish  
While you were out, I stopped by to visit with you about our Stewardship Program. Please call me this evening so that I can schedule a better time to meet with you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Parish  
While you were out, I stopped by to visit with you about our Stewardship Program. Please call me this evening so that I can schedule a better time to meet with you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



# Creating the Vision: Home Visitation

## Re-enlistment Forms

Your Neighborhood Coordinators and Home Visitors will feel more at ease about the process after the initial visit attempts have been made on Sunday. In order to limit the amount of work committees will need to do next year, if the parish chooses to do home visitation again, the use of re-enlistment forms is encouraged. A sample of this form is below. It is recommended that re-enlistment forms be provided to each Neighborhood and Area Coordinator. As Visitors return on Sunday afternoon, they should be asked to re-enlist immediately. Each Area Coordinator should then ask each Neighborhood Coordinator to re-enlist before they go home on Sunday afternoon. Typically, most of the Home Visitors and Neighborhood Coordinators will re-enlist.

<b>HOME VISITATION PROCESS RE-ENLISTMENT FORM</b>	
Please count on me! I am willing to serve again next fall as a	
_____ Neighborhood Coordinator	_____ Home Visitor
Name	_____
Address	_____
Phone	_____

## Home Visitor Training Meeting

The training of Home Visitors should take place 1 1/2 hours prior to the last morning Mass. All Committee members and Area Coordinators should arrive at least 45 minutes prior to the meeting. All Neighborhood Coordinators should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the meeting. Home Visitor Kits should be grouped in advance by Neighborhood Coordinator. Home Visit Lists should be copied and ready for distribution to the appropriate persons. Home Visitor Kits should be copied and placed in each Visitor's envelope with their other materials. Extra copies of the training materials should be produced for Neighborhood Coordinators, Area Coordinators and all Stewardship Committee members.





# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

## **Meeting Room Arrangements**

Please be sure to have light refreshments available for the Home Visitor training session and for the return of the Home Visitors. Ideally, you should have a podium and a sound system set up if your group will be somewhat large.

Some tables should be set up near the main entrance so that all participants can register and fill out a nametag. These tables should be divided in such a way that Home Visitors sign in at a separate place than the Neighborhood Coordinators. Area Coordinators and other Stewardship Committee members should be available to usher both Neighborhood Coordinators and Home Visitors to the correct tables.

## **Organization**

There should be a small head table to accommodate those who will be addressing the group. One side table should be set up for the other members of the Stewardship Committee and the Area Coordinators.

There should be one table for each Neighborhood Coordinator and his/her Home Visitors. Please arrange to have the Neighborhood Coordinator's table marked with the appropriate Coordinator's name.

Neighborhood Coordinator tables should be grouped by Area Coordinator so that each Area Coordinator can move freely about their section to answer questions and/or fill-in for absent Neighborhood Coordinators.

## **Training Meeting Agenda**

Each Area Coordinator should visit his/her tables prior to the start of the meeting. In the event that any Neighborhood Coordinator is missing, the Area Coordinator should fill in until he or she arrives. The Area Coordinator should make all his or her Neighborhood Coordinators aware of where he or she is sitting so that the Neighborhood Coordinators have access to their Area Coordinators if problems arise.



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

Pastor/Administrator/ Parish Director	The Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director should provide welcoming remarks, open the meeting with a prayer and introduce the Program Coordinator.
Program Coordinator	<p>Prior to the meeting, the Program Coordinator should review all of the training materials and the contents of the Home Visitor Kit. At the meeting, the Program Coordinator should ask the Visitors to remove the training materials from the rest of the Home Visitor Kit.</p> <p>He or she should then review every item in the training materials. He or she should: (1) emphasize the time visits are to begin and end on Commitment Sunday and encourage Visitors to return all of their completed materials that afternoon; (2) mention the deadline for returning all materials (usually the following Friday or Saturday); and (3) highlight the availability of the hotline.</p> <p>Upon concluding the review of the training materials, the Coordinator should ask the Home Visitors to check the contents of the Training Kit by asking them to remove each item as he or she lists it. At this point, the Program Coordinator should turn the meeting over to the Neighborhood Coordinators.</p> <p>In the event that a Home Visitor does not have the listed amount of a certain item, it is the responsibility of the Area Coordinator to find the additional item(s) for that Visitor.</p>
Neighborhood Coordinators	Neighborhood Coordinators should make certain that each Home Visitor's Kit is complete, that he or she is familiar with the area that he or she will be visiting and whether or not he or she has any specific questions. The Neighborhood Coordinators should write down any questions that they cannot answer in order to ask the Program Coordinator when he or she reconvenes the meeting. This entire process should take approximately 5 minutes.



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

Program Coordinator	As the Program Coordinator reconvenes the meeting, he or she should ask if Neighborhood Coordinators have any questions from their Home Visitors. At the completion of the question and answer session, the Program Coordinator should let the visitors know that there will be refreshments available after Mass and upon their return. He or she should then turn the meeting over to the Pastor/ Administrator/Parish Director.
Pastor/Administrator/ Parish Director	The Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director should offer a closing prayer and invite all participants to attend the Mass at which commissioning will take place.

### **Home Visitor Commissioning**

The following commissioning service is provided for your use or modification. The important thing is that all of the Home Visitors, Neighborhood Coordinators and Area Coordinators should be commissioned at the last Mass on the Sunday on which home visits will occur. All of these people should be asked to stand during the Commissioning Service which should be conducted immediately prior to the Dismissal Rite.



# Creating the Vision: Home Visitation

## Commissioning Service

Today is a very special day for \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church. We will be visiting the homes of our families as part of our Parish Stewardship Program. The Visitors will, in a special way, be witnessing to the love we have for our parish and our church and will be bringing that love to the homes of our parish community.

The Home Visitors have participated in this liturgy. At this time, we would ask the Visitors, Neighborhood Coordinators, Area Coordinators and the Committee to please stand. We offer them our blessing that the walk they take today will be one with and in the name of the Lord and that the witness they give will be one of deep love and faithful commitment to the Gospel.

Let us pray: Compassionate God, we are here to give ourselves to you and to your people. It is through what we are and do that others will come to know you. We are here to bring peace and healing, to witness to others of your love. Teach us to be sight for the blind, ears for those who are deaf to hear your word, hands for those who look to build a kingdom of love. Guide our steps, keep us safe, fill us with peace.

Spirit of Power, time and again throughout history you anointed your servants and sent them on the mission to speak your word, always renewing the face of the earth in such a variety of ways that creation itself sings of your glory and the human family reflects your beauty a thousand times over.

(Extending hands over the water): Come, Spirit of the Living One, bless this water of Commissioning. Make it a source of gladness and tenderness. We pray that by this blessing, our hands and hearts might be strengthened for the task to which you sent us, that we be compassionate to human need, tender and strong in our care for one another, genuine in our friendship, and faithful in the commitment we have made.

At this time, I would ask that all of those standing come to the altar to be blessed and I invite the congregation to join in singing "Let Us Build the City of God."

All are gathered and the following blessing is given:

*The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace.*

I now ask that each of you take a moment and open your minds and hearts to the acceptance of God's blessings which will pass through you to all of our parishioners.

Pause for a moment, and then the celebrant will give the congregation the dismissal blessing.



# *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

## **After Mass**

Immediately after Mass, Home Visitors need to return to the training facility. Refreshments are recommended. Each Neighborhood Coordinator should be instructed to assure that their Home Visitors have looked through the materials and read their instructions. In the event Neighborhood Coordinators are asked a question that they cannot answer, they should refer the question to an appropriate Committee member.

It is very important that all members of the Stewardship Committee circulate throughout the training facility making certain that people are well informed and well organized.

Some Home Visitors may be inclined to stall their departure. Typically, they are nervous about getting started and will be nervous until they complete their first visit. For this reason, members of the Committee should be observant of people who are remaining in the hall more than 20-30 minutes. They should seek these people out, answer their questions and get them on the road as soon as possible.

## **After Visitors Depart**

Once your Home Visitors have departed, it is time to reorganize the training facility and be ready to receive visit materials when the Home Visitors return.

The majority of tables and chairs should be removed from the training facility. One table for each Area Coordinator should remain and enough chairs for only the Neighborhood Coordinators.

The Neighborhood Coordinators' table tents that identified their tables should now be placed in front of their seats at their Area Coordinator's table so that they will be clearly visible to the Home Visitors as they return.

Each Neighborhood Coordinator should place copies of each of their Home Visitor's Visit List immediately in front of them. The Area Coordinator should have a master copy of all of their Neighborhood Coordinator's Visit Lists. Sufficient copies of the re-enlistment form should be provided to each Neighborhood Coordinator. They should be encouraged to ask their Home Visitors to re-enlist. This process will have to be observed as each visitor returns, since some Neighborhood Coordinators may be reluctant to ask.



## *Creating the Vision: Home Visitation*

You should have refreshments available for Home Visitors as they return.

As the Neighborhood Coordinator is checking off the names of families and individuals that have already been visited, the Area Coordinator should ensure that the Neighborhood Coordinator repeats the deadline for the return of materials for anyone not at home on Commitment Sunday.

As each Neighborhood Coordinator finishes his or her check-in, the returned reply envelopes should be given to the Area Coordinator who in turn can check it off on his or her master copy. The Area Coordinator should have a box to put the reply envelopes after checking them off.

During the course of this recording process, it would be helpful if the Area Coordinator made certain that any necessary notes are marked clearly on the reply envelope. It should be clearly marked on the face of the envelope, for example, if a family has moved, if a family refused to participate, etc.

After each Neighborhood Coordinator has checked in his or her last Visitor, the Area Coordinator should reaffirm the need for follow-up with Home Visitors who still have pending visits. They should also reaffirm the deadline to turn in those materials. Only then should the Area Coordinator offer the re-enlistment form to the Neighborhood Coordinator.

### **Follow-Up**

During the week after Commitment Sunday, the Area Coordinators should stay in touch with Neighborhood Coordinators, who should stay in touch with their Home Visitors. A set of master home visit lists should be kept at the parish office so that reply envelopes can be checked off as they are returned by the Home Visitors.

It may be helpful, particularly in larger parishes, to hold a follow-up meeting with the Neighborhood Coordinators on the Monday after Follow-Up Weekend. At this meeting, Area Coordinators could review all the home visit lists with the appropriate Neighborhood Coordinator in order to make certain that all reply envelopes have been returned. The Neighborhood Coordinator can then be asked to make one final phone call to any Home Visitor who still has Commitment Cards out.

All follow-up work should be concluded by the Saturday after Follow-Up Weekend.



## **General Follow-up Common To All Methods**

Thorough follow-up is critical to the success of harvesting the gifts of time, talent and financial resources. The following procedures must be done to maximize the results of your efforts.

### **Thanking Parishioners Involved in the Stewardship Process**

All parishioners need to be thanked for their participation. Anyone who was involved in the Stewardship process should be written a thank-you note. An end of the year thank-you gathering also helps parishioners to feel appreciated.

### **Contacting Parishioners Who Offer Their Time and Talents**

Procedures must be determined in order to ensure that all who offer their time for various ministries are contacted. In order to process the Time and Talent Forms, the following must be decided:

1. The internal process that is used to circulate the Time and Talent Forms to the appropriate ministry director and/or committee chairperson. Someone must be responsible for monitoring this process.
2. The length of time each ministry director or committee chairperson is given to make their initial contact with those who newly offered their time. There is nothing worse than someone coming forward to offer their time and talents to never have been contacted at all.
3. Whether the parish wishes to invite all who are offering their time and talents to some type of introductory session.



## *Creating the Vision: general Follow-up*

One way to begin involvement would be to hold an orientation session. The point of such a session would be to review the overall mission and vision of the parish and commission all newly involved in ministry. Those currently involved could also be invited to renew their commitment to parish activities.

Each group of newly involved could then meet with the appropriate ministry director or committee chair. This would ensure that all are contacted. Directors and chairs would inform everyone of the responsibilities required of anyone active within the ministry as well as the schedule of any training opportunities. Anyone unable to attend the session should receive materials handed out at the meeting and receive a follow-up call from the director or chairperson.

If your parish does not choose to hold this type of orientation session, it is essential that the ministry director, chairperson, or a designated committee member work closely with all those responsible for making contact with those newly involved in ministry. **If parishioners are not contacted (even if their help is not needed immediately) they will be more reluctant to come forward in the future because they will assume their time and talents are not needed or valued. This is worse than never having asked them in the first place!**

### **Quarterly Reminders**

A thank-you letter should be sent after receiving the Commitment Card, verifying the time and talent offered and the financial giving plan (weekly, monthly, annually) indicated by the parishioner. After this initial acknowledgment letter, it is important to implement a system of quarterly reminders on financial obligations. These reminders let people know where they stand in relationship to the total amount they have committed. If parishioners have not kept up regularly with their financial commitments, they will often try to catch up by immediately sending in a check for the amount they are behind. This will help tremendously with cash flow. Other important reasons for the quarterly reminders include:

- When parishioners say they will give \$x per week, they frequently neglect to make up the weeks they miss Mass or attend a liturgy at another church.





## *Creating the Vision: general Follow-up*

- People want to fulfill their Stewardship commitments, but they tend to lose track of their progress quickly. Although very few people will ever initiate the question of their financial commitment fulfillment, parishioners generally get back on track if the parish starts the conversation. If there is no reminder process, people will conclude that no one has noticed they have fallen behind and therefore it's not important or no one really cares!
- The quarterly reminder is also another opportunity to thank people for what they have contributed to date. You cannot thank contributors enough. Just as givers of time and talent, donors of financial resources need to be affirmed and assured that their contributions have been noticed and are making a real difference. Many people need to be sure that their contributions have been received and recorded properly.

You should also consider including a pre-addressed return mail envelope. This will greatly increase the possibility that someone who is behind will send in a "catch-up" payment. Also, be sure this reminder is not worded as an 'invoice.' Remember, parishioners are not being 'billed' for being members of a parish community. The purpose of the reminder is just that: to remind people what they have committed to, and to thank them. Encourage them to contact the parish office if there is an error on their reminder.

Of course, there are some parishioners who should NOT get a quarterly reminder:

- Parishioners who have made a financial commitment during the preceding quarter
- Those who may be temporarily away
- Parishioners who have asked not to receive a reminder
- Parishioners who may be having financial hardships, i.e. elderly on fixed incomes, that the parish takes special care not to include on these financial mailings

Examples:

1. A parishioner who alerts you to his/her wish to donate at year-end. Honor this information by refraining from sending reminders except possibly sending the fourth-quarter reminder as a stimulus to the donor that year-end is approaching.



## *Creating the Vision: general Follow-up*

2. Callers who ask you to “save the postage” and indicate they will remember to fulfill their financial commitment without being reminded. It is better to honor the request than to risk alienating the parishioner by ignoring the request.

Good donor relations means honoring individual requests even if you need to keep a list of “special exceptions” to your master reminder list.

### ***Personal Follow-up - Making Friends and Building Relationships***

We suggest that, if a major donor (determine what a major donor is in your parish — \$500, \$1,000, or \$2,000) is not fulfilling his or her commitment and the giving history indicates that financial hardship is not a likely possibility, a phone call from the right person is an invaluable opportunity to hear and respond to a concern. Is the parishioner upset because of misinformation? Can you connect them with a parish ministry if a family or personal need surfaces? Will you find out they have received an erroneous reminder which may have offended them but which can be corrected by extending an apology?

Phone calls to donors let them know that you are aware of their loyalty and the level of generosity they have shown. It demonstrates sincere concern for them as people as well as the caller’s own concern for the well being of the parish. Take the opportunity to thank them for past support. This is an example of how evangelization and Stewardship are interwoven!

Of course, it is also critical that anyone who returned a Personal Concerns Card during the home visit program or who expressed concerns during a telephone follow-up are also given personal attention. The time taken to address issues expressed will not only help to repair or build relationships, but is also an opportunity to show compassion and caring for fellow parishioners.



## **The Role of the Lay Witness**

One of the most effective means of presenting the Stewardship message is through the Stewardship lay witness talk. Parishioner testimonials send a strong message to the faithful about giving of oneself and one's treasures (time, talent and financial resources) in gratitude for what God has given them. People are motivated by hearing that Stewardship is working for other people with whom they can relate.

This talk is usually given after the homily by people who are already practicing Stewardship in their own lives. Think about identifying parishioners who are from various walks of life within the parish, i.e. young adults, retired, couples, singles. Consider a question and answer presentation between articulate older children or teens and the pastor. The talk has two purposes: to inspire people to become good stewards; and to share real life examples of how Stewardship is lived.

Identify and Select Parishioners as Lay Witnesses who:

1. truly understand, believe and live a life of Stewardship
2. relate well to other parishioners
3. feel comfortable sharing their faith experiences with a large group
4. are excited about their Catholic faith
5. are enthusiastic about sharing their time, talent and financial resources
6. have a personal story to tell about their Stewardship journey
7. understand Stewardship is not just the call to share our gifts with the parish, but with our families, friends, communities, Archdiocese and global Church



## Resources: *Lay Witness*

### **Sample Outline for Composing Lay Witness Talk**

1. Introduce Yourself – People want to know who is talking to them. Give a description of your family, the number of years in the parish, etc.
2. Properly Define Christian Stewardship – It is a response we make in gratitude to God for what has been given to us. It is an intentional, planned, proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.
3. Discuss How You Began Practicing Stewardship – When did you first become aware of the concept? What did you think when you first heard about it? 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? What motivated you to make a change in the way you were living?
4. 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 your time and talent?
5. Urge Your Fellow Parishioners To Get Involved - Invite the parish community to join you and your family in making their parish a Stewardship parish. Ask them to look at all that God has given to them and make a generous response to God’s many gifts.

### **Tips for Presenting Your Stewardship Journey**

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:

1. Pray. Spend time talking to and listening to God. Reflect on the many blessings you have received. Think about where you are on your personal Stewardship journey and how you arrived there. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your words as you begin to prepare to share your journey.



## Resources: Lay Witness

2. 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 it is more natural.
3. For you to give a good presentation, it is best 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.
4. 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.
5. Above all, be sincere, enthusiastic and friendly. Graciously respond to any feedback that is offered.

### **Some Do's and Don'ts**

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

1. Explain that Stewardship means giving of the "first fruits," not what is left over.
2. Talk about the need each of us has to give back in gratitude.
3. Share your struggles with Stewardship as well as your triumphs. People will appreciate your honesty and be more open to your message if they can identify with you.
4. Emphasize the sense of peace that comes when we put God first.
5. Emphasize that it is important to give all three: Time, Talent and Treasure.
6. Explain that Stewardship touches every area of our lives. It's about how we share with our family, friends, workplace, and community as well as our parish and Archdiocese.



## Resources: Lay Witness

### **DON'T**

1. Talk in “bargaining” terms (“I gave this and God gave me this in return.”)
2. Stress church needs or budgets.
3. Talk in dollar or time amounts: “If everyone could give \$10 a week,” or “We need \$2 more a week from everyone,” or “You need to give your fair share.”
4. Use threats of possible consequences stemming from the failure to give: “We won’t be able to heat or air condition the church,” or “We’ll have to close the school.”
5. Suggest that Stewardship is mandatory or an obligation.

*The most important goal of living a life based on the principles of Stewardship is a deepening of faith – a real spiritual conversion. Sharing your spiritual journey with other members of your church is a unique gift and a true statement of your commitment to Stewardship.*

*Thank you for showing your gratitude by this sharing.*

## **Beginning and Ending**

### **Beginning**

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 and our two children, John and Mary. We have been parishioners here at (name of parish) for XXX number of years. We’d like to share with you what Stewardship means to our family and how it has affected our lives.”

### **Ending**

The following is an example of a closing paragraph: “As we continue with our liturgy this morning/evening and our gifts are brought forward to the table, let us reflect on all that God has given us and ask ourselves how we have been using those gifts. Is our gift of treasure a measure of the gratitude we have for what we have been given? How do we use our time and talent to serve others in our family, community, workplace and Church? 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.”



## Resources: *Lay Witness*

### **Sharing Your Story**

Answer some questions about your personal Stewardship experience, whether newly begun or longstanding:

- What was my first remembered experience of Stewardship?
- What was my initial reaction to the concept?
- Why did I accept Stewardship as a way of life?
- Has Stewardship made a difference in my life?
- How have I shared my time, talent and treasure?
- What have been the benefits of Stewardship in my life?
- Is there any way we can give people good news about money? (for treasure witness)

## **Constructing Your Presentation**

1. The presentation should be 6-8 minutes long, clear and concise.
2. Make sure you know which Stewardship approach you are asked to convey. Does the pastor want you to make specific mention of intention cards or other items?
3. Tell a story about your Stewardship journey. Remember: people love to hear stories about other people! This should be the bulk of your presentation because your story can help others to make changes and that's why we do this!
  - a) What happened in your life to cause you to make changes in the sharing of your blessings? Your telling of this story can help others to consider changes in their lives.
  - b) You may want to talk about your own growth as a giver, the challenges it presented and the benefits and blessings that resulted.
4. Read the scriptures for the day you are speaking and refer to them if possible. You can include some comments from the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, but be careful to avoid "over-quoting" to your audience.



## Resources: *Lay Witness*

5. Explain briefly what Stewardship is, noting that it is more than sharing the gift of treasure. Explain it is the sharing of the first fruits of all of our blessings coupled with trust in God to provide for our own needs.
6. Avoid using numbers and statistics as “guilt trips.”
7. Ask them, point blank, to pray about and consider becoming better stewards of their blessings.
8. Thank the pastor and parish community for the opportunity to speak and thank the parishioners for their past generosity and support.
9. Provide the pastor with a copy of your presentation in advance.

## **A Checklist of Reminders for Stewardship Speakers**

1. Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled Mass time.
2. Identify yourself to the celebrant before the liturgy begins. Be sure to confirm any logistics such as:
  - a) Where you will be speaking from (some churches have more than one pulpit)?
  - b) Find out where to sit – near the altar, in a front pew, on the altar?
  - c) Will you be processing in with the celebrant, altar servers, etc.?
3. Speak slowly, loudly and clearly. Your message is useless if people cannot understand.
4. Be brief and be prepared: no more than 6-8 minutes.
5. It is far more important to believe what you are saying than to be eloquent.
6. Dress appropriately.
7. Be prepared to greet people after Mass at the back of the church. This is an opportunity to chat informally with parishioners who may want to meet you.





## Children and Youth as Lay Witnesses

Just as the adult lay witness testimony is one of the most effective means of presenting the Stewardship message, a well-done lay witness presentation by children and youth of the parish can also be very effective. This testimony does not only need to be geared toward other children and youth; it can be very inspiring to adults in the parish, as well. The goal is to inspire others to give freely and joyfully of their gifts. Hearing how a young person in the parish already lives Stewardship can have a profound effect.

### **Tips in choosing a young person as a Lay Witness:**

- Invite a young person who is already practicing Stewardship in the parish. Those who are altar servers, lectors, greeters, involved in helping others, often show an understanding of Stewardship in their lives.
- They should be someone who attends Mass every week with their family. Often the entire family is involved in Stewardship in both in their parish and community.
- Invite a young person who is mature, articulate and somewhat at ease in front of large groups.

### **Consider a Question and Answer dialogue:**

- The lay witness should be introduced along with information on his or her family.
- Using a dialogue format, interview the lay witness with regard to his or her practice of Stewardship. Ask them to explain what Stewardship means to them and to share real life experiences that relate to Stewardship.
- The young person should be given a copy of the questions and plenty of time to prepare their answers from their own experiences. The pastor should meet with the lay witness to review their responses and to rehearse.
- The pastor will help guide and direct the lay witness testimony. In this way, the young person will not have to worry about what to say next. He or she can speak from the heart in a relaxed and comfortable manner.



## Resources: *Lay Witness*

- At the end of the dialogue, if this is not coupled with an adult lay witness testimony, the pastor should thank the lay witness for sharing their thoughts and experiences with Stewardship and encourage EVERYONE to think about how they can share their own gifts of time, talent and financial resources in the service of God and one another.

### **Sample Questions for a Child and Youth Lay Witness Dialogue:**

- We have been educating the parish about Stewardship for many years. I know you have watched adults come up here and talk about Stewardship. What do you think Stewardship is about?
- What is it you love about your parish?
- If Stewardship is really all about thanking God for all the wonderful things God has given to us, what are some ways you use your time to thank God?
- We are reminded that all we have and all that we are is a gift from God. God gives everyone special talents – that’s just how God makes us – with special talents. What are some of those special talents God has given you?
- How do you use those talents here at the parish? In your family and neighborhood? In your school?
- When you share your gifts of time and talent, how does that make you feel?
- When we learn about Stewardship, we learn that our money (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 the parish community?
- How would you encourage other children to get started in Stewardship?



## **Sample Stewardship of Treasure Commitment Cover Letter**

Dear Mary,

It is with a profound sense of awe that I say Thank You to You for your many expressions of stewardship this past year. I look at the Stewardship of Time (hours and hours really) involved in attending committee meetings, in being an acolyte, a lector, a communion distributor, an usher; the Stewardship of Time in planning and executing the walk-a-thon, the festival, the rummage sales, the auction, the golf outing, the parish clean up days, counting out scrip, the fish fries, the Brewer's games and now the Bradley center events, movie nights and the car raffle to name but a few. Not one of these events would happen without the Stewardship of Time of our parishioners.

As you know, this is the time of the year when we traditionally ask for your annual pledge of financial stewardship. This pledge enables the Parish to plan the programs that will be carried out in the following year. Fund raising gurus tell us that people need to know how their hard earned money will be spent, and the enclosed page gives but a brief sketch of some of those ways in this parish. (We could have a full page and then some for each ministry area.)

I ask you once again to look at all that God has given you and ask you what return you will pledge.

A financial pledge card and return envelope are enclosed. The backside of the card can be used to determine the percent of return you may wish to make. On the front side please indicate your financial pledge for 2001. Please help save us the cost of a second mailing by returning the card on or before November 30th in the envelope provided. **THANK YOU!**

Yours in Christ,

Reverend .....



## **Sample Stewardship of Treasure Insert You Are There**

*St. Mary Parish, Menomonee Falls*

- Did you know that we are one of only a handful of parishes that pay catechists for teaching our children in the religious education program? The parish moved to this a number of years ago as one way of assuring quality education for our children in this program. Thank you to you! We hope to continue this practice in the new budget year and to expand and enhance our Christian Formation program. Your \$\$\$ means that “you are there”:
  - Inviting, encouraging and applauding the efforts of our religious ed teachers;
  - Preparing our children for their First Communion;
  - Praying with our youth on their retreats;
  - Preparing our youth for the sacrament of Confirmation;
  - Celebrating the sacraments with our youth and children.
  
- In the current year, we made the leap to pay faculty at 75% of the Menomonee Falls Public School wage scale. In prior years, we averaged 72% of the MFPS scale. That meant that some teachers were paid well in excess of this average, while others were painfully below it. This year, however, each teacher is at a minimum of 75%. Thank you to you! In the coming budget year, we hope to move to 76% of MFPS. Your \$\$\$ means that “you are there” in the classrooms:
  - Assuring a competent teacher in every classroom;
  - Providing chalk and erasers, pens and pencils, text books and paper;
  - Serving the hot lunch meals to our children;
  - Teaching our children to read, to sing new songs, to create new poems;
  - Looking over their shoulders as they practice their computer skills;
  - Moving the paint brush to make that project an artistic masterpiece;
  - Keeping a safe building for all.



## *Resources: Stewardship of Treasure*

- Your financial stewardship this year has enabled us to make 166 visits to parishioners in the hospital between January 1st and September 30th. Also within that period of time we were able to visit 215 sick and/or elderly in their homes. Thank you to you! In addition to this, countless numbers of parishioners make communion calls to the sick and homebound. Your \$\$\$ means that “you are there” visiting the sick, the elderly, the dying – holding their hands and praying with them.
  
- Your financial stewardship enables us to purchase thousands of hosts and gallons of wine for communion; candles and flowers to decorate the Church; palms for Palm Sunday; charcoal and incense and missalettes. Thank you to you! Your \$\$\$ means that “you are there”:
  - Rehearsing with the choir and leaders of song;
  - Singing for funerals and comforting the bereaved;
  - Playing the organ for weddings;
  - Training our acolytes; Preparing our readers;
  - Meeting with engaged couples to plan their wedding Mass;
  - Decorating the Church for special liturgical seasons.
  
- One of the ministries that remain hidden (unless something goes wrong) is the ministry of building & grounds. Those among us who are homeowners realize what a huge cash investment it is to own property. We all know how vital it is that our parish property be safe, cared for, and welcoming. Thank you to you! Your \$\$\$ means that “you are there”:
  - Lighting our church, classrooms, gym and offices;
  - Cleaning the classrooms every night;
  - Raking leaves; cleaning gutters;
  - Shoveling snow; mowing the lawn;
  - Heating our buildings in winter; air conditioning them in summer;
  - Throwing out garbage; picking up after . . . ;
  - Setting up chairs for a meeting; then setting them up for the next one;
  - Washing and waxing floors; painting walls; cleaning windows;



## *Resources: Stewardship of Treasure*

- Repairing the plumbing;
  - Hiring contractors to repair or replace roofs; to build the Johnson chair lift; to install air conditioning; to do remodeling.
- Father and all of us in the office also want to say Thank you to you! Your \$\$\$ means that “you are there”:
- Celebrating daily Eucharist;
  - Meeting with the bereaved to plan the funeral Mass;
  - Preparing parents for the Sacrament of Baptism for their children;
  - Answering the phone and the doorbell;
  - Preparing the weekly bulletin and the monthly “Peals”;
  - Updating records (change of address records; sacramental records)
  - Registering new parishioners;
  - Coordinating rooms for meetings;
  - Paying bills; preparing employee paychecks;
  - Making thousands of copies of notes, minutes, mailings, records;
  - Keeping our insurance coverages up-to-date.

**Thank You Too You!**



# A Taste of St. Robert

*St. Robert Parish – Shorewood, WI*

### Concept:

Determine a creative way to invite parish members, new and old, to volunteer for parish activities. The response, conceived of in the parish stewardship committee, was to go beyond the traditional ‘time and talent’ approach of mailing and a few witness talks.

We committed to an idea that to effectively recruit new blood, people needed to first be invited to do so. We are inundated with written invitations so the best way we felt was to engage people face to face. Deciding that free food always draws people, and also believing that a ‘ministry fair’ might lack the appeal we wanted to convey, we set out to create a new event.

### What We Did:

- Essentially **two people from the stewardship committee** agreed to run with the idea. They enlisted the support of a few others from the community who took responsibility for various aspects of the event.
- We invited all parishioners to the event which was held in **mid-April**, two weeks after Easter.
- **Invitations** were in the form of bulletin stuffers inserted for 5-6 consecutive weeks. It was also promoted through other newsletters in the school and parish and from the pulpit, etc.
- It was held on a **Friday evening** in the school gym, our largest space available for such a gathering. Several hundred people attended.
- **Each committee/ministry** of the parish was invited to staff a booth with information about their ministry. Several dozen responded. In addition to information, the volunteer was available to answer any questions, talk about the focus of the committee or ministry, or comment on time commitment.
- A sign up sheet was available to enlist new volunteers immediately. We received **100 new volunteers** that evening.



## Resources

- **Food and drinks** were provided. Using connections and relationships established through our parish fair, all of the food was donated. I believe beverages (beer, wine, and soda) may have been donated as well.
- **Children's activities:** we had our multi-purpose room in the school set up for the kids. We had a DJ. We had older students and some adults assigned in the room.
- There was **no real formal program**. People knew why they were there.

### Comment:

The event, in some ways, was very much a **'thank you'** event for those who came who have participated over the years. The Pastor's support was very important. He was totally behind it, trusted the people running it, and therefore did not have any probably with the unbudgeted \$5-600 that was spent.

Questions about this event and its planning can be directed to Mike Brauer (414) 967-1170 or to Taegan Grunwald @ 332-1164.





# Stewardship

## A Series of Bulletin Columns

*Rev. Michael A. Ignaszak ■ St. Helen Parish, Milwaukee*

*Fall 2000*

### **Stewardship Part I**

*August 27th, 2000*

Stewardship is a word that we hear more and more often in the Church these days. Some people think automatically of the diocesan appeal when they hear the word. Others think of our annual pledge drive at the parish. Still others wonder why the Catholic Church is using a word that they usually thought of as a Protestant word. Stewardship is more than a word. It is a way of life. It is a way of life that is deeply rooted in the Scriptures and in our Catholic tradition. While I am on sabbatical there will be a series of bulletin columns reflecting on Stewardship. It is my hope that we at St. Helen's can deepen our understanding of this aspect of our response to God. Perhaps we can begin to see stewardship as a way of life rather than just a word.

### **Stewardship Part II: the Word**

The word "steward" from which "Stewardship" is derived can be traced back to the Old English words, "Sty Warden." The word "sty" meant the whole farm or estate. Today we still use this word, but only to refer to the place where pigs are kept. It originally meant the whole farm, the place where you stayed, hence "the sty." The word "warden" still maintains its meaning when we talk of a game warden. The warden was the protector, the guardian and the proxy. A warden was left in charge of the owner's property when they were away for a long trip. It was understood that the warden was in charge and they were to treat the property as if it were their own. They would enjoy its benefits and eat its crops but they were also responsible to maintain the property and all its hands. In many ways it was theirs to use but not theirs to own. They would have to return the property to the owner upon his return. The most trusted warden of the sty, the steward, was almost a part of the family, a caretaker and trusted friend, but still a servant. It is this notion of Stewardship that is at the heart of our response to God.



God gives us gifts throughout our life. In many ways they are not our own. Even our family, parents and children are entrusted to us, but do not belong to us. Our money, our homes, our skills and knowledge are really only on loan to us. Someday we will return them to God. It is up to us to be good stewards, to care for these gifts after having used them well and to preserve them for the next generation. Stewardship teaches us that we are only here temporarily. All of God's blessings, given in love, also come with the responsibility to use and care for those gifts, wisely. Throughout our lives, and eventually in death, we will make our return to God.

### **Stewardship Part III: Ecology**

Stewardship is a word we most often associate with "Churchy" things and "Ecology" is a word we often think of in relationship to political debates, science class and Public Television specials. Yet, the two words are related quite closely. Part of the notion of Stewardship discussed in Part I of this series spoke about care for the next generation.

If we see everything as a gift from God that is given to us on loan, then we must care for this gift so it can be passed on in good condition. Obviously caring for the earth and its resources (ecology) flows from being a good steward. This same logic applies when we look at our parish, its school, its programs and its resources as gifts from God. Most of us today did not build this parish; we inherited it from our parents. Even our founding members did not build this parish alone. Many generations have built upon the work of their predecessors. Stewardship teaches us that we have been given a gift in this community and we need to not only use that gift but to care for it so that the next generation of our parish will benefit from what we leave behind.

### **Stewardship Part IV: Beyond Our Walls**

Beyond the boundaries of our parish, Stewardship teaches us that we are responsible for the whole Church, not just our parish or diocese. That is why our parish Stewardship program and the annual Archdiocesan Stewardship Appeal use the same word. They are both part of the same reality – caring for the Church throughout the world that has been entrusted to us.

In today's culture we have learned to see time in very small pieces. Drive-through



convenience, technological advances and new ideas of customer service have all taught us to expect things quickly. Rarely do we have to wait more than a day for anything. In centuries past, time was seen in much bigger blocks. Most people never saw a clock much less one with a quartz-accurate second hand. This larger concept of time affected how people saw their world and their role within it. Many projects, especially something like a great Gothic cathedral, were only accomplished through several lifetimes. Those who started the project never saw its completion. Those who prayed within a Cathedral's walls rarely had been there when the cornerstone was laid. Yet everyone pitched in to make these monuments to God a reality. The Cathedral reminded each generation that they were part of a larger whole. That Church of which they were a part spanned many places and many times. Often people would labor on a Cathedral with only the notion that they were part of a purpose beyond themselves. This is Stewardship at its best.

### **Stewardship Part V: The Scriptures and Stewardship**

Stewardship is first found in the Scriptures in the Old Testament when it describes the ancient practice of a tithe. Even in the story of Cain and Abel we see both of them making offerings to God out of their harvest. The difference between their gifts was that Abel offered the first and the best of his harvest, while Cain's offering was not his best and not the first fruits of his flock. Often, for Christian Denominations that have a more elaborated understanding of tithing, the biblical tithe is referred to 10% or 5% of one income. This can seem overwhelming to us within the Catholic Church. These figures can however act as a goal. The most important part of the notion of tithing is not whether it is 1%, 2%, 5% or 10%. What matters the most is the idea of deciding ahead of time the first fruits of our labors will be dedicated to the Lord. Tithing is both an expression of gratitude to God for what he has given us and a statement of dependence. By tithing we are saying to God that we recognize that all we have depends on his gracious love. When we make this commitment to ourselves we are saying that God comes first. Before the gas bill, before the rent, before any of the other obligations that dominate our lives, we say that God takes priority. We are also saying that we trust that if we put God first, then God will take care of us. I know a family that had made a commitment to tithe 5% of their income. Their Stewardship tithe was so important to them that the parents went out of the way to teach their children to depend on God. It happened



that in the process of building their dream home an unexpected unemployment left them in serious debt, yet they continued to tithe what little they had. When I visited them they shared that, even though there were some tough times, they had never gone hungry. Even though they had to adjust their plans and change their dreams, they were never in want for the basics of life. Just when another crisis threatened to pull them under, things always worked out for the good. This family taught me the kind of trust that is at the heart of Stewardship.

### **Stewardship Part VI: Tithing Continued**

In the New Testament Jesus told us the story of the widow's mite. Those with much were making large gifts to the temple, but they still lived in luxury and excess. Jesus observed a poor widow placing a small coin among the grand gifts. He acknowledged her gift as the greatest, since it came from her need not from her excess. She gave even beyond what she should have been able to afford. This is the kind of trust Stewardship demands of all of us. This kind of dependence is not easy, nor are we able to just decide to trust God so completely starting today. We grow towards this kind of trust. That is where the idea of setting a percentage comes in. Each year as we renew our commitments we should challenge ourselves as to whether we can do a little bit more. If we give 2%, perhaps we can give 3% or 4%.

This approach to Stewardship can be very freeing. Once I have decided what I am giving to the Church and to other charities, I can be free from the guilt and manipulation that so often occurs when we receive baskets of solicitations from a multitude of charities. Once I have set an amount for myself, I also decide on what kind of charities I will support for the year. One year I might favor the food pantries and hunger relief projects, another I might favor medical research charities. I try to decide ahead of time where I will give my tithe, always leaving the biggest portion for the Church. As begging letters arrive I save only those that fall into the categories I have decided to favor. Then once a month, when I begin to pay my bills, I first honor my tithe and then prioritize which charities will receive something that month. The rest of the appeals will wait until the next month. Personally I try to function this way, but it is not always easy. However, I have always found that when I honor my tithe it not only makes me feel good that I have shared God's gifts to me, but somehow my resources never run out.



## **Stewardship Part VII: Accountability**

Another Scripture story that refers to Stewardship is Jesus' parable about the king who gave his three servants ten talents, five talents and one talent. The point of the parable is not to compare God to this demanding and conniving king, but to show that if it makes earthly sense to use our gifts wisely, then it makes even more sense to use wisely the gifts we have been given from above. We are accountable for the way we use or misuse God's gifts to us. That is why you often hear Stewardship in our lives described as involving our time, talent and treasure. All of these are our gifts from God. They are not to be buried but to be used wisely, invested in our community and our world.

As in Part III of this series, when the connection between ecology and Stewardship was explored, there is a part of Stewardship that calls us to look at all of our lives as a gift. The time we have been given, the talents and abilities with which we are blessed and our share of the treasures of God's earth are entrusted to us. We are the stewards of this world. Beyond our notion of "giving" to charity, Stewardship calls us to work to make our investments of time and talents grow. Stewardship encompasses all of our life so that we may even talk about tithing our time. Can you imagine giving 10% of your time to God in prayer and service to others? This might seem unrealistic until we include caring for family in this 10%. Service to the community or to the Church, service to our family, earning a living to support our family then all become a part of our response of Stewardship. Work then is not just to earn the money; it is to care for the world and support the family and the Church. Stewardship becomes a way of looking at things, a way of life that shifts the focus of everything we do away from self-centered concerns to how each action of our day serves the Lord in gratitude. Stewardship is a way of living with things in proper perspective.

I hope this series of reflections on Stewardship has given you a chance to reflect more deeply on God's call to you to live as one of his stewards.

*Blessings,*

*Fr. Mike*

*Copies of this entire bulletin series are available from the St. Helen Parish office.*



## Parish Survey

A parish survey should be designed and distributed to every parish household. The survey inquires about parishioners' opinions regarding parish services and ministries.

The survey will serve to communicate to every parishioner that each is an important person in the parish because you are asking for their opinion. Also it will identify the needs of the parishioners and whether the parish ministries are meeting those needs. For example, if several elderly parishioners expressed a need for transportation to Mass on Sundays a ride-share ministry could be formed and volunteers sought during the Annual Stewardship Renewal.

## Sample Parish Survey

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the effectiveness of our parish ministries in providing for the spiritual, educational and social needs of the parishioners.

**Directions: Please circle the letter that corresponds to your choice.**

Family Name:

Phone:

1. Please indicate the number of people in your household:

- a. A single man
- b. A single woman
- c. A married man
- d. A married woman
- e. Number of high school students
- f. Number of grade school students



## *Resources*

2. Age bracket(s) of each are:

- a. 0 to 5 years
- b. 6 to 13 years
- c. 14 to 18 years
- d. 18 to 25 years
- e. 26 to 39 years
- f. 40 to 49 years
- g. 50 to 59 years
- h. 60 years and over

3. Is your family registered in this parish?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. If NO, are you registered in another parish in the Archdiocese?

- a. No
- b. Yes – Parish Name?

5. If Yes to #3, how long have you been a member of this parish?

- a. 0-2 years
- b. 3-5 years
- c. 6-10 years
- d. 11-20 years
- e. Over 20 years







# Resources

7. Which of the following are, or would be, most helpful to your prayer life? (circle as many as apply):

- a. Parish Mission Week (a week-long parish renewal)
- b. Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration
- c. Adult Education
- d. Spiritual Formation
- e. Bible Study
- f. Prayer Group
- g. Rosary
- h. Enhance Mass (How?)
- i. Other

8. Please rate how well you believe this parish is serving the needs of the following groups of parishioners: *(If any of these areas do not apply to you, or you cannot assess them adequately, please circle the NA-Not Applicable)*

	Excellent					Poor	
Preschool Children	5	4	3	2	1		NA
Suggested ways to improve:							
School Children (K-8)	5	4	3	2	1		NA
Suggested ways to improve:							
High School Students (9-12)	5	4	3	2	1		NA
Suggested ways to improve:							
Single Adults	5	4	3	2	1		NA
Suggested ways to improve:							



## Resources

Young Married Couples (no children) 5 4 3 2 1 NA

Suggested ways to improve:

Families 5 4 3 2 1 NA

Suggested ways to improve:

Single Parent Families 5 4 3 2 1 NA

Suggested ways to improve:

Ages 50 and Over 5 4 3 2 1 NA

Suggested ways to improve:

Senior Citizens (retired) 5 4 3 2 1 NA

Suggested ways to improve:

Persons with Disabilities 5 4 3 2 1 NA

Suggested ways to improve:

Non-Catholic Spouses 5 4 3 2 1 NA

Suggested ways to improve:

9. Would you be willing to volunteer for something that you may be qualified for yet do not have much experience in? \*\*You would receive training. (i.e. Lector, Usher or Religious Education Instructor).

a. Yes

b. No



## Resources

10. Which of the following best describes how you really feel about tithing (percentage-giving) of treasure?

- a. I follow the biblical concept of tithing by giving the “first fruits:” 10% of my gross income (8% to the parish and 2% to other charities).
- b. I follow the biblical concept of tithing by giving the “first fruits:” 10% of my gross income (5% to the parish and 5% to other charities).
- c. For me, tithing means giving a percentage of my gross income, but not 10%.
- d. I take care of my personal bills and then give to the parish from what is leftover.
- e. I make an occasional donation, but I do not give a percentage of my income.
- f. I do not believe in giving money to the Church or charity.
- g. Other

11. If you do not believe in the biblical concept of tithing, why not? (circle as many as apply):

- a. Giving money to the parish does not result in any direct benefit to my family or me.
- b. The money given to the parish is not spent well.
- c. There are too many other things my money goes for. If I were to give a percentage of my gross income, I would not be able to support my current lifestyle.
- d. Too much of the money contributed does not stay in this parish.
- e. This parish is relatively well-off. I prefer to give to more needy causes.
- f. Other

12. What is your perception of our current parish financial status?

- a. We are generating enough revenue to pay our operating bills, including facility upkeep, and to put money aside in savings to meet future parish needs.
- b. We are generating the revenue to pay our operating bills, including facility upkeep, but do not put money aside in savings for future parish needs.
- c. We are generating barely enough revenue to pay our operating bills.
- d. We are having difficulty paying our operating bills.



## Resources

13. How are you informed about the parish finances? (circle as many as apply):

- a. Weekly Bulletin
- b. Annual Financial Report
- c. Conversations with Other Parishioners
- d. Not At All
- e. Other

14. How would you describe your knowledge of Catholic doctrine and issues pertaining to the Catholic Faith?

- a. Knowledgeable
- b. Knowledgeable, but some additional education would be helpful
- c. Somewhat knowledgeable, but there are definitely issues that I need to learn more about
- d. Not very knowledgeable

15. Have you or would you attend any of the adult education sessions or bible study sessions?

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. If No, why not?

- a. I was not aware of them.
- b. None of the topics have been of interest of me. I would attend session(s) on the following topics:
- c. do not have time.
- d. They are held at times that do not fit into my schedule. The best time for me to attend is:
- e. I am not interested in attending adult education sessions.
- f. Other



# Resources

17. What do you like best about this parish?
18. What would you like to see added or changed to improve this parish?
19. How has the growth of the parish (or lack of) affected your own family?
20. We do not send our child(ren) to the parish school or Catholic high school because:
21. How do you feel you and your child(ren) are included in parish life?
22. What should be done to improve the parish school?
23. What improvement(s) do you think we need to make to our Religious Education Programs?
  - a. Strength of religious curriculum
  - b. Discipline
  - c. Atmosphere conducive to learning
  - d. Other

**Please complete this section only if you have children attending a Diocesan Catholic School(s)**

24. What is your most important reason for enrolling your child(ren) in the Catholic Schools?

Elementary

- a. Safe environment
- b. Academics
- c. Religious Education
- d. Other

High School

- a. Safe environment
- b. Academics
- c. Religious Education
- d. Other

25. What importance do you think your child's school places on religious instructions and activities? (circle your choice for each)

	High Priority	Low
Elementary	5 4 3 2 1	
High School	5 4 3 2 1	



# Resources

26. Realizing that religious and academic education are of primary concern, please rank the following additional areas according to the importance you think they should have at the elementary or high school level. (circle your choice for each)

<u>Elementary</u>	High Importance	Low
Sports/Physical Education	5 4 3 2 1	
Health and Substance Abuse Prevention	5 4 3 2 1	
Music and Art	5 4 3 2 1	
Computers and Technology	5 4 3 2 1	
Foreign Language	5 4 3 2 1	
Special Educational Services	5 4 3 2 1	

<u>High School</u>	High Importance	Low
Sports/Physical Education	5 4 3 2 1	
Health and Substance Abuse Prevention	5 4 3 2 1	
Music and Art	5 4 3 2 1	
Computers and Technology	5 4 3 2 1	
Foreign Language	5 4 3 2 1	
Special Educational Services	5 4 3 2 1	

**Thank you for completing this survey. This information will help the parish set priorities and goals for the future. Results of this survey will be available as soon as possible.**



# Archdiocese of Milwaukee

## Sample Position Description

**Position Title:** Director of Parish Stewardship/Parish Stewardship Director

**Supervisor:** Pastor

### Primary Function of This Position:

The Director of Parish Stewardship is responsible for the administration of \_\_\_\_\_ (parish's name) stewardship education and activities. As a resource to the Stewardship Committee, the Director creates opportunities and frame work to help parishioners understand that Stewardship is an expression of discipleship that calls us to share our gifts of time, talent and financial resources. The Director coordinates human and financial resources in a systematic way that meets the ministry needs of the parish.

### Major Position Responsibilities:

#### Oversees the Parish Stewardship Effort

- Oversees the efforts of stewardship education in the parish, acting as liaison and resource to all ministries.
- Plans and executes the annual stewardship commitment/ recommitment process.
- Coordinates time and talent components of the parish stewardship effort.
- Sees to it that all time and talent offerings are recorded in a timely manner.
- Ensures that the chairs of ministries are notified of the parishioner's commitment to the ministry and proper contact and follow-up occurs.
- Seeks third source funding opportunities for parish.
- Coordinates financial stewardship component.
- Recruits and prepares individuals to share their personal testimonies about stewardship with parishioners.
- Develops a welcoming program for parishioners.



## *Resources*

- Sends letters of acknowledgement for pledges or gifts in a timely fashion.
- Prepares stewardship messages for the bulletin, websites or parish newsletter.
- Develop an annual pastoral report outlining the gifts shared within the parish.
- Initiates and implements Planned Giving component to annual stewardship efforts.
- Assists in the maintenance of the parish's financial stewardship records.
- Prepares thank-you notes, acknowledgement as needed.
- Promotes and understands the theological aspects of stewardship.

### **Acts as Resource to the Stewardship Committee, Parish Ministries, Parish Staff and Parish Members**

- Works closely with the Director of Administrative Services and Finance Committee.
- Attends all Stewardship Committee meetings.
- Collaborates with Parish Council, committees and staff in overall parish planning.
- Educates staff on the meaning of stewardship and their role in the process.
- Creates and makes available appropriate stewardship literature for the parish community.
- Works closely with the Director of Religious Education to promote stewardship educational opportunities for the children and youth of the parish.
- Using the time/talent commitments, guides members to the parish committees and ministries.
- Offers leadership and continuing education to committees on the integration of stewardship in their ministries.
- Attends Archdiocese educational offerings and maintains membership in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Association of Parish Stewardship Professionals.
- Maintains membership in the International Catholic Stewardship Council and attends conferences when able.
- Coordinates the Archdiocesan Catholic Stewardship Appeal.
- Works closely with the Director of Liturgy to incorporate stewardship opportunities in the liturgies when appropriate.
- May act as a coordinator of various stewardship activities, including but not limited to: auctions, capital campaigns, endowment efforts, fundraising and other special projects.





## *Resources*

### **Position Specifications/Requirements:**

#### **Skills, Knowledge and/or Abilities (SKA'S):**

- public speaking skills
- possesses knowledge of Catholic Church and Catholic stewardship
- proficient in written and verbal communication
- ability to work collaboratively with people of diverse backgrounds
- ability to work independently
- possesses a sense of professionalism and confidentiality
- ability to maintain a flexible schedule
- knowledge of non-profit financial operations
- ability to lead and direct efforts of volunteers
- computer: MS Office and financial management software skills
- ability to direct, motivate and evaluate groups and individuals

#### **Education, Training and/or Experience:**

Bachelor's degree in a related field required. Parish life or parish ministry experience preferred. Candidate must possess academic knowledge of the theology of stewardship. Computer literate in word processing and database management. Highly motivated individual with good interpersonal skills; emphasis in public speaking and preaching. Candidate must be practicing Catholic with ability to serve as model of Gospel values. Candidate must have demonstrated knowledge and leadership skills and theory in stewardship.

#### **Responsibility for Quantifiable Measures:**

Local parish department budget

#### **Working Environment:**

Local parish office. Ability to work some evenings and weekends.



# Harvesting the Gifts of Time, Talent & Treasure Stewardship Checklist

## 1) Develop a Stewardship Plan and Timeline which includes:

- Stewardship education: bulletin reflections, homilies, lay witnessing
  - Adults
  - Families
  - Children/Teens
  - Young Adults
- Plans for building/maintaining a welcoming, hospitable atmosphere
- Comprehensive New Parishioner Welcoming Program
- Select yearly Stewardship Theme
- Various communication vehicles
- Prayer and formation opportunities
- Ministry Fair
- Time and Talent
- Financial Commitment
- Thank you's/gratitude/affirmation
- Gift Accountability
- Outreach

## 2) Communicate the Stewardship Educational Plan to:

- Parish Leadership
- Committees
- Parish community

## 3) Prepare the Parish Community

- Stewardship education
  - Bulletin reflections
  - Lay witnessing
    - Invite parishioners to be lay witnesses. Select lay witnesses that reflect your parish community (ie, single, families, seniors, youth/young adults)
    - Prepare and schedule lay witnesses
- Develop messages that help parishioners make the connection with how their gifts, both talent and financial, are reflected in parish life



## Resources

- Plan with Religious Ed Director and Principal (if parish school) to incorporate Stewardship education into curriculum
  
- Ministry Fair
  - Select Date, Time and Theme
  - Communicate with parish staff, ministries and parish community to include purpose of fair, responsibilities and time commitment of the participants
  - Public recognition of all parishioners involved in ministry
  - Follow-up and evaluation
  
- Annual Stewardship Pastoral Report

*Offers a way of being accountable to the parish for the gifts of time, talent and treasure brought forward, and helps people see what they can be proud of in their parish*

  - Finances: pie charts, bar graphs, income and expenses
  - Ministries supported and people served: numbers of parishioners involved and people served by those ministries
  - Sacraments: number of baptisms, weddings, funerals, confirmations, etc.
  - Photographs of ministries in action
  - Parish Outreach
  - Thank you and affirmation
  
- Announcement Weekend
  - Inform parishioners through pulpit and bulletin announcements that their invitation to commitment or recommitment to Stewardship as a Way of Life will take place

#### **4) Design/assemble all Stewardship Resources reflected in the Plan**

- a) Ministry Catalogue
  - Table of Contents
  - Letter from Pastor
  - Organizational Structure
  - Directory of Committee Chairpersons and Staff Directory
  - List of Parish Social Activities or Clubs
  - Areas of Ministries
    - Contact information: name, phone number, email



- Ministry description
  - Mission statement
  - Explanation of activity of work of committee
  - Suggested families, single, children and teen activities
  - Meeting times, place, time commitment expected
  - Term of commitment

## b) Sign Up Forms for Sharing Gifts of Time and Talent

- One for each member of household (adults and children)
- Easy to fill out and include directions where to return
- Opening statement about Stewardship
- Explanation of what to expect once form is returned
- A thank you for offering time and talents for the work of the Parish
- Blank lines for new ministry/activity suggestions
- Area available for special assistance requests
- Commitment to Prayer

## c) Invitation to Give – the Letter

- Personalized
- Most effective when the tone of the letter is one of gratitude
- Language that helps parishioners feel this is a wonderful opportunity to support their parish
- Asks parishioners to share their gifts with the community using Stewardship language
- Clearly asks for a commitment (financial/time/talent) and explains the importance of their support

## d) Invitation to Give – the Supporting Brochure

- Makes the case for making a commitment
- Can include a financial contribution guide
- Educates and answers questions about the call to Stewardship and the impact Stewardship has on the parish



## Resources

- Describes the Stewardship opportunities available in the parish. ie planned gifts, automatic funds withdrawal, monthly statements, envelopes

### e) Invitation to Give - Financial Commitment Card

- Easy to fill out
- Information asked for is consistent with commitment letter
- Space for name, address, phone, e-mail
- Check-off boxes: weekly, monthly, annually, unable to make a commitment at this time, no longer a parishioner
- Space to write amount of commitment
- Option for giving, i.e. electronic funds transfer, envelope
- Space for children/youth commitment
- Commitment to Parish Membership

### f) Return Envelope

- Insures confidentiality
- Facilitates return of commitments

## 5) Harvesting the Gifts

- Plan Commitment/Recommitment Weekend
  - Schedule weekend with staff and Liturgy Committee
  - Work with Liturgy Committee to plan liturgy with special Stewardship focus
  - witnesses at all Masses
  - Stewardship messages incorporated into homilies
  - Stewardship Banners and displays
  - Music and petitions to reflect the call to Stewardship
  - Annual Pastoral Report available
  - Select method of distribution:
    - In-pew
      - Materials in pew



- Direct Mail
  - First Class
- Home Visits
  - Commissioning of visitors
- Select method of collection
  - Mail
  - Communal at Offertory
    - Blessing of the gifts brought forward

## 6) Follow-up

- Gather all commitment forms for input
- Input names in database
- Create and send Thank You's
- Run Ministry/Committee lists for MinistryChairs to make contacts
- Using suggested guidelines from the Stewardship Committee, Chairs contact parishioners who have shown an interest in the ministry
- Committee Chairs send contact report back to Stewardship Committee
- Stewardship Committee sends thank you's to Chairs
- Ministry Chairs keep track of member's participation and return form for input and thanks
- Financial reports given to Finance Committee for budgeting purposes
- Thank you's and graphical updates in bulletins
- Strategize follow up method to those who have not returned commitment cards
  - Follow up mailings
  - Phonathon
- Stewardship Committee uses information to create stewardship messages/reflections and public thank you's for bulletin/monthly statements/annual report

### *Stewardship is a Way of Life*

*A Parish who embraces the vision of calling forth and nurturing the gifts of all people,  
will have the resources it needs to thrive.*



# Stewardship Ladder of Motivation

*(Why People Give)*

**6 Gratitude (give until it feels good).** The strongest motivation for giving is gratitude. If people give of themselves because they are grateful for what God has given them, it makes no difference who the priest or bishop is – they are grateful to be part of the mission of the Church. This is Stewardship: giving after reflection on one’s blessings, and giving out of gratitude. The Scriptures comment on gratitude: “Each of us must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2Corinthians 9:7).

**5 Duty/Sacrifice (give until it hurts).** Many people give out of a sense of obligation. This often entails loyalty to an institution – one’s “alma mater,” one’s parish, etc. At other times it entails a need to sacrifice and atone for past failings. The new covenant of Christ has replaced the old covenant based on sacrifice. The Scriptures comment on sacrifice: “Go and learn the meaning of the words, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Matthew 9:13).

**4 Need (give if someone else hurts).** People also give because they perceive a specific need – to repair a leaky roof or because the Religious Education department is “desperate” for teachers. This approach is fine, but when the need is gone, so are the people. The Scriptures comment on need: “You are being enriched in every way for all generosity...for the administration of public service is not only supplying the needs of the holy ones but it is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God” (2Corinthians 9:11-12).

**3 Social Approval (give if someone is looking).** Sometimes people give in order to be recognized by others. They should give because it is the right thing to do, not because others notice. If people’s giving depends on an audience, when the audience is gone, so is their Stewardship. The Scriptures comment on social approval: “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them: otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father...But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6:1,3).



**2 Rewards (give if you get something back).** Some people give in order to receive. Some look for material rewards from raffles, games of chance, tax breaks, etc. Some look for spiritual rewards such as the proverbial “ticket to heaven.” For these givers, when the rewards are gone, so is their Stewardship (and sometimes even the faith!). The Scriptures comment on rewards: “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites...Amen, I say to you, they have already received their reward” (Matthew 6:5).

**1 Guilt/Fear (give to keep from being punished).** Guilt does not promote Stewardship because it is a preoccupation with one’s self. People may give out of a sense of guilt, but when the guilt is gone, so is their Stewardship. The Scriptures comment on fear: “Fear is useless, what is needed is trust” (Luke 8:50).







## The Ministry Fair

A Ministry Fair showcasing the ministries of the parish has many benefits. It is an opportunity for parishioners to:

- **meet** those currently involved in parish activities;
- **thank** those involved for their service to the parish;
- **learn** about the various ministries;
- **celebrate** all the wonderful ways the parish is a living sign of our faith.

The Ministry Fair is one component of the entire Stewardship Plan. The focus should be much broader than a means for recruiting. If the main purpose is to generate excitement and celebrate, then we are helping parishioners understand their gifts are vital to keep the parish thriving.

Listed below are suggestions to help when planning your Ministry Fair:

### 1) Select Date and Times

- Schedule Time and Talent Commitment/Recommitment Weekend first
- Plan Ministry Fair to be held before Time and Talent Commitment weekend
- Consideration of timing of event: Some parishes are moving toward holding the Ministry Fair in the Spring to spark interest, and Treasure component in the Fall

### 2) Select Theme

- Promotes planning and focus

### 3) Layout of Hall/Grounds

- Decide set up of tables/booths/areas for each committee/ministry
- If planning to be held outside, plan for rain/inclement weather



## 4) Communication

- Staff and Committees
  - Before announcing the date, make sure there are no conflicts with other committee's plans for the Parish
  - Invite representatives from committees to be part of the planning process
  - Communicate theme with staff and committees
  - Communicate purpose of the Ministry Fair
  - Provide outline of Ministry Fair activities
  - Find out if special equipment is needed for committees, i.e. VCR, electricity
  - Let committees know where their 'booth'/area is, amount of space for set-up
  - Inform committees on what they need to provide for their 'booth'
  - Times of the Fair; when ministry booths should be staffed
  
- Parish
  - Bulletins
  - Pulpit Announcements
  - Special invitations sent to segmented groups, i.e. new members
  - Lay witnessing by parishioner(s) on what it means to be involved and of service to their parish and community
  
- Liturgy Committee
  - Incorporate something special into Liturgies during that weekend or in preparation, i.e. one representative from each committee/area of ministry processing in with one item that exemplifies their ministries, banner, etc. and placing it at the altar or in another designated place
  - Prayers of the Faithful
  - Recognizing each committee/ministry and praying in gratitude for all they do
  - Litany of ministries of the Parish



## 5) Children and Youth

- Incorporate children's activities into the Fair, perhaps surrounding the theme
- Offer childcare; play activities at a specific area for the younger children
- Have youth as greeters, hand out name tags, etc.
- Involve ministries that involve youth/children to be represented

## 6) Follow Up

- Send thank you's to committees for participating and to all who were involved
- Evaluate the event: Planning Committee to debrief; ask committee members present at the Ministry Fair for their feedback:
  - What worked well
  - What could be improved upon
  - How to get more people to attend
  - Comments heard from those who visited the Fair
- Report the results/successes/thank you's to the parish at large, through the bulletin, newsletters, pulpit

## 7) Best Practices

- Serve desserts at each booth, to encourage people to visit
- "Ministry Bingo": Three \$100 prizes raffled after each Mass on Ministry Fair weekend. To enter the raffle, parishioners were encouraged to visit each booth at the Ministry Fair and receive a sticker. Parishioners who had collected stickers and received a "Bingo" on their bingo card had their name put in a hat for the drawing. Note: The first time this was done, two of the raffle winners donated their winnings back to the parish. (St. Matthew Parish, Oak Creek)
- Ministry Fair Theme: "Wine, Dine and Sign" Held on the Parish grounds on a Friday evening with food served. DJ was hired for the youth, and children's activities were also planned. (St. Robert Parish, Shorewood)
- Encourage people to enter their names for a drawing of a parish/school t-shirt, sweatshirt, cookbook, candle, etc. Send simple postcard to all who put their names in thanking them for stopping at the Fair.
- Have a contest for the "best" decorated booth/table. Have those who attend vote.



# Scriptural Passages with a Stewardship Message

## *Old Testament*

- The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being. Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and he placed there the man whom he had formed. The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. (*Genesis 2:7-8, 15*)
- Jacob then made this vow: If God remains with me, to protect me on this journey I am making and to give me enough bread to eat and clothing to wear, and I come back safe to my father's house, the Lord shall be my God. This stone that I have set up as a memorial stone shall be God's abode. Of everything you give me, I will faithfully return a tenth part to you. (*Genesis 28:20-22*)
- All tithes of the land, whether in grain from the fields or in fruit from the trees, belong to the Lord, as sacred to him. (*Leviticus 27:30*)
- The Lord said to Moses, Give the Levites these instructions: When you receive from the Israelites the tithes I have assigned you from them as your heritage, you are to make a contribution from them to the Lord, a tithe of the tithes; and your contribution will be credited to you as if it were grain from the threshing floor or new wine from the press. Thus you too shall make a contribution from all the tithes you receive from the Israelites, handing over to Aaron the priest the part to be contributed to the Lord. From all the gifts that you receive, and from the best parts, you are to consecrate to the Lord your own full contribution. (*Numbers 18:25-29*)
- Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows in the field you have sown; then in the place which the Lord, your God, chooses as the dwelling place of his name you shall eat in his presence your tithe of the grain, wine and oil, as well as the firstlings of your herd and flock, that you may learn always to fear the Lord, your God. ...that the Levite who has no share in the heritage with you, and also the alien, the orphan and the widow who belong to your community, may come and eat their fill; so that the Lord, your God, may bless you in all that you undertake. (*Deuteronomy 14:22-23, 29*)



## Resources

- . . .but each of you with as much as he can give, in proportion to the blessings which the Lord, your God, has bestowed on you. (*Deuteronomy 16:17*)
  
- You shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go the place which the Lord, your God, chooses for the dwelling place of his name. There you shall go to the priest in office at that time and say to him, “Today I acknowledge to the Lord, my God, that I have indeed come into the land which he swore to our fathers he would give us.” The priest shall then receive the basket from you and shall set it in front of the altar of the Lord, your God. Then you shall declare before the Lord, your God, “My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as an alien. But there he became a nation great, strong and numerous. Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O Lord, have given me.” And having set them before the Lord, your God, you shall bow down in his presence. (*Deuteronomy 26:2-5, 10*)
  
- When you have finished setting aside all the tithes of your produce in the third year, the year of the tithes, and you have given them to the Levite, the alien, the orphan and the widow, that they may eat their fill in your own community. (*Deuteronomy 26:12*)
  
- A psalm of David. The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds, the world and those who live there. (*Psalms 24:1*)
  
- Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce. Then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow. (*Proverbs 3:9-10*)
  
- One man is lavish yet grows still richer; another is too sparing, yet is the poorer. He who confers benefits will be amply enriched, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. (*Proverbs 11:24-25*)
  
- 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: Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessing upon you without measure? (*Malachi 3:10*)



## *New Testament*

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (*Matthew 5:3-7*)
  
- You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (*Matthew 5:13-16*)
  
- They replied, “Caesar’s.” At that he said to them, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.” (*Matthew 22:21*)
  
- So do not worry and say, “What are we to eat?” or “What are we to drink?” or “What are we to wear?” All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. (*Matthew 6:31-33*)
  
- As you go, make this proclamation: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. (*Matthew 10:7-8*)
  
- Then the king will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.” And the king will say to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (*Matthew 25:34-36, 40*)
  
- He also told them, “Take care what you hear. The measure with which you measure will be measured out to you, and still more will be given to you. To the one who has, more will be given; from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” (*Mark 4:24-25*)



## Resources

- His disciples answered him, “Where can anyone get enough bread to satisfy them here in this deserted place?” Still he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” “Seven,” they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also. They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over – seven baskets. There were about four thousand people. He dismissed them. (*Mark 8:4-9*)
- As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.” He replied and said to him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to (the) poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” (*Mark 10:17-21*)
- He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, “Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.” (*Mark 12:41-44*)
- Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you. (*Luke 6:38*)
- Then he said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?” (*Luke 9:23-25*)
- Then he said to the crowd, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.” Then he told them a parable. “There



was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry?”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.” (*Luke 12:15-21*)

- . . . Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more. (*Luke 12:48*)
- It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another. (*John 15:16-17*)
- No one should seek his own advantage, but that of his neighbor. (*1 Corinthians 10:24*)
- There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11*)
- If (one) part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it. (*1 Corinthians 12:26-27*)
- Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work. You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God. (*2 Corinthians 9:7-8, 11*)





## Resources

- For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. (*Galatians 5:13*)
  
- Make no mistake: God is not mocked, for a person will reap only what he sows, because the one who sows for his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows for the spirit will reap eternal life from the spirit. Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. (*Galatians 6:7-9*)
  
- For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it. If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that. Those who want to be rich are falling into temptation and into a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils, and some people in their desire for it have strayed from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains. (*1 Timothy 6:7-10*)
  
- Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life. (*1 Timothy 6:17-19*)
  
- Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels. Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you also are in the body. Let your life be free from love of money but be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never forsake you or abandon you.” Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind. (*Hebrews 13:1-3, 5, 16*)
  
- Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father who created all the lights in the heavens. (*James 1:17*)
  
- What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (*James 2:14-17*)



## Resources

- As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. *(1 Peter 4:10-11)*
- His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power. *(2 Peter 1:3)*
- The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. *(1 John, 3:16, 18)*

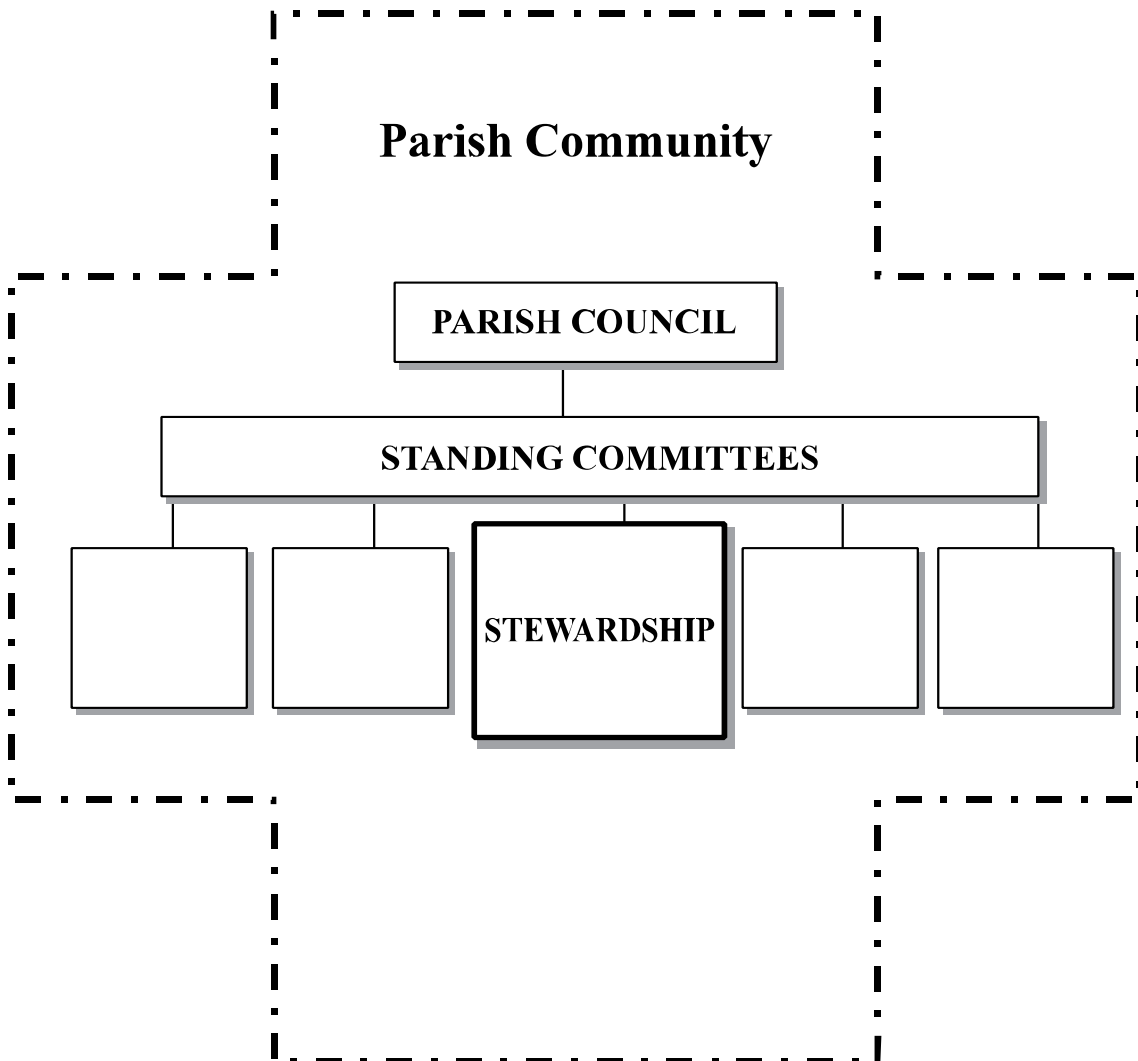




# STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Helping fulfill the parish Mission  
through ministries of Service and Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee is a standing committee accountable  
to the Parish Council





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## CHAPTER 21 – STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

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PARISH COMMITTEE RESOURCE BOOK  
ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE

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## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

### DESCRIPTION

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for the ongoing stewardship educational efforts of the parish. Members of the committee are faith-filled individuals committed to building a community of prayer and hospitality which welcomes and affirms all gifts. This committee works closely with the other standing committees of the parish to ensure stewardship efforts are consistent and fulfill the parish mission. Developing programs for welcoming new parishioners, designing creative tools which invite all parishioners, including children to share their time, talent and treasure, producing quality reports that communicate the generosity of the parish community and the accountable use of the parish resources are areas of focus for the Stewardship Committee.

It is recommended that the Stewardship Committee be a separate standing committee of the Council with its own subcommittees or task groups.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Understands and promotes the biblical concept of stewardship to all parishioners and parish groups.
2. Oversees the efforts of stewardship education in the parish including the annual commitment or recommitment of parishioner's gifts.
3. Recruits Individuals and/or Couples to share their personal testimonies about Stewardship through Lay Witnessing.
4. Prepare a Time and Talent List or Catalog of Parish Committee/ Ministries and be responsible for keeping the list or catalog current.
5. Ensure that all who come forth to offer their gifts are contacted, recorded and thanked.
6. Develop a welcoming program that helps new parishioners feel embraced by the parish, provides materials that highlight parish life and invites participation by all.
7. Educate parishioners about stewardship through various parish communication vehicles and publications, i.e. bulletin, parish/school newsletters, monthly statements, brochures, and general intercessions.
8. Collaborating with Liturgy Committee to incorporate Stewardship opportunities in homilies and reflections that may take during Mass.



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## CHAPTER 21 – STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

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PARISH COMMITTEE RESOURCE BOOK  
ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE

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9. Conduct a parish census.
10. Evaluate the Stewardship educational effort and awareness on an annual basis.
11. Produces comprehensive reports that reflect the generosity of the parish community.
12. Collaborate with Parish Religious Education Committee and Day School staff to assure that the children/youth component of stewardship is represented in all stewardship efforts.
13. Provide in-service and continuing education opportunities for your Stewardship Committee.
14. Oversees the implementation of various stewardship efforts, which may include home visits, phone-a-thons, capital campaigns, planned giving, ministry fairs, annual stewardship days, and small group prayer opportunities.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Pastor/Parish Director

Parish Council liaison

Parish Staff Member

### COMMITTEE LEADERS

Chairperson

Vice-chairperson (optional)

Secretary

### MEMBERS

Parishioners, who are spiritually motivated, practice stewardship as a way of life, can envision the benefits of being a “total stewardship parish,” and have personal qualities that contribute to success, i.e. are organized, patient, creative, accountable and willing to share their faith with others.



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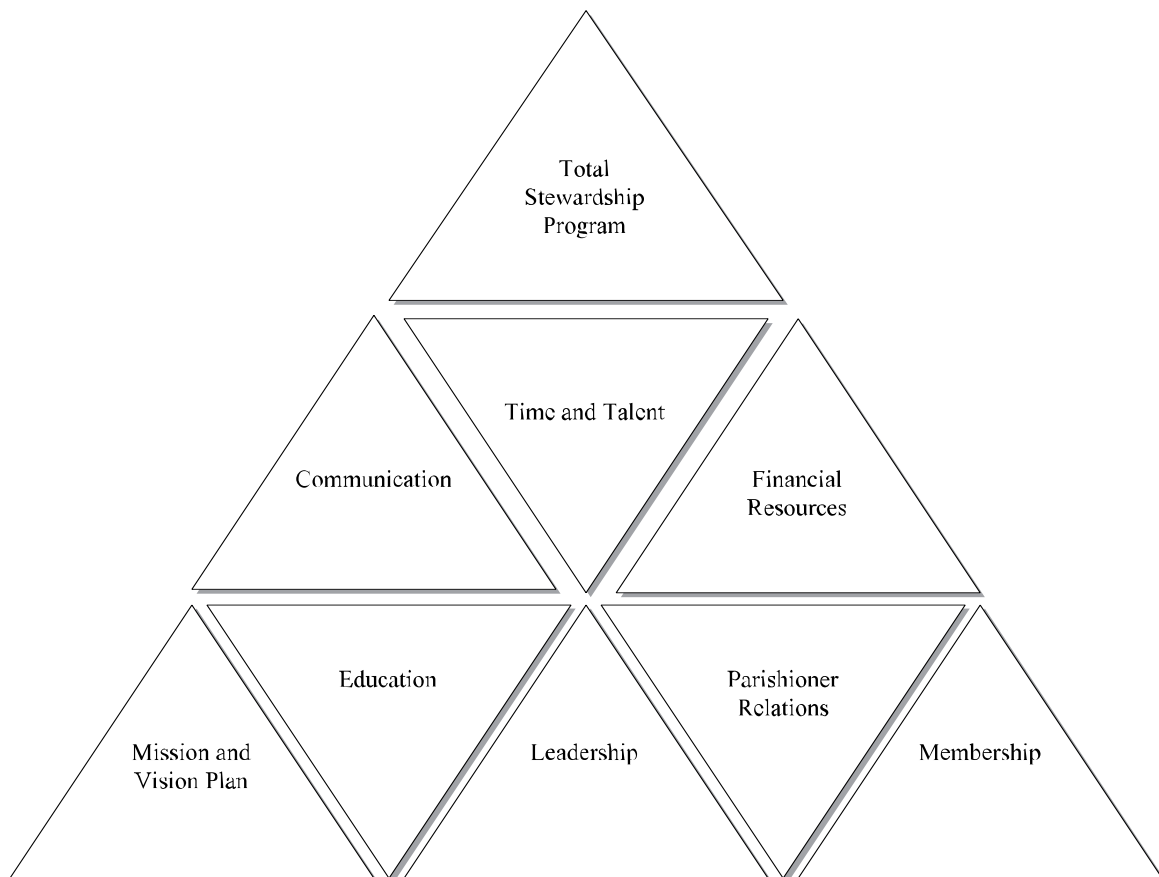
CHAPTER 21 – STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

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PARISH COMMITTEE RESOURCE BOOK  
ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE

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## BUILDING BLOCKS OF PARISH STEWARDSHIP



## ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICES AND RESOURCES

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## Stewardship – Concept and Reality

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### **Part 1 – The “Think Tank”**

The concept of Stewardship is relatively new to most Catholics. Until recently, we tended to view the concept of Stewardship as a Protestant idea that was little more than a fund-raising gimmick. Gradually that view has begun to change. The signs of the time strongly indicate that Stewardship is not optional – for the church or for society in general. So much depends on our being able to take good care of the many resources that a loving God has given each of us.

It is important, first of all, for us to understand what is meant by Stewardship. It is more than money, more than a vague concept of giving of time, talent and treasure; it is “a way of life”.

Stewardship is an expression of discipleship – how we understand and live out our lives. Whatever we are and possess is in actuality God’s gift that we hold in trust. God is the source of all we have and are. God calls us to be good stewards by the way we live; by the way we use our human and financial resources. Stewardship calls for commitment.

Stewardship calls us to gratitude, responsibility and accountability for all of our human and financial resources. It calls us to make the best possible use of what we have been given through prudent planning and careful allocation of resources, so that we can serve the community of faith in the most effective and just way possible. Good Stewardship allows us to make decisions about resources that are “mission-driven” rather than “crisis-driven”. It also calls us to work beyond our parish boundaries to share resources and to cooperate with one another.

Many Catholics have been practicing good Stewardship for years even though they might not be able to define it as such. But the majority of Catholics are members of their parishes in



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name only. They donate less than 1% of their income and even less of their time and talent. Too often parishes, in an effort to increase contributions, concentrate on the treasure aspect of Stewardship alone.

However, studies have indicated that giving is directly linked to personal commitment. Until people “buy into” what their parish is all about, it is unrealistic to expect their financial contributions to rise.

Statistics say that today about 20% of Catholics actually get involved and do the work of their parish. But in the early church, everyone served in some capacity. With membership comes responsibility. At least, it used to be that way. Today many Catholics have a “pick and choose” mentality about their religion. They find it very easy to give themselves permission to do nothing.

Studies done in recent years have indicated that most people consider themselves better off today than ever before. Almost anything we want, we can get. But when asked if they were happy, the majority of people said, “No.” With all our basic needs met, with all our material abundance, something is still missing. Our narcissistic way of life no longer seems to be enough.

Happiness comes from relationships. And relationships are all about helping each other. When we do for others, we do for ourselves. Those who have served others in some manner say that they have received much more than they have given. There’s a sense of accomplishment, of belonging. And those good feelings are addicting. It makes you want to continue your service and even to increase it. And it will eventually lead to a larger financial commitment as well.

For example, in starting their Stewardship campaign, the leadership of one Kansas parish decided to only speak of the giving of time and talent. For four months, treasure was never mentioned. And yet, in those four months they found their collections had risen 30%! Why? The contribution of time and talent leads to a sense of belonging and that sense of belonging leads to a sense of responsibility.

A 1999 study by a group called Independent Sector found that volunteering in general has increased significantly in the last few years. When people were asked to volunteer, 90% did.





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The number of households giving to charity also remains high. Contributing households with a volunteer gave more than 2.5 times on average than those without a volunteer. And households with at least one volunteer gave 84% of all charitable contributions. The most frequently cited motivations for contributing were:

- being previously asked to give by someone they knew well
- having previously volunteered in an organization
- being asked by the clergy to give

Although charitable contributions in general have increased, the church has not been on the receiving end. Many parishes have found that over the years their contributions have remained flat at best. Contributions have not increased by the same proportion as expenses. And generally speaking, contributions from roughly 25% of parishioners often times finance about 2/3 of the parish budget. Obviously Stewardship efforts have fallen woefully short on the parish level.

Cutbacks in spending have been the result, in some cases leading to the loss of key personnel and programs. Many parishes have reached the point where decisions about resources are now “crisis-driven” rather than “mission-driven”. We await the return of pledge forms with apprehension. Will we be able to do those roof repairs, begin to pay our teachers an equitable salary, expand our outreach to those in need? If this trend continues, the future looks bleak indeed.

### **Part 2 – The Mechanics**

What follows are some key components that should be in place if a Stewardship program is to be successful. It is by no means an exhaustive list.

- Stewardship is “a way of life”. It is not a once-a-year campaign.
- Adopting Stewardship as “a way of life” could require a major paradigm shift. For parishioners to be able to make that leap, they have to be educated.



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- If Stewardship is reviewed only as a concept, it will not be enough to change people's thinking. It must be real, concrete and tangible. People must be able to make connections. For example, a worthwhile exercise might be to ask people to list all of God's gifts in their lives and then to evaluate their use of those gifts.
- Constant reinforcement of Stewardship as "a way of life" must be given from the pulpit.
- The awareness level of parishioners must be raised. Do people know what is being done in Human Concerns, Christian Formation, Prayer and Worship, etc.? Are they aware of the costs involved to keep these "good things" going? Regular communication and publicity is key.
- What do parishioners want from the Church? Is the parish going in the direction(s) that most parishioners want? Do they view those "good things" that are happening in the same way and with the same value as the parish leadership? A questionnaire, perhaps in conjunction with a Strategic Planning initiative, could be helpful in determining the level of support for various programs, etc.
- Parishioner testimonials are very powerful tools. First-hand experiences and reporting what Stewardship has meant in their own lives can be great motivators.
- Find out what motivates people to donate their treasure, from the largest contributors to those who give little or nothing.
- Stewardship is un-conditional giving, i.e. no strings attached.
- When people volunteer, they should be contacted in a timely manner. Many times parishioners will say they signed up to do something but then were never called. The message they receive is that they are not needed in the parish.
- There is no substitute for a personal invitation. Every parishioner should be contacted either in person or with a phone call.
- When we think of Stewardship, we think too readily in terms of dollars and cents, forgetting that their value is dependent upon ideas, talents and time. No gift one may give is as much discounted or under-estimated as time is. Few gifts are of greater value.



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Volunteers should be acknowledged and parishioners made aware of their contributions. A Volunteer Coordinator might be considered.

- There should be open discussion of parish issues with the parish's needs communicated in an open and honest manner.
- A Stewardship Committee should be in place. Members should be representative of all the parishioners.
- A Development Director may be necessary to get things rolling. This person will be able to direct the committee's activities for maximum efficiency.

Many pieces have to be in place for a Stewardship effort to be successful. But the good news is that there are model programs out there that are working very well, e.g. St. Francis of Assisi Congregation in Wichita, Kansas.

If we approach Stewardship as “a way of life” instead of merely an abstract concept, it will work. If we help people see that in the breaking of the bread “I accept Jesus’ death as the pattern of my life; that I am for others, not for myself,” it will work. If our parishes are welcoming and inclusive, if we can embrace change, it will work. We will be able to “set the bar high” and plan for the future with confidence.

### **Bibliography/Works Cited**

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Stewardship: Living Life as God Intended. Videocassette. St. Francis of Assisi Congregation, Wichita, KS.

### **Additional Resources**

Contribution Breakdown Statistics – St. Aloysius Congregation, West Allis, WI

Contribution Breakdown Statistics – St. Cecilia Congregation, Thiensville, WI

Contribution Breakdown Statistics – St. James Congregation, Mequon, WI

Fr. Joe Janicki, Pastor, St. Cecilia Congregation, Thiensville, WI

Fr. Gregory Spitz, Pastor, St. James Congregation, Mequon, WI





## Parish Stewardship **SAMPLE** Action Plan

### ACTION STEPS

### TIMELINE RESPONSIBILITY

<p>1. Work with the Parish Council and parish leadership to develop a plan around prayer opportunities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ uniting the parish in prayer around something specific</li> <li>■ education about all prayer opportunities available</li> <li>■ solicitation of prayer intentions from the parish at large</li> </ul>	<p>Stewardship Committee to meet with Prayer and Worship Committee by May, 2005</p>	<p>Prayer and Worship Committee</p>
<p>2. Renew Hospitality Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ define areas of focus and create mission statement; involve and form current members in renewed goals; identify additional members and personally invite</li> <li>■ form Welcoming Committee: define responsibilities and terms</li> <li>■ identify parishioners and personally invite to serve on Welcoming Committee</li> </ul>	<p>June 1, 2005</p>	<p>Ed, Amy, Judy, and Stewardship Committee</p>
<p>3. Develop a Stewardship Communication plan to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stewardship education for all committees, including the importance of personal invitation and formation for service</li> <li>■ work with leadership to schedule “ministry minutes” after Liturgies; follow-up information in bulletin</li> <li>■ identify, train and schedule parishioners for testimonials</li> </ul>	<p>By end of August, 2005</p> <p>Fall, 2005</p> <p>Fall, 2005</p>	<p>Stewardship Committee</p>
<p>4. Create Communication Committee and include these tasks in their</p>		





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# Parish Stewardship **SAMPLE** Action Plan

<p>Stewardship plan to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ design Treasure materials to be part of the overall Stewardship message</li> <li>■ decide and implement the distribution and collection of Financial Stewardship</li> <li>■ create a Treasure follow-up process to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ thank you's</li> <li>■ communication with non-responders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<p>8. Form a Planned Giving Advisory Committee.</p>	<p>Revisit when appropriate</p>	<p>Parish Council, Stewardship Committee and Finance Committee</p>
<p>9. Develop/gather materials to educate and market your Planned Giving Program.</p>	<p>Revisit when appropriate</p>	<p>To be determined</p>
<p>10. Incorporate Planned Giving education as part of the overall Parish Stewardship Plan.</p>	<p>Revisit when appropriate</p>	<p>To be determined</p>
<p>11. Working with the Human Concerns Committee, design and implement a process to discover the needs of parishioners and make connections to fill those needs.</p>	<p>Revisit when appropriate</p>	<p>To be determined</p>



# **Archdiocese of Milwaukee Parish Stewardship Program Job Description - Home Visit Method Home Visitor**

## **OBJECTIVE:**

To contact parish families and secure their commitments.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Attend a training meeting on Commitment Sunday.
2. Attend a commissioning mass on Commitment Sunday.
3. Review and understand the materials.
4. Visit approximately ten households.
5. Present materials to each family for completion.
6. Receive a sealed envelope with each parish family's information contained within.
7. Return the sealed envelope for each family to the assigned Neighborhood Coordinator.

## **TIME COMMITMENT:**

A training meeting lasting 1-1/2 hours and a commissioning mass on Commitment Sunday. Visit for approximately 2-1/2 hours on that Sunday and complete visits to parish families that you missed during the following week.

- 1 Approximately 6 hours.





## Prospect List for Home Visitors

Neighborhood Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Area Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

### HOME VISITOR PROSPECTS

Please provide at least 2 prospect names for each Home Visitor to be recruited  
(a total of 10 names to get 5 visitors)

	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	Y/N
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

**NOTE:** Upon conclusion of recruiting Home Visitors, produce four copies and distribute to the Key Clerical Assistant, the Regional Coordinator, the Area Coordinator and the Logistics Coordinator.



## Prospect Letter to Home Visitor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Our parish is about to embark on an important program that will provide significant benefits to our parish.

On \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_, we will be visiting all of our parish households. The visit will not be complicated. It is intended to pick up census forms, personal concerns cards, and time/talent forms which will have been completed by each family prior to the visit. In addition, the visitor will present a parish support commitment card which the family will complete. All responses will be sealed in an envelope and will remain confidential.

Within the next few days, you will be called by one of the Neighborhood Coordinators who serve on our committee. Each of these people has agreed to recruit and assist several Home Visitors. They will describe the task to you. We have high hopes that you will say “yes” when you are asked to be a Home Visitor.

We didn't draw your name out of a hat. We know that you can do the job. We are deeply grateful for all that you have done for the parish. Those who help the most are the most familiar with our needs. Please agree to serve and keep us in your prayers as this process moves forward.

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Program Coordinator

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Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director



# **Archdiocese of Milwaukee Parish Stewardship Program Job Description - Home Visit Method Neighborhood Coordinator**

## **OBJECTIVE:**

To recruit and direct the activities of five Home Visitors.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Participate in training meeting.
2. Recruit five Home Visitors from a pre-assigned list of possible volunteers.
3. Report to the Program Coordinator the names of the five Home Visitors recruited.
4. Assure that Home Visitors attend their training on Commitment Sunday.
5. Attend mass on Commitment Sunday with the Home Visitors and be present when they return from their visits that afternoon.
6. Follow up with Home Visitors who are making calls to parishioners not contacted on Commitment Sunday until all commitment cards and materials are returned.

## **NOTE:**

Neighborhood Coordinators are asked to be active only during the fall commitment process. This would occur annually, and they need not participate throughout the rest of the year. Members should serve for two years, then replace themselves with a new committee for future renewal efforts. It would be advisable for future committee members to assist in the current year's implementation.



### **TIME COMMITMENT:**

Approximately 2 hours per week or 10 hours over 6 weeks.

The Neighborhood Coordinator will be thoroughly trained in the recruiting process prior to beginning recruitment of Home Visitors. In addition, the Neighborhood Coordinator will be asked to call their Home Visitors and remind them of the Home Visitor training session.

In the event that a Neighborhood Coordinator goes through the names provided and has not recruited five Home Visitors, additional names can be provided by the Area Coordinator.

At the Home Visitor training session, the Neighborhood Coordinator will sit with his/her Home Visitors and oversee their training and their departure.

The Neighborhood Coordinator will remain at the training site (unless making home visits) until all of his/her Home Visitors have returned and their cards have been properly checked in.

Finally, the Neighborhood Coordinator will be asked to follow up with each of his/her Home Visitors during the course of the week immediately after Commitment Weekend and/or until all home visitation cards have been turned in.





# Prospect List for Neighborhood Coordinators

Area Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

## NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATOR PROSPECTS

Please provide at least 10 prospect names for each Neighborhood Coordinator to be recruited

	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	Y/N
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

**NOTE:** Please make 4 copies and submit to the Program Coordinator, the Regional Coordinator, the Key Clerical Assistant and the Area Coordinator.



# Prospect Letter to Neighborhood Coordinator

Date

Name

Address

City/State/ZIP

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Our parish is about to embark on an important program that will provide significant benefits to our parish.

On \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_, we will visit every household in our parish and offer all parishioners an opportunity to share their time/talent and treasure with the parish. The visit will not be complicated. It is intended to pick up census forms, personal concerns cards, and time/talent forms which will have been completed by each family prior to the visit. In addition, the visitor will present a parish support commitment card which the family will complete. All responses will be sealed in an envelope and will remain confidential.

Your participation is vital to the success of this effort. Within the next few days, you will be called by one of the Area Coordinators who serve on our committee. Each of these people has agreed to recruit and assist five Neighborhood Coordinators. They will describe the task to you and ask you to participate as a Neighborhood Coordinator. A job description is enclosed. We have high hopes that you will agree to participate.

You will be provided with excellent training in order to complete this task, and the parish will provide you with a specific list of Home Visitor prospects æ people that you will be asked to contact.

We didn't draw your name out of a hat. We know that you can do the job. We are deeply grateful for all that you have done for the parish. Those who help the most are the most familiar with our needs. Please agree to serve and keep us in your prayers as this process moves forward.

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Program Coordinator

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Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director



# Neighborhood Coordinator Roster

Area Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

## Neighborhood Coordinators

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** Upon conclusion of recruiting Neighborhood Coordinators, please make 4 copies and distribute to the Key Clerical Assistant, the Regional Coordinator, the Area Coordinator, and the Program Coordinator.



## Take a Step

How to move gradually toward giving which is planned, proportionate and sacrificial Find your household income on the appropriate chart (if necessary, please approximate by using combinations of amounts). Move across on the same line to find the amount you currently give weekly or monthly in the envelope. Move straight up the chart to find what percentage of your income your current gift to the parish represents. Please consider taking a step by pledging at the next level. For example, if you are presently giving 2% to the parish, consider pledging 2.5% or even 3% now. Consider setting your eventual goal at the Biblical tithe of 10% (5% to the parish and 5% to other charities). It may take a few years to get there, but this is a worthy and rewarding goal for all on the road of discipleship.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME Based on 40-Hour Work Week or 2080 Hours/Year				Weekly Giving to the Parish									
Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	.5%*	1%*	1.5%*	2%*	2.5%*	3%*	3.5%*	4%*	4.5%*	5%*
4.80	190	835	10,000	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00
7.20	290	1,250	15,000	1.50	3.00	4.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	14.00
9.60	385	1,665	20,000	2.00	4.00	6.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	15.00	17.00	19.00
12.00	480	2,085	25,000	2.50	5.00	7.00	10.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	19.00	22.00	24.00
14.50	575	2,500	30,000	3.00	6.00	9.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	20.00	23.00	26.00	29.00
16.75	675	2,915	35,000	3.50	7.00	10.00	13.00	17.00	20.00	24.00	27.00	30.00	34.00
19.25	770	3,335	40,000	4.00	8.00	12.00	15.00	19.00	23.00	27.00	31.00	35.00	38.00
24.00	960	4,165	50,000	5.00	10.00	14.00	19.00	24.00	29.00	34.00	38.00	43.00	48.00
29.00	1,155	5,000	60,000	6.00	12.00	17.00	23.00	29.00	35.00	40.00	46.00	52.00	58.00
33.50	1,345	5,835	70,000	7.00	13.00	20.00	27.00	34.00	40.00	47.00	54.00	61.00	67.00
38.50	1,540	6,665	80,000	8.00	15.00	23.00	31.00	38.00	46.00	54.00	62.00	69.00	77.00
43.50	1,730	7,500	90,000	9.00	17.00	26.00	35.00	43.00	52.00	61.00	69.00	78.00	87.00
48.00	1,925	8,335	100,000	10.00	19.00	29.00	38.00	48.00	58.00	67.00	77.00	87.00	96.00
72.00	2,885	12,500	150,000	14.00	29.00	43.00	58.00	72.00	87.00	101.00	115.00	130.00	144.00





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HOUSEHOLD INCOME Based on 40-Hour Work Week or 2080 Hours/Year				Monthly Giving to the Parish									
Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	.5%*	1%*	1.5%*	2%*	2.5%*	3%*	3.5%*	4%*	4.5%*	5%*
4.80	190	835	10,000	4.25	8.50	12.75	17.00	21.25	25.50	29.75	34.00	38.25	42.50
7.20	290	1,250	15,000	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00	31.25	37.50	43.75	50.00	56.25	62.50
9.60	385	1,665	20,000	8.50	17.00	25.50	34.00	42.50	51.00	59.50	68.00	76.50	85.00
12.00	480	2,085	25,000	10.50	21.00	31.50	42.00	52.50	63.00	73.50	84.00	94.50	105.00
14.50	575	2,500	30,000	12.50	25.00	37.50	50.00	62.50	75.00	87.50	100.00	112.50	125.00
16.75	675	2,915	35,000	14.50	29.00	43.50	58.00	72.50	87.00	101.50	116.00	130.50	145.00
19.25	770	3,335	40,000	16.75	33.50	50.25	67.00	83.75	100.50	117.00	134.00	150.75	167.50
24.00	960	4,165	50,000	21.00	42.00	63.00	84.00	105.00	126.00	147.00	168.00	189.00	210.00
29.00	1,155	5,000	60,000	25.00	50.00	75.00	100.00	125.00	150.00	175.00	200.00	225.00	250.00
33.50	1,345	5,835	70,000	29.00	58.00	87.00	116.00	145.00	174.00	203.00	232.00	261.00	290.00
38.50	1,540	6,665	80,000	33.50	67.00	100.50	134.00	167.50	201.00	234.50	268.00	301.50	335.00
43.50	1,730	7,500	90,000	37.50	75.00	112.50	150.00	187.50	225.00	262.50	300.00	337.50	375.00
48.00	1,925	8,335	100,000	42.00	84.00	126.00	168.00	210.00	252.00	294.00	336.00	378.00	420.00
72.00	2,885	12,500	150,000	63.00	126.00	189.00	252.00	315.00	378.00	441.00	504.00	567.00	630.00

*\*You are asked to give an equal percentage to other charities (for example — if you are giving 5% to the parish, give an additional 5% to other charities for 10% total giving). Other charities might include food pantries and other programs for the poor, missions, Catholic Stewardship Appeal, Combined Collections, United Way, Catholic Urban Academies, Saint Francis Seminary, etc.*