

# Stewardship Training Meeting

## Agenda

### 1. Purpose of Meeting

- ❖ To train committed individuals on effective Stewardship education for their parish which will include messages of:
  - ✘ Invitation to fuller participation.
  - ✘ Ownership of the parish.
  - ✘ Care of each other through parish support.
  - ✘ Help parishioners see the connection between parish family/God's family/own family.

### 2. Objective of the Stewardship Program

- ❖ To increase participation in parish ministries by calling forth every person's gifts.
- ❖ To encourage registration by all parishioners so the parish registry reflects all parish members.
- ❖ To inform and communicate the impact full membership in a parish will have on each individual's life and the lives of the entire parish community.
- ❖ To create a joyous, social experience that celebrates the generous spirit of the parish community.

### 3. Outline of Stewardship Education Process

- ❖ Identification of District Team Leaders (yourselves).
- ❖ Training of District Team Leaders.
- ❖ Training of Area Coordinators/Home Visitors.
- ❖ Special Stewardship Focused Liturgies at each parish, led by members of the District Team.
- ❖ Home Visits to Parishioners with Materials for commitment / registration etc.
- ❖ Fiesta-party held at each parish.
- ❖ Focus group meeting with District Team Leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the process.
- ❖ Archdiocesan recognition of participants.

### 4. Mass Responsibilities for the District Team Leaders

- ❖ Be there at the beginning of Mass to Welcome.
- ❖ Act as Readers / Eucharistic Ministers.
- ❖ Speak at the homily or as an after communion reflection on your personal stewardship journey or experience.
- ❖ Lead the parishioners in the stewardship song.
- ❖ Act as co-hosts to the potluck lunch following Mass.
- ❖ Speak at the potluck lunch again sharing a stewardship experience or challenge.

### 5. Public Speaking Training

- ❖ Refer to Handout.

## **6. Materials used throughout the Educational Process**

- ❖ Stewardship Song.
- ❖ Holy Cards.
- ❖ Still Pictures / Video of family sharing gifts.
- ❖ Brochure handout on stewardship.
- ❖ Commitment Cards / Registration Forms.
- ❖ Testimonials.

## **7. Timeline of Process**

- ❖ To be determined.

## **8. Q & A's**

## **9. Conclusion and Thanks**

# The Role of the Lay Witness

One of the most effective means of presenting the Stewardship message is through the stewardship lay witness talk. This talk is usually given after the homily by people who are already practicing stewardship in their own lives. It may be given by an individual or a couple. In some cases, even the children may participate. The talk has two purposes: to inspire people to become good stewards; and to share real life examples of how stewardship is lived.

## 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? Were you able to give a full tithe (10%) right away? If not, how are you working toward that goal?
5. **Urge Your Fellow Parishioners To Get Involved** - Invite the congregation 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.
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 Church (parish and diocese).

## **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 dollars a week," or "We need \$2 more a week from everyone," or "You need to give your fair share."
4. Use of 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 are parishioners at St. Mary's Parish in (any city). 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.”

### *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.
  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 for the opportunity to speak and thank the parishioners for their past generosity and support.
  9. Please provide the pastor with a copy of your presentation in advance.
  10. The diocese always has requests for effective lay witness presenters from parishes wanting to begin a comprehensive stewardship effort. If you are interested in speaking at parishes other than your own, but within our diocese, please contact the Parish Stewardship Office. We will be happy to add your name to our roster. Please provide a copy of your presentation.

## **A Check List 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.



# 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 40-50% of parish households show no record of participation. Contact with inactive Catholics serves an important pre-evangelization function. It represents the only 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.

The home visit hopes to accomplish the following:

- To make the person feel welcomed and a vital part of the parish.
- The registration and or updating / completion of a Parish Census Form which includes sacramental status and Mass attendance questions for each family member.
- Identifying unmet needs by providing a Personal Concerns Card which any family member can complete and then seal in an envelope to be opened only by a parish staff member.
- Assisting parishioners in filling out Time and Talent forms for members of the family.

Financial Commitment Cards are delivered by the Visitor. Home Visitors will be instructed not to tell people that they *should* give or *how much* they should give.

## Home Visit Rational

The first reason for a home visit is to make the person feel welcomed. Since sometimes there is an anonymity factor, many people have a fear of filling out documentation due to immigration issues. For some, being new in the country and looking for employment may also cause a person to not feel committed to the parish, since their first obligation is not only to their immediate family but also to their family members in their country.

The second reason could be the lack of understanding what stewardship means. The word *stewardship* does not translate into Spanish. Therefore, “Una Invitacion a Compartir Nuestros Dones” (An Invitation to Share Our Gifts) is used to help people understand the need of financially supporting their parish. Some examples of sharing our gifts and how it helps the parish should be illustrated.

Also, the church structure in this country may be different from their country of origin. Education is necessary for them to understand the message of membership and stewardship.

## Program Outline

The Home Visit Program will involve the following steps;

- Recruitment and training of leadership.
- Identification and recruitment of prospects as District Team Leader, Area Coordinators and Home Visitors.
- Home visitations.
- Annual update of commitments.

### **Organization of the Visitor Network**

- District Team Leader
- Area Coordinators
- Home Visitors

### **Recruiting Volunteers**

Typically, the District Team Leader and Area Coordinators are directly recruited by the Stewardship Committee or by the Parish Priest. Home Visitors should have a good sense of the mission and ministry of the parish.

### **Training Meeting Agenda**

Parish Priest	Begin with welcoming remarks, open the meeting with a prayer, and introduce the District Team Leader.
District Team Leader	Present an overview and purpose of program. Describe the job of the Area Coordinator and the Home Visitor.
Conclusion	The District Team Leader will conclude the meeting, asking for questions.
Parish Priest	Offer a final thank you and a closing prayer.

# Hispanic Parish Outreach - Home Visit Flow Chart

**DISTRICT TEAM LEADER**

AREA COORDINATOR	AREA COORDINATOR	AREA COORDINATOR	AREA COORDINATOR	AREA COORDINATOR
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HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS
HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS
HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS
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HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS
HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS
HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS	HOME VISITORS

This model / example is based on a parish of 800 active families.

- ❖ 1 District Team Leader per parish
- ❖ 5 Area Coordinators
- ❖ 50 Home Visitors making 16 home visits. These visits could be in one week, one day, or throughout the month. The home visitors could go in pairs, which would make a total of 32 visits. A parish could chose to visit one third of their parishioners each year, in order to visit the entire parish community within a three year period.

# Sample Bulletin Announcements

## Home Visits

### **In Preparation of Home Visits:**

We are in the process of planning something wonderful that can have a very positive impact in our parish community. Inspired by the Posada tradition that is so wonderfully celebrated in many Hispanic cultures, we have been preparing for parishioners to visit those who have made *(name of Parish)* their home, but have not yet formally registered.

Why? We want to make sure everyone at *(name of Parish)* feels welcome and offer the opportunity for those who are not registered members to become registered. We also want to make sure that we make attempts to know everyone in our community, and the chance to respond to any needs that we may not know about. When people sign up to become a registered member of their parish, they are making a commitment. They are saying “Count me in. This parish is important to me, and I want everyone to know how much it means to me. I want my parish to be able to know who I am, ask me to share my gifts, and help me when I need it.”

This is also a wonderful opportunity to hear parishioners share with those they visit why being a member of *(name of Parish)* is so important and life-giving to them.

We want to make sure that everyone knows that this is completely voluntary – no one has to be visited if they don’t want to be. We will be explaining the process for signing up to be visited soon.

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### **Follow-up to the Home Visits:**

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in our home visits: the planning team, the visitors, and especially to those who so graciously welcomed fellow parishioners into their homes. This was a wonderful experience of bringing our parish into one another’s families. We hope this experience has strengthened the connection families have with the parish. This was also an important time to make it easier for people to register in the parish as the home visitors provided the information to make that possible.

(Sharing information on number of people visited and positive comments/quotes could also be added.)

## Sample Home Visit Invitation

Since you are part of our family, we would like to visit you.

May we come and visit on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_?

The purpose of our visit is to invite you and your family to become parish members. We will also listen to your concerns or comments and prayer requests.

Yes, please visit.

No, I am not interested in a home visit at this time.

Yes, I would like a visitor, but this time does not work for me/our family. This date and time would be better \_\_\_\_\_.

# Home Visitation List

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

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

## **Home Visitation Sample Thank You Letter**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

We are blessed with many generous parishioners, giving of themselves because this parish is an important part of their lives. You are an important part of our parish family, and I want to thank you for inviting *(name of visitors)* into your home and helping them feel so welcome.

Your participation in this parish is vital to helping us thrive. This is your parish, and your involvement is needed. Please know that this community is here for you, too. If there is ever a time when you may need something, please let me know.

Welcome to *(name of parish)*! It is a blessing to have you here.

In Christ's Peace,

## Sample Thank You Letter to Home Visitors

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

We are blessed with many generous parishioners giving of themselves because this parish is an important part of their lives. You have been one of those generous members of our parish. Thank you for sharing your gifts with our community by visiting your fellow parishioners. I'm sure your gifts of welcoming and hospitality have made a lasting impression and brought our parish closer to those you visited.

I know you will continue to be a welcoming presence to all in our parish. Thank you, again, for sharing your gifts with others.

In Christ's Peace,

Pastor



