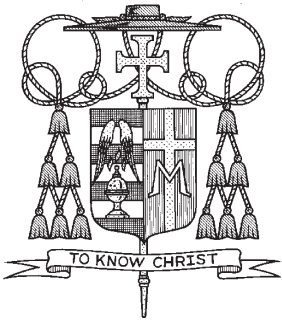
A photograph of a double rainbow in a cloudy sky over a field with trees. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, and a bright rainbow arches across the upper half of the frame. A second, fainter rainbow is visible below the first one. The foreground shows a grassy field and a line of trees.

*Stewardship  
A Way Of Life*

KAREN CALLAWAY

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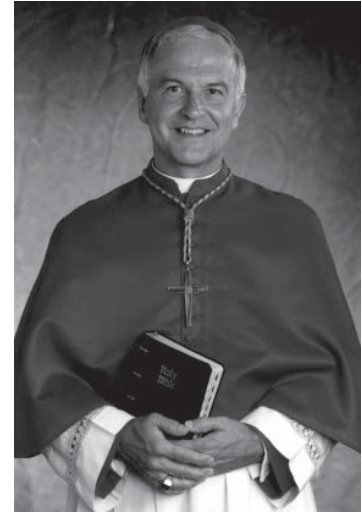


Bishop of Gary

## **DIOCESE OF GARY**

9292 BROADWAY  
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA 46410-7088

219-769-9292  
219-769-2066 FAX



**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:**

**When we were baptized, we entered into the holiness of God through our incorporation into the Body of Christ. We became the very dwelling place of His Holy Spirit. Our most urgent task is to grow in relationship to Jesus, to grow in discipleship.**

**This manual has everything to do with growing in holiness. Stewardship is directly related to discipleship. A steward has a deep appreciation of his or her relationship with God and strives to be a good caretaker and trustee of God's many gifts. A steward recognizes God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all that one possesses.**

**This manual is meant to assist parishes in becoming stewardship parishes. It is to help all parishioners to understand that stewardship is a way of life, a way of being in relationship to God. It is not a one-time project.**

**The manual is divided into three major components: stewardship of prayer, stewardship of time and talents, and stewardship of treasure. It provides formation, together with tools and resources, to implement all three components.**

**During the past year, our Office of Stewardship sponsored two well-attended and well-received formation sessions on stewardship. This manual is a follow-up on those sessions. It is a practical guide to assist all members of the parish, including children, to grow in loving relationship with the Lord by becoming good stewards of the incredible gifts that God has given us.**

**Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may we grow as evermore faithful disciples of Her Son!**

**Sincerely in the Lord Jesus,**

**Most Reverend Dale J. Melczek  
Bishop of Gary**

DJM/vm

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# Introduction

*“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 is more than a program; it is a life long process. It is a process that engages a person in an ever-deepening understanding that all is God’s and none is ours.

Authentic Christian stewardship leads to evangelization. It is an evangelization that is never satisfied until all within the faith community are approached, heard and invited to participate.

This manual is based on the belief that all the baptized are gifted and called to ministry. All of the gifts of the community are needed in order to accomplish the Mission of Jesus Christ. It is the task of parish leaders to identify and invite everyone to share their gifts on an ongoing bases.

The process proposed in this manual is not a one time program, but rather an ongoing process that will assist the parishes in becoming a Stewardship Parish. It is divided into three

components: Stewardship of Prayer, Stewardship of Time and Talent, and Stewardship of Treasure. These components repeated annually along with continual formation through programs, newsletters, bulletin and liturgies will assist the parish in becoming a Stewardship Parish. Stewardship must permeate the life of the parish if we are to form disciples willing to share their gifts to accomplish the Mission of Jesus Christ.

Many parishes already have begun the process of Stewardship of Time and Talent and Stewardship of Treasure. This manual may provide for these parishes new ideas or approaches to their process.

For those parishes who are just beginning Stewardship this manual provides a step - by - step development of a process that is ongoing. A parish that strives to become a Stewardship Parish recognizes that God’s people must be continually invited to share their gifts.

## Two Proposed Time Lines

Stewardship of Prayer	Stewardship of Treasure	Stewardship of Time & Talent
December - Advent	January or February	April
March - Lent	November - (Before Thanksgiving)	May

# *Theology of Stewardship*

To live as a Christian steward is an expression of mature discipleship. It is a conscious, firm decision to respond to the call to follow Jesus and to imitate his way of life. Stewardship can never be reduced to habits of giving or volunteerism. Because it is rooted in discipleship, stewardship permeates all aspects of Christian life.

Discipleship and stewardship are the fabric of Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord. This Christ-centered way of living has its beginning in baptism, the sacrament of faith. This way of life embodies and expresses the one mission of Christ: to do God's will, to proclaim the Good News of salvation, to heal the afflicted, to care for one's sisters and brothers, to give life - life to the fullest - as Jesus did.

Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. With every step one is challenged to go further in accepting and living God's will. Being a disciple is not just something else to do alongside many other things suitable for Christians, it is a total way of life that requires continuing conversion. This conversion is the result of our total self, being focused on God as the Creator and giver of all good gifts, the greatest of which is Jesus Christ.

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

Christian stewardship provides a spirituality that a lay person can take home from church, exercise at work, and express through involvement in the community and the parish. Christian stewardship applies to everything - personal talents, abilities, and wealth; the local, national, and world-wide environment; all human and natural resources; the economic order; governmental affairs; and even outer space.

A commitment to stewardship changes the way we live. It is a practical, but profound response to the counter-cultural challenge of the Gospel to follow Jesus regardless of the cost. As baptized Christians, 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, teaching, serving and sanctifying, is our task. It is the personal responsibility of each of us as stewards of the Church.

# Nurturing Stewardship

## The Role of the Pastor

*A pastor will be successful in fostering stewardship if he is committed to the spirituality of stewardship as a way of life for himself and the parish. In addition he will:*

- Understand that prayer is essential to stewardship.
- Focus on being faithful, not successful, in stewardship.
- Promote hospitality.
- Share with the parish his personal commitment to stewardship.
- Establish a Stewardship Committee composed of prayerful parishioners who are themselves good stewards of time, talent, and treasure.
- Utilize the witness of lay parishioners once a year to testify to the benefits of living a life of stewardship.
- Encourage the growth of faith through formation programs and parish involvement.
- Take advantage of Sunday scripture passages that affirm stewardship.
- Preach the full Gospel, incorporating the appropriate stewardship parables in Sunday homilies.
- Encourage ongoing parish outreach and giving to the poor.
- Help parishioners honestly discern between their wants and their needs.
- Personally participate and encourage parish leadership to participate in the annual Diocesan Stewardship Day.
- Conduct annual renewals of time, talent and treasure.
- Thank people for all they do to serve God by serving others.

## The Role of the Parish Stewardship Committee

*An active, praying Stewardship Committee is absolutely critical to a parish for the ongoing education and commitment of parishioners to the stewardship of time, talent and treasure.*

- Members must be spiritually motivated, and exemplify and live out stewardship.
- Members should be able to envision where stewardship can take the parish.
- Keep a current time and talent catalogue of parish activities and organizations.
- Recruit individuals and/or couples to share their personal stories about stewardship with parishioners.
- Collaborate with the Pastoral Council and Parish Commissions.

## The Role of the Stewardship Committee, cont.

- Carry out the stewardship effort of time, talent and treasure on an annual basis.
- Recruit individuals and/or couples to share their personal stories about stewardship with parishioners.
- Look for ways to reach out to new and current members in order to make them feel included.
- Evaluate the stewardship effort and awareness efforts on an annual basis.
- Publicize stewardship thoughts on a weekly basis in the parish bulletin.
- Make appropriate stewardship literature available to parishioners.
- Publicize stewardship reflections quarterly in the bulletin or parish newsletter.
- Encourage support for stewardship through the general intercessions at Mass.
- Develop a welcoming program for the parish.
- Provide ongoing formation programs for the committee and the parish.
- Communicate to the parish the results of the committee's efforts.
- A committee member serves on the Stewardship and Administration Commission.
- Provide for an annual renewal program.

## Annual Nurturing of Stewardship

An annual renewal of stewardship is important. Like other messages in scripture and Church teachings, the message of stewardship needs to be presented on a regular basis. Without those regular reminders and encouragement, we tend to revert to old ways.

Stewardship is about conversion. It is an ongoing process that needs regular nourishment if it is to grow and develop. A continued reminder

of our call to discipleship will move us forward in increasing our giving of time, talent and treasure. An opportunity needs to be provided annually for those people who for whatever reason were unable to participate in the previous year's stewardship effort. And finally, an annual stewardship renewal reaches new people who have arrived in the parish. New parishioners are often hungry for ways to get involved in the life of the parish.

*“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” (pt 4:10)*

# Stewardship Formation

Every parish should make education and formation for stewardship a priority. This vital priority helps individuals, families and communities understand what it means to follow Jesus in an affluent, consumer culture. It also establishes a scriptural basis for responding to the Church's growing need for human, physical and financial resources.

Stewardship is a life long process that demands ongoing study, reflection prayer and action. For stewardship to be a way of life it

requires a change of heart - a conversion to following Jesus without counting the cost. This conversion not only takes time, but requires being open to the work of the Holy Spirit. Parishes that embrace the theology and practice of stewardship see a significant change of attitude on the part of clergy and lay people. A solid formation program is essential if a parish truly wishes to help individuals and families make stewardship a way of life.

## Methods of Formation

### Small Faith Sharing Groups

Faith sharing groups bring people together for prayer and learning. They provide opportunities to build community and support for the parish stewardship effort. Recommended programs:

- Stewardship: a Disciple's Response,  
National Catholic Stewardship Council,  
(202) 289-1093
- Disciple as Steward,  
Sharon Hueckel  
Sheed and Ward, (800) 266-5564
- Sharing Treasure, Time and Talent,  
Msgr. Joseph Champlin  
Liturgical Press, (800) 858-5450

### Video Tapes

- Presentations from the annual National Catholic Stewardship Conference
- Fr. Joseph Tagg Video -  
March 17, 2001 Diocesan Program
- The Heart of Stewardship: Sacrificial Giving,  
Msgr. Joseph Champlin  
Liturgical Press, (800) 858-5450

### Bulletin Announcements and News Letters

A regular space should be reserved in the weekly bulletin or parish newsletter for stewardship messages. Include articles on parish ministries, spiritual growth, stewardship and affirmation for parishioners generosity.

# *Stewardship of Prayer*

*Prayer is the life of the new heart.*

*It ought to animate us at every moment.*

*But we tend to forget him who is our life and our all.*

*“We must remember God more often than we draw breath.”* St. Gregory

*But we cannot pray “at all times” if we do not  
pray at specific times, consciously willing it.*

(Catholic Catechism, 2697)

An effective parish is a Stewardship Parish, one in which the leadership and the membership take on the identity of caretakers and trustees of God’s many gifts. Stewardship is a conscious, firm decision carried out in action to be a follower of Jesus Christ despite the cost.

The practice of stewardship has the power to change how we understand our lives. Good stewards recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, and source of all that they are and possess.

A stewardship way of life is effective for a parish because it does four things that lead us to a full Christian life that expresses our seriousness about discipleship. A Stewardship Parish receives God’s gifts gratefully, it nurtures, tends and cherishes those gifts, it shares those gifts and returns them to Lord.

Our starting point in becoming a Stewardship Parish is with prayer. The foundation of all other forms of stewardship is the stewardship of prayer - giving back to God a generous portion of our time through a prayerful relationship with him. Each day we give thanks to God for the blessings and gifts we have received. We do this both through personal prayer and communal prayer.

We invite all of our parishioners - adults, youth and children - to make a personal commitment to pray for ourselves, for our parish, and for our diocese. A commitment to prayer enables us to fulfill the mission all are called to in baptism. A commitment to prayer enables us to make it a priority over all the busyness that clutters our lives.

*The model for the life of a Christian  
steward is the Life of Jesus.*

# *General Suggestions*

- Provide a prayer commitment card for each member of the family. Not every member will have the same commitment to prayer. However, giving all members of the family a prayer commitment card empowers them to make their own commitment. Even though it may increase your printing charges, it sends the message that all prayers are important to the success of the parish as the members strive to make the Mission of Christ a reality in the world.
- Provide an envelope for the prayer commitment cards. The envelopes provide confidentiality which is an important component of Stewardship of Prayer. However, a place for the family name should be provided on the front of the envelope.
- Extra prayer cards and envelopes should be available in the pew. Following the homily, the presider allows time for those who have not filled out their commitment card to do so. He then asks the Stewardship Committee to collect all of the commitment cards and bring them forth at the offertory procession. Encourage the assembly to pray for one other as the cards are brought forth.
- Pencils should be available in the pews. When all of the cards are collected they should be brought forward in a large basket and placed in the sanctuary.
- The basket of cards, which has been placed in a prominent spot in the sanctuary, are blessed by the presider after Communion.
- The Stewardship Committee may want to consider developing a prayer booklet specific to your parish that can be distributed to all parishioners and given to new ones as they register.
- Additional prayer commitment cards should be left in the vestibule of the church for people who may not have been present on Stewardship Sunday. They can drop them in the offertory collection when they are completed or give them to the pastor.

*As disciples of Christ, stewards see themselves  
as caretakers of all God's gifts.  
Gratitude for these gifts is expressed in prayer and worship  
and by eagerly sharing  
these gifts out of love of God and one another.*

# Bulletin Articles

## TIMELINE

### WEEK 1

- Bulletin Article

### WEEK 2

- Bulletin Article

### WEEK 3

- Bulletin Article
- Prayer homily

### WEEK 4

- Distribute the prayer cards to everyone after the homily.
- Collect the prayer cards and take them to the altar.

## Prayer - Bulletin Article I

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*“Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God”. (1Cor. 4:1)*

Christian stewards recognize God as the origin of life, giver of freedom, and source of all things. We are grateful for the gifts that God has bestowed upon us, how we use these gifts tells us what kind of stewards we are becoming. As the pastor of St. \_\_\_\_\_ Parish I am inviting every member to join me in creating a Stewardship Parish.

conversion. A Stewardship Parish is based on the conviction that a parish belongs to each of its members, and that it requires each parishioner’s personal commitment to a stewardship way of life.

We begin our journey toward a Stewardship Parish with Stewardship of Prayer. Prayer is the basis for all other facets of stewardship and the foundation that makes all things possible in our parish. It is through our ongoing prayer that the Mission of Jesus Christ continues to evolve. I invite all of our parishioners, adults, youth and children, to reflect upon your response to this call to Stewardship of Prayer.

This radical transformation begins with the commitment of myself and the parish leaders to a continual process of communal stewardship

## Prayer - Bulletin Article 2

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*“Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you.” (Mt. 7:7).*

Last week we invited you to reflect upon how you will respond to the invitation of prayer. Stewardship of Prayer is an important component to our becoming a total Stewardship Parish. As you continue to reflect, let me share with you some of my reflections about the importance of prayer.

In the Bible we see many images of a loving God. Sometimes God is pictured as a gardener, a vinekeeper; sometimes as a shepherd caring for his flock. Throughout the scriptures God is seen as caring for all created things with deep love. He invites humanity to respond with that same love and care.

In our lives the unfolding story of this relationship with God is called prayer. It is our response to the God who is always looking for us and waiting eagerly to embrace us.

In the Gospels Jesus gives a new dimension to prayer. He addresses God with ease, with intimacy and with a name. Jesus' whole life was a prayer to the Father. As the mediator between God and people, Christ's prayer is always heard. When we join our prayer to his, as we do in the official prayers of the Church, we can be sure that our prayer finds acceptance.

St. Paul tells us that the Spirit leads us to

imitate the prayer of Jesus, and so we too can come to trust God as a loving Father, anxious to give us all we need. When we pray consciously, that is by giving time to it apart from our living and acting, we can pray with praise and thanksgiving. In this way we speak to God as the creator of all life, and we are able to see ourselves as part of God's plan.

Next week we will explore both personal and communal prayer forms. The following week we will ask all members of every family to reflect upon their personal prayer life, set prayer goals for the next 12 months, and make a private commitment in writing.

### **Prayer -Bulletin Article 3:**

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*“Again I tell you, if two of you join your voices on earth to pray for anything whatever, it shall be granted to you by my Father in heaven.” (Mt.18:19).*

The traditional definition of prayer is the raising of the mind and heart to God. It is an act by which one enters into conscious, loving, communion with God. Forms of prayer can be differentiated by reason of its purpose - prayers of thanksgiving, adoration, contrition, intercessions and petitions, or by reason of context.

Communal prayer is offered to God by a group of persons together. It may be liturgical (Eucharist) or non-liturgical. Private prayer, such as the Rosary, is offered by an individual alone and is non-liturgical

There are other methods of prayer such as meditation, centering, praying the Scriptures, and devotions. Our prayer can occur either privately or communally, at particular times, or it can permeate our whole day, our whole life.

Next weekend we celebrate our Stewardship of Prayer Commitment. As we prepare ourselves to become a Stewardship Parish, and as we reflect upon our commitment to be good stewards of our time through prayer, let us ask ourselves these questions:

- Do I believe that everything I have is a gift from God?
- Does prayer permeate my whole day and life?
- Is prayer part of my family life? Meals, evening prayer, morning prayer?
- Is the Eucharist a priority in my life, or merely what I do on Sunday morning?
- Am I involved in a prayer group?
- Am I willing to make a written promise to make prayer a priority.

After prayerful discernment as a family, please return next Sunday the commitment card that you will receive in the mail this week.

# *Direct Mailings*

## **Prayer - Sample Letter**

---

Dear ~

Three weeks ago we introduced you to the first phase of a process for St. \_\_\_\_\_ in becoming a Stewardship Parish. All of us have a key role to play as “stewards” of God’s gifts of time, talent and treasure. Stewardship is the understanding that all we are and all we have are gifts which God has given us for our temporary use in helping those around us. This first phase of our annual Stewardship Program is the foundation from which all other forms flow - the Stewardship of Prayer.

As our parish begins the journey toward becoming a Stewardship Parish, I am aware that some may not be able to participate in all three phases of the Stewardship process. However, it is important that each of us participate as much as possible, and all of us should be able to participate in the Stewardship of Prayer.

Over the past few weeks I have asked each of you to reflect on the importance of prayer and to make it a top priority in your life. Enclosed are a brochure and prayer cards. Please have all of your family members take a few moments to fill out their card, and seal it in the enclosed envelope. The cards will be collected at Mass this Sunday following the homily, and presented at the table of the Lord. With your participation, we as a parish family can become the good stewards Jesus calls us to be.

I will be praying for the success of our efforts and I hope you will join me in this prayer.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

## **Prayer - Sample Follow-up Letter**

---

Dear,

A few weeks ago I wrote to you about our call to stewardship here at St. \_\_\_\_\_ Parish. We began our journey toward becoming a Stewardship Parish by reflecting upon our prayer life and then making a definite commitment to it through our Stewardship of Prayer. I have been very pleased with the response that we have received of prayer commitments. This commitment not only provides abundant grace to the individual, but to our parish as well.

In reviewing the commitment cards I realized that I had not received your commitment prayer card. Our parish stewardship is not complete without every member of our parish family participating. I invite you to join your fellow parishioners and myself in our Stewardship of Prayer. Please place the enclosed prayer card into the collection basket this Sunday.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

## Prayer - Sample Thank You Letter

---

Dear ~

On behalf of the staff, the Stewardship Committee, and parishioners of St. \_\_\_\_\_ Parish, I want to thank you for your response to our Stewardship of Prayer appeal. I am sincerely grateful for your participation. Please be

assured that your prayer commitment will remain sealed as a symbol of your covenant between your family and the Lord. Please remember in your prayers our parish and the success of our stewardship process.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

### **Stewardship Prayer**

**Oh Lord, giver of life and source of our freedom,  
we are reminded by the Psalmist that yours is  
the “earth and its fullness; the world  
and those who dwell in it.”  
We know that it is from your hand that we  
received all we have and are and will be.  
Gracious and loving God,  
we understand that you call us to be  
the stewards of your abundance,  
the caretakers of all  
that you have entrusted to us.  
Help us always to use your gifts wisely,  
and teach us to share them generously.  
We pray with grateful hearts, in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

# Liturgical Suggestions

## Prayer - Stewardship Sunday Liturgy

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### Suggested Hymns

- This Day God Gives Me (Haas)
- Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (Peace Prayer of St. Francis)

### Penitential Rite

- For the times we have been selfish with our time, Lord have Mercy.
- For the times we have forgotten you, Lord, Christ have mercy.
- For the times we have failed to be thankful for the wonderful gifts you have bestowed upon us, Lord have mercy.

### General Intercessions

- That our parish may come to understand the true meaning of stewardship by giving back to God a generous portion of our time through prayer, we pray to the Lord.
- For all the baptized, in our parish and in the diocese, that they will be faithful in their responsibility to fulfill the Mission of Christ, we pray to the Lord.

- For the success of our parish Stewardship of Prayer program, we pray to the Lord.
- That we may joyfully offer our gifts before God, to help do his work here on earth, we pray to the Lord.

### Homily Notes

- How we pray depends upon our concept of God.
- If you are finding prayer difficult, take a look at your image of God.
- Some people pray in spurts. They don't always pray morning and evening prayers. They pray as the need arises or when the Spirit moves them. Some of us pray only when we run into trouble.
- A commitment to prayer deepens our relationship with God and enables us to fulfill our baptismal call.

*“No one shall appear before the Lord empty handed,  
but each of you with as much as he can give,  
in proportion to the blessings which the  
Lord, God has bestowed on you.”  
Deuteronomy 16:10, 16-17*

# Stewardship of Treasure

***“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits  
of all your produce; then will your barns be filled with grain,  
with new wine your vats will overflow.”***

Proverbs 3:9

We all dread talking about money in our parishes. Is there any way we can give the people the “Good News” about money? There is if we teach them about stewardship.

The Bishops in their Pastoral on Stewardship indicate clearly that there is a theology to our stewardship message and that we, as church leaders, are called upon to live, teach and preach stewardship as part of our leadership role in the church. Stewardship of money is not a vile or unclean topic to preach and teach about. The essence of the message is not about money, but rather about our “call” and our “response” to be Christ in our day - it is about commitment and responsibility to do our sacrificial share in keeping Christ’s mission alive through the church and our parish.

At its very core stewardship is about gratitude to our God for the blessings bestowed upon us.

The ownership of all things, including our time, talent and treasure belongs elsewhere. God gave us these gifts out of love. Ours is only the privilege of use. This is the fundamental message we need to impart.

Stewardship doesn’t start with the needs of the parish, no matter how great they are. It begins with our personal need to return to God a truly grateful portion of our time, talent and treasure in thanksgiving for all the blessings he gives us.

In terms of the stewardship of treasure this means that, more important than the material needs of the parish is the *need* of the *giver* to *give*. Stewardship can never be reduced to habits of giving or volunteerism. Because it is rooted in discipleship, the concepts of stewardship should permeate all aspects of Christian life.

## **The Five Elements of Sacrificial Giving**

Giving is planned (involves advance decisions).

Giving is proportionate (a percentage of one’s income).

Giving is sacrificial (off the top, not from what is left).

Giving is free (unconditional).

Giving is a prayer (of thanksgiving).

# General Suggestions

## Preparation for Commitment Sunday

---

- The Pastor and Stewardship Committee need to set goals for the Stewardship of Treasure appeal.
- Set high expectations to motivate your parishioners. High expectations also motivate the committee and parish leadership.  
Suggested increase: \$4 or \$5 per week per household, or 25% increase over current offertory gift per household.
- Members of the Stewardship Committee, including the pastor and parish staff, should make their commitment along with the parishioners on Commitment Sunday.
- The committee should have a follow-up plan for those who do not respond on Commitment Sunday. Include in the plan a mailing to those parishioners who were not present on Commitment Sunday.

## Commitment Sunday

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- On Commitment Sunday the Stewardship Committee will distribute the commitment cards and envelopes following the homily. The cards will be filled out in the pew. The “In-Pew” method of inviting parishioners to share their time, talent and treasure has proven to be very successful. However, an alternative would be to have the card completed at home and collected on Commitment Sunday following the homily.
- A short “summary homily” should begin the commitment signing process.
- Following the homily the presider leads the community in reciting the stewardship prayer. (See *Stewardship of Prayer* section.) Time is then allowed for reflection and filling out the commitment card.
- The committee collects the cards and they are presented with the gifts as part of the offertory procession.

## Lay Witness Talk

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- The lay witness should introduce themselves and their family, and describes their affiliation with the parish.
- Use the Scriptures assigned for that Sunday.
- The talk should include answers to these questions:
  - When did I first hear about stewardship?
  - What was my initial reaction to stewardship?
  - What motivated me to accept stewardship as a way of life?
  - Has stewardship made a difference in my life?
  - When did I begin to experience the benefits of stewardship as a way of life?
  - How does our family share their time, talent, treasure?

# Bulletin Articles

## TIMELINE

### WEEK 1

- Bulletin Article

### WEEK 2

- Bulletin Article
- Homily:  
Stewardship  
and Sharing  
our Treasure

### WEEK 3

- Bulletin Article
- Homily:  
Financial  
State of the  
Parish

### WEEK 4

- Bulletin Article
- Lay Witness  
Talk
- Distribute  
commitment  
cards after  
the homily.
- Bring them up  
at the offertory.

## Treasure - Bulletin Article 1

***“Tell those who are rich in this world’s goods not to be proud, and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth. Let them trust in God who provides us richly with all things for our use. Charge them to do good, to be rich in good works and generous. Sharing what they have.”*** TM.6:17-19

Through our stewardship formation, we have learned that stewardship is the living of our faith. You and I are the Body of Christ in today’s world. Each of us is called upon not only to say, “we believe” but also to live our faith and practice our faith. You and I are called by the Lord to be Church and serve in his name. Stewardship is a vocation, a ministry, a total way of life to which we are called.

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 know they are the recipients and caretakers of God’s many gifts.

Out of pure love and gratitude to God, who is the creator and giver of all our blessings, we are asked to share a portion - the first fruits - with him.

Our journey toward becoming a total Stewardship Parish leads us to Stewardship of Treasure. Although not the most popular subject in most Catholic churches, this phase of stewardship may be the strongest test of our role as good stewards.

During the coming weeks we will explore the responsibilities and opportunities we have as caretakers of God’s gifts. We will talk about the needs of our parish and the need for all of us to share our gifts with our parish and one another. The true stewards never feel coerced in sharing their gifts. Rather he or she gives out of gratitude and joy, whether the gift is prayer, talent or treasure.

## Treasure - Bulletin Article 2

***“...Those who believed —shared.”*** Acts

There are three basic attitudes that describe stewardship: 1) acknowledging God as the provider of all we have, 2) being grateful for his many gifts and blessings, and 3) giving a portion of these back to God through our offerings of time, talent and treasure.

We are beginning in our parish the Stewardship of Treasure segment of our Parish

Stewardship process. The first step in this phase is to reflect upon our attitude toward giving.

How do you decide what to give?

- Do you put \$2 in the collection no matter when or where you attend Mass?
- Do you contribute only when your pastor convinces you the parish has a particular need?

- Do you feel you are doing your part by paying a sizable tuition to send your child to a Catholic school?
- Do you put in the collection whatever you happen to have in your wallet or purse?
- Do you and your spouse prayerfully and thoughtfully regularly review your income, and select a percentage to give back to God in thanksgiving for the many blessings God has given you?

The last choice illustrates the concept of

“sacrificial giving”. This concept involves contributing from one’s substance rather than one’s abundance, or giving “off the top” rather than from what is left over. It may also involve forgoing in our lives some pleasure or luxury.

During the coming week I invite you to re-evaluate your motivation for sharing your treasure with your parish. Christ does not condemn our possession of material goods, but he pronounces harsh words for those who use them in a selfish way.

### Treasure - Bulletin Article 3

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***“Do not neglect good deeds and generosity  
God is pleased by sacrifices of kind.”***

Hebrews 13:16

The path to holiness and sanctity is in giving. The great statement of St. Francis of Assisi is that “It is in giving that we receive.” The joy that comes in giving is a reward in itself.

This sense of giving and its attendant joy is something that should be shared with our parish family. Each of us is called to be church. The parish exists for its members, but it cannot exist without their help and sacrificial support of the regular parish offertory collection.

Today at all of the Masses I am giving a State of the Parish presentation. I am including the highlights of what has been accomplished within the past year - sacramentally, pastorally, formational and through service to others. I also will speak to the cost of accomplishing these ministries and other projects.

This week you will receive in the mail the following reports:

- A summary of my talk.
- From the Pastoral Council the vision, goals, and plans for our parish for the coming year, and how they will be achieved, including a projection of cost.
- A summary of the present giving patterns of our parishioners.
- A suggested weekly contribution card.

During the coming week please meet with your family in prayer, asking for guidance. Reflect on the meaning of “sacrifice.” Is there anything the family is willing to give up in order to increase the weekly offertory gift for the sake of your parish? Next Sunday you will be asked to make your commitment at Mass. Let your gift be representative of what God has given you.

***He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly and  
he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully.***

2Corinthians 9:6

- Do you feel you are doing your part by paying a sizable tuition to send your child to a Catholic school?
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2Corinthians 9:6

## Treasure - Bulletin Article 4

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*“For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart.”*

Matthew 6:21

Have you ever given a beautiful gift to friends for their wedding and not been thanked? If so, how did it make you feel?

Imagine yourself sharing your talents on stage to a packed audience and, after delivering a stunning performance, hearing no applause. Picture the look of disappointment on your face.

These examples seldom happen in our lives, yet at one time or another we may have been guilty of these same gestures when we have not thanked God for the gifts he has given us. God has bestowed on us the gift of time - have we spent it wisely. He has blessed all of us with varied talents. We show our appreciation not with applause but by sharing those talents with others in the form of ministry.

How do we thank God for the material possessions with which he has entrusted us? Do we “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and give to God what is God’s?”

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. This Christ-centered way of living has its beginning in Baptism, the sacrament of faith.

Today at all the Masses we will complete our parish offertory commitment cards. After the cards are completed the Stewardship Committee will collect them and they will be brought forward at the Offertory procession.

## Sacrificial Giving

**How much should you give? Start with an assessment of your level of giving now. Is it a proportion of your resources which adequately reflects your gratitude for God’s generosity? There is no magic number that represents the “right” amount. Nor is there a “right” answer to the calculation of income upon which the proportion of financial giving is figured. It is easy to get caught up in playing games with *net* versus *gross* income or looking for loopholes which will exempt that unexpected windfall. Your sacrificial giving pledge isn’t your tax return. It is your return to God of a proportion of the gifts God has given you, which you choose to share with your parish and other charities.**

**If you can give your gift and not notice it, it isn’t a sacrificial gift. The element of sacrifice is present when something about your life has to change in order for you to be able to give the gift. Everytime you give the gift, you are reminded of the reasons why you have chosen to give.**

# Direct Mailings

## Treasure - Sample Letter

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Dear ~

In his gospel Matthew tells the story of the rich man who meets Jesus on the journey to Jerusalem. It is clear in the story that the answer to the question of how to gain eternal life, to enter the kingdom is: *Come Follow Me*. It is in following Jesus that one discovers the scope of the goodness God seeks - and the means to achieve it.

The problem with the rich man is that the call to come and follow is linked to the command to give away his wealth. Like others before us, we find ourselves wondering: why does Jesus ask the man to part with his riches?

This demand of Jesus is a symbolic test of loyalty, a test that confronts every would-be disciple in one form or another: Will we serve God and seek first his kingdom, or will we serve wealth and status in pursuit of our ambitions? When the rich young man goes away sorrowful, he mirrors the tragic plight of all who choose the second option.

This Sunday following the homily at all of

the Masses, the Stewardship Committee will distribute commitment cards inviting you to make a financial commitment to your parish. These cards will be collected and brought forward in the offertory procession.

Included with this letter is a summary of my talk on the State of the Parish, a copy of the Pastoral Council's goals and plans for the coming year; a summary of the present giving patterns of our parishioners and a suggested weekly contribution card. Please take the time to review the materials and together with your family reflect on the many gifts God has given you, and decide together how you can give back in proportion for the many blessings you have received.

Your generous financial support is the major reason we are able to carry out the mission of Jesus in our parish community. I am especially grateful for your support and may God continue to bless you and our parish as we meet the challenge of stewardship together.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*The life of a Christian steward  
lived in imitation of the life of Christ,  
is challenging, even difficult in many ways;  
but both here and hereafter it is charged  
with intense joy.*

## Treasure - Sample Follow-Up Letter

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Dear ~

Four weeks ago as a part of our becoming a Stewardship Parish, we began our Stewardship of Treasure program. Last week at all of the Masses we invited the parishioners to make a financial commitment to the parish.

This invitation has been responded to generously by many in our parish. This response enables us to expand the current programs and structures and to provide additional programs that will serve our parishioners needs.

When we accept Jesus' invitation to share our time, talent and treasure, we are making a commitment to discipleship that shapes us and permeates our every decision. When we agree to Christ's invitation, we commit ourselves to reflect his generosity, love and sacrifice in our own lives. Your commitment to financial stewardship is one sign of your commitment to Christ, to the people

of God, to your parish and to your own salvation.

Since I have not received a commitment card from you and your family, I am taking the liberty of enclosing a commitment card in hopes that you will join the many others in our parish who are making gifts that are planned, proportionate, and sacrificial.

I invite you to use the enclosed envelop and drop your commitment card in this weekend's collection, or mail it to me directly.

If you have any questions about stewardship, or would like to speak to me personally, please feel free to call me.

May the Lord continue to bless your family and the entire parish as we continue on our journey toward a Stewardship Parish.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

## Treasure - Sample Thank You Letter

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Dear ~

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee and myself, thank you for your generous response to our Stewardship of Treasure appeal.

Your gift not only provides support to our parish ministries, but also contributes to the sense of parish community which is so important to us

all. As you and the other generous members of our parish act on your commitment to discipleship, you make our parish a tangible sign of God's love and grace in the world.

May you and your loved ones continue to experience God's abundant blessing.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

# Liturgical Suggestions

## Treasure - Stewardship Sunday Liturgy

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### Suggested Hymns

- “This Is the Day” (Haugen)
- “All That We Have” (Ault, Diagle)
- “Christ Be Our Light” (Farrell)
- “Be Not Afraid” (Dufford)
- “Song of Thanksgiving” (Ducote)
- “We are Called” (Haas)

### Penitential Rite

For the times we have hoarded our gifts instead of sharing them freely with others,  
Lord Have Mercy.

For the times we held back the first fruits of our labor and offered you instead our leftovers,  
Christ Have Mercy.

For the times when we are consumed by materialism,  
Lord Have Mercy

### General Intercessions

- That we submit ourselves to the Spirit of God and fulfill our callings as God’s priestly people through our sacrificial support of our parish offertory, we pray . . .
- That our Church will grow in faith as we experience what it is to sacrifice, we pray...

- That our gifts of bread, wine and sacrificial support which we are about to bring to the altar will help us carry out the mission of Christ in our parish more effectively, we pray . . .
- That, like the apostles, we may follow Jesus, using our time, talent and treasure to bring others closer to God, we pray . . .

### Homily Notes

- We *enter* the world with nothing and we *leave* the world with nothing. The ownership of all things, including our time, talent and treasure belongs elsewhere. God gave us these gifts out of great love. Ours is only the privilege of use.
- This is the concept of stewardship. It is not a secular word or code word for fund raising. Fund raising is something we do; stewardship is who we are. Fund raising impacts only people’s checkbooks. Stewardship invites us to change our hearts. Stewardship is an attitude. And it’s a call from Jesus.
- Today I am inviting you to make a commitment to the Stewardship of Treasure phase of our journey toward becoming a Stewardship Parish. Please join me in filling out the commitment card that has been given to us by the Stewardship Committee.

# Stewardship of Time and Talent

*“Everything comes from you, and  
we have given you only what  
comes from your hand.”* 1 Chronicles 29:14

The invitation Christ gave to his first disciples to “come follow me” is the same invitation given to each person who says, “I believe.” Answering this invitation comes after reflection on Jesus’ personal involvement in the lives of all the people he encountered in his ministry. His ministry was never done because he viewed it as an opportunity to be shared with others. The faith of the disciples to answer Christ’s call was his gift to them. This is the same gift given to each believer.

Jesus calls us, as disciples, to a new way of life - the Christian way of life - of which stewardship is part. We are called individually, and by name. Each one of us has a vocation and God intends each one of us to play a unique role in carrying out the divine plan. Our challenge is to understand our role and respond generously to this call. Christ calls each of us to be stewards of our personal vocations, which we receive from God. We cooperate with God in our own redemption and the redemption of others. It is our task to continue the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church’s essential mission.

We are accountable for the proper management of our faith and spiritual gifts, our time and the activities we pursue, our body and its mental and physical health, our talents and the vocation to which we have been called. We are asked as good stewards to share our gifts with God and our faith community.

Stewardship of our talents calls us to discover and grow in our own giftedness. As individual as our own thumb print, each of us is a unique blend of abilities and talents. Perhaps we have discovered some of our talents through our livelihoods, in our work as teachers or accountants, as carpenters or administrators. As stewards, God calls us to reflect, not only upon these talents but upon our other talents as well.

Our talents a special gift from God and the ways in which they form us help create our unique “self”, which is a gift as well. God calls us to share with Him and with others our very selves. Jesus compares our giftedness to a “*light*”, created to illuminate “*all in the house*”, not to be hidden “*under a bushel basket*”.

# *General Suggestions*

## **Ministry Fair**

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- Form a committee to plan and organize the Ministry Fair. Set the dates long in advance - fairs take a great deal of time and planning to be successful.
- Ask every organization, committee and commission in your parish to submit a brief description of who, what, when, where and why about their group.
- Print a catalogue listing all of the parish organizations, committees, and commissions.
- Include in the catalogue contact persons for each group.
- Distribute these to everyone after Mass on the day of the Ministry Fair.
- Invite parish organizations and committees to set up a display table for people to look at. Someone should be available to answer questions.
- Set up tables to maximize visibility for all of the organizations and committees.

## **Commitment Sunday**

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- Have sufficient ministry commitment cards for distribution at all of the Masses after the homily. The pastor asks those present to make their commitment and bring the card to the basket at the front of the church. An alternative would be for the Committee to collect the cards and bring them forth in the offertory procession.
- The basket should be placed in a prominent and visible place in the sanctuary.
- It is important that someone follows-up with the parishioners who make a commitment to work in a ministry. If people are not contacted they will be reluctant to share their gifts in the future.
- Report to the parish the number of responses that were received.

## **Lay Witness Talk**

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- The lay witness should introduce themselves and their family, and describe their affiliation with the parish.
- Use the Scriptures assigned for that Sunday.
- The talk should include answers to these questions:
  - When did I first hear about stewardship?
  - What was my initial reaction to stewardship?
  - What motivated me to accept stewardship as a way of life?
  - What difference has stewardship made in my life?
  - When did I begin to experience the benefits of stewardship as a way of life?

# Bulletin Articles

## TIMELINE

### WEEK 1

- Bulletin Article

### WEEK 2

- Bulletin Article
- Homily on "Spirituality of Gifts"

### WEEK 3

- Bulletin Article
- Ministry Fair
- Lay Witness Talk

### WEEK 4

- Invitation to share their gifts.
- Distribute the commitment cards after the homily.
- Procession of the commitment cards.

## Time and Talent Bulletin Article 1

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*"You are lacking in one thing  
Go sell what you have.....then come, follow me". (Mk. 10 - 21)*

In (Month/date) I invited you to participate in the Stewardship of Prayer, an ongoing part of our Parish Stewardship, which asked you to return a portion of your time to the Lord through prayer.

As we continue this life long process of stewardship in our parish we now invite you to reflect on ways in which you can share your gifts of time and talent with others.

God has blessed each of us with the gift of time and talent

Sharing these gifts with others fits into our stewardship way of life.

Christian stewardship focuses on the relationship between God and us. God has put us in charge of His world, and He expects us to use what we have control of to help Him accomplish His purpose. Each of us must help in the ongoing Mission of the Church.

Over the next three weeks through these bulletin articles I will be reminding all of our parishioners to think of themselves as stewards, or caretakers, of the talents God has given to each of us. As a family spend sometime this week reflecting on ways in which each family member can share their gifts with the parish.

## Time and Talent - Bulletin Article 2

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*"Above all, let your love for one another be constant. As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received". 1 Peter 4:8,10*

Stewardship is living out a commitment to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered. This conversion is the result of our total self being focused on God as the Creator and giver of all good gifts. Jesus Christ is God's greatest gift to us. Stewardship tells us to share our gifts of time and

talent so that the Gift of Jesus Christ may be given to those who do not know him. The fundamental motives for giving back to God are profound gratitude, justice and love. Christian stewardship provides a personal spirituality that we can take to our homes, our community and the workplace.

Our call to serve, or to minister, does not necessarily dictate a call to the priestly or religious life. By virtue of our baptism, each of us has the responsibility to use our time and talents to serve the Lord and one another. All of us need to reflect on how we can share our time and talent to help meet the needs of our brothers and sisters here on earth. By choosing to meet the needs of our parish, our diocese, we are moving in the right direction on our journey to salvation. We are also saying

thank you for the gifts of time and talent God freely gives us.

Next week the Stewardship Committee will sponsor a Ministry Fair here at our parish. I invite you to attend this event, which will take place after all the Masses, so that you can discern how you will share your gifts of time and talent at your parish.

### **Time and Talent - Bulletin Article 3**

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***“I am sure of this much: that He who has begun the good work in you will carry it through to completion, right up to the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6***

Stewardship is the process of learning about the strategic management of God’s resources and how best to use them, whether they be spiritual, human or financial. Learning more about stewardship helps us to become involved in the ministry of the Church. The more involved we are the more successful our church experience will be.

Today the Stewardship Committee is sponsoring a Ministry Fair in preparation for our Stewardship of Time and Talent Commitment Sunday that will be celebrated at all of the Masses next weekend. As you leave Mass today, a catalogue of the parish ministries and activities will be given to you. Additional information or questions you may have about a specific parish ministry can be answered at the Ministry Fair today. As we prepare and reflect on our commitment to be good stewards of our time

and talents through parish ministry, let us ask ourselves these questions:

- Have I accepted that God has entrusted me to build and maintain his kingdom on earth?
- Am I living a life of gratitude to God by returning a portion of my time and talent?
- Do I participate in the mission and life of my parish beyond attendance at Mass?
- Do I believe that I possess unique talents and skills from which those around could benefit from?
- Do I generously share my gifts or do I hoard them hiding them under a bushel basket?
- When asked to participate in the work of my parish church, do I look for an excuse to say “no”? Or do I search for the courage to say “yes”?
- Do I rely on others in the parish to “get things done” or do I answer the call to serve in some small way myself?
- As a Christian steward do I recognize God as the source of all I have?

# *Direct Mailings*

## **Time and Talent - Sample Letter**

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Dear ~

Time and Talent Commitment Sunday is this weekend during all of the Masses. For the past two weeks we have been reflecting upon the Spirituality of Time and Talent and how we all must share our gifts in order to continue building the Kingdom of God.

Last weekend we heard from ( individual's name) who shared with us the impact that stewardship has had on (his/her) life as a disciple. This weekend it is our turn to respond. It is our turn to commit ourselves to stewardship of time and talent by indicating in which ministry we would like to serve for the coming year. We will be passing out time and talent commitment cards at Mass asking you to indicate where your gifts can best serve the people of God.

Enclosed is our parish catalogue that contains the various ministries offered here at (parish name). Please review this material prayerfully and discern where your gifts can best be used in our parish ministries. It is my sincere hope that you will share your time and talent with your parish, as we continue to build a community of faith here at (parish). It will take all of us acting as good stewards to be the community that God is calling us to be.

Thank you for your past gifts of yourself through ministry. Please join me in praying for the success of our ongoing process of stewardship and for the openness of each parishioner to the grace to respond generously and lovingly.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

## **Time and Talent - Sample Thank You Letter**

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Dear ~

Thank you for your faith-filled response on your Time and Talent Commitment card. We acknowledge and appreciate your desire to share your time and talent as a (list the ministry) for the coming year. Someone from (ministry) will contact you as soon as possible to help you get started. At that time they will explain to you the formation

and training that will be provided for the particular ministry you have chosen.

Once again, thank you. Your commitment to (parish name) is a tangible sign of your love and commitment to Christ.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*The sharing of our time and talent for the good of the parish family is a gift of stewardship.*

# Liturgical Suggestions

## Time and Talent - Stewardship Sunday Liturgy

### Suggested Hymns

- “We Are Many Parts” (Haugen)
- “I Say ‘Yes’ Lord” (Pena, Haugen)
- “Here I Am Lord” (Shutte)
- “We Are Called” (Haas)
- “Anthem” (Conry)
- “City of God” (Schutte)
- “Send Us Your Spirit” (Haas)
- “God Has Chosen Me” (Farrell)

### Penitential Rite

For the times we have been selfish with our time and talent, Lord Have Mercy.

For the times we have said “no” to you Lord, Christ Have Mercy.

For the times when we are willing to give you only one hour a week on Sunday and nothing more, Lord Have Mercy.

### General Intercessions

- That we may come to more fully appreciate every day all that Jesus has sacrificed for us, we pray to the Lord.
- That we may be more fully aware of and appreciative of all God’s many blessings, realizing that without Him we could do nothing, we pray to the Lord.
- That we may live as God’s stewards, using his many gifts to do His will on earth, we pray to the Lord.

### Homily Notes

- We can’t judge the success of a parish by the number of people who show up on Sunday, rather we judge the success of a parish by what’s happening between Monday through Saturday.
- The call to stewardship does not come from the priests or parish leaders, but from Christ at our baptism.

### Prayer of Commitment

*Lord God, you who know the secrets of our hearts, come now and fill me with the spirit of sincerity as I pledge myself to you and to the coming of your Kingdom. Lord and friend, I dedicate myself to a life of service and worship of you. May a song of praise be a constant melody of my heart. May I find you here at this time and in this place. Lord God, bless me now with your abounding love as I promise to be your friend, your servant, and your minister. May I ever live out this commitment in your name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

# *Stewardship for Children and Youth*

*“Just so, your light must shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”*

Matthew 5:13-16

Parishes should consider the value of introducing stewardship as a way of life for the children and youth of the parish. Many of our children and youth already practice stewardship as part of their family’s commitment. A focus on youth and children’s stewardship should be coordinated with the adult stewardship effort.

Teaching our children and youth to steward the gifts of God present one of our greatest challenges and an equally great reward. Parents who practice stewardship, are not only fulfilling the gospel and giving meaning to their lives, but they are living examples of Christ to their children. All are called by Jesus - adults, youth and children - to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, to practice hospitality, to clothe the naked, to care for the sick, to help people who are not free and to be a blessing to others.

In addition to serving others, children and youth should be taught to share a portion of their allowance or money earned with their parish.

Stewardship formation cannot be limited to one set of lesson plans for a specific time frame. It must be an ongoing effort to assist the children,

and youth in making stewardship a way of life. Language and examples of stewardship not only must be incorporated in all of the lessons and activities, but the school teaching staff, catechists, the principal, the director of religious education, and the youth minister must demonstrate stewardship through example and attitude.

Specific suggestions for incorporating stewardship throughout the school year and in the parish youth programs can be found in this chapter. Stewardship for children and youth should coincide with the parish stewardship process inviting the children and youth to share their gifts of time, talent and treasure.

Another obvious way to encourage children and youth to be good stewards is the involvement of the parents. Because children tend to do what their parents do (not always what they say) parents must be an example of what a good steward is, if the children are going to participate. Schools and religious education programs need to encourage parents to discuss with their children how they will share their gifts of time, talent and treasure with their parish and community.

# *Fostering Stewardship*

## **Role of the Stewardship Committee**

**The Stewardship Committee can foster stewardship in the following ways:**

- The Stewardship Committee should assist in coordinating the activities of stewardship for children and youth.
- Include the children and youth in the annual stewardship process.
- Recruit children and youth to share their personal feelings about stewardship.
- Invite the children and youth to sign a commitment card for time, talent and treasure.
- Publicize some of the children and youth's time and talent gifts in the bulletin.
- Provide offertory envelopes for all of the children in the parish.
- Keep up with the latest resources for stewardship education for children and youth, and provide updated information to the DRE, Principal and Youth Minister.
- Provide in-service formation for catechists, youth leaders and teachers. Encourage them to attend the diocesan stewardship programs.

## **Role of the Youth Minister**

**The Youth Minister can foster stewardship in the following ways:**

- Participating in formation programs sponsored by the diocese or the parish.
- Youth Ministers should model stewardship in their own lives.
- Provide stewardship education/formation opportunities for the youth. Include a mini-course on stewardship for the youth.
- Advocate youth involvement in all areas of parish life. Promote youths as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, greeters, and ushers. Encourage the parish commissions to invite youth to participate as active members.
- Encourage the youth to not only share their gifts of time and talent, but to share their gift of treasure through sacrificial giving to the parish offertory and special collections. Many teens have jobs and they should be encouraged to give back with gratitude.

### **Stewardship Prayer**

*Gracious God, we thank you for the wonder of all that you have given to us.*

*You give us eyes to see your presence, ears to listen to your voice,  
mouths to speak your name, hands to help those in need.*

*Help us to use the gifts you give us in service to others.*

*Help us to be good stewards of the earth and its resources.*

*We ask this through Jesus, who shows us the way to live and love. Amen.*

## Role of the Director of Religious Education

### The Director of Religious Education can foster stewardship in the following ways:

- Incorporate stewardship throughout the curriculum so that the children understand stewardship as a way of life.
- Provide formation and training to parents so that they are able to share the gift of their Catholic faith with their children.
- Model good stewardship of parish religious resources - funds, materials and facilities.
- Network with other parishes who have a stewardship process.
- Provide offertory envelopes for the students in the religious education program.
- Provide opportunities for families to work together as good stewards of time and talent.
- Change the words *service hours* to *stewardship*. Service hours denotes a requirement for completion, whereas stewardship places service in a spiritual context of gratitude to God for all He has given.
- The DRE should attend workshops and programs to assist he or she in understanding stewardship. Stewardship formation should be provided for the catechists.
- Provide updated resources on stewardship that can be used with the curriculum and lesson activities.

## Role of the Catholic School Principal

### The School Principal can foster stewardship in the following ways:

- The principle should attend workshops or programs to assist he or she in understanding stewardship.
- Stewardship formation should be provided for the teachers.
- Integrate a children's stewardship prayer into the schools morning prayer, assemblies, and liturgies.
- Change the words *service hours* or *community service* to *stewardship*. Stewardship denotes a way of life.
- Choose a theme or themes to be used throughout the year to promote stewardship.
- Give recognition to existing stewardship activities and cultivate new ideas.
- Promote stewardship activities within the school staff.
- Collaborate with other schools on stewardship activities.
- Network with social service and outreach organizations to promote opportunities for students to give of their time, talent and treasure.
- Provide updated resources on stewardship material.
- Provide offertory envelopes for all of the children.
- Encourage family participation in stewardship time and talent activities.

***“Just so, your light must shine  
before others that they may see  
your good deeds and  
glorify your heavenly Father.”***

**Mt. 5:13-16**

# *Suggestions for Implementing Stewardship*

## **LITURGY**

- Those who are planning children and youth liturgies or Liturgy of the Word for Children should take the opportunity to focus on stewardship when the readings are reflective of stewardship as a way of life.
- Assist the children in understanding that serving as readers, choir members, altar servers, and ushers are opportunities for stewardship of time and talent.
- Encourage the gifts of time and talent with the youth by inviting them to participate in the Sunday Liturgies as ushers, readers, choir members, cantors, and altar servers.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

Sacramental preparation for Baptism, First Eucharist and Confirmation are opportunities for fostering stewardship with youth and children. Some of these opportunities are:

- Provide opportunities for families to share their faith in their home and in the parish through witnessing to their children and their parish family.
- Provide training for all staff on evangelization and welcoming new parents and families.
- Invite the children and parents in First Eucharist preparation to use their gifts to serve others in such areas as nursing homes, making cards for shut-ins, visiting shut-ins, providing food for the poor, etc.
- Help the confirmandi of the parish discern their gifts and use them to serve others.

- Provide retreat opportunities for children and youth that focus on stewardship as a response to discipleship.
- Invite the parishioners, as good stewards of their time, to pray for the families, children and youth who are involved in sacramental preparation.

## **ONGOING FORMATION**

- Incorporate the language of stewardship in the school and religious education program.
- Create a bulletin column where the children can share their stewardship experiences.
- Use children and youth envelopes in which notes or artwork for sharing their time and talent can be included on the envelope.
- Develop a stewardship newsletter.
- When the parish stewardship process is being conducted collaborate with the Stewardship Committee by having 3 - 5 lessons on stewardship in the religion classes.
- Select monthly an outstanding steward from the school and religious education program, and post their picture in the church and the school.
- A year-round poster competition can be initiated based on everything the children have learned about stewardship.
- Periodically during the class year, invite missionaries to speak in the classroom about their Third World assignment. Involve the youth and children in outreach programs.
- Develop a Youth Stewardship Fair that will show how they do stewardship.

# Planned Giving

Stewardship is grounded in the belief that God gives us everything we have and are, and calls us to use those gifts for the building of the Kingdom. As stewards of God's gifts, we have a responsibility to pass on to future generations the blessings we have received in this life.

Our first concern should be taking care of our loved ones but leaving a portion of our estate to our parish, schools, or diocese should receive careful consideration.

Planned giving is a comprehensive form of stewardship that is just beginning to take root in the Catholic Church. Planned giving can provide an ideal opportunity to show your parishioners that stewardship involves much more than giving money to charity. Stewardship also involves providing for the future of our children, our parish and our diocese.

Planned giving entails three concepts: Planning, Giving and Receiving.

## **Planning:**

Planned giving, as the phrase implies, is not primarily about giving, but about *planning*. Stewardship does not entail a haphazard giving away of our time, talent and treasure but implies the prudent management of our time talent, and treasure. Stewardship means giving the right

amount to the right cause as the right time. This can only be accomplished with planning.

## **Giving:**

Planned giving obviously entails giving, but a very specific kind of giving. Planned gifts are generally gifts from our assets. As an investment in the future of the Church, planned giving is a way for the donor to integrate his or her financial planning with his or her stewardship.

## **Receiving:**

Finally, planned giving actually has to do with *receiving*. There are a number of plans that provide either a tax reduction or a life income for the donor.

### **Suggested Ways of Giving**

- **Your Will**
- **Life Insurance**
- **Cash/Stock/Bonds**
- **Charitable Lead Trust**
- **Charitable Remainder Trust**
- **Annuities**
- **Retirement Plans**

### **For information on Planned Giving contact:**

**Mr. Karl Dytrych**  
**Diocesan Pastoral Center**  
**(219) 769-9292, Ext. 247**


# Resources / Recursos

- *Children's Stewardship Manual.*  
International Catholic Stewardship Council  
(202) 289-1093.
- *Manual sobre la Administracion de los Bienes de Dios para Ninos.*  
International Catholic Stewardship Council  
(202) 289-1093.
- *El Significado Espiritual de la Administracion de Nuestro Tiempo, Talento y Tesoro Como Bienes de Dios.*  
International Catholic Stewardship Council  
(202) 289-1093.
- *Choices & Challenges: Stewardship Strategies for Youth.*  
Dan R. Dick  
Discipleship Resources Distribution Center.
- *52 Ways to Teach Stewardship.*  
N. Williamson, Rainbow Publications.
- *The Life of a Christian Steward: A Reflection on the Logic of Commitment.*  
International Catholic Stewardship Council.
- *Ora Siempre y No Te Desanimas - San Lucas 18:1 - Un Tesoro de Oraciones Privadas para el Administrador Cristiano de los Bienes de Dios.*  
International Catholic Stewardship Council.
- *Pray Always and Never Lose Heart - Luke 18:1 - A Treasury of Private Prayers for the Christian Steward.*  
International Catholic Stewardship Council.
- *Lesson Plans for Religious Education Programs and Schools.*  
Diocese of Covington, KY, 606-283-6258.
- *The ABC'S of Stewardship for Children and Youth.* Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, 405-721-5651.
- *Curriculum on Stewardship and Children's Stewardship.* Archdiocese of St. Louis 314-926-3525.
- *Sustaining and Strengthening Stewardship.*  
James Kelley, Liturgical Press.
- *Youth Stewardship Program.*  
Diocese of Toledo, 419-244-6711.
- *Youth Stewards in Formation.*  
Diocese of Wichita, 316-296-3000.
- *Sixty-Second Stewardship Sermons.*  
Charles Cloughen, Jr, Liturgical Press.
- *Steward Saints for Every Day/Santos Administradores de los Bienes de Dios para Todos los Dias.*  
International Catholic Stewardship Council.
- *Stewardship Programs for Children & Youth.*  
Rita McCarthy Swartz.  
Sheed and Ward Publications, 800-235-8722
- *Sharing Our Gift of the Heart - a Curriculum Guide for Religious Education.*  
Archdiocese of Louisville, 502-585-3291

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Stewardship Office - Archdiocese of Louisville, KY  
National Catholic Stewardship Council

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*God has foreseen our prayers from eternity and thus included them in his plan for the universe, to give us and others what he knew we would ask for. In fact, there is no higher use we can make of our liberty than freely to choose to pray.*



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# *Stewardship*

## *A Way of Life*

# *Stewardship of Prayer*


**Parish  
Address  
Phone  
Pastor**

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*“Whether or not our prayer is heard depends not on the number of words, but on the fervor of our souls.” St. John Chrysostom*

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# Stewardship of Prayer

The practice of stewardship, giving back a portion of the gifts God has given us, has the power to change how we understand our lives. Christian stewards recognize God as the origin of life, giver of freedom and the source of all we have and are. Christian stewards also know the power of prayer.

As Christians, we believe our time, which is the way we measure our lives, is a gift from God. And as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are expected to be good stewards. Commitment to a stewardship way of life means not only using our gifts - including our time - wisely, but also joyfully giving back to God in gratitude.

*“To those who seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, he has promised to give all else besides. Since everything indeed belongs to God, he who possesses God wants for nothing.”*

St. Cyprian



Check off or write down your prayer commitment and keep this portion as a reminder of your pledge. Through your prayer commitment, you become a **minister of prayer** in your parish.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday Mass
- \_\_\_\_\_ Daily Mass
- \_\_\_\_\_ Morning Prayer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Prayer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Praying the Scriptures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Novena
- \_\_\_\_\_ Daily Rosary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Visits to the Blessed Sacrament
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prayer Before Meals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prayer after Meals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Retreat, Day of Reflection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meditation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Way of the Cross
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reconciliation

Your Own Method of Prayer:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



*“You will receive all that you pray for, provided you have faith”.*

Matthew 21:22

In response to my baptismal call to continue the mission of Christ, and in gratitude for the gifts I have been given, I willing commit today to make prayer a serious part of my life. Therefore, for the coming year I will:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**M**ature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves. 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.

Stewardship: A Disciples Response, USCCB



**Parish**  
**Address**  
**Phone**  
**Pastor**

# Stewardship

## A Way of Life

# Stewardship of Time and Talent

*“Christ has no body now on earth but yours,  
no hands but yours, no feet but yours.”*

St. Theresa of Avila

# Stewardship of Time & Talent

In the Bishop's Pastoral on Stewardship they emphasize the Church as Servant model when they state that God's work on earth is ongoing and we are all collaborators in God's creation. Work is fundamental to our vocation on this earth. Being servants to others is of the very essence of being Christ-like. At the Last Supper when Jesus washed the disciples feet, he told them: "If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." **Jn 13:14-14.**

After prayerful reflection of the blessings God has bestowed upon you and your family, please indicate your willingness to make a one-year commitment to the following ministries. St. Paul challenges us that we must be "doers of the word and not hearers only". **James 1:22.**

## Education/Formation

- 01 Catechist
- 02 Catechist Aide
- 03 School Teacher Aide
- 04 General Assistance in RE program
- 05 General Assistance for the School
- 06 Adult Formation
- 07 Home-School Activities
- 08 Vacation Bible Program
- 09 Commission Member

## Parish Life

- 10 Welcoming Team
- 11 Woman's Club
- 12 Men's Club
- 13 Social Activities
- 14 Grief Support
- 15 Youth Ministry
- 16 Funeral Meals
- 17 Hospital Ministry
- 18 Sunday Nursery
- 19 Scouting
- 20 Commission Member

## Spirituality/Worship

- 21 Liturgy Committee
- 22 Choir
- 23 Retreat Committee
- 24 Art/Environment
- 25 Lector
- 26 Usher
- 27 Eucharistic Minister
- 28 RCIA
- 29 Marriage Preparation
- 30 Commission Member

## Social Justice

- 31 St. Vincent de Paul
- 32 Food Pantry
- 33 CRS Programs
- 34 Pro-Life Team
- 35 Blood Drive
- 36 Migrant Ministry
- 37 Prison Ministry
- 38 Health Ministry
- 39 Habitat
- 40 Commission Member

## Stewardship/Administration

- 41 Bulletin Assistance
- 42 Offertory Counters
- 43 Stewardship Committee
- 44 Facilities/Grounds Committee
- 45 Office Volunteer
- 46 Computer Volunteer
- 47 Festival Committee
- 48 Commission Member



*"Put your gifts at the service of one another."*  
Peter 4:10

Please fill out the form below indicating how you will share your gift of time and talent for your parish.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Use the ministry number to indicate your preference:**

I am interested in: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

I am continuing in: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

**H**e who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully. 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.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-8



# Stewardship

## A Way of Life

# Stewardship of Treasure

Parish  
Address  
Phone  
Pastor

*“Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord God has blessed you.”*

Deuteronomy 16:17

# Stewardship of Treasure

**Sacrificial giving** . . . is a gift of love; freely giving back to God the first portion of what God has given us.

To “sacrifice” means to “make sacred”. Through sacrificial giving, we “make sacred” the work of our daily lives. We offer God, up front, a gift of the fruits of our labor.

The “first fruits” described in the Bible put the needs of the church *first* rather than giving to God what is left over.

To “sacrifice” also means to give up something we truly value for the sake of something greater still.



**To become a sacrificial giver in a way that will best benefit your parish, consider gifts that are:**

- thoughtfully planned.
- based on a percentage of your income.
- the first funds set aside.
- a commitment - the same amount each week or month.
- regularly reviewed - and increased or decreased as resources change.

**How can sacrificial giving benefit you and your family?**

- greater peace and sense of purpose.
- less concern for material goods.
- fewer conflicts about money.
- strengthened trust in God’s love and care and many find they are better managers of their resources.

**Before you decide what to give...**

- meet with your family in prayer, asking for guidance.
- use the meeting as an opportunity to teach your children the importance of stewardship.
- reflect on the meaning of sacrifice. What is your family willing to give up in order to increase their weekly gift for the parish?
- use the chart below to evaluate your level of giving.

Weekly Income	Suggested Weekly Contribution			
	3%	5%	8%	10%
\$250	\$7.50	\$12.50	\$20.00	\$25.00
500	15.00	25.00	40.00	50.00
750	22.50	37.50	60.00	75.00
1,000	30.00	50.00	80.00	100.00
1,250	37.50	62.50	100.00	125.00
1,500	45.00	75.00	120.00	150.00
2,000	60.00	100.00	160.00	200.00



**“He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully.”**  
2Corinthians 9:6

In prayerful thanksgiving for many blessings bestowed and as a good steward of the gifts, I/we make this commitment to contribute to the support of the parish:

Weekly contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
Monthly Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ I/We are envelope users.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I/We wish to receive envelopes.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

