

Stewardship

“Joyfully Receiving and Sharing”

Stewardship Manual:

A Guide for Individuals and
Parishes Developing a
Stewardship Way of Life

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WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

- ❖ Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor. Gratitude for these gifts is expressed in prayer, worship, offering, and action by eagerly sharing these gifts out of love of God and one another (National Catholic Stewardship Council 1993). Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus; and where it has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed. Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the talent, treasure and time allotted to us.
- ❖ Stewardship is living out Christ's instruction to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).
- ❖ Stewardship is caring. Stewardship is responsible management of our God-given resources of talent, treasure and time. It enhances our relationship with God and one another.
- ❖ Stewardship builds happy, healthy families. Stewardship renews Christ's Church.
- ❖ Stewardship pleases God because the good steward is careful of creation, is respectful of justice and charity, and is prayerful at all times. "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more" (Luke 12:48).

Our offering of our ability, time and tithe/alms is one way of saying: "We belong to the Lord and to one another."

Stewardship is...

Hospitality

We place our life in God's loving hands and make Him our treasure.

Prayer

We adore Him as the giver of all good gifts. We thank God for the profound gift of the Eucharist.

Service

We unite our offering with the rest of our Parish Family so that together we might care for the needs of one another, especially the poor.

Formation

We profess that we belong to God, that all we possess is His and we wish to know Him better.

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10).

SPIRITUALITY OF STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is living out a commitment to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered. This conversion is the result of our total focus on God as the Creator and giver of all good gifts. Profound gratitude, justice and love become the fundamental motives for giving back to God.

Christian stewardship can be identified by several meaningful characteristics, according to Stewardship a national newsletter:

- ❖ Christian Stewardship provides a spirituality that all can take home from Church, exercise at work, and express through personal involvement in both the community and the Church.
- ❖ Christian Stewardship successfully bridges the material world around us and the world of the Spirit within us.
- ❖ Christian Stewardship gives joy! Those who voluntarily give their time and abilities for work in the parish will always experience joy if they give them for Christ. They are not, however, guaranteed freedom from frustration.
- ❖ Christian Stewardship is not job-oriented or project-minded. It is a way of life.
- ❖ Christian Stewardship takes a positive view of money. It sees money not only as a medium of exchange but also as a symbol of the person who has it. We reveal something of who we are by the way we acquire it, use it, and share it.
- ❖ Christian Stewardship helps us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. Our gift to God should be from our *first* fruits, not from what may be left over.
- ❖ Christian Stewardship teaches Christians to be concerned about where and how to share their parish financial surplus. Stewardship is not giving just to meet the needs of the budget. We have a need to give.
- ❖ Jesus Christ is God's greatest gift to us. Stewardship tells us to share a portion of our time, ability, and tithe/alms so that the gift, Jesus Christ, may be given to those who do not know Him.

No doubt, the spiritual benefits outweigh all else. Properly presented, teaching about stewardship will deepen our faith and ultimately change our lives.

The following theological points serve as a basis for a Christian way of life expressed through stewardship:

- ❖ Stewardship expresses a basic attitude of gratitude to God for God's many gifts to us and the trust we have in God as the ultimate source of our security.
- ❖ As stewards we use the gifts God has given us to further His creative and redemptive purposes; as stewards we use God's gifts for God's purposes.
- ❖ God's creative and redemptive purposes are most fully revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of God's son, Jesus. The basic pattern of Jesus' work is found in this Paschal mystery. It is a pattern of giving life for the sake of others, and in the giving, finding life more fully realized for ourselves and for those to whom we give.
- ❖ The Church is a gathering of disciples who nurture and encourage one another in discipleship.
- ❖ The practice of discipleship in and through the Church is one of the primary ways we are called to follow Jesus. It is the whole Church, the Body of Christ, which is responsible for carrying on the work of Christ in the world today.
- ❖ Our sharing in the Paschal mystery of Jesus brings us to understand sacrifice as a sign of gratitude, praise, and trust in God. Sacrifice means giving from our substance so our giving changes us.

An example: The bread and wine we offer at the Eucharist represents the whole of our lives. When they are transformed, the whole of our lives are transformed. So, too, the symbolic offering of a significant proportion of our talent, treasure, and time is a sign of our giving our whole lives to God, and our whole lives are transformed in the action.

St. Paul reminds us that we are but one body with many parts. For the body to function, those parts are *interdependent*. Christ expects us to work with Him to make the mission of the Church real, vibrant and alive. Stewardship requires participation in the mission of the Church. The challenge of stewardship is to direct our doing. Each of us is here for a purpose. Each of us is here to make a difference. According to the parables of stewardship, God charges us with the building of the Kingdom.

- ❖ When stewardship is introduced in a parish, those who respond generously to the message are often parishioners who have experienced a spiritual renewal through Renew, Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, Christ Renews His Parish, the Charismatic Renewal or similar small faith-sharing groups. Many distinguished leaders in the Church believe that establishing and nurturing small faith-sharing groups is critical for the future vitality and spiritual growth of Catholics. Experience has demonstrated that parishioners who are members of such groups are often leaders as well as generous contributors of their time, talent, and treasure. These parishioners can be key leaders and examples in spreading the stewardship message to all in the parish.

**A SUMMARY OF THE 1992 U.S. BISHOPS’
PASTORAL LETTER, *STEWARDSHIP:*
*A DISCIPLE’S RESPONSE***

To be a Christian steward

What identifies a Steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly is one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means more. As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.

Disciples as stewards

Let us begin with what it means to be a disciple—a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. As members of the Church, Jesus calls us to be disciples. This has astonishing implications:

- ❖ Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost.
- ❖ Christian disciples experience conversion, life-shaping changes of mind and heart and commit themselves to the Lord.
- ❖ Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live.
- ❖ Jesus' disciples living as stewards recognize God as the origin of life, giver of freedom, and source of all things. We are grateful for the gifts we have received and are eager to use them to show our love for God and for one another. We look to the life and teaching of Jesus for guidance in living as Christian stewards.

Stewards of creation

The Bible contains a profound message about the stewardship of material creation: God created the world but entrusts it to human beings. Caring for and cultivating the world involves the following:

- ❖ Joyful appreciation for the God-given beauty and wonder of nature.
- ❖ Protection and preservation of the environment, which would be the stewardship of ecological concern.
- ❖ Respect for human life; shielding life from threat and assault, doing everything that can be done to enhance this gift and make life flourish.
- ❖ Development of this world through noble human effort, physical labor, the trades and professions, the arts and sciences. We call such effort work.

- ❖ Work is a fulfilling human vocation. The Second Vatican Council points out that, through work, we build up not only our world but also the kingdom of God, already present among us. Work is a partnership with God; our share in a divine-human collaboration. It occupies a central place in our lives as Christian stewards.

Stewards of vocation

Jesus calls us as his disciples to a new way of life, the Christian way of life, of which stewardship is a part.

Jesus does not call us as nameless people in a faceless crowd. He calls us individually, by name.

Each one of us, clergy, religious, lay person; married, single; adult, child receives a personal call and a personal vocation. God intends each one of us to play a unique role in carrying out the divine plan.

The challenge, then, is to discover and understand our role, our vocation, and to respond generously to this call from God. Answering the call of Jesus Christ the Christian vocation entails the practice of stewardship. In addition, Christ calls each of us to be stewards of our personal vocations, which we receive from God.

Stewards of the church

Stewards of God's gifts are not passive beneficiaries. We cooperate with God in our own redemption and in the redemption of others. We are also 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 is proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying is our task. It is the personal responsibility of each one of us as stewards of the Church.

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

- ❖ Parents, who nurture their children in the ways of the faith.
- ❖ Parishioners, who work in concrete ways to make their parishes true communities of faith and vibrant sources of service to the larger community.
- ❖ All Catholics, who give generous support, time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church.

Obstacles to Stewardship

People who want to live as Christian disciples and Christian stewards face serious obstacles. In the United States and other nations, a dominant secular culture often contradicts religious convictions about the meaning of life. This culture frequently encourages us to focus on our pleasures and ourselves. At times, we can find it far too easy to ignore spiritual realities and to deny religion a role in shaping human and social values.

Catholics have entered into the mainstream of American society and experienced its advantages; many of us also have been adversely influenced by this secular culture. We know what it is to struggle against selfishness and greed, and we realize that it is harder for many today to accept

the challenge of being a Christian steward. It is essential, therefore, that we make a special effort to understand the true meaning of stewardship and live accordingly.

A Steward's Way

The life of a Christian steward models the life of Jesus. It is challenging and even difficult, in many respects, yet intense joy comes to those who take the risk to live as Christian stewards.

Women and men who seek to live as stewards learn that "all things work for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28).

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her ministry in a spirit of fidelity and service. She responded generously to the call. We must ask ourselves:

Do we also wish to be disciples of Jesus Christ and Christian stewards of our world and our Church?

Central to our human and Christian vocations, as well as to the unique vocation each of us receives from God, is that we be good stewards of the gifts we possess. God gives us this divinehuman workshop, this world and Church of ours. The Spirit shows us the way. Stewardship is part of that journey.

Thoughts on the Pastoral Letter

The U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, has situated stewardship within the context of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. "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" (p.13). Stewards as Disciples see themselves as caretakers of God's many gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another. Being a disciple and practicing stewardship are aspects of the same reality.

The U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter powerfully supports our efforts to promote stewardship.

The Pastoral:

1. Introduces a theology of stewardship for Catholics in America.
2. Emphasizes that stewardship is integral, not optional.
3. Links stewardship with our discipleship.

Some parishes use the Bishops' Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* as a study and prayer activity. Parishioners spend a specified amount of time between meetings reading and reflecting on one chapter of the pastoral letter and then gather in small groups to respond to the questions at the end of each chapter.

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www.catholicstewardship.org*

THE WORDS OF STEWARDSHIP

Over the course of the stewardship journey, a variety of ways to remember the practice of stewardship have emerged. Most memorable is time, talent, and treasure. Another way is time, ability, and tithe/alms. More recent is hospitality, prayer, formation, and service.

It is not impossible to get lost in vocabulary and forget that:

Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.

For those with questions on which short hand words may be used, a brief summary is in order.

Time Talent and Treasure ~ The most familiar way to reference stewardship.

Time—each one of us has a finite amount of time in a day and a lifetime. How we use that time is a reflection of our values. From sporting events to religious activities to leisure time; how we manage that time for the Glory of God is our mission.

Talent—The word talent is truly undervalued. It is not uncommon for people to say “I do not have any talents.” Talent can be narrowly defined as a person that can sing, play an instrument or create art. That narrow definition robs us of so much goodness. From creating websites to fixing lawn mower engines, to caring for those hurting, talent is broadly defined and beautiful. A stewardship parish should consider a system to help people uncover hidden talents and find meaning ways to use them.

Treasure—another word that can be misunderstood. Treasure again can be considered a term only for the “wealthy.” Scriptures tell us through the story of the [widow's offering](#) (Mark 12:42-44) that all of us have financial resources and we are all called to be generous like our loving Father.

Time Ability and Tithe/Alms ~ Another way to reference stewardship

Time—see above.

Ability—A keen variation of the word talent. Perhaps a word with less baggage as it may be easier to realize abilities versus talents. Abilities can take the shape of work related skills, hobbies, and other interests. Just as before, it is important that people within a parish have a meaningful place to use abilities.

Tithe/Alms—These two words are very biblical and refer to what we are called to give and how much. Our financial resources are all of the worldly goods we hold in some monetary value. Cash, cars, real estate, securities or life insurance are examples. A tithe is Old Testament for “a tenth” or 10% ([Gen 28:22](#)). And we are instructed by scripture to give a 10% of our gross income to the Lord.

Hospitality Prayer Formation and Service ~ A fresh framework for stewardship

Hospitality—What we do to help our fellow Christians feel welcome and wanted makes a significant difference. Not obvious but desperately important, the best way to serve parishioners is in the pews. [Hospitality](#) is the key to love one another.

Prayer—our connection to Jesus is our [prayer life](#). Communal and private prayer is how we learn what our loving God has in store for us.

Formation—is not an intellectual exercise alone. No, it is a process of learning, accepting, and adding to our abundant life in Christ.

Service—is not the finale but rather the beginning to a stewardship way of life. Hospitality Prayer and Formation are the preparatory steps to ready each of us [to serve others](#), to live out the new evangelization.

MANUAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of this manual is to help each parish go step by step through a parish renewal of time, talent, and treasure. Each parish is different in their understanding and practice of stewardship. Therefore, this manual is organized for the novice and experienced parish family.

Planning and conducting the annual parish stewardship renewal is very important if stewardship is to come alive and remain alive in your parish and become a “*way of life*” for parishioners in general. A renewal cannot be accomplished effectively in one or two weekends. It takes several weeks of planning, communication, education, homilies and lay witness presentations to spread the message and its importance.

While there are many ways to conduct a renewal, the processes in the following pages have been gleaned and designed so each parish will receive results and bring its family closer to Christ. Once a parish has begun a stewardship renewal process, it should be conducted annually.

Likewise, it is very important to keep stewardship information and the invitation to participate in front of the parishioners on a year-around basis. This effort should be supported by the pastor and conducted under the efforts of those responsible for stewardship in the parish, preferably a parish stewardship council.

During the renewal process, the schedule of parish activities should be such that the parishioners can focus specifically on their personal and spiritual decisions regarding the use and volunteering of their time, ability and tithe/alms for the parish community, diocesan and universal Church.

The following guidelines reflect the suggested sequencing of activities for conducting the parish stewardship renewal.

STEWARDSHIP MINISTERS STEP 1A

Taken from: *Stewardship Manual: A Guide for Individuals and Parishes Developing a Stewardship Way of Life.*
Office of Stewardship, Diocese of Dodge City

We suggest the parish form a Stewardship Council with the general responsibility for stewardship awareness and the annual stewardship renewal. In Medium-sized to large parishes, this will be its own council. In small parishes, a stewardship committee may be part of the Pastoral Council. We suggest that the Stewardship Council not be under the auspices of the Finance Council because that tends to put too much emphasis on the treasure instead of equal emphasis on time, talent and treasure.

The Council could consist of five or more members, less with a smaller parish. Members could be appointed to serve three years.

*Stewardship Council Members, much like the Pastoral Council, could be selected to serve for a specific (for example 3-year) term, with the option of renewing for a second term. To assure having new members, who will bring new ideas, ask your original committee members to commit for 1, 2, or 3 years for their first term. Always select both a chairperson and vice-chairperson to insure the presence of qualified, experienced leadership.

MEMBERS OF A STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

In recruiting parishioners to serve on a Stewardship Council, consider the following qualifications or criteria:

1. Spiritually Motivated - It is important that members be people of prayer and be concerned about parishioners' relationship with God—not merely about the needs of the church. If their primary concern is raising more money for the church or getting more volunteers for the church, then they would not be appropriate to be on the stewardship council. Look also for people who are Eucharistic, who have a deep relationship with Jesus, who are grateful for that relationship and who act on that gratitude. Such persons spend time in studying Scripture and may be people who go to Mass more often than only Sunday.
2. Exemplify and Live Out Stewardship - Look for members who are already personally committed to stewardship as a way of life. They may not call it stewardship but they live it. Those committed to stewardship volunteer their time in various parish and community activities. The pastor will certainly know or can find out about people's volunteer activities at the parish and may even know about a person's involvement in the community. Those committed to stewardship will also be committed, regular and generous givers to the offertory. Again, the pastor will know or can find out about people's giving levels.
3. Envision Where Stewardship Can Take the Parish - It is important that all members of a stewardship committee have the same understanding of stewardship in a general way before they join the committee and, more specifically, after they join the committee and are further formed. Some may see stewardship only as tithing your money; others may see stewardship as recycling paper products; others may see it as volunteering your time to church organizations only. Use the definition of stewardship to help consolidate the diverse viewpoints of the committee members.

It is also important that the members be able to develop a vision of where the parish can be 5, 10 or 15 years from now.

4. Have Personal Qualities that Contribute to Success - Look for people who are accountable (they do what they say they are going to do when they say they are going to do it), persistent, optimistic, organized, patient, creative and willing to share their faith with others.

The Definition of Stewardship:

Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace (1 Peter 4:10).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Taken from: *Stewardship Manual: A Guide for Individuals and
Parishes Developing a Stewardship Way of Life.*
Office of Stewardship, Diocese of Dodge City

1. **Carry out the Stewardship Renewal of time, talent, and treasure on an annual basis.** These efforts usually run two to five weekends every year. On the first weekend of a two weekend effort and on each of the first two weekends of a three weekend effort the pastor would deliver a homily on stewardship and a lay person or couple would give a personal testimony on how stewardship is lived out in their life or lives. The last weekend would always be a Commitment Sunday, where parishioners would bring their commitment cards of time, talent, and treasure to Mass and place them in the basket. More foundational catechetical efforts may spread over several weekends.
2. **Recruit individuals and/or couples to share their personal testimonies about stewardship with the parishioners.** The lay witness testimony is probably the most educational, motivational and important part of the stewardship effort. The lay witness talk makes stewardship very real and practical for the people in the pews. The lay witnesses should preferably be individuals from the parish who believe and practice the principals of stewardship in their own lives—those who give of their time, talent and treasure.

~Parishes that have been doing stewardship efforts for several years might want to consider the use of a parish video instead of a single lay witness.

3. **Prepare a time and talent list or catalog of parish activities and organizations, and keep the list or catalog current.** A time and talent list or catalog gives parishioners an opportunity to become aware of the number and type of volunteer ministries available in the parish. Some parishes may have ten volunteer opportunities; others may have fifty. They may range from altar server to youth group leader. Some parishes develop an actual pamphlet or catalog that provides a detailed description of each group or activity. Others may use a simple listing with little details. While the primary emphasis is on current groups or activities, items that you would like to start, such as welcoming committee or a homeless shelter crew, can be added. Many parishes have a stewardship ministry fair to promote the many parish and community groups that provide volunteer opportunities to parishioners (see pages 20-21 of the Renewal Resources Manual for more information)
4. **Ensure that those who volunteer are contacted and asked to become involved.** It is essential that the stewardship council works with the appropriate parish commissions and groups to ensure that those who commit of their time and talent are *personally invited* to become involved. This activity of the council is probably its most challenging task. It takes planning before the two or three weekend effort and follow-up after Commitment Sunday to make sure people end up actually volunteering for a committee. If people are not contacted and instead just have their names put in a book or in a computer, then they will not get involved in future stewardship efforts. They will also start to believe that stewardship is only about money.

~Some parishes bring the ministry leaders together for an appreciation event combined with an opportunity to present the stewardship message and the importance of the follow up procedures. When ministry leaders understand the importance of their position and the follow-up and training of new ministers, they are more

likely to respond to the stewardship effort in a positive and timely manner. One pastor in our diocese insisted that the training sessions for new ministers be scheduled and “on the books” prior to the stewardship Commitment weekend. Therefore ministry leaders had to respond in a timely manner.

5. **Evaluate the stewardship effort and awareness efforts on an annual basis.** All elements of the stewardship effort in the parish need to be evaluated. Review comments, criticisms and questions received with commitment cards. Evaluate the written materials used throughout the year—letters, brochures, bulletin announcements, newsletter articles, etc. discuss the verbal presentations—are the homilies and lay witness testimonies getting the stewardship message across? What more could we be doing to get stewardship information out to people? What kind of results are we getting from the stewardship effort? Always look to the spiritual life of the parish when evaluating stewardship. Do these efforts bring people closer to God? What symptoms of spiritual change are evident in the parish?
6. **Publicize stewardship thoughts throughout the year in the parish bulletin on a weekly basis.** It is very easy to put a few lines about stewardship in the bulletin and website each week. With little effort, it can be one way to keep the stewardship message in front of people on a regular basis. These reflections can include Scripture quotes; quotes from books, magazines and newspapers; or ideas that you jot down while going about stewardship work in your parish.
7. **Make appropriate stewardship literature available in the parish booklet racks.** Including stewardship brochures or pamphlets in the booklet rack provides people the opportunity to read and learn more about stewardship apart from any brochures that might be used for the annual effort. You may want to rotate three or four brochures throughout the year. There are several companies that produce good stewardship materials from which to choose.
8. **Publicize stewardship reflections in the parish newsletter on a quarterly basis.** Stewardship reflections could include profiles of individuals or couples in the parish who live lives committed to stewardship, questions and answers on stewardship, thoughts on stewardship, commentaries on stewardship, ministry spotlights, etc. You may also want to consider producing a special newsletter each year that focuses only on stewardship.

~Communicating stewardship through a well designed parish website is highly recommended. A website is a 24 hour bulletin board that can reach many families very effectively
9. **Incorporate comments about stewardship in the Sunday homilies.** The committee could suggest that the priest(s) incorporate comments about stewardship in the Sunday homilies on a monthly basis. In looking at the three-year cycles of gospel readings, there are opportunities to convey a stewardship-related message almost every month. In some instances, the whole homily could focus on stewardship. In others, a few sentences can be incorporated into the context of the entire homily.
10. **Encourage support for stewardship through the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.** The committee can develop Prayers of the Faithful with a stewardship message that can be prayed at regular intervals throughout the year. Typically one stewardship prayer among all the other Prayers of the Faithful would be sufficient.
11. **Develop a welcoming program for new parishioners.** Work with the appropriate parish commissions to develop programs for welcoming parishioners, whether it is by personal

visits, in group meetings, or through the mail. Be sure to include a discussion of and materials about stewardship in the presentation and/or packet.

12. **Develop a commissioning service for those who volunteer in the parish ministries.** Work with the Liturgy Commission to develop and plan a commissioning service to be held at all Masses on Commissioning Sunday. Be sure to check with all ministry leaders to ensure that the new volunteers have been contacted and formed in their individual ministries. This is best done after the homily as part of the Prayers of the Faithful.
13. **Show appreciation for those who are involved in parish volunteer ministry.** Gratitude is an important element of stewardship. Find a way to say “thank-you” to those people who volunteer in the parish. This could involve something as simple as an appreciation reception after Mass or as elaborate as a catered dinner.
14. **Develop a program of stewardship education to be incorporated into the faith formation program for children, youth and adults.** Work closely with the Education Commission and Director of Faith Formation to ensure that the stewardship message becomes a part of the faith formation process. In many cases, incorporating stewardship language and terminology into the existing curriculum is all that is needed to promote stewardship among children and youth. The Archdiocese of Louisville has two stewardship curriculum books—Good Things Are For Sharing, for elementary grades, and From the Heart, for the High School grades. Preparation for Confirmation should have a stewardship component. Work with your RCIA director to ensure the catechumens and candidates have a good understanding of stewardship. The adults of the parish might appreciate a stewardship presentation by a motivational speaker.
15. **Add a children’s component to your parish stewardship effort.** In addition to including stewardship education in the faith formation curriculum, include children in your 2 or 5 weekend stewardship effort. Consider forming a sub-committee to address the entire field of children’s stewardship.
16. **Provide opportunities for gifts discernment.** Parishioners should be given an opportunity to help discover their own spiritual gifts and then use those gifts in service to others. Parish stewardship efforts can include programs and workshops on the discernment of gifts to better help parishioners find the ministry best suited for them.
17. **Provide in-service and continuing education for your stewardship council.** The chairperson of the Stewardship Council should make sure each member receives the most current awareness information sent by the Diocesan Office of Stewardship. Councils should plan to attend diocesan-wide programs such as Stewardship Day, regional workshops, and the National Catholic Stewardship Council’s annual conference.
18. **Develop an annual plan.** Each committee should develop a detailed yearly plan that includes the organization and preparation for the 2 or 5 weekend effort as well as monthly awareness activities.
19. **Expand your focus beyond the parish.** Consider spreading the message of stewardship beyond the parish. One way to do that is to encourage your diocesan newspaper to print stewardship profiles or stewardship questions and answers. You may even want to supply the paper with your own profiles and questions and answers.

PROCESS OUTLINE STEP 1B

Following is an overview of the annual diocesan/parish stewardship renewal process. For a more detailed and date/deadline driven description of the renewal process, please refer to the specific sample schedule and guidelines prepared by the diocese for each year's renewal.

Prepare

Stewardship Ministers:

- ❖ Plans and prepares for the annual renewal process.
- ❖ Conducts an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the parish stewardship process.
- ❖ Reviews and/or designs time, talent and treasure commitment forms.
- ❖ Submits draft forms to diocese for set-up, printing and return distribution to the parish.
- ❖ Considers the possibility of planning, scheduling and conducting a stewardship ministry fair.
- ❖ Recruits and trains volunteers to give witness presentations.
- ❖ Prepares stewardship articles and bulletin announcements for publication in parish newsletters and/or bulletins during the renewal process.
- ❖ Considers preparation and publication of parish ministry booklet or flyer identifying all parish ministries, the purpose of each and providing the names and phone numbers of those in charge of each ministry.
- ❖ Prepares mailings to be sent to parishioners during the annual renewal process.
- ❖ Works with parish elementary school religion teachers, directors of religious education and/or parish school of religion teachers to assure that stewardship education will be included in the religious education curriculums during the annual renewal process.
- ❖ Encourage family members to use their gifts and skills in parish ministry.

Renew

- ❖ During the renewal period of two to five weeks leading up to Stewardship Commitment Weekend, stewardship homilies and witness presentations should be scheduled for presentation each weekend or a combination thereof.
- ❖ Newsletter articles and bulletin announcements should be published.
- ❖ Conduct stewardship ministry fair.
- ❖ Commitment forms, the parish ministry booklet or flyer and the pastor's related letter should be mailed or distributed in some manner to all parishioners.
- ❖ Encourage completion and return of commitment forms on stewardship weekend.
- ❖ Facilitate a process to receive the commitment forms.

Follow-up

- ❖ Complete the follow-up process as promptly as possible.
- ❖ Compile lists of time and talent volunteers to be distributed to parish committees, groups, ministries, etc.
- ❖ Promptly thank volunteers in some personal and appropriate manner.
- ❖ Provide treasure commitment forms to parish finance committee for recording and monitoring purposes (attend carefully to confidentiality).
- ❖ Facilitate a process or procedure to correspond to those who have not responded to the renewal process, again inviting them to participate in the process.

- ❖ Evaluate the quantitative and qualitative results of the process.
- ❖ Assist and work with the parish pastoral (parish) council in determining if the parish leadership and ministry structure is adequate and conducive in facilitating the stewardship way of life in the parish.

COMMUNICATING STEWARDSHIP STEP 2

An effective stewardship process must include planning and implementing communication about stewardship. Ideally, there will be elements of communication that occur in the context of Mass and those that occur outside that context.

Printed and Audio Visual Communications

- ❖ ***Direct communication to parishioners.*** The stewardship committee should evaluate and decide on which types of stewardship material should be sent to all parishioners, and which should be targeted primarily to active parishioners.
- ❖ ***Parish Newsletter and/or Web Site.*** Are essential elements of communication to parishioners. A newsletter or web site allows parishioners to find out about all the daily and weekly activities and ministries going on in the parish. A professional website is a 24 hour location for family members to receive up to date information of parish activities and information. With growing numbers of web users, a good website is cost effective and necessary.
- ❖ ***Commitment Cards and Envelopes.*** An important element of the stewardship effort is the commitment form or card. Parishioners are generally asked to complete a Personal Commitment of Time/ Talent form at the conclusion of a Time/ Talent Stewardship education process and to complete a Financial Commitment or Intention Card at the conclusion of the Financial Stewardship educational process. The Commitment forms or cards can be placed in a collection basket, mailed to the parish or brought forward and placed in a special container in the context of Sunday Mass.
- ❖ ***Expressions of appreciation.*** Volunteers should be thanked, directly by the pastor and staff and by mention in the parish bulletin for contributions of time and talent. It's important to also thank any young people, by name, for any specific services they were able to offer. Financial contributions should also be acknowledged by an individual thank you. Such a thank you can include some mention of the ministries that were made possible by the donation.
- ❖ ***Educational resources.*** The parish should make available to staff, school, and parishioners a variety of resources about stewardship including books, videos and audio tapes.
- ❖ ***Print resources.*** A variety of brochures and pamphlets are available from commercial distributors. Some sample resources are contained in this workbook. See the Appendix for more information on resources available for purchase.
- ❖ ***Bulletin.*** The bulletin should be used to highlight ministries, to thank volunteers, and to report in an ongoing way the good news about the generosity of parishioners in their offerings of time, talent and treasure.
- ❖ ***News releases.*** Parish staff and ministry coordinators should utilize the news release to inform the public of programs and achievements in the parish. Local papers will often print such news releases verbatim. If the release is about an upcoming event, make sure to be explicit about whether the program is ecumenical (open to all who are interested). Newspaper articles about parish events engender pride in the parish.
- ❖ ***Parish brochures.*** Well-designed parish brochures which contain directions, hours of Masses and other useful information can be left at local hotels and bed and breakfasts.

- ❖ ***A Parish Ministry Directory*** is an informative guide to the organization and activities of the parish for all parishioners. It communicates what is going on in the parish to new and present members. It can reduce calls to the church office for names and telephone numbers of contact person for parish groups. See sample of a Parish Ministry Directory. The directory can be printed on 8.5 x 11 sheets or in a booklet form. The following are suggested items for inclusion in the Directory.
 - Parish Mission Statement
 - Parish Goals
 - Description of ministries/groups
 - Skills/training needed
 - Time commitment

- ❖ ***Kiosks***. Located in a central meeting place in the church or parish, a kiosk contains informational posters and pamphlets on various organizations and services within the parish. Kiosks can include pictures of the parish staff, Parish Pastoral Council leaders, new families, etc.

- ❖ ***Video/Audio***. Either an audio or videotape can be made of parish activities and given to new families to welcome them to the parish.

Communications during Mass

- ❖ ***Lay witnesses***. There is tremendous value in having lay people share the story of their commitment of time, talent and treasure and comment on how such sharing has affected their lives.

- ❖ ***General Intercessions***. Including a stewardship intention in the recitation of prayers of petition throughout the year serves as a continuing reminder of the importance of accepting stewardship as a way of life.

- ❖ ***Communication from the pulpit***. One of the most effective methods of educating parishioners about stewardship is for the pastor and other priests to communicate their own commitment to stewardship. The pastor's commitment is by far the most powerful force in motivating parishioners to become more dedicated stewards.

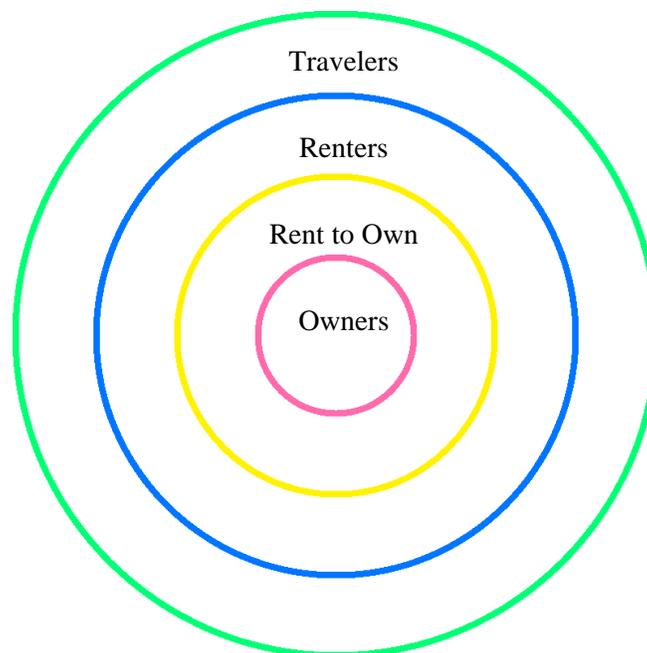
- ❖ ***Pulpit Announcement***. Typically, a pulpit announcement is used to announce special events or needs in the parish. In some cases the pastor may make a personal appeal for participation in a special activity.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS **STEP 3**

Parish stewardship efforts should be based on strategic considerations of the people served. Many of our parishioners vary in their personal commitment to parish life. Stewardship lived, in the life of a parish, reaches out to those who may not appreciate the value of a life based on Formation, Hospitality, Prayer, and Service. It is valuable to take deliberate steps to identify our parishioners to make all our efforts effective. The following model lists examples with descriptions identifying target groups:

- A. “Owners or core parishioners”– People who are actively involved in ministry giving of time, talent, and treasure. These people know their faith and are bedrock to parish ministry.
- B. “Rent to Own”– People who attend Mass regularly and may be involved in ministry at a basic level. Engaged when invited or see a need they believe in. Believe in the church but need catechesis.
- C. “Renters”– People who attend Mass with some regularity, not involved beyond attending Mass. Easily pulled to other denominations. May have children in the parish school or religious education program. Can be engaged when invited. Need catechesis.
- D. “Travelers”– People who attend Mass once or twice per year. May attend Sunday worship in other denominations but come back to the Catholic church for significant events such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Not very engaged.

This list can easily be modified to individual parishes, however, the concept remains the same. Each parish needs to engage specific groups *where they are at* when information is disseminated, and stewardship efforts are promoted. One size does not fit all. To grow ministries, the way each parish extends an invitation to specific groups needs to be customized to engage new and active members. Trust in God’s help to reach out to all.



Model showing how a demographic survey can look.

Steps for demographic considerations using this model:

- 1) This is not a judgment call on members' spirituality, only a practical view of where parishioners are at.
- 2) This means of organizing the parish is to be kept confidential. The purpose is to reach out and evangelize those who do not respond to ordinary parish activities.
- 3) Identify or categorize the entire parish. If the size of parish makes this process unrealistic, categorize a percentage of the parish to understand the whole.
- 4) When communicating parish activities, it is necessary to consider each group individually. The parish bulletin is perfect for *Owners, and the Rent to Own* groups. However, this same vehicle will be lost on *Renters and Travelers*. Personalized mailings, phone calls, and quarterly newsletters would be much more effective for *Renters and Travelers*. Keep all records as up to date as possible to effectively communicate to these two groups. NEVER remove any parishioner from your parish data base based on attendance or lack thereof.
- 5) Another economical means of communication, often overlooked, is a professional and current web site. Many parishioners are using the internet as a primary source for seeking information and communication. If you do not have a well maintained web site, begin discerning if one is necessary for the size of the parish.
- 6) Begin selecting new ministers from other circles. The process will come with a reasonable amount of failure for numerous reasons. However, *Renters and Travelers* will not normally volunteer for ministry. Others may only volunteer due to the need of the parish rather than the person's need to give.
- 7) Personal invitation is mandatory when engaging people in all groups. Personal invitation breeds hospitality and provides a personal touch to parishioners in outer groups.
- 8) Gratitude should be displayed to all who accept the invitation to ministry in any parish. It is poor hospitality to accept a person's service without thanking them for it.

Following these steps will engage each parishioner right where they are and bring them into the life of the parish and into the life of Christ. It is our obligation to reach and lovingly accept each person's need to give back to their parish.

PARISH EVALUATION STEP 4

Introduction

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

Stewardship — A Disciple’s Response
The U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

In order to facilitate the Christian vocation of responding to the “Call to Discipleship” and to nurture stewardship as a lifelong “Way of Life:”

- 1) Individuals should develop and exhibit certain characteristics depicting their love of and example of following Christ;
- 2) Parishes should acknowledge and exhibit stewardship as the “key” to an alive, vibrant parish where dedicated and committed parishioners, giving freely of their time, talent, and treasure, without expectation of return, create a dynamic atmosphere that invites and encourage others to become involved and sets a positive example for the entire parish community. Parishes should develop, foster, nurture and maintain a parish stewardship process, exhibiting certain characteristics, providing parishioners, young and old, the opportunities to learn about, experience and live out the lifelong “Way of Life,” serving the parish community, the diocesan and wider universal Church;
- 3) Parishioners should sense and feel that their parish is a place of *Formation, Hospitality, Prayer, and Service* within which they experience the invitation and opportunity to serve and to be served.

The attached forms have been designed to assist pastors and parish leadership in reviewing and evaluating their parish stewardship process and the effectiveness thereof in facilitating the “Call to Discipleship” whereby parishioners are drawn to and converted to that lifelong “*stewardship way of life.*”

Parish Evaluation Simplified

Parish life is a continuous evolution. While the Truth in Eucharist will never change, the methods in which Stewards share that Truth with our fellow parishioners must evolve. There are many activities, while noble indeed, but they may not be reaching our families. There are activities that can engage our family we may not be aware of that are needed. Therefore, a parish evaluation is necessary to meet this continuous evolution. If we do not provide the services and programs that are wanted, our family will seek them out elsewhere. An evaluation of the parish will give all parishioners voice in the parish and will draw out many gifts of time and talent that may otherwise go unnoticed.

The evaluation should be a function of the Pastor and Pastoral Council with results distributed to subsidiary leadership. The results will produce a variety of responses that are best considered by the Primary leadership of the parish. The results should be utilized to fulfill the overall vision of Pastor and Pastoral Council.

The following single question is a simple yet effective means of drawing out parishioners' ideals and visions for parish life. Not every suggestion can be used, however, the overall response can give parish leadership a good idea of the temperament of the parish and begin addressing the desires of those engaged in parish life. In addition, responses can help engage those whom we strive to bring Truth.

How could *Parish Name* better serve your social, spiritual and parish family needs?

It is suggested this open ended question be delivered at Mass on simple card stock and returned either at Mass or parish office. Preparing the congregation for the evaluation can be done through the bulletin and pulpit announcements several weeks before responses are requested. This will give all parishioners time to consider the question. Administering the evaluation at mass aids in collecting responses in a timely fashion.

Results

Once collected, like responses should be tallied. The Pastor and Parish Council can then identify programs and activities most desired by the parish family. Likewise, issues on the minds of the family can be identified and addressed. Also, the relative urgency can be identified and can give leadership focus on what needs immediate action and what can be addressed or incorporated at a later date.

Once the compilation of responses is complete, a report should be distributed throughout the parish via bulletin, website, and newsletter. This will allow all parishioners the opportunity to see what direction the parish is taking and get an overall picture of the temperament of its members.

Pastors need to organize a meeting with parish leadership from all councils to identify what councils and committees will respond to the desired ministries. Remember, if we do not do anything with the responses, the evaluation is meaningless. Action is desired to meet the changing needs of our family. Again, it must be noted that not every objective needs to be met at once. Three to five should be selected to insure that those ministries and needs are not only completed, but completed well. Last, parishioners may indicate that some parish ministries and activities may no longer be wanted or needed. While difficult, it may be time to let them go.

Formal evaluations, such as questionnaires, can also be used to draw specific conclusions of parish activities. To get a broad sense of how the parish is doing, the open ended question is preferred.

Parishes should plan an evaluation every five years. This will ensure that ministries keep up with the changing needs of the parish family.

Evaluation Statistics			
	2015	2016	2017
Number of Families in Parish			
Time & Talent Commitments Returned <i>English</i>			
Time & Talent Commitments Returned <i>Spanish</i>			
Time and Talent Participation Rate			
Treasure Commitments Returned <i>English</i>			
Treasure Commitments Returned <i>Spanish</i>			
Treasure Participation Rate			
New Commitments Returned <i>English</i>			
New Commitments Returned <i>Spanish</i>			
New Commitment Participation Rate			
Total Participation Rate			

HOSPITALITY STEP 5

Welcoming begins even before a new person steps into the church. The Stewardship Team and Hospitality Committee (if one is organized) should work in tandem. Hospitality and welcoming are an absolute key element in the success of a parish family. We cannot minister to or with our family if they are not in the pews. Your parish should communicate its mission, its welcome and the times for liturgical celebrations to the wider community. This could include an attractive and useful web site, a brochure about your parish which is available to local realtors, and hotels, and an attractive sign on which the Mass times are large enough to be seen from the road.

It is important that each person who attends an event or liturgical celebration at your parish receive a welcome. The usher/greeter at Mass is a key person and possibly the only person from the parish who will speak with the new person. Greeters should warmly welcome parishioners to Mass and all parish activities. The parish should communicate to all parishioners their responsibility to be welcoming people – even in the parking lot.

One of the most effective ways to foster a sense of community and welcoming is for the parish to provide a coffee hour after the Sunday morning Masses and possibly an ice cream social after the Saturday evening Mass. Ideally this would be every weekend and would be provided free (or at least one weekend per month). For welcoming newly registered members, consider implementing some or all of these suggestions:

Welcoming newly registered members.

Consider implementing some or all of these suggestions:

1. Prepare a “Welcome Packet” to be given to all new parishioners. Items that could be included in this packet are:
 - ❖ Welcome letter from pastor
 - ❖ Brochure about the church, staff, activities and a facilities floor plan
 - ❖ Parish bulletin with schedule of Masses
 - ❖ Directory of Parish Ministries
 - ❖ A map of the local area
 - ❖ School and religious education information, Stewardship information including commitment forms for time/talent and finances
 - ❖ Booklets on prayer, parish patron, and parish mission statement
2. When a newcomer wishes to register at the parish, consider a *personal* interview using one of the following methods.
 - ❖ The pastoral staff schedules regular times at the parish office for a personal interview of newcomers
 - ❖ The parish secretary schedules an appointment for the newcomer with a member of the pastoral staff for a personal interview
 - ❖ The parish Welcoming Committee or Parish Stewardship Committee calls the newcomer and schedules an appointment at the newcomer’s home.

3. The registration interview should be more than a mere collection of data. The time spent in friendly conversation about people's background, occupation, interest, etc. often makes a lasting positive impression. It is important to convey to new people *we care about you* and *we ask each parishioner to make a commitment to the parish*. Remember to update parish census information after the interview.
4. Contact should be made by telephone or by a personal visit to those parishioners who do not return a registration or time/talent commitment form. Any commitment form that is returned should be promptly reviewed and the new person's name given to the appropriate contact person.
5. A periodic *newcomers*' social or coffee hour will enable new parishioners to meet other members of the parish family, both new and old. Newcomers should be personally invited. All members of the parish staff and Parish Pastoral Council should be present to personally greet the people, give a tour of the facilities and answer questions.

It is may be possible to obtain from local City Hall, realtors or other commercial suppliers, the names and addresses of new residents. Whatever people's beliefs, the Catholic community should make an effort to welcome them in a warm and friendly manner.

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL ANNUAL PLAN

We encourage Stewardship Councils to make a detailed yearly plan that includes the organization and preparation for the 2-5 weekend renewal effort as well as monthly awareness activities. There are many ways to do this and someone in your group who is good with computers can be a big help. A *sample* follows below.

Use Stewardship Thoughts in Bulletin on Weekly basis - supplied by [Office of Development Stewardship in e-Newsletter](#).

Use Stewardship Prayer of the Faithful on bi-monthly basis.

Pastor to incorporate Stewardship in homilies as appropriate to readings (monthly).

MONTH	DAY	ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
January	6	Evaluation of Renewal Weekend	David/Trish
	13	Article in Parish Newsletter	Judy
	20	Follow-up: confirm that volunteers contacted	Phyllis/Becky
	27	Stewardship Council Meeting 7:30	Emily & Fr. B
February	4	Order Stewardship materials for bookrack	Marcelle
	6	Commissioning Service for Volunteers	Liturgy Committee
	13	Question and Answer in Bulletin	Bernadette
	24	Stewardship Council Meeting 7:30	Emily & Fr. B
March	6	Welcome Breakfast for Newcomers	Welcoming/Stewardship Committee
	13	Article in Parish Newsletter	Judy
	24	Stew Council Meeting 7:30	Emily & Fr. B
	24	Plan Stewardship Appreciation Dinner	Stewardship Council
April	7	Mail invitations to Stew Dinner	Susan
	21	Stew Committee Meeting 7:30	Emily
	29	Stewardship Appreciation Dinner 7:00	Stewardship Council
May	15	Stewardship Question & Answer in Bulletin	Bernadette
	24	Article in Newsletter	Judy
	25	Evaluation of entire Stew. Renewal	Carol
June	5	Welcome Breakfast for Newcomers	Welcoming/Stewardship
	9-30	Revise Time and Talent Booklet	Susan/Greg/Trish
		Take a Vacation!	
July	12	Plan Gift Discernment Workshop	KerryAnn/Joe/Fr. Bob
		Get some Rest!	
August	14-15	Begin planning Renewal Weekend	Stewardship Council
	20	Article in Newsletter	Judy
	21	Stew. literature in bookrack	Marcelle
	26-28	Gift Discernment Workshop	Guest Presenters/Committee
September	1	Welcome Breakfast for Newcomers	Welcoming/Stewardship
	5	Stewardship Bulletin Board Up	Trisha/Becky

	10-11	Plan Ministry Fair	Greg/Trish
	12-15	Announce Children's essay contest	Phyllis
	22	Stew. Council Meeting - 7:30	Emily/Fr. S
	25	Children's Stew in F. F. Classes	Carol
October	7	Renewal materials to printer	Carol
	18	Article in Newsletter Renewal Weekend	Judy
	17-18	Recruit Lay Witness Presenters	Bob /Phyllis
	29	Lay Witness Training session	Trisha/Becky
November		"2-5 renewal weekends" - All Masses	Fr. & Council
	1-4	Prepare mailing for Renewal	Cassie
	6	Article in Bulletin	Fr. B
	7-8	Hang Stewardship Banners	Bob
	15	Mailing of Brochure/Commitment Card	Mailing Committee
	20	Commitment Sunday	Fr. B
December	5	Send TY cards	David/Susan
	12	TY in Bulletin	Bernadette

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL RENEWAL SCHEDULE

To use this calendar, first establish the date of Stewardship Commitment Sunday then fill in the dates working backward from there. On this calendar, the “X” represents Commitment Sunday. The designation “X-10” in the calendar signifies “Commitment Sunday minus 10 weeks.”
 Note: The sample below is for a 3 weekend renewal.

X-10	Week of:	Pastor and stewardship committee begin recruiting lay witnesses or couples to speak at all Masses on Weekend 1 and Weekend 2. If the parish is not able to recruit volunteers from the parish, see if another parish nearby or diocese can help find lay witnesses. <i>Generally speaking, it is much more effective to use individuals from your own parish.</i>
X-9	Week of:	Mailings to parishioners are planned and scheduled beginning this week. Brochures are either designed by the stewardship committee or ordered from a company that publishes stewardship resources.
X-8	Week of:	Envelopes and letterhead for cover letters are printed in house or ordered from a local printer.
X-7	Week of:	If parish has a newsletter, article about stewardship is written and included in the next issue.
X-6	Week of:	Special activities, such as making posters or banners, are planned and assigned. Lists of parish’s time and talent opportunities are developed.
X-5	Week of:	First bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X-4	Week of:	Lay witnesses meet with pastor to coordinate their remarks. Second bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X-3	Week of:	Mailing #1 is sent to all parishioners following this weekend. Third bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X-2	Week of:	WEEKEND #1. Pastor’s homily #1. First lay witness presentation. Mailing #2 is sent to all parishioners after Weekend #1. The fourth bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X-1	Week of:	WEEKEND #2. Pastor’s homily #2. Second lay witness presentation. Mailing #3 is made to all parishioners after Weekend #2. The fifth bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin, announcing that commitment cards will be mailed to homes during the week and they are to be returned to church the following weekend.
X	Week of:	WEEKEND #3 – COMMITMENT SUNDAY. Pastor’s homily #3. Cards are presented at Mass. Sixth bulletin announcement is placed in church bulletin.
X+2	Week of:	During the week a thank-you mailing is made to those parishioners who have responded with time, talent and treasure commitment cards.

FOLLOW - UP STEP 6

The Renewal Follow-up Process and the timeliness thereof is essential in the overall success and growth of stewardship at the parish level. Parishioners need and should expect to receive prompt and timely acknowledgement and a thank you for their volunteer commitment of time and talent as well as for their gift of treasure. They will be expecting the opportunity to serve and to be served.

Although very important, the follow-up, the thank you's and the use of those volunteering to give of their time and talent are often the **most neglected aspects of the stewardship process** at the parish level. The following renewal follow-up process and related time schedule is suggested to assist in the effectiveness of the parish stewardship process.

Beginning on Commitment Weekend and continuing as time, talent and treasure commitment forms are received, the stewardship committee should have a plan in place to review, compile and record the volunteer and gift commitments of parishioners.

◆ *Time and Talent Commitment Follow-Up*

The time and talent volunteer lists should be compiled from the time and talent commitment forms and distributed to the appropriate committees, groups, ministries, etc.

The volunteer lists of those who have committed should be distributed as quickly as possible to the appropriate parish committees, groups, or ministries. These various groups, etc., are to see that the individuals' gifts of time and talents are put to use at the service of others. Accepting and receiving the stewardship commitment forms implies accepting the responsibility to help match the parishioners with the parish organizations and services that need and can use their time and talent.

Volunteers should then be provided with an appropriate thank you. This may be in the form of a letter, a card, a phone call or other communication that would be appropriate and effective. The most important part is the "thank you". Individual and personal forms of "thank you" are generally more effective than a general thank you from the pulpit or in the parish bulletin. A combination of the personal and general form of thank you would be the most desirable.

A special effort should be made to review the names of volunteers to make sure they are being utilized if at all possible. In large parishes, it may not always be possible to immediately use some of the volunteers. If this is the case, the volunteers should be advised of the number of volunteers and ask for their patience as they wait to be contacted.

◆ *Treasure Commitment Follow-up*

The confidential treasure commitment forms should be turned over to the Pastor, bookkeeper or Finance Council for statistical and tabulation purposes, and then used to record the commitment in the parishioner contribution data file for monitoring purposes.

A summary of the financial commitments should be prepared for the Stewardship and Finance Councils for the purpose of monitoring the level and trend of financial commitments being made

to the parish. The Finance Council needs this confidential information for planning and budgeting. The Stewardship ministers would only need the overall totals for statistical and trend purposes.

It is extremely important for a thank you to be sent to those who completed treasure commitment forms. Refer to Appendix A for suggested thank you formats.

◆ ***Non-Respondents and New Parishioners***

The stewardship process never ends. It should be ongoing throughout each year. It is necessary and important to follow up on those who have not responded as well as those who join the parish during the year. This is part of the overall parish stewardship educational process. Follow-up with non-respondents and educating new parishioners on the stewardship way of life can and will bring additional and new sources of energy and leadership to parish life. The welcoming of new parishioners should include an introduction to the parish and diocesan stewardship process. This part of the process can be a function of a welcoming committee if one exists.

◆ ***Parish Stewardship and Related Structure Evaluation***

The effectiveness of the stewardship process or renewal cannot be judged solely on the basis of financial results and volunteer commitments. Stewardship is spiritually based; the results will be in the hearts of those who are responding to the call. While we cannot always measure or see evidence in the quantitative results, it may be happening in qualitative terms, e.g. more enthusiasm, increased joy, deeper individual involvement, commitment and attitude which, over time, provides increased quantitative results.

Commitments of time, talent and treasure, on the other hand, can be measured. Ordinary offertory giving should be analyzed by looking at comparable periods in previous years, particularly that of the most recent year. Review of the numbers should include factoring in or out special fund raising that was or may be necessary. Reviewing the results of a renewal should also compare the number of volunteers participating from year to year. Keeping annual statistics on the time, talent and treasure commitments can be very valuable when needed for trend analysis and projection purposes.

It is important for the stewardship ministers, the finance committee and the parish pastoral council to annually meet with the pastor and associates to formally evaluate the results of each stewardship renewal process. Statistics and trends should be reviewed. Parish structure should also be reviewed to determine if it is meeting the needs of the parish as well as providing parishioners the opportunity to serve and be served.

Conducting and completion of the follow-up and evaluation process within two to three months of Commitment Sunday is imperative. The promptness in which volunteers are contacted, thanked and utilized will directly correspond to the results and success of the parish stewardship process.

Finally, it is important to publish the quantitative results of the renewal process so the entire parish family can see the product of this effort.

STEWARDSHIP FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN **STEP 7**

A Component of the Parish Stewardship Renewal Effort

Parishes who have completed a successful first-time stewardship effort, and are committed to promoting on-going stewardship awareness, should consider the value of introducing stewardship as a way of life to the children and youth of the parish. They have been eager and interested observers of the adult effort over the past year, and many of your young people already practice stewardship as part of their family's commitment. A focus on Children's Stewardship should be done in addition to the adult stewardship effort with youth lay witnesses either on a separate weekend from the adult lay witnesses, or as part of a Children's Liturgy of the Word.

Suggestions for implementing Children's Stewardship in your parish

- ❖ Support--It is vital to enlist the support of the pastor, pastoral staff, Pastoral Council, Faith Formation Director, and (in parishes with a school) the school principal.
- ❖ Education--Include a 3-5 week mini-lesson on stewardship in your faith formation classes.
- ❖ Feature some of these children's activities such as posters, banners, essays, etc. during the weeks preceding Commitment Sunday.
- ❖ Compile a children's time and talent list. Be sure to include adult ministries that would welcome participation on the part of children. (i.e. housecleaning, lawn and garden care, visiting the elderly, etc.) Make that list available to the children.
- ❖ Communication--Introduce the idea of children's stewardship early through bulletin announcements, parish newsletter articles, and bulletin board materials. Include a note on children's stewardship in the letter from the pastor.
- ❖ Children's Commitment Card--Provide commitment cards for the children to complete their pledge of time talent, and treasure as their gift of thanksgiving for all of God's blessings in their lives.
- ❖ Children's Envelopes--Consider implementing use of a children's envelope that includes a space for sharing their weekly time and talent as well as treasure.
- ❖ Lay Witness--Ask a young person who is involved in ministry in your parish (altar server, children's lector, children's usher, etc.) to share with the other children what stewardship means to him/her.
- ❖ Follow-up--See to it that each child who completes a commitment card receives a "thank you" and an invitation to participate in the ministry they indicated. Contact should also be made with parents regarding their role in the child's commitment.
- ❖ On-going awareness--Include a children's corner in your weekly bulletin, highlighting some of the time and talent items mentioned by them in their weekly envelopes. Include children's stewardship notes in parish newsletters, prayers of the faithful, faith formation classes and newsletters, and (when appropriate) in children's Liturgy of the Word or homilies for children.
- ❖ Children's Stewardship Ministers- Consider forming a sub-group of your Parish Stewardship Ministers to address the current and on-going needs of children's stewardship.

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

The Diocesan Development Office supports the diocesan stewardship process at the parish and diocesan level. In this role, the Development Office assists parishes with the annual stewardship renewal process, providing educational information, training and related materials to parishes. The Diocesan Development Office is available and willing to work directly with parishes as they seek help, assistance, education and training relative to the stewardship concept, the process, parish planning and working with parish stewardship committees. To seek assistance and help please contact:

Margaret Hampton, Coordinator of Development
Diocese of Boise
1501 S. Federal Way, Suite 400
Boise, ID 83705
Office phone: 208-342-1311
Direct phone: 208-350-7539
Email address: mhampton@rcdb.org

Educational Assistance

Along with educational materials, the Development Office distributes an e-newsletter every other month with articles and ideas for promoting stewardship as a way of life in parishes. To sign up for this resource, go to <https://www.catholicidaho.org/Stewardship>.

Written/Video/Audio Assistance

There are various sources of printed stewardship materials available from the diocese, the International Catholic Stewardship Council and other publishers and dioceses. All of these materials are informative, educational and helpful.