



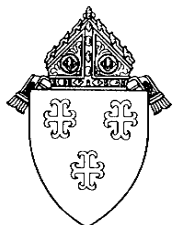
TIME · TALENT · TREASURE

A

GUIDE

FOR INTRODUCING

STEWARDSHIP TO CHILDREN



PREPARED BY:

**THE OFFICE OF STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT
DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND**

Lifelong Habits Take Shape if Stewardship is Instilled at a Young Age

Without a doubt, it is very important to enlist the support of the pastor, Parish Council, Religious Education Director, and the school principal when implementing children's stewardship in your parish community. When the spirit of stewardship begins to take hold within your parish, be sure to incorporate ministries and activities for the younger generation. Communicate and introduce children's stewardship by utilizing bulletin announcements, parish newsletter articles, and bulletin board postings. If the Stewardship Committee decides to explore more opportunities for this age group, the following ideas and suggestions may be helpful.

1. Integrate Stewardship into the Religious Education Curriculum

Review your existing curriculum and begin to familiarize and educate students in all grade levels about the concept of Christian stewardship, helping them discover their individual gifts and talents. One way for children to recognize their particular skills and abilities is to have students complete a Talent Resume (*please refer to Appendix A*). Once they become aware of their individual gifts and talents, they will begin to understand that as God's stewards, we are responsible for the use of these gifts entrusted to us. In addition, they will soon begin to understand that time is also a gift from God.

During religious education class, give students instructions on how to fill out a Commitment Card that will indicate how they plan to share a portion of their time and talent (*please refer to Appendix B*). As an assessment activity, each student should be asked to agree upon a commitment that they intend to accomplish within one week. This commitment to share their God-given gifts could simply be to help someone at home, at their parish, or in school. Children may even choose to commit to something that can be accomplished as a whole class. As the week concludes, children can take a few moments to reflect on whether their individual commitment was accomplished. Once completed, the commitment cards may be placed in a basket or be posted on a bulletin board in the parish center.

Help children become cheerful givers by identifying where stewardship is already apparent within their parish, neighborhood, and within their current life experiences. The Director of Religious Education should communicate with teachers to coincide lesson plans with the recommitment of time and talent during the parish's annual Stewardship Weekend (*please refer to Appendix F*). Through exercises such as "Stewardship Popcorn," children and youth learn to practice life-long stewardship through the grateful sharing of their time, talent, and treasure. The purpose of this exercise is to show the power of God's love in our lives. God the Father cares for us through others. The sharing of their time and talent is based on love. The source of this love is the warmth of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit lights up the loving and the caring characteristics in each of us (*please refer to Appendix D*).

2. Ask Children and Youth, "What does stewardship mean to me?"

Consider holding a poster or banner contest where children and youth within the parish can illustrate their own personal interpretation of what stewardship means to them. Posters and/or banners can then be displayed around the church, parish center, or school during the annual Stewardship Weekend.

3. Establish a Children's Stewardship Committee

A Stewardship Sub-Committee comprised of youth within the parish can be formed to focus on the on-going needs of children's stewardship. A member of the parish Stewardship Committee may serve as an advisor to this group.

4. Encourage Parents to Talk About Stewardship With Their Children

Through the use of letters (*please refer to Appendix E*), convey to parents the importance of discussing stewardship with their children. This letter will serve to make parents aware of your stewardship awareness efforts and in doing so, will ask for their assistance in carrying out this mission of faith. It is very important that parents, who play an important role in the faith formation of their children, understand the true meaning of stewardship. One way to convey this message to their children is to encourage them to begin and end each day with a prayer. This is a wonderful way for children to spend their gift of time in gratitude to God for all His many blessings. Consider having your parish implement the use of a children's envelope that includes not only a space to indicate their treasure, but also a space to include how they will spend their weekly time and talent helping others.

5. Develop a Children's Time and Talent List

When developing a parish "Opportunities to Serve Booklet," be sure to include a list of time and talent opportunities for children, and make this list available to young parishioners of the parish. This list can also be a part of a "New Member" packet. Many adult ministries can be altered to include children or may spin off to create a children's branch (*please refer to Appendix C*).



6. Reserve a Children's Section in the Parish Bulletin

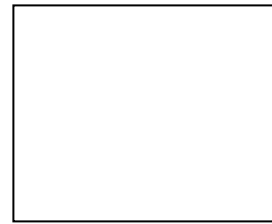
Reserve a section for children's stewardship within your parish's weekly bulletin. Children can be encouraged to write this section highlighting some of the time and talent activities described in their weekly treasure envelopes. It is recommended that children's stewardship notes of interest be published in parish newsletters as well as mentioned during the Prayers of the Faithful and homilies at the children's liturgy.

TALENT RESUME

My Name _____

My School _____

My Age _____



My Photo

1.) I think I am good at _____

2.) Others tell me I am good at _____

3.) I am creative when it comes to _____

4.) The best feature of my personality is _____

5.) I think I work best with (age group) _____

6.) Some jobs I have successfully completed are _____

APPENDIX B – Commitment Card

Commitment Card



Name: _____

I promise to share my time and talents.

How: _____

When: _____

APPENDIX C – Opportunities to Serve for Children and Youth

- ✓ Catholic Youth Organization activities and charities
- ✓ Communal reciting of rosary
- ✓ Stations of the Cross
- ✓ Prayer evenings
- ✓ Youth Choir
- ✓ Organize youth Mass
- ✓ Tutorial services
- ✓ Shovel snow/rake leaves/mow lawns
- ✓ Run errands for the homebound
- ✓ Bring pets to visit the elderly
- ✓ Extra chores around the house
- ✓ Help keep their school clean
- ✓ Plan and perform plays in church
- ✓ Organize a walk-a-thon or read-a-thon
- ✓ Toy drives
- ✓ Clothing drives
- ✓ Youth Stewardship Committee
- ✓ Youth Lay Witness - to speak at youth Masses

APPENDIX D – “Stewardship Popcorn” Exercise

A group of family and friends are gathered around a table. A popcorn popper, salt, butter, and a container for the popped corn are placed on a table. Give to each person one kernel of unpopped popcorn to hold. Remind them that it is hard, small, insignificant and unappetizing by itself. Discuss what is within the shell (the white, fluffy, popped corn) and how to get the insides out (heat). Then gather the kernels, enough necessary to make a full batch of popcorn. Prepare to drop the kernels into the popper.

Before proceeding, explain the symbols:

The CORN = US

We are potentially beautiful, with just the right talents, when we “go-it” with God. We are hard and unappetizing without Him.

The POPPER = CHURCH

Into which Jesus invites us all

The HEAT = GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Who brings out of us the person we should be and the talents we need. Together, with other kernels, we become God’s sweet smelling community.

The SALT and BUTTER or SPREAD = SACRAMENTS

The Sacraments make us more flavorful and appealing, more Christ-like. They give us the strength to continue sharing ourselves with others.

Before starting the popper, offer a prayer and read a short Bible passage, such as Matthew 25: 14-30 (Parable of the talents). Briefly explain the meaning of the passage and some personal needs prayers.

Then let the popping begin. Notice how some of the kernels, like people, respond more quickly and that, when they are filled with the heat (the Holy Spirit), all dance around, even flowing the popper (Church). When the corn is popped, eat it.

The lesson is not over. Some of the kernels do not pop. They were in the same heat for the same length of time. That is like the people who come to Church but don’t let it make any difference in their everyday lives or those who don’t come to Church at all.

End with a prayer and song.

APPENDIX E – Sample Letter to Parents

Date

Dear Parents:

Jesus has called each of us, including our children, into a life of stewardship. We must provide them with opportunities to know the joy of accepting this call. When we do this while they are young, it becomes the way they choose to live their lives.

All that we have and all that we are comes as a gift from our very generous God. Stewardship teaches us to be grateful for the gifts entrusted to us. We each have a responsibility to make a plan for how we will return a portion of our gifts of time, talent, and treasure in service to others. We have all been blessed in certain ways.

As parents, it is important that you help your children recognize and nurture the talents received. We each make a difference when we share our gifts. An important way you impact the lives of your children is to model a life of stewardship by giving of your time, talents, and treasure for the good of others and by helping your children find opportunities to do the same. Finally, we ask that you support our school and parish as we strive to educate your children about the true meaning of Christian stewardship.

Sincerely,

Pastor / Principal / Director of Religious Education
Saint Alfred Parish

APPENDIX F – Sample Letter to Religious Education Teachers

Date

Dear Grade Three Teachers:

As you may have noticed, your schedule will soon include a lesson on stewardship, a concept our parish has been promoting during recent years. The lesson is timed to cover stewardship during the next few weeks when our entire parish is being asked to reflect on our Christian call to share our time, talent, and treasure.

After reviewing the entire schedule for all grades, we decided that this level (grade 3) is a good place to begin helping children understand and use the vocabulary of stewardship. Our focus will also help them find ways to discover that stewardship is already blossoming in their lives. We have included this lesson in the grade three program for the last few years and it seems to fit in well.

This year, our parish has designated Sunday, November 4th, as Stewardship Sunday. Families will be asked to complete annual commitment cards for the sharing of treasure. Therefore, our stewardship lessons should overlap this time period. Furthermore, one of the lessons provided includes having the children make their own “Commitment Card” depicting how they will share their time, talent, and treasure. Children’s cards should be collected in class and handed in at the end of class on October 28th, which will enable their commitments to be included as an offering on Stewardship Sunday. Enclosed please find stewardship commitment cards for the children to use.

Thank you for your interest and cooperation in making stewardship a family effort! Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Director of Religious Education
Saint Alfred Parish

Enclosure

**If you would like to learn more about stewardship and children,
please contact:**

**Office of Stewardship & Development
Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence
One Cathedral Square
Providence, RI 02908
Telephone (401) 277-2121
Fax (401) 277-2120
www.providencediocese.org**