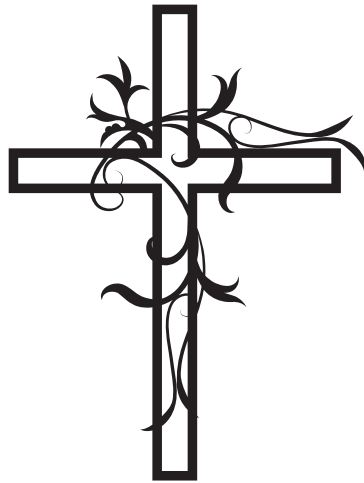


ARCHDIOCESE OF MOBILE

RESOURCE HANDBOOK FOR
STEWARDSHIP



PREPARED FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MOBILE
BY
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2012



This Resource Handbook contains materials arranged into the five categories listed below.

- I. The Initial Stewardship Initiative Materials
- II. Annual Stewardship Renewal Materials
- III. Lay Witness Materials
- IV. Sample Follow-up Materials for Parishioners and Respondents
- V. Stewardship Awareness Materials for Ongoing Stewardship

In the event you would like to make additional copies or electronically copy a section or multiple sections, this Handbook can be found online by logging in to the Archdiocese of Mobile's website with your parish name and password. For instance, if you wish to use the "Intentions" for Prayer of the Faithful you need only to highlight the material you desire, select copy, and paste the material into the document you are using.



STEWARDSHIP HANDBOOK

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TIMETABLE FOR CONDUCTING INITIAL STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

To use this calendar, establish the date of *Stewardship Commitment Sunday* then fill in the dates working backwards from this date. Please note “X” represents Commitment Sunday and the designation “X-10” signifies “Commitment Sunday minus 10 weeks.

X-10	Week of:	Begin recruiting individuals or couples as Lay Witnesses. This is done by the Pastor and Stewardship Committee. Lay Witness talks should be done at all Masses on Weekends 1 and 2. If volunteers cannot be recruited from the parish, the Archdiocese can help to find lay witnesses, it is more effective to use people from your own parish.
X-9	Week of:	Plan and schedule mailings to parishioners. Brochures can either be designed by the Stewardship Committee or ordered from a company that publishes stewardship materials. (See pages 65-67 for publishers.)
X-8	Week of:	Order envelopes and letterhead for cover letters from a local printer.
X-7	Week of:	Write an article about stewardship to be included in the next issue of your parish newsletter, if your parish has one.
X-6	Week of:	Plan special activities including creation of posters and banners and assign tasks. Develop a list of time and talent opportunities for your parish.
X-5	Week of:	First bulletin announcement . Order labels for three parish mailings.
X-4	Week of:	Lay witnesses meet with the Pastor to coordinate their remarks. Second bulletin announcement .
X-3	Week of:	Mailing #1 is put together and mailed to all parishioners immediately following this weekend. Third bulletin announcement .
X-2	Week of:	WEEKEND #1. Pastor’s homily #1. First lay witness presentation . Mailing #2 is sent to all parishioners immediately after Weekend #1. Fourth bulletin announcement .
X-1	Week of:	WEEKEND #2. Pastor’s homily #2. Second lay witness presentation . Mailing #3 is made to all parishioners after Weekend #2. Fifth bulletin announcement , announcing Commitment Cards will be mailed to all homes during the week and that these need to be completed and returned to church the following weekend.
X	Week of:	WEEKEND #3 – COMMITMENT SUNDAY. Pastor’s homily #3. Commitment Cards are presented at Mass. Sixth bulletin announcement .
X+2	Week of:	During the week a thank-you note or letter is sent to each parishioner who completed and returned the Time, Talent, and Treasure Commitment Cards.



(Includes Brochure)

(Date)

Title, Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner,

Spiritual growth and renewal are critical to our individual spiritual development and vital to the community life of our parish. Beginning this year we are seeking to embody the principles of stewardship and to actively promote stewardship in each parish of our Archdiocese. In becoming good stewards, we are thanking God for His many blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent, and treasure He has given to us.

During the next few weeks, you will be hearing about stewardship and what it means to be a good steward in terms of your own spiritual lives. I invite you to reflect on the gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure that God has given to you and how you use these gifts each day.

Time. How much time is set aside each day in prayer to visit with God and to spend time alone with Him? Is time spent in volunteer activities for parish and community?

Talent. What special talents has God given to you? Each of us has received special gifts from God, and God wishes us to use these to love Him and our neighbors. When we use the talents God gave us, we have an opportunity to help build His kingdom here on earth.

Treasure. What percentage of your yearly income is given to support your parish, Archdiocese, community, and other good works? If God were to call you home today would you be happy with your commitment?

At each Mass this weekend you will be hearing from (name/names of lay witnesses) who will share with all of us their personal stewardship experiences.

I invite you and your family to pray about stewardship and your relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ during the next several weeks. The enclosed brochure on stewardship discusses the real meaning of stewardship, and I ask you please to read it prayerfully.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor's Signature

(Pastor's Name)

Enclosure



(Includes Brochure)

(Date)

Title, Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner,

In last week's letter, I invited you to reflect on the many blessings God has given to you and to renew your relationship with Him. I asked you to think about the gifts of time, talent, and treasure given to you by God and how you might become a better steward of these gifts.

- **Time**—Our most precious commodity. The demands of work, school, community, parish, and family can be overwhelming, but time spent visiting with God in prayer is vital to our spiritual development. God gave us this wonderful gift of time on earth. In spending time with God we have the opportunity to rethink our priorities and examine whether we are returning a portion of our life here on earth to God.
- **Talent**—God in all of His wonder and glory has given each of us talents that we are meant to use as part of His divine plan. From heart surgeons to social workers to artists to construction workers, God gave each of us special talents to share with our neighbors. Our parish needs us to use our talents so that God's love and His Word can be shared. I sincerely hope you will share your talents with our parish.
- **Treasure**—Your gift of treasure allows our parish to provide religious, educational, and social ministries. Our weekly Offertory collection is the primary source of our parish's financial support. To be a good steward of treasure means committing a regular portion of your income to support our church and to do good deeds.

At this weekend's Masses you will listen to (name/names of lay witnesses) who will be sharing their personal experiences on stewardship. Next weekend is Commitment Sunday. You will be asked to renew your pledge to share a portion of the gifts God has given to you; time, talent, and treasure. You also will be asked to place your commitment cards in the offertory collection (or place it on the altar.)

It will be a joyous day of renewal for all of us as we recommit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts God has given to us. The enclosed brochure discusses the relationship between stewardship and our Christian life, and I hope you will take the time to read it prayerfully.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor's Signature

(Pastor's Name)

Enclosure



(Includes Commitment Cards)

(Date)

Title, Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner,

For the past several weeks, we have been prayerfully thinking about being good stewards of the gifts God entrusted to us while we are here on this earth. Now, I am asking each of us to acknowledge our commitment of *TIME*, *TALENT*, and *TREASURE* in a more formal way by:

1. Reading and signing the enclosed *Covenant for Stewardship*.
2. Reviewing the enclosed List of Stewardship Opportunities of Time and Talent and commit yourself to those that best fit with your talents. You can write them in (or place a ✓ by them) on the Time and Talent card. If you already commit your Time and Talent, then please list your current parish involvement.
3. Completing the Stewardship of Treasure Card included in the brochure. Consider a percentage of your annual income as your level of giving. You could give five percent of your income to the Parish and give another five percent to good works in the Archdiocese and your community. This commitment between you and God and your parish is a confidential matter.
4. Using the enclosed envelope to return both your Time and Talent commitment card and Treasure commitment card and bring these with you to Mass this weekend.

Please be generous with your time, talent, and treasure commitments. For your spiritual growth and for the parish's spiritual growth, it is important that we all embrace stewardship and commit a portion of our gifts to help others and to spread the word of God. We need your commitment to continue building our community of faith.

Please know that you and your loved ones are in my daily prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor's Signature

(Pastor's Name)

Enclosures



STEWARDSHIP INTENTIONS FOR PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

*The Prayer of the Faithful reminds us of our faith and our values.
The following intentions may be used as written or adapted to fit
the special blessings and needs of your parish.*

Oh, God, our loving Creator and Giver of all good gifts, bless our parish, strengthen our faith, and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship so we may give generously of our time, talent, and treasure to spread your word here in our church and throughout the world, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, God, Creator of the universe, we thank you for the gifts of time, talent, and treasure you have bestowed upon each of us. We thank you by being good stewards and sharing a portion of these gifts to support the good work of our Parish and to help others. By being good stewards of your gifts may we deepen our love for You, we pray to the Lord.

Dear God, all that we are, all that we have, and all that we will become, is a gift from you. May Christians everywhere recognize the need to respond with gratitude and generosity to the many gifts God have given to us, we pray to the Lord.

God created the world and everything in it. As your stewards, dear God, may we work toward a deeper appreciation of all creation, greater respect for all human life, preservation of the environment, and greater love in this world, we pray to the Lord.

God calls each of us—clergy, religious, layperson, married, single, adult, and child—to play a unique role in carrying out His divine plan. In answering that call, may all Christians everywhere become good stewards of their God-given vocations, we pray to the Lord.

For all Catholics, especially those who generously share their time, talent, and treasure to strengthen parish and Archdiocesan ministries and God's universal Church, we pray to the Lord.

Many caring stewards here in our parish give generously of their time, talent, and treasure in response to God's gifts. With gratitude for their stewardship, we pray to the Lord.

Dear God, please open our hearts and our minds to your call that we be good stewards of the gifts you have given us, we pray to the Lord.

Through our prayers, may the Holy Spirit enlighten our hearts and souls so we will know that God desires us to share the gifts He entrusted to us while here on earth, we pray to the Lord.

May we see your face dear Christ in our brothers and sisters and be moved to share what we have with them, we pray to the Lord.

Dear God, by becoming better stewards of the gifts You have given us, may we help to build Your Kingdom here on earth, we pray to the Lord.

SUGGESTED BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS
DURING THE STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

- *First Bulletin Announcement*
Our Parish will begin (renew) its Stewardship Initiative on (date). Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Stewardship allows us to thank God for all the blessings He has given to us by returning to Him a portion of our time, talent and treasure. Stewardship will transform the spiritual lives of each of us and our parish as a whole.
- *Second Bulletin Announcement*
Stewardship is based on our need to return, out of gratitude, a portion of the gifts God has entrusted to us so that we can share God's word here on earth. It is based on the fact that all we have and all that we are comes from God and we can thank Him for these blessings by investing a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has allotted to us. Soon we will begin (renew) our Parish Stewardship Initiative. Please be generous in giving of yourself.
- *Third Bulletin Announcement*
Christian stewardship provides a spirituality that you can take home from church, exercise at work, and express through personal involvement in your parish and community. Please pray that our Stewardship Initiative, which begins next weekend, will enlighten our entire parish. At all Masses next weekend, we will be hearing from parishioners (names) who will share how stewardship is affecting their lives.
- *Fourth Bulletin Announcement*
Our Stewardship Initiative begins this weekend. At all Masses, our priests and select parishioners (names) will be speaking about stewardship. Next weekend you will hear from (name) parishioners. Please continue to think prayerfully about your personal commitment of time, talent and treasure to our Church and community.
- *Fifth Bulletin Announcement*
We continue our Stewardship Initiative. Stewardship can change the lives of both givers and receivers. At all Masses this weekend, you will hear more about stewardship from our priests and parishioners (name) who will be sharing their personal experiences. You will receive a commitment card in the mail later this week asking you to be a good steward by committing a portion of your time, talent, and treasure to share with your church and those in need.
- *Sixth Bulletin Announcement*
This is Stewardship Commitment Sunday. Please return your time, talent, and treasure cards at Mass today. If you did not bring them today, please bring them next week or mail them to the church.



Pastors and Priests are encouraged to use any of the following homilies or material found elsewhere in this Handbook or to develop original homilies.

Priest Homily (Example #1)

In The First Letter of St. Peter, we are reminded, “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” Throughout Holy Scripture there are constant reminders that we are called to be stewards of all of God’s gifts....Our time, our talents, our financial resources, our communities, the earth we live on with its natural resources, and our relationships with family and others. We must recognize that everything belongs to God, and we are stewards who are asked to use these gifts in loving service to one another. Simply put, stewardship is about how we use the gifts God gave us while we are here on this earth.

Today, we are beginning our stewardship initiative here in our parish. It is a life-changing event that will transform the lives of each of us and our parish.

At the end of our three-week stewardship initiative, each of us will be asked to commit a portion of our time, talent, and treasure to our parish life. We will ask you to make this commitment in writing for each of these important elements of stewardship. We will ask you to return your commitment cards on Commitment Sunday.

In the meanwhile, you will hear from (or have heard from) some of our parishioners about how stewardship has transformed their lives. This week, I am happy to announce that you will hear from (or have heard from) (name of presenter). We thank them for being good stewards and witnessing for us how stewardship is affecting their lives. **(The Lay Witness presentation may be done before the processional at the beginning of Mass or after Communion.)*

We appreciate their willingness to come forward to discuss stewardship because for many of us, stewardship is a new concept, which is why you received a mailing this week and will be receiving another letter or two during the next few weeks. Please take time to read the letters and brochures when they arrive at your home.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the Time, Talent and Treasure He has allotted to us.

We are asking each of you to spend time during the next two weeks praying and thinking about what stewardship is and how it can affect our lives. For some of us, this means thinking about stewardship and the individual commitments we can make. For others, it means having a family discussion on what commitments the family can make. In both instances, we are asked to view stewardship as the joyful return to God of the first fruits of what He has bestowed upon us.

Stewardship of Time and Talent asks that we share our time and talents with our church

and community. Stewardship of Treasure asks that we return a portion of our money to God by sharing it with our Parish, the Archdiocese, and charitable organizations within the community.

We look to Jesus for help in understanding what stewardship is and what it means. Jesus points out that we reveal our values by our actions just as a tree reveals what kind of tree it is by the type of fruit it bears. This is very similar to what Our Lord says in the Gospel of St. Luke about the things we value, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Stewardship makes a difference. The difference is seen in many areas of our lives. We see it first in the focus of our giving. Instead of focusing on the needs of the group to whom we’re giving financial support or helping with time and talent, we begin to focus on God, our relationship with Him, and our need to give back to God out of gratitude.

The second difference we witness is our motivation for giving. Stewardship is an integral part of our spiritual life, and we discover that we give because we are grateful to God for what He has given us. We give freely because we want to, not because we have to.

The third difference we can see is in the result of the giving. As we practice stewardship, we discover greater spiritual growth and a deeper faith. Spending time discerning how we are to share our gifts of time, talent, and treasure heightens our awareness and accountability regarding their use. In fact, we find that our lives are changed for the good.

Please spend time during the next two weeks to read the letters and brochures we are sending you and to listen carefully to what your fellow parishioners have to say from the pulpit about their commitment. Then, I hope you will give prayerful consideration to your personal commitment of your time, talent and treasure.

Priest Homily (Example #2)

“Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment.” (I Timothy 6:17)

This passage is one of many in Scripture that helps us to understand and become aware of what stewardship is all about, and through discovering its true meaning, we undergo a personal transformation. We are reminded that “all things” of this world are gifts from God, and should be used to bring us closer to God—the end for which we were created. In the words of Bishop Robert Morneau, “I’ve never seen a U-Haul following a hearse.”

Contrary to what many people believe or assume, stewardship is not a secret code for fundraising. It is a powerful initiative that will change our faith life and that of our parish. Stewardship is a way to live life for our remaining days on this earth. It is based on the biblical view of God as Creator and us as His servants. When we leave this earth

and stand before God, He will ask us to account for our stewardship of the gifts of time, talent, and treasure given to us for our lifetime.

Stewardship implies that we are not the true owners of all that we have on earth; we are only stewards of our time, our talent, and our treasure. Stewardship provides us the foundation to strengthen and deepen our faith, individually and as our parish family. Stewardship begins with an awakening of the personal need for each of us to return to the Lord, a portion of the gifts He has given us—time, talent, and treasure—in gratitude for what He has done for us.

Stewardship asks that we give the “first fruits” of what we have received, not the portion left over. You will discover that when you give God the “first fruits” of your time, talent, and treasure that while it first, seems difficult very soon it becomes easy for us to do so. We will also discover that the portion of gifts left over is more than enough for our own needs. Putting God first in our lives by practicing stewardship deepens our faith in a way that we never dreamed possible.

As parishioners and as a parish, we are renewing our commitment to stewardship. I hope you prayerfully are considering your commitments of time, talent, and treasure to our parish. This coming week you will receive the third and final stewardship mailing in which you will be asked to make a stewardship covenant.

By committing yourself to becoming a wiser and more prudent steward of your time, talent and treasure, you will enhance and enrich the quality of your faith and the faith of our parish. You will discover that needs versus wants becomes more clearly defined in a positive way. Let us prayerfully reflect on the power of stewardship and its ability to transform our hearts so that we may live the life God would like us to live.

And, let us use the opportunity given us today to listen to one of our parishioners who has discovered the personal value of stewardship. Today, we will be hearing from (or have heard from)* (names of parishioners). **(The Lay Witness presentation may be done before the processional at the beginning of Mass or after Communion.)*

Priest Homily (Example #3)

“Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” These words of St. Paul to the Corinthians remind us that our giving ought to be planned and determined in a prayerful way—Welcome to Commitment Sunday. Our three week Stewardship Initiative comes to fruition today as we make a formal commitment to share our gifts.

We have spent our time over the last several weeks thinking about stewardship, learning how it can transform our lives, and prayerfully considering our God given responsibility to share our gifts with our parish and others.

We have heard from our fellow parishioners about what stewardship means to them, and how they live their lives based on stewardship.

During Mass today, we will be presenting our stewardship gifts. The ushers will come forward and collect our Time and Talent and Treasure commitment cards. (Or -You will be asked to bring your commitment cards forward and place them in the stewardship basket.) Our parish thanks each of you for your commitment to share your time, talent, and treasure.

If you did not bring your cards with you today, please do so next Sunday. (Or-There are additional commitment cards in the pew for those who forgot their cards today.)

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus Christ. We have learned that those who have adopted stewardship as a way of life have had their lives transformed for the better.

And, we have learned that stewardship is truly a way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all of His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent, and treasure He has given to us. Stewardship deepens our relationship with the Lord and brings each of us a sense of peace and joy.

Jesus promises us that by practicing stewardship we will grow spiritually. There are many references in the Bible to stewardship. In one of these, Jesus tells us, *“And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”* (Matthew 10:42) The reward is a growing trust in God’s divine will.

Symbolically the cup of cold water we give to others to drink represents the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure to our parish and to our community to help those in need. Each of us is called to give a drink of cold water, which can be done by supporting our parish so our priests can bring Christ’s healing touch to our faith community and those it serves.

Our parish family is blessed with many different members, each of whom has special gifts and abilities to benefit our parish family. Today, as we bring forth our gifts in God’s name, I hope as individuals and, as a parish, each of us will grow spiritually by being good stewards of the gifts we have been given for the duration of our life on earth.

Thank you.



During our Season of Stewardship, the following pulpit announcements about stewardship should be made. Feel free to use these as written or to edit them to fit the special blessings and needs of your parish.

Weekend One

You should have received a mailing from the pastor this week. During the next few weeks, you will be asked to review the gifts of time, talent, and treasure that God has given you and to renew your commitment to share a portion of your time and talents with our parish.

You also will be asked to share a portion of your income as a sign of your gratitude to God for what He has given to you; and as a way of expressing your faith and trust in God. Please prayerfully consider your response.

Weekend Two

As you are aware, our parish is in the midst of renewing our commitment to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us. During the past week you received a letter from Father along with commitment cards to share your time, talent, and treasure.

Please take time this week to prayerfully consider your response. Next weekend you will be asked to make a commitment of your time, talent, and treasure to our parish and to offer your cards during the Offertory Collection.

Weekend Three (Commitment Sunday)

Over the last few weeks, we have asked you to give prayerful thought to your commitment of sharing a portion of your time, talent, and treasure.

Today is Commitment Sunday and during Mass we will be asking the ushers to come forward and collect our commitment cards. (If the parish decides to have parishioners come to the altar with their commitment cards, explain this method.)



SAMPLE LIST OF TIME AND TALENT OPPORTUNITIES

Below is a sample list of time and talent stewardship opportunities. It is not inclusive, but does give a broad overview of the many ways one can share their time and talent.

Adult Day Care Volunteer	Literacy Effort Volunteer
AIDS Effort Volunteer	Liturgy Commission Member
Altar Server	Masonry Work
Adult Education Facilitator	Men of St. Joseph
Altar Society	Men's Club
Arts and Crafts Teacher	Migrant Ministry Volunteer
Artwork and Marketing for Publications	Minority Ministry Volunteer
Auto Repair	Mothers' Morning Out Volunteer
Auxiliary Minister	Musician
Baby-Sitting	Newcomers' and/or Sunday Coffees
Baptism/Marriage Preparation	Newsletter Work
Bereaved/Terminally Ill	Office Work
Bible Study Leader	Outreach to Inactive Catholics
Board Member of Community Agency	Outreach to the Housebound
Budget Planning	Painting
Campus Ministry Volunteer	Parish Dinner Preparation
Capital Campaign Volunteer	Pastoral Council Member
Catholic Charities Appeal Volunteer	Phone Duty
Choir Member	Photographer
Clothing Ministry Volunteer	Plumbing Work
Community Life Commission	Prayer Group Leader
Computer Programmer	Printer
Crisis Pregnancy Volunteer	Pro-Life Volunteer
Driver	Public Relations Assistance
Education Commission Member	RCIA Sponsor
Electrical Work	School Volunteer
English as a Second Language Teacher	Scout Leadership
Evangelization Commission Member	Sewing
Family Life Commission Member	Social Service Centers Volunteer (CSS)
Faith Formation Teacher	Sound Systems/Electronics
Finance Council Member	Social Outreach
Food Deliveries to Sick/House Bound	Soup Kitchen Volunteer
Homeless Shelter Volunteer	Sports Team Coach
Hospital/Hospice Volunteer	Stewardship Committee Leader/Member
Kitchen Help	Teacher's Aid or Substitute
Knights of Columbus	Telephone Ministry
Catholic Daughters	Typing
Lawn/Plant/Shrubbery Care	Usher/Greeter
Lector	Visiting Sick/Homebound
Legion of Mary	Young Adult Minister

TIMETABLE FOR CONDUCTING
THE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

This calendar is designed for use by parishes that have been conducting a Stewardship Initiative for at least one year. The Stewardship Committee and the Pastor need to determine the date for Commitment Renewal Sunday "X", which should fall within the Season of Stewardship for the Archdiocese of Mobile. The dates for the calendar below are filled in by working backwards from the date of Commitment Renewal Sunday.

X-6	Week of:	Order brochures. Identify Lay Witnesses. Plan and assign promotional materials including banners, bulletin boards, or other appropriate items.
X-5	Week of:	Check supply of envelopes/letterhead/labels. If necessary order more supplies. Update the Time and Talent Opportunity List. Make copies.
X-4	Week of:	Write an article for the parish newsletter or bulletin.
X-3	Week of:	Meet with the Lay Witnesses and pastor to coordinate remarks.
X-2	Week of:	Mailing #1 made during this week. Bulletin announcement #1.
X-1	Week of:	Renewal Sunday - Pastor's introductory and endorsement remarks. Lay witness talks all Masses. Mailing #2 during this week. Bulletin announcement #2.
X	Week of:	Commitment Renewal Sunday - Pastor's homily. Commitment Cards are returned during Mass. (Remember to have extra cards in pews for those who forgot to bring them). Bulletin announcement #3.
X+1	Week of:	Week after Commitment Renewal Sunday. Bulletin Announcement #4
X+2	Week of:	Thank you letter mailed to those who returned commitment cards.

Note: Refer to pages 16 and 36-44 for sample bulletin announcements.

**First Bulletin Announcement** (Two Weeks before Commitment Renewal Sunday)

This week you will receive by mail a List of Time and Talent Opportunities available in our parish and a brochure asking you to TAKE ANOTHER STEP on your Stewardship pilgrimage. Please take time to read them carefully as you consider your response to our Lord.

Second Bulletin Announcement (One week before Commitment Renewal Sunday)

Today we have heard from _____ (lay presenters), who shared with us their Stewardship experience and how it has changed their lives. We thank them for sharing their story with us. Please pray for them and for all of us, so that our hearts may be open and our response generous when we receive our Commitment Cards in the mail this coming week.

Please bring your Cards to Mass next week on Commitment Renewal Sunday.

Third Bulletin Announcement (Commitment Renewal Sunday)

Commitment Renewal Sunday is an excellent time to think about the fact that our life on this earth is a gift from God as are the talents He bestowed upon us and the treasure that we have. We are stewards of these gifts from God, which belong to us only for the duration of our life on this earth.

The question we need to ask ourselves is: As a good steward of God's gifts to me, what portion should I share to help those in need and to spread the Word of God?

Fourth Bulletin Announcement (Week after Commitment Renewal Sunday)

Thank you to everyone who returned their Commitment Cards last weekend. If you have not done so yet, would you please renew your stewardship commitment by bringing your Commitment Cards with you to church next weekend or mailing them to us or stopping by the church office at your convenience.

*(Includes Brochure)*

Date

Title, Name
Street/Mailing Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____,

As a member of <name of parish> we will have the opportunity to renew our commitment to living the life of a good and faithful steward. As we reflect on the many blessings in our lives, let us pray to the Holy Spirit and ask for guidance as we recommit ourselves to sharing a portion of the gifts that God has given us.

Many members of our parish family can give witness to the peace and deepening of faith they have experienced by being good stewards of the gifts of time, talent, and treasure given to us by our Lord. I am confident that many of you would like to respond more fully, but are hesitant to share the special gifts given to us by God. If you find that you presently share two hours of your time each week as a volunteer, ask the Holy Spirit to help you to commit to sharing three or more hours a week.

If you think you have very few, if any, talents ask the Holy Spirit to help you to discern your special gifts and to share these as a volunteer. If you currently give less than ten percent of your income to the church, prayerfully commit to giving five percent to your parish and five percent to other good works.

God has blessed each of us in many ways, and we have an inherent need to give thanks to God. Will you place your trust in God by returning a portion of the gifts He has given you to help your parish and community. Remember, God has promised us that He will not be outdone in generosity.

I thank each of you for being a member of this parish and for your continuing generosity of time, talent, and treasure.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Name
Pastor, (Name of Parish)

Enclosure



SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR SECOND RENEWAL MAILING

(Includes Commitment Cards)

Date

Title, Name
Street/Mailing Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____,

I hope you had time this past week to look over the stewardship brochure included in my last letter and to prayerfully consider your renewed commitment to sharing your time, talent, and treasure for the coming year.

God has blessed each of us in many different ways. We need to spend some time this week in prayer to God to thank Him for blessing us with His gifts of life on this earth, our special skills and talents, and the financial resources we have. God would like us to be good stewards of these gifts and to proportionately share what we have with others. Now is a good time to ask yourself if you are being a good steward. This is a very personal decision between you and God.

Please fill out the Time and Talent portion of the enclosed commitment card. Indicate the current ministries you wish to continue supporting and add any new ones you would like to begin for the coming year. Remember, also, that your community involvement is part of your time and talent even though it is not on the commitment card.

As you complete the Stewardship of Treasure included with the brochure, please consider "taking another step" in the level of your gift. Bring your Time and Talent and your Treasure Commitment Cards with you to Mass this coming weekend.

I am touched by the continuing generosity of all of our parishioners here at <name of parish>, and I am confident of your continued commitment to being a good steward of the gifts of time, talent, and treasure you have received from God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor's Signature

Pastor's Name

Enclosures



Stories—from children to adults, we are captivated by stories. Magazines and newspapers are always looking for human-interest stories. Every good homilist or preacher includes a story. In the late Archbishop Murphy's last talk on stewardship at the Northwest Regional Stewardship Conference in Seattle, he shared a story of his struggle with leukemia, and the importance of the "gift of life" that came to him in the form of donations of blood.

Jesus used stories to teach others, and the Gospel writers through their own stories gave witness to their lives with Jesus. These stories continue to transform the lives of humans and to bring about life-changing conversions to millions of people over the last 2,000 years. Each of us can identify a time in our life when the story of another brought about a change for the better. It might be a major conversion or an attitude adjustment, but it has made a difference in how you live your own life. Archbishop Murphy's story made hundreds of people regular blood-donors.

Far from "tooting our own horn," every time we share our own stories we give witness to the generosity of a loving and generous God. It is one of the most powerful and effective means of presenting the stewardship message. Properly prepared, it has the potential to change peoples' lives.

One of the most effective means of presenting the stewardship message is through the Stewardship Lay Witness Talk. This talk can be given before Mass begins or at the completion of Communion by people who are already practicing stewardship in their own lives. It may be given by an individual or a married couple. In some cases, children may participate. The talk has two purposes: to inspire people to become good stewards; and to share real life examples of how stewardship is lived.

Sample Outline of Lay Witness Talk

- Introduce Yourself - While many of your fellow parishioners will know you, some may not. Give a description of your family, the number of years you have been a parishioner, et cetera.
- Properly Define Christian Stewardship - It is a response we make in gratitude to God for what He has given to us. It is intentional, planned, and proportionate giving of our time, talent, and treasure.
- Discuss How You Began Practicing Stewardship - When did you first become aware of the concept? Did you have reservations? Be honest about your first reactions. People will relate to any feelings of "discomfort". How did your family react to the idea? Was the initial "plunge" difficult? How did you go about it?
- When did you begin to experience the benefits? Speak of the effect that Stewardship has had on your faith life. Use anecdotes from your own family life if possible. How do you and your family share your time and talent? Were you able to give a full tithe of 10 percent right away? If not, how are you working toward this goal?

- Urge your fellow parishioners to get involved. - Invite the congregation to join you and your family in making your parish a stewardship parish. Ask them to look at all that God has given them and to respond generously to His many gifts.

Tips for Presenting Lay Witness Talk

An important part of people's acceptance of stewardship is the personal witness and individual testimony you provide with your presence and the way you give your talk. Please consider the following tips in preparing your comments:

- Prepare your personal remarks so that you are comfortable with them. Use your own style, wording, and delivery. Write Out Your Talk Word For Word. Then, if you feel comfortable with your approach, use notes or key words to guide you through your presentation so that it is more natural.
- To give a good presentation, it is best to rehearse your talk aloud several times before making it at Sunday's Masses. If you only practice reading it silently, you won't have the same effect. If it is possible, practice your talk in the church when no one is there, using the sound system. Be comfortable enough with your material so that you can look up from your notes and make eye contact. In a large church, remember to turn to the sides occasionally to include everyone.
- If you are giving a stewardship renewal talk, ask the person who did the talk last year to listen to your presentation and to make suggestions based on their experience. Ask the pastor to listen to your talk in church and to offer suggestions.
- Nervousness can make your throat dry. If you think this may happen, have a glass of water in an unobtrusive place...and use it if you need it.
- Above all, be sincere, enthusiastic, and friendly.

DOs and DON'Ts for Lay Witness Talks

(If these fit within the context of your talk)

DO

- Explain that stewardship means giving our "first fruits," not what is left over.
- Talk about the personal need of each Christian to give back in gratitude.
- Say "Many of you know from your own giving experience that what I have shared with you is true." (Acknowledging that you are not in this alone.)
- Stress the joy and fulfillment that comes to those who give God the first shares of their time, talent, and treasure as a way of expressing their gratitude and trust in God.
- Talk about intentional, planned, and proportionate giving. Explain what it means to you personally to give from your substance.
- Emphasize that it is important to give all three "time, talent and treasure".
- Explain that stewardship involves not only church (parish and diocese); it also includes community.

DON'T

- Don't talk in bargaining terms. (e.g. "I gave this much time or treasure and God gave me this in return.")
- Don't stress church needs or budgets.
- Don't talk in dollar or time amounts: "If everyone could give \$10 a week...we need \$2 more a week...give your fair share...if everyone could give 3 hours per week."
- Don't use threats of possible consequences stemming from the failure to give: "We won't be able to heat or air-condition the church...We'll have to close the school."
- Don't suggest that Parish Stewardship is an obligation.

To the Lay Witness:

The most important goal of living a life based on the principles of stewardship is a deepening of faith...a real spiritual conversion. Your sharing your spiritual journey with members of your parish family is a unique gift and a true statement of your commitment to stewardship. You are showing your gratitude by this sharing. Thank You.

Getting Started ...and Ending Up

Many find that the hardest part of a talk is getting started and winding up. To open your stewardship talk simply introduce yourself, "Good morning, (evening). I'm Jane Doe and this is my husband John. We are parishioners here at St. Mary's along with our three children, Suzie, John, and Mark. We'd like to share with you what stewardship means to our family and how it has affected our lives."

The following is a suggested closing paragraph:

(If done at the beginning of Mass)

"As we continue with our liturgy this morning (evening), and our gifts are brought forward, let each of us ask ourselves if this gift of our treasure which we offer today, is truly a measure of the gratitude we have for what we have been given. Let us look at what we give to our church and the community in terms of time and talent, and ask ourselves if this is proportionate to God's gifts to us. Let us remember that God, who takes care of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, will likewise take care of each of us when we give generously and trust in His love.

(If done after Communion)

As we conclude our liturgy this morning (evening), let each of us ask ourselves if this gift of our treasure, which we gave today, is truly a measure of the gratitude we have for what we have been given. Let us look at what we give to our church and the community in terms of time and talent, and ask ourselves if this is proportionate to God's gifts to us. Let us remember that God, who takes care of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, will likewise take care of each of us when we give generously and trust in His love.



The following are actual presentations given by lay witnesses. While these presentations are individualized and cannot be used as they are, they serve as models for how lay witness presenters can express their thoughts and personal stories.

Lay Witness Talk (Sample #1)

Stewardship means different things to different people. Let me share with you what stewardship has come to mean to me. Reflecting back on the time spent growing up in Ohio, I've realized more and more not only how loving my parents were but also how wise they were. I learned a lot from my parents, but there are four things I learned from their example that have had a particular impact on my life. First I learned that God loves us. He is good, and we can trust Him. Secondly I learned that each of us is given certain gifts and talents and one of our responsibilities in life is to discover what those gifts and talents are, develop them and use them to benefit others. Thirdly I learned that to whom more is given, more is expected. Fourthly I learned that having a job and spending time with your family is important, but not enough. We also need to spend time being with and helping others.

With that kind of learning and my parents' examples, I did not have a great deal of difficulty in grasping the concept of stewardship of time and talent. I didn't call it that, but I did it. From the time I was in high school and onward, I made sure I spent time doing things for and with other people, mostly through different types of volunteer work. As I continued to give of my time and talent, I realized that I was growing spiritually. God and other people became a more important part of my life.

After graduating from college and moving to Mobile, I continued to give of my time and talent through various church groups and community boards. Yet something was still missing. You see, I gave of my time and talent but not my treasure. I reasoned that I spent so much time in church and community activities that I didn't need to give regularly to the church or other community groups. Sure, I gave some, but it was sporadic and unplanned.

It wasn't until my wife and I made an "Engaged Encounter" seven years ago that I started to look even more seriously at my relationship with God. We realized that we couldn't hold back on any area of our giving because God wasn't holding back on any area of His giving. We also decided that we wanted God to be the center of our marriage. That led us to a decision to start giving of our treasure in a planned and proportionate way. We started giving two percent of our income to the church and other charities in 1994. Five years later, we were giving eight percent of our income to the church and other charities. My wife and I are planning to move to the biblical tithe, 10 percent of our income, next month.

As we continued to give, we've learned that we are growing more spiritually and that our faith is deepening. By giving as we have, we have tried to place material things and money in their proper perspective. That has caused us to look at what we need versus what we want. For example, when we bought a new home almost two years ago, we bought a somewhat smaller house than we might have if we hadn't been practicing

stewardship of treasure.

Stewardship has become a way of life for us. It's not always easy, but we try to live it. Presently, I am spending eight hours a week in volunteer work outside of my job and my wife is spending three hours per week in volunteer work. In the area of treasure, 80 percent of our giving is church-related while the other 20 percent goes to community agencies.

Stewardship of time, talent and treasure has been and will continue to be an important part of our lives.

Lay Witness Talk (Sample #2)

Stewardship: What is it? How do we do it? Will we like it? Does it hurt? Will it work for us? Why should we do it?

These are many of the questions that passed through my mind as we first considered stewardship as a program in my parish. We looked at various programs in existence and the more I looked at them the more I became convinced stewardship was something our parish should do. I guess I was really experiencing my own conversion to stewardship as a way of life. I kept seeing that the Church could never flourish and grow if everyone was supporting it like I was, with a contribution each week that I would never miss.

As I look back at my own decision on stewardship and its maturation in the last five years, I notice that my ideals have changed some. There were lots of reasons that I felt we should begin stewardship in our family. God has been very good to us. My husband and I have two healthy, happy children.

We have finally passed through the struggling years in our own business and now had time to think about other things. As I began to think about the church and what it meant to me, I realized that if everyone was making the kind of limited volunteer and financial commitment that I was then the church would not be here for my children. There was no other way it could continue without a higher level of support from me and other parishioners.

Besides, I had great expectations of the Church. It should be well equipped to teach my children all about the wonders of God. It should be able to care for the sick, feed the needy, and care for the elderly.

If my expectations were right, then I had to do my part to make them a reality. I was already giving some time to the church and with that time my talents. But there had to be a strong commitment of time and a commitment of treasure if the church was going to be able to do all the things I wanted it to.

Once I decided that perhaps stewardship was something our family needed to think about, I was rather hesitant to bring it up for family discussion. My husband is non-Catholic. Would he feel the same as I do? How would we handle contributions of time

and treasure to two churches? After we talked about how we felt and agreed that it was something we would try, my husband offered a simple solution. We would give one-fourth of our treasure and time to his church and three-fourths to my church since our two children were members of our parish. We have never had a problem with this method.

Since we made our decision on stewardship, I think our outlook on lots of things has changed. We have become more supportive of various worthwhile needs and organizations in the community. I think it opened an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

I came to embrace stewardship through the church, but I have grown in stewardship to include the entire community. I feel that God expects us to minister to all people. My gift that fulfills my stewardship may be given to anyone who needs it. It is the giving and the support of God's children that is important. The spiritual rewards, the feeling of accomplishment that you are following God's way are the important things that you will reap from stewardship. You will know you are succeeding when the spirituality and feelings of stewardship far surpass the question of how much you should give.

Lay Witness Talk (Sample #3)

My first encounter with Stewardship was in 1987. I sat in my parish church in Columbus, Georgia and listened to two people from Jacksonville, Florida tell us their story and ask us to consider giving a percentage of our income and more of our time to the church and community.

Up until that time, I had thought I was doing pretty well. I had always given what I thought was generously to the church...especially in terms of money. I had been taught to "contribute to the support of the church", both by the parochial school I attended in Philadelphia and by my parents. When we were growing up, there was no Saturday Vigil Mass. Saturday night was the time to get ready for Sunday. Baths, polishing shoes, washing and curling hair and getting our church envelopes ready were all part of the ritual. My Dad put \$5.00 in his envelope in the 1960's and each of us four kids put \$.10 in ours. These were placed on the mantle behind my mom and dad's wedding picture, ready to be picked up on our way to church on Sunday morning. When I grew up and got a job, I put \$5.00 in my envelope. I figured that was what grown-ups did.

We never consciously thought about the giving of time. It was just sort of expected that we would run errands for our neighbor who had only one leg or cut the grass of the elderly lady across the street. It was just part of what you did when you took food to a family who had a death or someone in the hospital. These were the things I continued to do as an adult without ever giving much thought as to how much time was involved or why I was doing it.

It was only after listening to the folks from Jacksonville that I began to realize I wasn't even close to giving in proportion to what I had. My dad's \$5.00 in the 1960's and mine in the 1990's were entirely two different things. The little "good deeds" for other people were nice, but kind of sporadic.

My life has been richly blessed. I had a family who loved deeply, parents who sacrificed to bring up four children and instilled in each of us a strong sense of church and morality. I was well educated, had a job, a home, friends and reasonably good health. God had given me many blessings...and I had to give serious thought as to how I was responding to His gifts.

It took a while for me to do something, because I didn't think I could raise my level of monetary giving, and I was pretty sure I didn't have any "spare time" to volunteer. I eventually decided to "take the plunge", but only on a trial basis of three months. I would give a tithe of 10 percent to my church and other charities, and I would find two more hours each week to volunteer for something. I fully expected to be able to say at the end of three months, "OK, Lord. I tried, but it doesn't work." That way, I figured I would be "off the hook".

Well, at the end of three months, I found that all of the bills had been paid, I wasn't suffering from malnutrition, and I saved some money, bought clothes, and went to the movies a few times. I also found out that I wasn't worrying about money nearly as much as I had been. I had become a reading tutor in our county literacy program and loved it. I obviously wasn't "off the hook", but was hooked.

Since that summer in 1987 the one overwhelming change in life has been a deepening of my faith. I really trust that God loves me and will take care of me. He has done it...even when I wasn't sure it could be done.

I guess my response to those who question the concept of Stewardship, or who are hesitant, is this: At least give it a try. Give God the opportunity to show you that He is a loving and generous God. He can only do that when we give up control and take that step in faith.

Lay Witness Talk (Sample #4)

If I had to choose one word to describe stewardship that word would be gratitude... stewardship is about gratitude to God for all the gifts He gives us each day, the big gifts and the small ones. Like many people, until recently, I misunderstood stewardship. Quite frankly, I thought it was a "politically correct" way to ask for more money, and that they threw in "time and talent" as a smokescreen. I have come to understand that is not what stewardship is about. The focus is not on the church's need to receive, but rather the individual's need to give. Stewardship is not a one-time contribution to a capital campaign or a series of good deeds. It is a way of life and a realization that all we have comes from God, and that we can say thank you to God by sharing the gifts He has given us with others. More than that, stewardship is not just something that happens, it is planned, proportionate, and intentional.

My name is Mary Smith and I have been a member of this parish for 11 years. I am married and my husband is Luke. We have three children— Luke, Jr., Perry, and Mark. It is my privilege to talk to you about stewardship this morning/evening and what a gift it has been in my life. I will talk about it in terms of the three words we usually associate with stewardship: time, talent and treasure.

Time: There are two questions I would like to consider with regard to time and stewardship. The first one is, “How much time will I commit to spending with God?” This is probably the most important aspect of my stewardship. I have found that time spent in prayer and receiving the sacraments is how I am filled. We cannot give what we do not have. I love the analogy of a glass of water in the sink...if we turn on the faucet and let the glass fill up and we keep the faucet running then the glass remains full and the water spills over the top. It is that overflow from which my stewardship comes, at least on my good days!

At Mass I receive the love of God through the Eucharist and then I have love to share with others I meet. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation I receive mercy and then I can be merciful to others. In quiet prayer of adoration I find peace and joy, which I can bring to others. I attend daily Mass, spend 30 minutes a day reading scripture and meditation and I try to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation once a month. That is what works for me, which is the time I have committed to spending with God.

The second question is: How much time am I willing to commit to sharing my gifts with others? This has been an important question for me to consider how much time I am giving to others, and to ask myself, “Is it planned and proportional, and am I spending my time wisely? I estimate on average I give eight hours a week to the church and other volunteer activities, and I feel that is reasonable in my circumstances as a stay-at-home mother with older children.

But as I have prayed about it, I believe I can give about 10 hours a week. Some weeks I have given less than that, and maybe I can call up the office to see if they need help with some project or stop by and help set up chairs one weekend. Some weeks I have given more than that and perhaps I need to evaluate my commitments to determine if I have balance in my life, keeping in mind my first responsibility is my vocation as wife and mother.

Talent: When I first thought about what talents God has given me, I drew a blank because I was limiting myself to the “usual” talents we think of that relate to church, such as singing or ironing altar cloths or heading up a committee. Everyone has been blessed, everyone has a talent they can share with the community. After much reflection, it occurred to me... there is one thing I can do...I CAN CRY!!! I am a fabulous crier, I cry easily, I cry often and as I tell my children, “I’m a professional, don’t try this at home.”

As you might imagine, crying does not feel like a gift most of the time. But I realized that I cry because I am a deeply compassionate person. I have the gift of empathy, and I use that gift in bringing communion to those in the hospital and the homebound. While many times we share a story and a laugh, or rejoice with them in their healing, sometimes all I can do is cry with people. It is in those difficult moments I have realized my ministry is offering my presence, my compassion and, most importantly, the Eucharist. I jokingly refer to myself as “Jesus’ chauffeur.”

As always, I find that when I give, I get so much more in return. I want to share with you one story of how a visit to the hospital changed my heart, helped me to know more deeply how much we are all loved and cared for by God. I visited a woman a couple

of years ago. I didn't know her. She was not from this area. She was about my age, and she shared with me that she had a number of chronic medical problems and had been in and out of the hospital often over the past few years. We prayed together and then she received communion. After a few moments of silence she said to me, *"There is a song that I love, I learned it in CCD (faith formation) many years ago. I have asked several people, and I have never met anyone who knows this song."* She began to sing it. I knew that song and, in fact, I remembered most of the words. I began to sing with her and the tears rolled down her cheeks and mine. I will never forget the look on her face. We were overwhelmed with God's love in that moment.

What an amazing God we serve! I knew then the scripture verse "God counts the hairs on our heads" was true. He heard her prayer and found someone who could sing that song with her. He hears all of our prayers, big and small. God knows what is important to us and delights in answering our prayers. In that moment I knew if God counted the hairs on that woman's head, maybe he counts the hairs on mine as well. That scripture is now part of my story, and whenever I hear that verse, I think of that woman and how God made His love known to us.

Treasure: First I want to thank this parish for your generosity. This is an amazing parish! When the Finance Committee presented the numbers on what we needed to build the church, you came through with a significant increase, which has continued week after week without the first stone being put into place. Now that is faith!

Actually those presentations in November helped Luke and me to look at our giving more carefully. In the past, I made all the finance decisions and it was not something Luke and I talked about very much. I felt pretty good about our giving, figuring Luke and I gave more than most people, so that was good enough. That presentation helped us to look at our giving in another way. Instead of comparing ourselves to others, maybe we should look at how much God has blessed us and give accordingly. As a result Luke and I increased our giving from 6 percent to 10 percent of our income.

Another important aspect of stewardship is giving our first fruits, not what is left over (which in our case is not much after the grocery bill with all our growing boys and their friends.) The amount we give each month is a commitment we made to God and to our community. It is one we take very seriously. At the first of the month when Luke makes a deposit, I write a check for 10% of the amount, whatever it might be. Luke gets paid once a month, and so does the church, which works best for us. Each time I drop the envelope in the basket I thank God for a specific gift in my life that month. It helps to reinforce the connection between giving and gratitude in my own mind. So if you see me holding the basket for a few minutes it is because I can't decide what to thank God for that month.

Finally, tithing of our treasure is teaching us about trust. Some months when we had a large amount of unexpected expenses I said to God, *"Okay, I want to see how you are going to pull this one off. There is no way that we will be able to make ends meet this month."* But He has always come through for us, sometimes in surprising ways. With our tithing, we are trying to put into practice : *"Seek God first and the rest will follow."*

To summarize: I have talked about what stewardship is and is not, and how I have tried to practice it in my own life. Now I want to get to **WIIFM**: (What is in it for me?) Why should you consider being a steward of your time, talent and treasure?

- Stewardship has helped me to know more deeply how much I am loved and cared for by God.
- Stewardship has helped me to know myself better. I found strength and courage I did not know I possessed. If you told me a couple of years ago that I would be involved in hospital ministry I would have laughed.
- Stewardship has helped me to feel more connected to the community. I know more people as a result of volunteer activities. It feels like home to me. When I am out of town and attend Mass at another church, I miss all of you.
- Stewardship has helped me to see the hand of God more clearly in my life. As I begin to see everything as gift from God, I begin to look for His blessings in my ordinary day. As Nate, a very wise 8th grader reminded us when saying farewell to Sister Gert, he believed it was not that she experienced more miracles than the rest of us, it was just that she was better at recognizing them. Stewardship has helped me to recognize the miracles in my life. We see what we expect to see.

Very simply it feels good to be grateful, to know the source of my blessings and to thank God each day for those gifts. I can hear you now saying to yourself..."Okay, that sounds pretty good for someone else. I would love to be a steward but I can't because:

- I am too old. *Ann was an RCIA sponsor at age 94 and continued to lector until she was 95.*
- I am too young. *14 year-old Sean was an impromptu cantor at the 8:30 Mass one Sunday.*
- I am too busy. *Maybe you can commit to greeting visitors personally after Mass.*
- I can't get out in the evening. *Maybe you can send cards or call a parishioner who is sick or whom you haven't seen in a while.*

We all can do something as we all have gifts to share. The great news is that God meets us right where we are. I ask you to prayerfully reflect on stewardship and how you can say thank you to God. I will leave you with a final question to ponder:

"What kind of church would this be, if in response to God's generosity, we asked ourselves each day "What can I do to bring the love of Christ to others?"



(Date)

Title, Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner,

I am most grateful for your generous response to our (first) parish Stewardship Initiative. Thank you. I am confident the benefits of embracing a stewardship way of life will be a source of blessings for you and for our parish community. More than (number) households responded with commitment cards. This is an excellent response to our (a first-time) initiative, but we will contact those who have not yet returned their commitment cards.

It is encouraging to know how many of you committed a portion of your God given gifts of time and talent to our ministerial opportunities. Your name and contact information have been given to the coordinators of the ministries you selected. You should be hearing from them shortly and will hopefully be given the opportunity to become involved in your chosen ministries. If you are not contacted, please let me know!

*Thank you for your commitment to share your earthly treasure. Your financial gifts will help our parish to remain strong and to reach out to help those in need and to evangelize. I will remember you and your loved ones in my prayers as I thank God for the wonderful stewards in our parish. Please know that our Parish will be a good steward of your gifts to us.

Again, thank you for your wonderful faith response to our Stewardship Initiative. As we journey together in this life, I hope we may all come to know God better and to thank Him always for the gifts He has given us to share with others and to do His work while we are here.

Gratefully in the Lord,

Pastor's Signature

(Pastor's Name)

**Note: If a parishioner responds to time and talent only, eliminate paragraph three in the above letter.*

FAMILY LIFE COMMISSION MEMORANDUM
TO TIME AND TALENT RESPONDENTS

The following memorandum can be edited or written in letter form to reflect any parish council, commission, ministry, or committee. Likewise the contact sheet can be modified to fit the opportunities your parish has to offer.

To: Respondents to Stewardship Effort

From: (Name), Family Life Commission

Date: Current Date

Subject: Your Time and Talent Stewardship Commitment

Thank you for your response to the Time and Talent portion of our Stewardship Initiative and for your willingness to commit your time and talent to the Family Life Commission.

If you are currently involved with one of the Family Life Commission groups or organizations, please accept my thanks on behalf of our pastor and parish for all that you do. Our commission could not function without your involvement.

If you are interested in being involved in the Family Life Commission for the first time, please refer to the attached sheet, which shows a summary of each group within the Family Life Commission and the name of the contact person for the group in which you have expressed an interest.

We have asked the contact person for your group to call you, but if you do not hear from this person within the next few days, please call them. They can let you know when and where the next meeting is. We also have forwarded your name to the chairperson of the group to which you have offered your time and talent, and that person will contact you in the near future.

Again, thank you for your generosity. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at xxx.xxx.xxxx or email me at stewardship@ourparish.org.

THE FAMILY LIFE COMMISSION
(Chairperson's name and telephone number)

The Family Life Commission is responsible for supporting existing and developing new efforts to promote quality family life; the primary focus is on Christian living and loving. Activities include the following:

CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT (CFM)—A national Catholic family organization, providing a place to share values, faith, and a place to experience Christ. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

HAPPY TIMERS—Meets the first Wednesday of every month, meeting locations vary, offering fun and fellowship for senior citizens. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

Helping Other People Endure (H.O.P.E.)—Volunteers help the sick, elderly and shut-ins of the parish with visitations, needed transportation, et cetera. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

MEN'S CLUB—Meets first Sunday of every month in the Parish Center. Open to all men connected with the parish (including non-Catholic spouses) interested in fellowship and services through sponsorship and support of parish-wide events and activities. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

MOTHER'S MORNING OUT—Wednesday mornings, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 am at the Parish Center. This is a co-op child care arrangement for young mothers of the parish. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

NEWCOMERS' COFFEE—First Sunday of every month following the 10:15 am Mass. Priests and parish representatives welcome new parishioners and those wishing to register. This social hour offers an opportunity to learn more about the parish. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

SCOUTS—

- BOY SCOUTS - Mondays, 7:30 pm in the parish center for young men in grades 7-12. This group is in need of adult volunteers. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)
- CUB SCOUTS - Open to boys in grades 1-6 with several dens in operation. Meeting times and locations vary. This group welcomes and is in need of adult volunteers. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)
- BROWNIES - Open to all girls in grades 1-3 to learn about the worlds of People, Today and Tomorrow, the Arts and the Out of Doors. Meeting times and locations vary. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

YOUTH GROUPS—Senior High Youth Groups. Social, spiritual, and service opportunities provided to all students in grades 9-12 in public or parochial schools, meeting on Sunday evening from 7 pm-8:30 pm in the parish center. This group is in need of adult volunteers. Contact: (Name, Phone Number)

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION LETTER
TO TIME AND TALENT RESPONDENTS

(Date)

Title, Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Name),

Thank you for responding to our parish's Stewardship Initiative by saying you would like to share a portion of your time and talent volunteering with the Communications Commission. A little more than a year ago, I joined the Communications Commission and my experience has taught me that I receive more from being a good steward than from what I give. Also, I haven't found a more friendly, helpful, and appreciative group of people.

The Communications Commission is responsible for the publication and release of information to our parish and community regarding the people and events of our parish. Through advertisements, bulletins, bulletin inserts, newsletters, mailings, articles, posters, and news releases, we get the good news out to the broader community. Our past year's accomplishments include our *Parish News* publication, a directory of parish ministries and organizations, and the parish pictorial directory.

Our communication needs require many different talents. The enclosed questionnaire is intended to get a better idea as to what specific areas you feel you can best contribute and the level of involvement with which you feel comfortable.

Please complete this form and return it in the enclosed envelope within the next two weeks.

After we have received your completed questionnaire, we will be calling to let you know what the next steps are to get you involved in this rewarding ministry.

Thank you again for expressing interest in wanting to help with our Parish's communication efforts. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at (Phone Number).

I look forward to being in touch, and may God bless you,

Chairperson's Signature

(Chairperson's Name)

Enclosures



(Date)

Title, Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Name of church) Parishioner,

The response to our Stewardship Initiative has been very encouraging. More than _____ individuals and families responded and committed their gifts of time, talent, and treasure to make our parish family even stronger in its faith.

I am most grateful to all who have made their commitment, but our parish family will have even greater cause to rejoice if more of our households participate in the stewardship effort.

In the event you did not receive or perhaps mislaid your stewardship commitment cards, please find new ones enclosed. It is my hope that everyone in our parish family will find a special role to play in helping to share the love of God with others.

Please know it is not too late to commit a portion of your time and talent to help others. I hope you will spend some time in prayer thanking God for His gifts to you and asking God to direct you in sharing your gifts with others.

I encourage you to sign the Stewardship Covenant and to make a commitment to share your time, talent, and treasure. You can mail or bring your stewardship cards to the office or drop them in the offertory collection at any Mass.

I hope to hear from you and will remember you in my prayers.

In the name of Christ,

Pastor's Signature

(Pastor's Name)

Enclosures



The following is a suggested approach in telephoning parishioners who have not responded. Use it as a guideline in developing your parish's approach.

Talk to the person(s) whose name is on the list, not to another member of the family. If they are not home, ask for a time when you can reach them. Leave a message that you are a fellow parishioner who is calling on behalf of the parish.

The purpose of the call is to follow-up on the stewardship homilies and mailings and to encourage the person to respond to committing their time, talent and treasure. Most of the calls will be very positive, but not all parishioners will respond the same way and, regrettably, a few will be negative.

Your responsibility is to talk with them about stewardship, **listen** to what they say, give them time to state their feelings, and then ask them if they will pray to the Holy Spirit and respond to the commitment cards they have received in the mail. Share that signing the cards is an outward sign of making a commitment and is not a legally binding commitment.

Let parishioners know how much their contribution of time, talent, and treasure is appreciated by the parish. They may respond that they are already doing as much as they can, but let them know we would still appreciate their completing their cards. We want everyone to think about their blessings from God and to take a fresh look at their time, talent and treasure commitments.

A suggested approach to the telephone calls

"Hello, Mr., Mrs., or Ms. _____. My name is _____. I am a member of our parish, and I am committing my time to our Stewardship Initiative. How are you tonight? Fr. _____ asked me to call and to see if you have received his recent mailings about stewardship. Have you received these? Father's most recent letter included a brochure with response cards in it.

IF "YES" ...Have you had a chance to read them? IF "YES" ...I hope you will be responding to Father _____'s request for your commitment. The cards can be brought to Mass this weekend. [If they are undecided, try to get them to respond and complete the cards.]

IF "NO" OR "NOT SURE" ...Let me take a few minutes to talk about the Stewardship Initiative our parish has been conducting during our Archdiocese's Season of Stewardship. Father is asking each of us if we would renew/commit a portion of our time and talent to help strengthen God's work here on earth through our parish. Father also asked us to pray about renewing our commitment of treasure to assist the church's work through the weekly offertory collection and other good works. We are inviting everyone to fill out the Time and Talent and Treasure cards. I hope you will respond by completing the cards and bringing them with you to Mass this weekend. If you would like us to send another card, we will do so. (If a person wants another copy, verify their name and address and give it to the church secretary to be mailed to them.)



(Date)

Title, Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Parishioner's Name),

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind."
(Hebrews 13:16)

I am writing to thank you for committing to be a good steward of the gifts that God has given you. Our parish, (Parish Name), is benefiting from your commitment and is a better faith community because of it. (You could list some of the benefits here.)

Our parish and the work we do on God's behalf depends upon the generous support and stewardship of the many parishioners who contribute a portion of their time, talent, and treasure. Thank you for your help.

All of us at (Name of Church) thank you for your gifts of time and talent to minister to the needs of others and for your continued financial support to help the parish carry out its work and to spread the word of God.

Thank you again for sharing your time, talent, and treasure with our parish (Name of Church), which has a more fulfilling life of faith because of these gifts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor's Signature

(Pastor's Name)



Year One Bulletin Announcements

January Announcements (Year One)

- Blessed Virgin Mary was the model steward with her unqualified, “yes” and complete trust in God’s will. When we place God first in our lives, all else falls into place.
- The Magi brought the child Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. What gifts do I place before Jesus? My time? My talent? My treasure?
- As we begin a new year, let us take time to purposely make stewardship of time and talent a part of our daily life and stewardship of treasure a part of our budget.
- Your first responsibility is to take care of your needs and the needs of your family – but not their wants. In looking at what we need versus what we want, we often are able to put material things and money in their proper perspective.
- *“Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”* (II Corinthians 9:7)
- All too often, stewardship is presented as having only one goal, which is giving money to the church and other charities. Stewardship is our becoming Disciples of God and using “only a portion” of the gifts God has given to us; our time on this earth, our special talents and skills, and our earthly possessions.
- *“For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”* (Matthew 6:21)

February Announcements (Year One)

- Stewardship involves a willingness to give from the very core of who we are and what we have; from substance rather than abundance.
- *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 7:21) Jesus made it clear that being stewards of our time, talent and treasure is the will of His Father.
- Stewardship of treasure asks only a percentage of our income. Many people find that when they trust God and return a percentage of their income to the Church and other charities, they continue to live well with the remainder of their income.
- *“...Always seek what is good for each other and for all.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

March Announcements (Year One)

- Lent is our opportunity to reflect on our relationship with God who calls us to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in our Lenten stewardship.

- *“Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”* (Matthew 5:16)
- In sharing time and talent, many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to visit with God in prayer and to volunteer with charitable activities.
- In sharing treasure, many Christians choose the biblical norm of giving 10 percent of their treasure. Some, because of circumstances, give more and others less. Some of us might start at three or four percent, and work our way upwards literally.

April Announcements (Year One)

- Each of us is talented. Stewardship encourages us to discern our talents and to use these to benefit our brothers and sisters and our Church and community.
- *“How can I repay the Lord for all the good done for me?”* (Psalms 116:12)
- Jesus asks us to demonstrate our love for Him through our generosity to others. In our everyday lives, He calls us to share our gifts of time, talent, and treasure with those in physical and spiritual need.
- *“So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.”* (Galatians 6:10)

May Announcements (Year One)

- Jesus asks us to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talents, and our treasure as an outward sign of our love and gratitude for Him.
- How much time have you spent this week visiting with God through prayer and promoting the work of God’s Church.
- Have you ever stopped and thought about how many hours you spend doing things for yourself versus how many hours you spend helping others?
- *“...Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise”* (Luke 3:11)

June Announcements (Year One)

- Sharing our time, talent, and treasure is not about giving until it hurts. Rather, it is about giving until you feel good about what you have given.
- If you don’t share your time, talent, and treasure with what you have now, you probably wouldn’t share your gifts even if you had more.
- *“The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones...”* (Luke 16:10)

- You are just one person but you are important to God and His work. Be faithful as you give of your time, talent and treasure.

July Announcements (Year One)

- Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all of His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent, and treasure allotted to us.
- 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.
- *"Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."* (Luke 6:38)
- *"Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."* (1 Peter 4:8-10)

August Announcements (Year One)

- Have you ever taken a moment to think about how much time you spend each week volunteering in your church or your community?
- *"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind."* (Hebrews 13:16)
- Have you ever thought about what percentage of your income you share with the church and other charitable causes.
- Stewardship is planned giving. It challenges us to plan and asks us to appraise – deliberately – what we are doing with our time, our talent, and our treasure.

September Announcements (Year One)

- Christian Stewardship provides a spirituality that you can take home from church, exercise at work, and express through personal involvement in your community and church.
- Stewardship is not job-oriented or project-minded. It is a way of life for your lifetime.
- Christian Stewardship takes a positive view on money. It sees money not only as a medium of exchange but as a symbol of the person who has it. The way we acquire it, use it, and share it, we are revealed in those actions.

- Christian Stewardship trains us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. To give to God should be from the top—not what may be left over.

October Announcements (Year One)

- Stewardship is an important for our spiritual growth as Catholics. We can thank God for His blessings by returning to Him a portion of our time, talent, and treasure.
- Giving our time involves being with God in prayer and worship and volunteering our time in the church and community activities to help others.
- *“For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”* (Luke 12:34)
- Sharing our talents arises from acknowledging God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well, and we are to develop these talents for the good of others.

November Announcements (Year One)

- *“Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.”* (1Corinthians 4:1-2)
- As we practice stewardship, we grow spiritually and our faith is deepened.
- As we approach Thanksgiving Day, let us take time to consider the blessings we receive from God and to thank Him.
- Stewardship of our time and talent and treasure is not limited only to the Church. Many people share their gifts with the community as well.

December Announcements (Year One)

- *“Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life.”* (1 Timothy 6:18)
- We are all stewards – managers of the many gifts God has bestowed upon us. Our challenge as Christians is to make good use of these gifts.
- Some of the obstacles that keep us from “making a straight path” for the Lord are the same obstacles that keep us from embracing stewardship as a way of life. John the Baptist calls us to reform our lives and to let go of the selfishness and greed that keep us from following God’s will.

- *“In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” (Acts 20:35)*
- In our daily lives, we manage our family and work responsibilities. But to become occupied with these important matters to the exclusion of the need of others outside our home or work, is a mistake we could carry into eternity.

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## **Year Two Bulletin Announcements**

### *January Announcements (Year Two)*

- It is important to measure our generosity not by what we give, but by what we have left.
- Stewardship involves a change of heart, embodied not just in a single action, nor even a series of actions, but in one’s entire life.
- *“... Everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:33)*
- Stewardship involves a conscientious, firm decision, carried out in action, to conduct one’s self as a follower of Jesus, regardless of the cost.

### *February Announcements (Year Two)*

- As Catholics, we are called by our Baptism to reach out and share our time, talent, and treasure with our brothers and sisters.
- *“But let our people, too, learn to devote themselves to good works, to supply urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.” (Titus 3:14)*
- We do not give because we have an abundance of resources and can afford to give; we give what we have to help others out of love and gratitude to God.
- St. Paul is often misquoted as saying “Money is the root of all evil.” He said no such thing. Money helps to feed the hungry, clothe the naked; and shelter the homeless.

### *March Announcements (Year Two)*

- Lent is a time for us to reflect on our relationship with God. We are called to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in our Lenten stewardship.

- If we give according to God's principles, God will give back to us. The young man, who gave his loaves and fishes to help feed the multitude, did not go without dinner.
- Stewardship reminds us to count our blessings, acknowledge God's gifts to us, and express thanks to Him by proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.
- *"Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work."*  
(2 Corinthians 9:8)
- The decision to give has less to do with budgets and more to do with placing your life in God's hands.

#### *April Announcements (Year Two)*

- Stewardship of time, talent, and treasure is a way to deepen our spiritual life, not a way to increase our giving, although living stewardship results in both.
- *"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:45)
- God has taught us that you cannot love without giving. Love calls us to action and to share our time, talent, and treasure with our brothers and sisters in need.
- If we give ourselves to God and let Him use our talents to serve others, we will be amazed by the results. Not only will our lives be changed, but so also the lives of others.

#### *May Announcements (Year Two)*

- Do we take the initiative in giving our time, talent and treasure, or do we wait to be asked?
- *"In generous spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts."*  
(Sirach 35:7)
- Whatever time we have on this earth is a gift from God, and God asks us to use it wisely, to serve Him and our brothers and sisters in physical and spiritual need.
- Stewardship of time, talent, and treasure faces obstacles related to greed, selfishness, irresponsibility, and a lack of trust. Place your trust in God and the rest will follow.
- All of us are called to be good stewards of our time, but to what ministry or good work is God calling me.

*June Announcements (Year Two)*

- *“With each contribution show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy.”* (Sirach 35:8)
- It is important that we budget our hours as we budget our income so we are able to share our time with our church and community activities.
- Stewardship of treasure is based on giving a percentage of our income. If we have little income, we give a little. If we have more income, we give more. Whether we are poor or rich, we can give a percentage of our income to our church and charities.
- Why not keep a record for one week of how you spend your time to see how much you share to do God’s work here on earth.

*July Announcements (Year Two)*

- The grateful heart needs to express gratitude to God. This can be done through prayer service to others, and sharing one’s resources to support good works.
- The heart that gives is open to receive. Ask our dear Lord Jesus Christ to open your heart so that you willingly share your gifts of time, talent, and treasure to help others.
- *“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should have the means to contribute so freely? For everything is from you, and we only give you what we have received from you.”* (1 Chronicles 29:14-16)
- If we accept the challenge of putting God first in sharing our time, talent, and treasure, our attitudes, priorities, and spiritual lives will be transformed.

*August Announcements (Year Two)*

- Have you given real thought lately to how good God is to you? Do you give in proportion to what God has given to you?
- Christ makes it quite clear that he expects us to be different. One of the ways he expects us to be different is by practicing stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
- *“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you”* (John 15:12)
- A life committed to stewardship requires we “possess lightly”. Jesus warned of the dangers of clinging to material possessions, and that our true treasure is life in heaven with our Father.

*September Announcements (Year Two)*

- Use the talents you possess: The woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sang best.
- Those who practice stewardship know they are caretakers of God's gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and are eager to share their gifts out of love for God and one another.
- Stewardship calls us to share generously what we have with others as members of one Christian community. Stewardship requires that we depend on God.
- Those who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all that they have and all that they are.

*October Announcements (Year Two)*

- *"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."* (John 20:21)
- Giving and sharing are learned responses. It is our responsibility to teach our young people this lesson.
- Stewardship opens our hearts and hands to others -- being available and willing to listen and share our time and our love. Those we give to can be neighbors, fellow parishioners, and our brothers and sisters in need.
- The meaning of money is attached to its use. God never condemned money, as such, but rather insisted that it be used to further the Kingdom of God.

*November Announcements (Year Two)*

- God has given each of us some special abilities. It is important that we use them to help one another and share the many blessings God has given to us.
- *"For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."* (Mark 12:44)
- Thanksgiving is a time for us to reflect on God's many blessings in our lives and to give "thanks" to our loving God, who will never be outdone in generosity.
- How much of your time, other than an hour on Sunday, do you give back to God for the many blessings that you have received from Him.
- Give your time, talent, and treasure until you feel good about your gift and your heart knows you have done something for God.

*December Announcements (Year Two)*

- Develop your talents to the fullest so that you can use them to benefit your church and community. Your abilities will grow with use; unused, they may wither away.
- *“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce; Then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow.”* (Proverbs 3:9-10)
- Your church and community offer many opportunities for using your time and talent in God’s service.
- Stewardship of treasure involves trust in God. You have to truly believe in God’s Providence and trust that, if you give 10% of your income to church and charity, He will help you live on the remainder of your income.
- No one has ever become poor for giving to our God who is so rich in love, mercy, and goodness.



The following passages from Holy Scripture are especially suited to the stewardship message.

| <b>Old Testament</b>   | <b>Stewardship Message</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1 Chronicles 29:14)   | <i>"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should have the means to contribute so freely? For everything is from you, and we only give you what we have received from you."</i>                                                                               |
| (Deuteronomy 14:22-29) | <i>"Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows in the field you have sown...so that the Lord, your God, may bless you in all that you undertake."</i>                                                                                                     |
| (Deuteronomy 16:16-17) | <i>"...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."</i>                                                                                  |
| (Deuteronomy 26:1-2)   | <i>"...you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest ...and putting them in a basket you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, chooses for the dwelling place of his name."</i>                                  |
| (Leviticus 27:30)      | <i>"All tithes of the land, whether in grain from the field or in the fruit from the trees, belong to the Lord, as sacred to Him."</i>                                                                                                                              |
| (Malachi 3:10)         | <i>"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, That there may be food in my house, and try me in this, says the Lord of Hosts: Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessing upon you without measure?"</i>                              |
| (Proverbs 3:9)         | <i>"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all you produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow."</i>                                                                                                   |
| (Proverbs 11:25)       | <i>"He who confers benefits will be amply enriched, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."</i>                                                                                                                                                     |
| (Sirach 35:7-9)        | <i>"In generous spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts. With each contribution show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy. Give to the Most High as he has given to you, generously, according to your means"</i> |
| <b>New Testament</b>   | <b>Stewardship Message</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| (Matthew 3:10)         | <i>"Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."</i>                                                                                                               |

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (Matthew 5:16)     | <i>“Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                    |
| (Matthew 6:19-21)  | <i>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”</i> |
| (Matthew 6:24)     | <i>“No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one or love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”</i>                                                                                                                                |
| (Matthew 10:42)    | <i>“And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he surely will not lose his reward.”</i>                                                                                                                     |
| (Matthew 14:16)    | <i>“[Jesus] said to them, ‘There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.’”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (Matthew 16:26)    | <i>“What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct.”</i>                        |
| (Matthew 22:37-39) | <i>“He said to them, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”</i>                                                  |
| (Matthew 25:44-45) | <i>“...‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’”</i>                                      |
| (Mark 10:21)       | <i>“...‘Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven.’”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| (Mark 10:43-45)    | <i>“...Whoever wishes to be great among you, you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”</i>                                              |
| (Mark 12:44)       | <i>“For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.”</i>                                                                                                                                               |

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| (Luke 3:11)    | <i>“...‘Whoever has two coats should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.’”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| (Luke 6:38)    | <i>“Give and gifts will be given to you...”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| (Luke 11:10)   | <i>“For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| (Luke 12:33)   | <i>“Sell your belongings and give alms.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| (Luke 12:34)   | <i>“For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| (Luke 14:33)   | <i>“...Every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| (Luke 21:1-3)  | <i>“When he looked up he saw some wealthy people putting their offerings into the treasury and he noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins. He said, ‘I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest; for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood.’ ”</i> |
| (John 9:4)     | <i>“We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (John 20:21)   | <i>“[Jesus] said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ ”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| (John 14:21)   | <i>“Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (John 15:16)   | <i>“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| (Acts 2:44-45) | <i>“All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| (Acts 4:34-35) | <i>“There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.”</i>                                                                                                                                     |



|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| (Acts 20:35)          | <i>“...keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| (Romans 12:6-8)       | <i>“Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”</i> |
| (1 Corinthians 4:1-2) | <i>“Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| (1 Corinthians 16:2)  | <i>“On the first day of the week each of you should set aside and save whatever he can afford, so that collections will not be going on when I come.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| (2 Corinthians 8:9)   | <i>“For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| (2 Corinthians 9:7)   | <i>“Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (1 Timothy 6:7)       | <i>“For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| (1 Timothy 6:8-9)     | <i>“If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that. Those who want to be rich are falling into temptation and into a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge them into ruin and destruction.”</i>                                                                                                                                |
| (1 Timothy 6:10)      | <i>“For the <b>love</b> of money is the root of all evils, and some people in their desire for it have strayed from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| (1 Timothy 6:17)      | <i>“Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| (1 Timothy 6:18-19)   | <i>“Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life.”</i>                                                                                                                                                                  |

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| (Titus 3:14)    | <i>“But let our people, too, learn to devote themselves to good works to supply urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.”</i>                                                                                  |
| (Hebrews 13:16) | <i>“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.”</i>                                                                                                                 |
| (James 2:15-16) | <i>“If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? ”</i> |
| (James 4:3)     | <i>“You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”</i>                                                                                                                               |



*These questions and answers on stewardship can be incorporated into the educational materials you develop during our Stewardship Initiative or used in parish bulletins or newsletters as an ongoing awareness activity.*

**Q. What is Stewardship?**

- A. While a single definition cannot explain all there is to learn about stewardship, it can provide us with spiritual direction. Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. In parishes and dioceses that initiate Stewardship, lives have been transformed spiritually. Stewardship is a way of life that allows us to thank God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent, and treasure in a planned and proportionate manner. Stewardship engenders a spirituality that deepens our relationship with the Lord. Stewardship affects the lives of individual parishioners as well as parishes.

The Archdiocese of Mobile has adopted the following definition of stewardship, which has been used by the Diocese of Wichita (KS).

*Stewardship is a grateful response to God's love. Based in Scripture, all that we are and all that we have flows from God as gift. In turn, we serve as stewards of our spiritual and material gifts and we share these gifts in love of God and neighbor.*

**Q. Is stewardship of treasure a gimmick for raising money for the Church?**

- A. No, not even close! Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible has dozens of references to stewardship and Jesus specifically talks about stewardship in a number of His parables. He made it very clear that His followers should share what they have with those in need. This sharing of gifts includes time, talent, and treasure. Stewardship is based on God's Word not on fundraising needs of the Church or charities.

Stewardship is based on our need to thank God in recognition that all we have and all we are comes from Him. We thank God for His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent, and treasure allotted to us while we are here on earth. Our decision to share our time, talent, and treasure is based on our need to give thanks. For example, in terms of sharing treasure, we should give the same amount of money whether the parish is \$200,000 in debt or has \$200,000 in savings because we give to thank God.

Finally, sharing a portion of our time, talent, and treasure is not limited to the Church, many of us commit our time and talent as volunteers of many good works; some with the church and some with the community. As you can see, stewardship is certainly not a fundraising gimmick but a way of life based on spiritual principles.

**Q. What is stewardship of time and talent and why is it important?**

- A. Being a good steward of our time means visiting with God in prayer and worship, sharing God’s love with family and friends, and sharing our talents as volunteers in church ministries and community activities that help others and promote justice. God gave each of us special talents He wants us to use in doing good deeds.

It is important that in sharing our God given gifts of time, talent, and treasure, our actions are intentional, planned, and proportionate. Many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to pray, to volunteer, and to do good works.

Sharing our time and talent is as important as sharing our treasure. God does not hold back on any area of His giving to us and we should do the same to others.

**Q. How do we give our time, talent, and treasure?**

- A. Stewardship involves intentional, planned, and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

Intentional is a well thought-out deliberate decision to live our Christian life according to how Jesus Christ wishes us to do so. In doing this, we need to thank God for His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure He allotted to us.

We need to plan to give. At least once every year, every Catholic and Catholic family needs to review their annual plan to share their treasure and making this the top item on their household budget and to review their lifestyle to be certain there are opportunities to share their time and talent.

Proportionate - A decision is made to give a certain percentage of one’s time and one’s income to the church and other charities.

**Q. What difference will stewardship make in our lives?**

- A. By being a good steward we focus on God and our relationship with Him. Instead of focusing on needs, we are intent of sharing what God has given us with those who need our help.

Another difference is in the motivation for giving. Stewardship is an integral part of our spiritual life and we give in that context because we are grateful to God for what He has already given us. We give freely because **we want to** not because we have to.

Another difference can be found in our spiritual development. As we practice good stewardship, we grow spiritually and discover a deepening of our faith. In fact, we find that our lives are transformed for the good.

**Q. How do our needs or the needs of our family fit into the concept of stewardship?**

- A.** Your first responsibility is to take care of your needs and the needs of your family - **not wants**. In examining what we need versus what we want, we place material things and money in their proper context. For example, when someone buys a new house, they may decide to buy the smaller model as opposed to the larger, glitzy house if they are practicing stewardship of treasure. The smaller house meets their needs and not necessarily their wants.

Stewardship of treasure asks only a percentage of income - not the whole thing. Many of us find that by trusting and making a tithe to the church and other charities, we can live more than adequately on our remaining income. It is important to pray to the Holy Spirit when deciding what percentage of income you would like to tithe. The Holy Spirit is an excellent guide who can be heard loud and clearly in your heart.

**Q. What are some examples of stewardship of time and talent?**

- A.** The following list of stewardship opportunities for time and talent is not inclusive, but does provide a broad overview of ways one can share their time and talent.

|                                 |                             |                               |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Adult Day Care Volunteer        | Liturgy Commission member   | Adult Education Facilitator   |
| Masonry                         | AIDS Effort Volunteer       | Men’s Club                    |
| Altar Guild/Society             | Migrant Ministry Volunteer  | Altar Server                  |
| Minority Ministry Volunteer     | Arts and Crafts Teacher     | “Mothers” Morning Out Aide    |
| Parish Publication Artwork      | Musician                    | Auto Repair                   |
| Newcomers’ Coffee               | Eucharistic Minister        | Newsletter Writing / Editing  |
| Baby-Sitting                    | Administrative Work         | Preparation for Sacraments    |
| Outreach to Catholics           | Bereavement Support         | Community Board Member        |
| Bible Study Teacher / Aide      | Painting                    | Pastoral Council member       |
| Parish Dinner Preparation       | Budget Planning             | Capital Campaign Volunteer    |
| Campus Ministry Volunteer       | Telephone Answering Help    | Lawn / Plant Caretaker        |
| Photographer                    | Carpentry                   | Choir Member                  |
| Faith Formation Teacher         | Plumber                     | Printer                       |
| Prayer Group Leader             | Clothing Ministry Volunteer | Computer Programmer           |
| Community Life Volunteer        | Respect-life Volunteer      | Public Relations Assistance   |
| Property/Real Estate Assistance | Crisis Pregnancy Volunteer  | Catholic School Volunteer     |
| Driver                          | RCIA Sponsor                | Scout Leader / Helper         |
| School Aide / Volunteer         | Electrical work             | Evangelization Volunteer      |
| ESL Teacher                     | Sewing                      | Sound Systems/Electronic Help |
| Social Service Volunteer        | Family Life Volunteer       |                               |

**Q. What portion of my time, talent and treasure should I give?**

- A. Giving our time, talent, and treasure involves changing our attitude towards giving. We need to remember that this life is transitory and that all of the gifts God has given us are on loan for the span of our life. God intended for us to share our time, talent, and treasure in proportion to what we have been given. Biblically speaking we should be sharing one tenth, or ten percent of our time, our talents, and our treasure.

In sharing we should commit five percent to our parish and five percent to various charities and good works. Some, because of circumstances, give more than that. Others might start at two, three, or four percent. When you are at peace about the size of your gift, when you do not find yourself making excuses for its size, when you know in your heart that you have been completely honest with God and yourself, then your gift is the proper size.

I have never met anyone who said they are poor because they tithe. Most of us discover tithing frees us from thinking too much about what we should be giving and brings us an inner peace.

**Q. If we are committed to paying tuition because we have children in a Catholic school, does that tuition count as part of our commitment to stewardship of treasure?**

- A. Each person ultimately must decide for himself what counts as their stewardship of treasure. In looking at the true meaning of stewardship, however, tuition would not be included in stewardship of treasure because it is a payment made for services received, namely Catholic education. Stewardship is giving in gratitude to God with no expectation of receiving anything concrete, such as education, in return.

While tuition may not be included in stewardship of treasure, it can affect the percentage of income that some families can give to the church and other charities.

**Q. How can we make our fellow parishioners and our families more aware of Stewardship?**

- A. In your parish you can use the church bulletins and parish newsletters to publish stewardship thoughts, questions and answers, and stories about good stewards. You can use the same means to highlight the many activities that are available in your parish.

You can become actively involved in community service as a parish group or as an individual . . . working at a homeless shelter, gleaning, and so forth. You can ask your Parish Finance Council to give regular reports on your parish's Stewardship of Treasure. Hanging banners, posting information on bulletin boards, and placing materials in the bookrack are additional means of reinforcing stewardship.

In your family, you may want to look at your lifestyle, at your accumulation of

“things”, and at the amount of time you spend with your family and for other people. This could mean taking an inventory of all of the “stuff” each member of your family possesses. It could mean taking your personal calendars and looking at where your time is being spent. Or, it could be as simple as going through your checkbook and seeing where your money goes. A parishioner once asked, “If someone found your lost checkbook, would they be able to tell whether or not you are a good steward?”

One family of seven, in an effort to start tithing, decided to “give up” their usual Friday night pizza dinner. (To the surprise of the parents, it was the teenage son’s suggestion). This freed up almost \$25 each week to be given to the church. They missed their pizza and began making their own. According to the mom, this has become real family time...members trying to outdo each other with their “originality” in the pizza making. It is amazing how often wants undermine and sometimes destroy what we really need to grow as individuals and families.

We must continually remind ourselves that all we have is because of a generous and loving God. He asks that we use His gifts wisely and return them generously for the benefit of one another. This awareness takes effort on our part, especially since we live in a materialistic and consumer oriented society—a society that tells us we come first; that we’ve worked hard for what we have, and it is ours to use for our own pleasure. The message of stewardship is completely different and reminds us that our life on this earth is to be spent in loving God and neighbor.

**Q. How important is it for children to learn about stewardship?**

- A. It is very important, the earlier we can begin teaching them, the better. We teach children while they are very young about Jesus, about prayer, and about love. We take them to church every week. We help them to understand the difference between their “needs” and their “wants.” These are all important parts of the Christian life.

Giving ourselves is also an important part of our Christian life, and we need to begin teaching children the meaning of true giving while they are young. More and more parishes are encouraging children to return a percentage of their allowance or other income by giving children their own church envelopes for the collection basket. Parents are encouraged to take a child with them when they visit the homebound or people in nursing homes. Religious education programs and youth groups are providing opportunities for children to mail cards to sick parishioners or to make food baskets for the poor. Many parishes now have stewardship commitment forms for children and youth as a part of the annual stewardship renewal.

**Q. Doesn’t the Church talk about money too much?**

- A. Individual churches vary regarding the amount of time spent talking about money, but the reality is the daily operation of parishes require money for everything from the utilities to salaries to ministerial outreach. In fact, it is a duty of the Church to ask for money, not only for its work but for the work done by Catholic charitable

organizations in serving our communities. The Church has always been a “Good Samaritan” to those in need regardless of their religious affiliation or culture. As a member of the Church, we need to help with this outreach.

On a number of occasions St. Paul urged the early Church to give money to help those in need. He even had very specific instructions on taking the collection for Jerusalem in his second letter to the Corinthians.

Today the focus of the Church is much more on stewardship than on “talking about money”. Stewardship is based on the individual’s need to give thanks, not on the Church’s need to receive. Stewardship is based on the premise that all that we have and all that we are comes from God and, as a way to thank God for all His blessings, we return a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.

**Q. Is committing to being good stewards of our time, talent and treasure asking us to do too much?**

A. No. Committing to being good stewards by sharing a portion of our time, talents, and treasure is the foundation for living a Christian life. To follow in the footsteps of Jesus is very difficult, but He never said it would be easy. Throughout the New Testament Jesus makes it clear that we should not succumb to the easy living of this earth, but should discipline ourselves and make sacrifices so that we will win the true life.

Making a commitment to stewardship is particularly challenging with today’s emphasis on materialism, consumerism, and leisure time. We need to realize that stewardship is a gradual on-going conversion process that changes our hearts, minds, and values. We are called to say “yes” to God and to a way of life He has spelled out for us in the Bible. We are asked to say “no” to the earthly values that are in direct contradiction to our spiritual lives and values.

**Q. Am I expected to give my time, talent and treasure exclusively to the church?**

A. No. Giving your time, talent, and treasure is not limited to the church. We also need to share these gifts with other charities, community groups, and volunteer organizations doing good deeds to help those in need.

**Q. Why should we give thanks?**

A. God asks us to give thanks. We would have no gifts of time, talent, and treasure without God. All that we are, all that we have, and all that we will become is a blessing from God.

**Q. What if we don’t have enough time to volunteer to help in our church or community?**

A. An immediate, almost natural reaction of most people when asked to volunteer or help with church ministries or community activities is an immediate, “I don’t have the time.” For some of us this may be a valid excuse but for most of us it’s not a



question of having the time, but of using the time we have. Why not keep a record for one week only to see where your time goes and for what activities. How much time do you spend volunteering in church and community activities?

**Q. Why is it important to renew annually our commitment to stewardship as a parish?**

**A.** It is important for many reasons. First, the message of stewardship like other messages in Scripture and in the teachings of the Church needs to be presented on a regular basis. Without regular reminders and encouragements regarding Biblical and Church teachings, we would have a tendency to revert to our old ways. Second, we need to renew ourselves spiritually and to be reminded that God calls us to be good stewards of the gifts He has given us. Renewing our commitment to stewardship gives us the opportunity to increase our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Third, there are members of the parish who did not participate in the previous year's stewardship initiative. Renewal gives them another opportunity to become involved in stewardship. Fourth, we have new parishioners who did not have the opportunity to commit to stewardship during our last initiative.

**Q. How do special efforts such as capital campaigns fit with stewardship of treasure?**

**A.** If you are committed to stewardship of treasure and have made your annual commitment of a specific percentage of your income to church and the community, then a capital campaign can present you with the opportunity to increase that percentage. In fact, many people use a capital campaign as a way to move forward from giving four percent of their income to giving six percent of their income. Then when the campaign pledge is completed (usually after 3 years), that money is available for other good works and deeds.

If you are not yet committed to stewardship of treasure, then making a pledge to a capital campaign can give you the opportunity to become involved with stewardship. For example, in most parishes, only 30-35 percent of the people will contribute to the offertory but 60-85 percent of the people will commit to a capital campaign.

**Q. In the area of stewardship of treasure, don't Catholics already give more than other religious groups in this country?**

**A.** No. According to a 1990 Gallup Poll conducted for a study by Independent Sector, Catholic households contributed on average less money to the church and charities than members of all other religious groups in the United States.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| <p>Catholic households contributed, on average, less money to the Church and charities than members of all other religious groups in the United States</p> <p>CATHOLICS - \$515 = 1.3%<br/>PROTESTANTS - \$842 = 2.4%<br/>JEWS - \$1,854 = 3.8%<br/>ALL OTHER RELIGIONS - \$1,075 = 2.7%</p> <p>Percentages show the percent of household income given</p> |
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**Q. “What if I can’t afford to share any of my treasure?”**

- A. The message of stewardship invites each of us to proportionally share our time, talent, and treasure in gratitude to God for our abundant blessings. For some of us, giving of our time and talent goes without saying. We recognize our giftedness and respond to the invitation to participate in the community of faith by sharing of ourselves.

Giving of our treasure may seem unfeasible to many faithful Catholics, especially during these trying economic times. One might ask “How can I give when I can’t even make ends meet as it is?” This is where we are invited to an understanding that stewardship involves trust. Jesus discusses this many times in the New Testament.

By placing our trust and confidence in God, we can respond to the challenge to give our treasure and abandon ourselves to the providence of God. If we trust God, we accept that He is the controller of our lives. By trusting God, we discover that as we share, our needs are met, maybe not our wants, but certainly our needs.

Regardless of our circumstances, a life committed to stewardship includes giving our treasure as well as our time and talent. Our giving may begin small, and may increase over time, but the key to our giving lies in our trust. When we give back to God from our “first fruits”, we find that He will provide for our needs.

**Q. How do our assets fit into our stewardship commitment of treasure?**

- A. For most people assets have not been a part of their stewardship commitment of treasure. Today, however, more and more people are considering assets as part of their stewardship of treasure.

The primary focus of our stewardship commitment of treasure has been our income. That income for some is limited to their salaries, but many also include sources beyond that such as investment income, income from things we sell, such as a house, or other sources of non-salary income.

As people grow in their stewardship life, however, more of them are realizing that limiting their stewardship of treasure to just their regular salary doesn’t really reflect giving all that they have. Hence, more and more people are including their assets in their long-range plans related to stewardship of treasure. This includes, among other things, leaving part of one’s estate to the church, creating a trust with the Catholic Foundation, or proving support to charities through a will or making the church or charity beneficiary of an insurance or retirement plan.

**Q. “I already support government efforts through my taxes. Doesn’t that count as part of my stewardship?”**

- A. Fulfilling your government obligation would not be considered an act of stewardship for two reasons. First, a person committed to stewardship is not motivated by

laws and obligations. Rather, the person committed to stewardship views giving as a gesture in gratitude to God for the blessings received.

Secondly, the Bible clearly treats giving to the government as very different from giving to God through the church and charities. One it treats as a civic obligation and the other it treats as a Christian responsibility. In fact, the Bible speaks of giving our “first fruits” to God. This suggests that we give to God before we pay anyone or anything else, including the government.

Stewardship, then, asks us to give to church and charities above and beyond what we give to the government through taxes.

**Q. “What about all the people in my parish who give nothing at all?”**

- A. The question is not “What about them?” It is “What about me?” As we grow in our Christian faith, we learn to become more honest with ourselves before God. Rather than scrutinize those around us regarding their giving, we turn within ourselves and ask “Is my giving enough? Am I truly giving to God from my first fruits, or am I giving God what is left over after all of my needs are met?”

While it is natural for us to compare what we do with what others do, our Christian faith calls us to consider how our actions conform to what God wants us to do. In comparing ourselves to others, we miss the mark because as Christians we are called individually to live a life committed to stewardship.

Each of us can find in our own hearts the faults we spot so easily in others. Our giving should not be based on what others give, but on the personal decision we must make for ourselves.

**Q. How can I commit to stewardship of my talents if I don’t have any talents?**

- A. It would be difficult if you indeed had no talents, but the truth is everyone has at least one talent. Most people have several talents and a few people have many talents. Some people are musical or artistic. Others are good at teaching, cooking, organizing or encouraging others. Some work well with children or the elderly while others are good writers or good listeners.

The number of talents we have is not the important thing. What is important is that we take time to discover our talents and develop and use them for the benefit of others. God has all of this worked out in His plan.

It is important not to confuse having a talent with excelling in a specific area. For example, you don’t have to have the best voice to join the choir and remember, you can always do one thing better than everyone else and they can always do something better than you.



Lord God, you alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life. We praise you and we thank you for your great power and your tender, faithful LOVE.

Everything we are and everything we have is your gift, and after having created us you have given us into the keeping of Your Son, JESUS CHRIST.

Fill our minds with HIS truth and our hearts with HIS love, that in HIS Spirit we may be bonded together into a community of faith, a parish family, and a caring people.

In the Name and Spirit of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our material gifts as an outward sign of the Treasure we hold in Jesus. AMEN

### **Prayer for Generosity**

LORD JESUS, you came to tell us that the meaning of life consists in giving. YOU told us that those who cling too tightly to what they have—without thought for YOU or others—end up losing everything. YOU gave us new values by which to measure the worth of a person's life.

Help us to realize it is not temporal success or riches or fame that gives life meaning. Rather it is the service rendered to YOU and others that brings fulfillment and makes our lives worthwhile.

May all our activity help build GOD'S kingdom: our obedience bring true freedom, our generosity increase love, our sacrifice bear generous fruit, our death lead to eternal life. Amen.

### **Stewardship Prayer for Those in Ministry**

Creator God, life is your gift to us.

Through Baptism, You invite us to share the gift of life in service to others.

Be with us as we choose each day to show Your presence in our world.

Give us the courage and generosity to respond to Your love—to Your call.

We pray especially for those who serve You in ministry in our parishes. (diocese).

May we bear the Good News to those in need.

Keep us close to you.

Open the minds and hearts of many other men, women, and young people that they may accept Your challenge and call to build the Kingdom in our parishes.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.



*If not us, who? If not here, where? If not now, When? If not for the Kingdom, why?*

**To be done at time of General Intercessions or other appropriate time.**

*Each parish should adapt this service to include their own names of active organizations and ministries.*

**Celebrant:** Loving God, you gave us Faith as a means to know you and your Son. We have joined together here today to demonstrate to you and our brothers and sisters in faith at (Name of Church) that we hear your call to serve each other.

There are no small tasks in your vineyard. Each and every effort we make as individuals is made "in Communion" with our entire community. Each task receives value by your grace upon those who give and those who receive.

Inspire each of us to know that genuine faith in you and in your Son is best expressed by our love for and commitment to each other.

**Deacon/Lector:** As leaders and members of councils, commissions, and organizations are identified, please stand and remain standing as you are joined by other groups in acknowledgement of your commitment and good works. Our response is: "Lord, bless your faithful people."

Will those who serve our parish as members of the staff, the Pastoral Council, the Finance Council, Building Committee, or Tithing Committee please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they may have the gifts of good judgment, openness to all, courage and fortitude to discern your will...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve on the Education Commission, our faith formation teachers, Catholic school teachers, Bible study leaders, and those who volunteer in any way in our Faith Formation program please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they may have zeal to present the teaching of scripture and tradition to all and that they may live these teachings in their own lives...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve on the Liturgical Commission and those men, women, and children who help to bring the liturgies to life: announcers, lectors, the Eucharistic ministers who assist during Mass and who bring Communion to those who are homebound, altar servers, the Perpetual Adoration volunteers please stand and remain standing. (Pause) we pray that they will make our time of prayer and worship a time of growing closer to the Lord so that we may be nourished with God's word and the Body and Blood of Jesus...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve at our liturgies as, ushers and greeters, Sacristans, Altar Society, and art and environment designers please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they will continue to offer us the spirit of friendship, hospitality and love and that they will provide us with the reverent physical atmosphere to worship...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve in Music Ministry: the cantors, the parish choir, contemporary ensemble, youth choir, the children's choir, and the instrumentalists please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray they will use their talents to lead us in song and prayer through the lifting up of our hearts and voices...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless you faithful people.*

Will those who serve on the Evangelization committee and the RCIA process stand and remain standing. (Pause) we pray that they will truly spread the Good News of Salvation and peace to all who search for union with God...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve in the Family Life Ministries...Cluster Leaders, Wednesday Night Gathering, Scouting, Young Singles, Marries Ministry, Christian Mothers, Morning Woman's Club, Men's Club, Handmaids of Mary, the OWLS, the Memory Makers, Round Robin Bridge, and the Athletic Association please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that through our organizations we may experience a stronger sense of family based upon our common faith...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who serve in our Community Life Ministries...Crop walk, Friendship Trays, Habitat for Humanity, Men's Shelter, Pathfinders, Bereavement, COPING, Adult Tutoring, Blood Mobile, Crisis Assistance, Hospice, Respect Life, St. Vincent de Paul Society, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray they will have the dedication to reach out to others in our city and county and that they will truly assist the many needs of those less fortunate than ourselves...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will those who are in service to our parish as church office volunteers, coffee and donut servers, drivers who provide rides, parish newsletter, registration, Sunday greeters, stuffers and folders, reception servers, visitors to homebound, nursery workers please stand and remain standing (Pause) We pray that the tasks of communications, and service and fellowship within our parish will truly be an extension of the hospitality that Jesus, Himself, provides to all who call upon Him...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

Will all of those whose talents and service often go unrecognized in our parish, those who pray daily for the people of this parish, please stand and remain standing. We pray that all of us recognize our calling to pray for the people our parish, especially those who are serving the parish in active ministry, those who are sick and homebound, and those who lead us in ministry, prayer and worship...Let us pray. *R/ Lord, bless your faithful people.*

**Celebrant:** Loving and Gracious God, we are blessed and we thank you for the richness you place in our lives. Fill our hearts with gratitude so that we may joyfully share our wondrous gifts of time, talent and treasure. Help us to be ever mindful of the needs of our parish family. Teach us to be good and faithful stewards. Show us how to take good care of each other and the world that you have entrusted to us. We ask all of this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen*



The Stewardship Committee needs to make a detailed yearly plan, like the one below, that includes organization and preparation for the 2-3 weekend effort and awareness activities.

| MONTH     | DAY   | ACTIVITY                                  | PERSON RESPONSIBLE    |
|-----------|-------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| January   | 06    | Evaluation of Renewal weekend             | David/Trish           |
|           | 13    | Article in Parish Newsletter              | Judy                  |
|           | 20    | Check to see volunteers contacted         | Phyllis/Becky         |
|           | 27    | Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:30        | Emily & Father Bill   |
| February  | 04    | Order Stewardship materials for bookrack  | Marcelle              |
|           | 06    | Commissioning of Volunteers               | Liturgy Commission    |
|           | 13    | Question and Answer in Bulletin           | Bernadette            |
|           | 24    | Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:30        | Emily & Father Bill   |
| March     | 06    | Welcome Breakfast for Newcomers           | Stewardship Committee |
|           | 13    | Article in Parish Newsletter              | Judy                  |
|           | 24    | Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:30        | Emily & Father Bill   |
|           | 24    | Plan Stewardship Appreciation Dinner      | Committee             |
| April     | 07    | Mail invitations to Stewardship Dinner    | Susan                 |
|           | 21    | Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:30        | Emily                 |
|           | 29    | Stewardship Appreciation Dinner 7:00      | Stewardship Committee |
| May       | 15    | Question and Answer in Bulletin           | Bernadette            |
|           | 24    | Article in Newsletter                     | Judy                  |
|           | 25    | Evaluation of Stewardship Program         | Carol                 |
| June      | 09-30 | Revise Time and Talent Booklet            | Susan/Greg/Trish      |
| July      | -     | TAKE A REST!                              | EVERYONE!             |
| August    | 14-15 | Begin planning Renewal Weekend            | Stewardship Committee |
|           | 20    | Article in Newsletter                     | Judy                  |
|           | 21    | Stewardship literature in bookrack        | Marcelle              |
| September | 01    | Stewardship Bulletin Board Up             | Trisha/Becky          |
|           | 10-11 | Plan Ministry Fair                        | Greg/Trish            |
|           | 12-15 | Announce Children's essay contest         | Phyllis               |
|           | 22    | Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:30        | Emily/Father Steve    |
|           | 25    | Children's Stewardship                    | Carol                 |
| October   | 07    | Renewal materials to printer              | Carol                 |
|           | 18    | Article in Newsletter for Renewal Weekend | Judy                  |
|           | 17-18 | Recruit Lay Witness Presenters            | Bob /Phyllis          |
|           | 29    | Train Lay Witnesses                       | Trisha/Becky          |
| November  | 01-04 | Prepare mailing for Renewal               | Cassi                 |
|           | 06    | Article in Bulletin                       | Father Bill           |
|           | 07-08 | Post Stewardship Banners                  | Bob                   |
|           | 12-13 | Renewal Weekend - All Masses              | Father & Committee    |
|           | 15    | Mailing of Brochure/Commit. card          | Mailing Committee     |
|           | 20    | Commitment Sunday                         | Father Bill           |
| December  | 05    | Send Thank-You cards                      | David/Susan           |
|           | 12    | Thank-You in Bulletin                     | Bernadette            |

STEWARDSHIP SEASON



PARISH STEWARDSHIP EVALUATION

**Effectiveness of Stewardship Committee:** *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the effectiveness of the Stewardship Committee.*

- 1. The parish has an active committee that nurtures a year-around stewardship effort. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. The parish stewardship committee has a detailed annual plan. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. The stewardship committee has detailed responsibilities on an on-going basis. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Stewardship Education:** *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the quality of the parish stewardship education program.*

- 1. Stewardship education program for children \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Stewardship education program for youth. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Stewardship education program for young adults. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Stewardship education program for adults. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Stewardship education program for seniors. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Stewardship Renewal:** *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the elements of the parish stewardship renewal.*

- 1. Mailings from the pastor \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Educational materials \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Time and Talent Ministry Booklet \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Ministry Fair \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Lay Witness Talks \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Time, talent, and treasure commitment cards \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. On-going awareness activities \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Overall stewardship renewal with documented annual growth \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Commitment and Growth:** *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being superior, please evaluate the growth and change in the parish as a result of stewardship.*

1. The parish shows signs of a long-term commitment to stewardship. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The parish shows signs of spiritual growth. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The parish has grown in the area of community outreach. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Children's Stewardship Song

Kimberly Kay Kocmoud

### REFRAIN:

Eve-ry-thing I have is a gift from God, a gift from God, is a gift from God.

Eve-ry-thing I have is a gift from God, my Time, my Tal-ents and my Treas-ures.

### VERSES:

1. Time is how I spend my days. Do I wor-ry or do I praise?  
 2. Tal-ents are the spe-cial things that God has giv-en for me to do.  
 3. Treas-ures are the gifts from God like food and mon-ey and cloth-ing, too.

1. Do I give some time to God for all the time that He has giv-en me?  
 2. Can I draw or can I write, sing a song or smile so bright?  
 3. If I give I soon will see God will al-ways give me all I need.

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 St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 401 South Parker, Bryan, TX 77803, (409) 823-8145

**A STEWARDSHIP SONG**

Refrain Anonymous  
Text: Psalm 24:1-6



O make us faith-ful stew-ards of your boun-ty. Give us the  
grace to bring your love to birth. We place our time, our  
tal-ent, and our trea-sure, we place our work and wor-ship with-out  
mea-sure all at your ser-vice, God of all the earth.

- Verse 1: The Lord's is the earth and all it holds,  
the world and all who dwell in it,  
for God founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.
- Verse 2: Who may ascend God's holy hill?  
And who may stand in God's dwelling place?  
They whose hands are pure, whose hearts are clean;  
those who do not seek for what is vain.
- Verse 3: You shall receive a blessing from the Lord,  
a reward from the God who saves you,  
when you serve your God with all your heart,  
see the face of God, the God of Jacob.

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

<http://www.usccb.org/publishing/stewardship.shtml>

(Publishing Services, USCCB, 3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017-1197)

- *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* (Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, available in English and Spanish)
- *To be a Christian Steward* (Summary of Bishops' Pastoral in pamphlet form)
- *Stewardship and Young Adults: An Invitation to Change the World* (Pamphlet geared to young adults in promoting stewardship)
- *Stewardship – A 3-D Way of Life: Not for Adults Only* (A videotape that explains and promotes stewardship among teens of your parish)
- *Stewardship – A 3-D Way of Life: Money Back Guarantee* (A videotape to explain and promote adult stewardship in the parish)

**International Catholic Stewardship Council (202.289.1093)**

[www.catholicstewardship.org](http://www.catholicstewardship.org)

Materials are available in English and Spanish.

- *Stewardship: Disciples' Respond – A Practical Guide for Pastoral Leaders* (A manual for parish and diocesan leaders to promote stewardship as a way of life)
- *Children's Stewardship Manual* (Parish/Diocesan manual for those interested in promoting children's stewardship.)
- *Keeping Stewardship Alive: Proven Stewardship Ideas* (A manual and CD of creative and practical ideas submitted by parishes, dioceses, and individual contributors for the purposes of promoting stewardship beyond the first years.)
- Matthew R. Paratore, Former Secretary General of the International Catholic Stewardship Council, has written a series of reflections on stewardship. They can be found on the ICSC website.

**Liturgical Press (800.858.5450)**

<http://www.litpress.org>

- *Called to be Stewards: Bringing New Life to Catholic Parishes* (A book by Patrick McNamara with examples of stewardship funding and ministry.)
- *Creating a Stewardship Council* (A booklet detailing the development and formation of a stewardship committee)
- *Grateful Caretakers of God's Many Gifts: A Parish Manual to Foster the Sharing of Time, Talent and Treasure* (A manual by Monsignor Joseph Champlin to help foster stewardship in the parish)
- *The Heart of Stewardship: Sacrificial Giving* (A short video by Monsignor Champlin and Dutch & Barbara Schultz promoting stewardship as described in the Bishops' Pastoral Letter)

- *Parish Stewardship Manual* (Step-by-step timetable with examples of letters, prayers, and bulletin announcements—packets with brochures, posters, and sample mailings)
- *Sharing God's Gifts*  
(A small educational brochure explaining the meaning of stewardship)
- *Sixty-second Stewardship Sermons*  
(A resource book for pastors and deacons in preparing stewardship homilies. The short “sermons” on stewardship can also be used in newsletters and parish bulletins.)
- *Sustaining and Strengthening Stewardship*  
(A book by Jim Kelley with bulletin announcements, stewardship Scripture passages, and questions and answers on stewardship)
- *A Way of Life*  
(A booklet by Monsignor Champlin with four faith-sharing sessions on stewardship)

***Our Sunday Visitor*** (800.348.2440)

[www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)

- *Why Catholics Don't Give, And What Can be Done About It*  
(A book by Charles Zech, Chair, Economics Department, Villanova University)
- *Best Practices in Parish Stewardship*  
(A book by Charles Zech, Chair, Economics Department, Villanova University)
- *Grace in Action*  
(Newsletters that can be used as bulletin inserts with feature stories on stewardship.)
- *Stewardship by the Book*  
(English and Spanish CD Roms and Paperback, by Sharon Hueckel. Contains stewardship bulletin announcements that reflect the Sunday Scripture readings.)
- *Living Catholic Stewardship: Joyful Generosity*  
(An informative brochure written by Sharon Hueckel on stewardship)
- *Living Catholic Stewardship: Discerning Your Gifts*  
(A brochure to discern individuals' gifts and talents by Lorene Hanley Duquin)
- *What the Church Teaches: Stewardship*  
(A short concise brochure on the Church teachings regarding stewardship)
- *Taking Care of God's Gifts: Stewardship A Way of Life (K-2)*  
(A stewardship coloring and activity book for children in grades K-2 by Laurie Whitfield and Robert Cammarata)
- *Taking Care of God's Gifts: Stewardship A Way of Life (3-5)*  
(A stewardship coloring and activity book for children in grades 3-5 by Laurie Whitfield and Robert Cammarata)
- *Catholic Stewardship: Sharing God's Gifts*  
(An informative paperback by Colleen Smith to motivate people regarding best practice of stewardship)

- Living Catholic Stewardship Conferences, sponsored by Our Sunday Visitor, provide outstanding speakers and presentations on the various topics of stewardship. For more information go to: <http://www.osvenvelopes.com/StewardshipProductsServices/ConferencesEvents/tabid/72/Default.aspx>

**Henri Nouwen Society** [www.HenriNouwen.org](http://www.HenriNouwen.org)

- *A Spirituality of Fundraising* (An excellent booklet on the spiritual perspective of fundraising as a ministry.)

**Twenty-Third Publications** (800.321.0411)

[www.twentythirdpublications.com](http://www.twentythirdpublications.com)

- *I Like Being in Parish Ministry: Stewardship* (A concise and informative booklet by Daniel Conway on stewardship with questions for reflection and prayer)
- *What Do I Own and What Owns Me?* (A book on the Spirituality of Stewardship written by Daniel Conway with a DVD of Archbishop Thomas Murphy and his reflections on the Pastoral Letter)
- *The Catholic Kid's Guide to Stewardship* (A book on children's stewardship written by Elizabeth M. Johnson)

**St. Catherine of Siena Institute** (888.878.6789)

<http://www.siena.org/Workshops.htm>

- *Called and Gifted* (A workshop facilitated by the St. Catherine of Siena Institute to help parishioners recognize their unique gifts and their response to God's call)

**Trumbauer Consulting** (612.823.7706)

<http://members.aol.com/trumbauer/>

- *Sharing the Ministry: A Practical Guide for Transforming Volunteers into Ministers* (A resource for helping parishioners recognize their unique gifts and call into shared ministry by Jean Morris Trumbauer)
- *Created and Called* (A program by Jean Morris Trumbauer for helping churches develop and manage a comprehensive approach to gifts-based ministry.)

**Parish Publishing** (888.320.5578)

[www.parishpublishing.org](http://www.parishpublishing.org)

- *Stewardship* (A monthly newsletter, English and Spanish, to understand true giving.)

**Archdiocese of Louisville, Office of Stewardship and Development** (502.585.3291)

- *Good Things are for Sharing: A Curriculum Guide in Stewardship for the Elementary School Level*
- *From the Heart: A Curriculum Guide in Stewardship for Middle and High School Levels*

***Resources for Children's Envelopes***

Our Sunday Visitor: [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com) (800.348.2440)

- Cathedral Corporation: [www.cathedralstewardship.com](http://www.cathedralstewardship.com) (800.698.0299)
- National Church Service, Inc.-The Envelope Service:  
[www.envelopeservice.com](http://www.envelopeservice.com) (800.627.9900)

***Resources for Parish Programs, Retreats and Missions with a Stewardship Focus***

- The Marian College Center for Catholic Stewardship offers programs, parish retreats and missions by Fr. Dan Mahan.  
<http://www.marianstewardship.org/>
- Partners in Stewardship for Life offers retreats, missions, evenings of reflection and workshops with Ed and April Laughlin.  
<http://www.partnersinstewardship.com/index.html>

