



WE BELONG TO CHRIST

Supporting our Parishes and Diocese

**We Belong to Christ
Stewardship Manual**

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	Page 1
What is Stewardship?	Page 2
What is the Church’s Interest in Stewardship?	Page 3
What Must a Person Do to be a Christian Steward?	Page 4
Getting Stewardship Started	Page 5
Forming a Stewardship Committee	Page 6
How to Select Stewardship Committee Members	Page 7
Sample Stewardship Timeline	Pages 8-9
Components of a Successful Stewardship Effort	Pages 10-11
Homily Outline	Pages 12-13
Tips for the Lay Presenter	Pages 14-15
Stewardship Chair Job Description	Page 16
Stewardship Committee Job Description	Page 17

Stewardship

WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

- Stewardship is a way of life! It is our recognition that all things come from God.
- Disciples (followers of the teachers of Jesus) who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the source of all they have and are and will be.
- Good stewards know themselves to be recipients and caretakers of God's many gifts.
- Good stewards are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate and share their gifts of our love for God and one another.
- Examples of "stewardship in action" include volunteering to help serve at funeral lunches, praying daily as a family, and contributing to a local Catholic ministry.

Stewardship

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S INTEREST IN STEWARDSHIP?

- In recent decades, many Catholics have entered into secular mainstream of American society.
- This process has widened the “split between faith and life” which Vatican II saw as “the most serious errors of our age” (Gaudium et Spes, no.43).
- The Church faces vexing questions:
 - ◆ How to use people’s gifts and charisma.
 - ◆ How to empower the laity.
 - ◆ How to recognize the role of women.
 - ◆ How to affirm racial, cultural, and ethnic minorities.
 - ◆ How to overcome poverty, oppression, and many other issues.
- Many Catholics are generously giving of themselves and their resources to the Church.
- However, others do not respond to the need in proportion to what they possess. Nationally, only 60% of registered households support their local parish with gifts, averaging three quarters of one percent of their annual income.
- Of the 42 major religious denominations, Catholics rank 40th in giving on a parish level. The goal of the stewardship program is to increase parishioners’ sharing of their spiritual, ministerial, as well as financial gifts.
- The Church now suffers a lack of resources. An improved financial situation would enhance the Church’s ability to carry out its mission and help the laity’s growth as disciples.
- Church support by the people is important, including the sharing of time, talent, spirituality, and treasure.
- Church support in the broader context addresses what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Essentially, it means helping the Church’s mission with money, time, spirituality, and personal resources of all kinds.
- The intent of this document is to help the pastors and parishioners increase their interest in stewardship.

Stewardship

WHAT MUST A PERSON DO TO BE A CHRISTIAN STEWARD?

- Recognize that stewardship is a long-term continuing process.
- Understand that stewardship is living a sharing, generous and accountable way of life.
- Express gratitude to God by sharing His gifts in justice and love with others.
- Recognize that stewardship is not about the Church's need to receive but an individual's need to give.

Getting Stewardship Started

THE PASTOR'S ROLE

A pastor should take several steps before starting a stewardship program in his parish:

- Form a stewardship committee by asking the most enthusiastic, committed, talented and willing members of your core group to serve.
- Delegate! Recruit a committed parish leader to work with you to start or renew a stewardship education program in your parish.
- Give your wholehearted support, be the leader of any stewardship plans and activities in your parish, and empower the parishioners to help your parish's stewardship plans.
- Assess the needs of your parish and your parish family and create a personal vision of what your parish can be in the future under the auspices of practicing Christian stewardship.
- Incorporate stewardship prayers into meetings, special intentions at Masses, as well as the weekly Church bulletin. Write your own prayer or use existing stewardship prayers.

Forming a Stewardship Committee

Pastors should not neglect this very important step in building a solid foundation for parish stewardship. The stewardship committee is a necessary and indispensable element in the ultimate outcome of a parish's efforts to convert parishioners to living out their faith by being good stewards of God's gifts. The stewardship committee is as important as any other commission or ministry in the parish. For it is, after all, good practicing Christian stewards who fill the rosters of parish commissions and ministries.

The stewardship committee should exist under the direction of the pastor or the parish council. The stewardship committee should never exist under the direction of the finance committee. If a movement towards total stewardship in the parish is to take hold, it must be spiritually based.

Stewardship cannot be cloaked in a disguise covering an ulterior motive; the Church's need to receive, as in money or volunteers. Stewardship can only root and thrive when the individual acknowledges that all he or she has is a gift from God. That person will then give out of gratitude, willingly and lovingly. Gratitude to a loving and generous God will then become the only motive for giving. Stewardship is then put in the proper context; it satisfies the individual's need to give, and not the Church's need to receive.

The number of members on a stewardship committee will vary according to the size of the parish and the number of people willing to serve. Do not restrict the size of the committee. The more people involved, the broader the outreach and the quicker the conversion of individual's hearts.

How to Select Stewardship Committee Members

The following draws a profile of a potential stewardship committee member:

- Deeply Spiritual – Your spiritual parishioners are easy to spot. You see them at daily Mass. They display a great love for the sacraments. They exude an aura of serenity and peace that flows from an intimate relationship with Christ. These individuals will serve on a stewardship committee for all the right reasons. Their actions will be prompted by their deep love of Jesus and their gratitude for His gifts.
- Good Stewards – These people live the life of a good and faithful Christian steward. They are committed volunteers and serve selflessly in all aspects of their life, family, church, and community. They freely give of themselves no matter what the cost. They are also generous with their financial blessings, always willing to share with those less fortunate. They, more than likely, are your most generous offertory givers.
- Visionary – These people are farsighted. They have the ability and imagination to envision what the parish can be under the auspices of stewardship. They will be able to develop a strategic plan for how the parish can grow spiritually, develop its ministries, and increase its outreach. They can write a mission statement for the parish that will guide the goals and direction of the parish in the future.
- Action Oriented – The people selected should be committed, accountable, creative, good time managers, articulate, possess leadership qualities, and be willing to get the job done.

Sample Stewardship Timeline

Prior to Week 1

- Attend the stewardship convocations along with your parish leadership. The dates, times and locations for these convocations will be announced.
- Review stewardship manual.
- Recruit a stewardship chairperson. This parishioner will help recruit the stewardship committee as well as implement the stewardship program at your parish.

Week 1

- Introduce stewardship into your parish, in your homily as well as your weekly bulletin.
- Begin praying the Stewardship Campaign Prayer during Mass. Continue weekly.
- Include the intention for a successful campaign during the prayers of the faithful. Continue weekly.
- Mail a Stewardship Campaign Prayer Card to households that normally do not attend weekly Mass with a letter from the Pastor requesting their prayers for a successful effort.

Week 2

- Present stewardship video at all Masses.

Week 3

- Have a lay presentation introduce the sharing of spiritual gifts through lay testimony.
- Reinforce the lay testimony with an article from the pastor in the weekly bulletin on the importance of sharing spiritual gifts.

Week 4

- Have a lay presentation introduce the sharing of ministerial gifts through lay testimony.
- Reinforce the lay testimony with an article from the pastor in the weekly bulletin on the importance of sharing ministerial gifts.

Sample Stewardship Timeline (Continued)

Week 5

- Introduce the sharing of financial gifts through lay testimony.
- Reinforce the lay testimony with an article from the pastor in the weekly bulletin on the importance of sharing financial gifts.
- Continue to publish in parish bulletin Pastor's writings on stewardship, reflecting on the readings for the day.

Components of a Successful Campaign Stewardship Effort

Campaign Stewardship Chair and Committee

A stewardship chair as well as a stewardship committee should be formed at every parish with the goal of implementing a campaign stewardship program at every parish.

Personal Letters

When communicating messages of stewardship, there is no more effective way than a personal letter from a pastoral leader about this very personal topic. It is a very personal matter when you ask someone to acknowledge God as the Creator of their gifts and remind them that it is an obligation to share their gifts in proportion to what they have received.

Homilies

The pastor should present the Biblical basis for stewardship during the parish stewardship effort. Many gospels and Sunday readings pertain to stewardship and present many opportunities throughout the liturgical year to preach the stewardship message.

Lay Witness Testimony

Stewardship testimony by a layperson or couple provides powerful motivation for others.

Prayers of the Faithful

Using prayers of the faithful to call parishioners to live as good stewards of their gifts of time, talent and treasure is a good spiritual motivator.

Bulletin Articles

Bulletin articles are excellent materials to elaborate on the stewardship message as well as elaborate on specific scripture quotes on stewardship.

Bulletin Announcements

The Sunday church bulletin is an excellent way to communicate weekly stewardship messages. Many stewardship resources plus your own creativity will achieve this.

Follow-up

Follow-up for every stewardship effort in the parish is critical. If a person volunteers to become part of a ministry, contact by a person on the ministry committee should happen immediately. The same applies to someone wanting to join a prayer group, rosary group, etc.

Thank You Letters

Commitments, either verbal or written, by a parishioner should always be followed up by a thank you letter.

Components of a Successful Campaign Stewardship Effort (Continued)

Stewardship Convocation

A two-day stewardship convocation will be held in both La Crosse as well as Stevens Point. The purpose of this event is to bring together pastors as well as other parish leadership for lay testimonies and discussions on the topic of stewardship.

Prayer Card

A stewardship prayer has been created and will be recited at Mass immediately following the prayers of the faithful.

Letter from the Bishop

A letter from Bishop ListECKI will be sent to every household within the Diocese, asking parishioners to pray the “stewardship prayer” as well as outlying ideas of how they can share their spiritual, ministerial, as well as financial gifts.

Stewardship Campaign Video

A stewardship campaign video will be shown at every parish during weekend Masses throughout the course of the campaign.

Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcements during the “inspiration” phase of the campaign will be sent to all of the local media outlets.

Homily Outline

- What is Stewardship?
 - ♦ Define stewardship – A steward is a manager. We are called to be stewards of God’s gifts.
 - ♦ Explain the basis for stewardship in the Catholic Church; spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Christ.
 - ♦ Stewardship is an act of religion – not only is it a way to give thanks to God for His blessings, but it is our way of sharing in Jesus’ mission here on earth.
- Discuss spiritual importance of Stewardship.
 - ♦ Use appropriate quotes from scripture to emphasize what the Lord expects from us as good stewards. To deny the stewardship message is to deny the words of scripture.
 - ♦ Explain how the layperson can use the principles of stewardship in a practical way to serve his family, his community, his church parish, the environment, etc. (time, talent, spiritual and treasure).
 - ♦ Stewardship is a barometer of one’s response to Jesus’ call to follow Him as disciples – a measure of one’s faith.
- Historical perspective of Stewardship.
 - ♦ Stewardship has its roots in Christianity: St. Paul’s teachings in the early days of Christianity.
 - ♦ The faith of our own ancestors in building (your parish) exemplifies stewardship in more recent or modern times. Now we can put a name to the time-honored traditions of building up the “body of Christ” through the Church.
- Create a vision for the future of the Catholic Church and the parish family under the auspices of Stewardship.
 - ♦ Cite examples of successful stewardship stories, i.e., St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Wichita, Kansas; previous efforts of your own parish; etc.
 - ♦ Tell how stewardship can affect the family life of an individual.

Homily Outline (Continued)

- Create a vision for the future of the Catholic Church and the parish family under the auspices of Stewardship. (continued)
 - ♦ Tell how stewardship can impact the community.
 - ♦ Tell how stewardship can impact the life of your parish:
 - Through prayer
 - Through ministry
 - Through finance
 - ♦ Emphasize that stewardship is not based on the Church's need to receive – but on an individual's need to give.
- Don't forget to "ask".
 - ♦ Ask parishioners to receive stewardship education via homily, brochure, letter, bulletin articles with an open mind and heart.
 - ♦ Ask parishioners to prayerfully consider what stewardship calls them to do.

Tips for the Lay Presenter

The following are key elements and points that should be covered in a lay presentation.

- The pastor should properly introduce the lay presenter and give a brief background of that individual's contributions to the parish community and his/her profession or vocation. This prevents the lay presenter from having to boast of his/her own accomplishments, which may prove embarrassing to some.
- The presenter should begin to talk by properly defining stewardship in his/her own words.
- During the presentation do not suggest that practicing stewardship is a response to the needs of the Parish. Emphasize that it is a grateful and individual response to a loving and giving God.
- The presenter should share his/her involvement in church ministry, school activities, community service projects, and describe the feelings, the joy, the rewards he/she personally experienced as a result of his/her involvement (i.e. he/she has made new friends, feels a sense of belonging or ownership, learned new skills, discovered hidden talents, felt closer to God, other rewards he/she may have experienced that can be directly attributed to his/her service to the Lord and others, etc.)
- The presenter should try to incorporate personal anecdotes concerning the lives he/she may have touched through his/her ministry (i.e. a child, the poor, the elderly, the unchurched, the sick, etc.)
- The presenter should be one who tithes or regularly contributes a proportionate share of his/her income to the parish and should be able to candidly share the joy and rewards of giving.
- Discuss how your family practices of stewardship through gifts of time, talent and treasure. (Examples might include spring cleaning and giving discarded clothes and other items to the poor, assistance given to an elderly neighbor, participation in environmental clean-up activities, coaching a little league team, etc.)
- Conclude the talk by encouraging fellow parishioners to generously contribute their time, talent and treasure by participating in the parish's call to Stewardship of Prayer, Ministry and Finance.

Tips for the Lay Presenter (Continued)

Tips for preparing a talk and delivering a talk

- Jot down your thoughts and personal experiences as they relate to the different points to be covered in “Tips for the Lay Presenter”.
- Take these notes and begin to write your talk out word for word.
- Sit down with your pastor or a stewardship committee member and edit the talk. Ascertain that you are including all of the points you want covered.
- Practice, practice, practice! Practice the talk aloud in front of a mirror. Deliver it to your spouse, family or a good friend and ask for their critique.
- If possible, practice your talk in church using the sound system.
- Strive to deliver the talk in a sincere, enthusiastic, and friendly manner.
- Keep the lay presentation to 2-3 minutes.

The lay presentation portion of the stewardship program (which is scheduled the weekend following the pastor’s stewardship homily) plays a very meaningful role in the stewardship education process. Parishioners can readily identify with or aspire to the testimony of those who live the lives of Christian stewards.

Stewardship

INDIVIDUAL PARISH STEWARDSHIP CHAIRS

- Recruit the Campaign Stewardship Committee at your parish.
- Assist the Pastor with the implementation of the Campaign Stewardship Plan as outlined in the Campaign Stewardship Manual.
- Attend regularly scheduled meetings during your parish's campaign.
- Appoint an alternate Chair to oversee the meetings that you are unable to personally attend.
- Openly support the goals of the campaign.
- Make a major gift to the campaign.

Stewardship

PARISH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

- Assist the Parish Stewardship Chair with the implementation of the Campaign Stewardship Plan as outlined in the Stewardship Guidebook.
- Attend regularly scheduled meetings during your parish's campaign.
- Openly support the goals of the campaign.
- Make a gift to the campaign.