



## **Lord, Source of All Gifts**

*Lord and Source of All Gifts,  
we, your people,  
rejoice in the fullness of  
Your generosity.*

*We thank you for those  
whose lives are visible signs  
of your love and blessing to others.  
Give us the courage to do the same.*

*Make us good stewards of all  
we have received, generously  
sharing our time, talents and  
treasure to build your kingdom  
of love and justice.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ  
in whom we begin and end all things.*

*Amen.*

*Taken from “ ‘Pray Always and Never Lose Heart’  
Luke 18:1  
A Treasury of Private Prayers  
for the Christian Steward”*





## **Leadership Formation**

*God does not judge us by how much we give  
but by how faithful we are in making that gift.*

There are many gifts among us! When we embrace Stewardship and *call forth* and *nurture* the gifts of all people, our parishes can be thriving, living testimonies to our faith. The ministries our parishes would be able to offer and the number of people affected by those ministries can be an incredible witness to the Spirit working within and among us. We *do* have all the resources we need in our own communities to become vibrant parishes.

One of the first steps is to develop plans that educate people about Stewardship so they can begin to recognize the gifts they have to offer. A true sense of Stewardship involves giving from our first fruits. So often, the tendency can be to give from what we have left over. When we understand Stewardship, then it is easy to see the abundance of gifts we and others have to offer. Giving from that abundance, rather than from a sense of ‘this is all I have left to give’ becomes a natural part of our lives.

That is why Stewardship is a conversion of the heart. It is a way of life. Stewardship will change us. It is very rewarding and joyful, however, when we truly place our trust in the Lord and share our gifts out of the pure joy of sharing; the old saying does ring true, “you will receive more than you give.”

As leaders in our parishes, we have the responsibility to ask people to do just what Jesus asked of his disciples: to give up their attachment to all that they possess, to place their trust in the Lord and follow Him. Jesus’ disciples were changed when they said ‘yes.’ Each of us needs to be changed in some way when we say ‘yes.’ What attachments will each of us leave behind as we begin or continue on our journey of Stewardship?

*Our mission as  
Stewardship  
professionals and  
committees is to  
engage people in  
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people on fire to  
live out their  
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God and others  
above all else.*





## *Responding to the Call*

Our mission as Stewardship professionals and committees is to engage people in ministry; to set people on fire to live out their baptismal promise to love God and others above all else.

Stewardship education is a continual process. The message of Stewardship may reach people at various times and in different ways. However, when parish leadership embraces Stewardship, it is most likely to thrive and be successful. Parishioners who have the experience of their leadership living lives of Stewardship are more likely to recognize this as an attainable goal. When parish leaders ensure that parishes are places of hospitality and help make people feel appreciated and needed, then parishioners will respond to the call of Stewardship.

How can those in parish leadership roles foster the Stewardship message throughout the ministries of the parish?

### **Parish Leadership Roles:**

- Pastor/Parish Director
- Pastoral Staff
- Parish Council
- Trustees
- Stewardship Committee
- All Committees of the Parish Council





## **Pastor/Parish Director**

The Pastor/Parish Director's commitment to Stewardship as a way of life is critical in a parish. How parishioners respond to the Stewardship education offered in the parish and what will be asked of them as baptized Catholics may in large part be due to the importance the Pastor/Parish Director places on this way of life. Public support of all phases of Stewardship education is necessary.

### **Some ideas for pastors to help parishioners live a life of Stewardship are:**

- incorporate Stewardship thoughts in homilies throughout the year
- prepare Stewardship homilies for the Stewardship weekends
- encourage the Parish Council to read about and study Stewardship
- utilize Archdiocesan training and consulting services for parish staff, Parish Council and Stewardship Committee
- help select lay witnesses and assist with their training
- thank people for all they do to serve God by serving others
- pray that people in the parish will grow spiritually as a result of their embracing Stewardship as a way of life.
- publicly support all elements of Stewardship as a way of life for the parish
- model Stewardship by making a financial commitment to the parish
- share your own Stewardship journey



## **Pastoral Staff**

The pastoral staff's support is also critical, as Stewardship is essentially intertwined throughout all the ministries of the parish. The staff has an important role in creating a hospitable atmosphere in the parish, helping to ensure all parishioners feel welcomed to share their gifts. Staff are central in helping parishioners discern their gifts to make the best match of their talents and the needs in the parish and community. When our gifts are drawn upon and used well, we are more likely to have a joyful, positive experience when we share them. Partnerships with pastoral staff will help facilitate this process.

### **Ideas for pastoral staff to help promote Stewardship as way of life:**

- **Director of Liturgy:** incorporate elements of Stewardship into the Liturgies, i.e. intercessions, music, orders of worship, commissionings and blessings, Stewardship commitment/recommitment opportunities
- **Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministry, and Day School Religion Teachers:** blend Stewardship education for children and youth into the curriculum; promote opportunities for children and youth to share their time and talents with the parish community
- **Director of Administrative Services:** create and maintain the technological systems that allow the parish to track gifts and the ability to communicate with parishioners
- **Business Manager/Bookkeeper:** from a Stewardship perspective, create various materials and messages to show parishioners the ministries their gifts are supporting, as well as all the ways all gifts of time, talent and financial resources are being used
- **Director of Human Concerns:** communicate and promote outreach activities which allow parishioners to share their gifts with the wider community
- **Parish Secretary:** ensure communication pieces are shaped through the lens of Stewardship and an atmosphere of welcome is created in the parish offices; facilitates the full completion of the Status Animarum for the Archdiocese, so the Office of Parish Stewardship has the information necessary from throughout the Archdiocese to be better able to assist in this area



## **Director of Stewardship**

There may come a time when the parish will want to consider a paid staff position for Stewardship. Adding a paid staff member provides a measure of consistency, accountability and coordination that may otherwise be missing. The Director of Stewardship's main responsibilities are to oversee the parish Stewardship effort and to act as a resource to the Stewardship Committee, parish staff and parish members. Along with the Stewardship Committee, they create a framework to help parishioners understand Stewardship as an expression of discipleship, as well as opportunities to cultivate time, talent and treasure.

There are a number of paid Stewardship Directors in parishes throughout the Archdiocese. The Archdiocesan offices of Parish Stewardship and Human Resources have prepared a sample job description for a Director of Stewardship which can be found in the Resource section.

### **Some of the responsibilities of a Director of Stewardship include:**

- annual Stewardship commitment/recommitment process
- new parishioner welcoming process
- follow-up and acknowledgment of gifts
- Stewardship messages for various vehicles of communication
- Stewardship education for committee, staff, parish
- annual pastoral report
- time, talent, and financial resource cultivation





## **Parish Council**

The commitment of the Parish Council to Stewardship education for the parish is just as critical as the Pastor's commitment. Understanding Stewardship as our call as baptized is important to understanding our mission as Church. All Stewardship efforts flow from that. Generally, people will respond positively to those who inspire and challenge them.

The Parish Council, as the visioning and policy-making body, has a leading role in Stewardship efforts. When "Stewardship" is the vision of the Parish Council, the work of all committees and ministries will flow from that vision.

### **Some ideas for Parish Councils to help with Stewardship education are:**

- spend time reading about and studying Stewardship in order to fully understand its meaning and focus
- commit the parish to conduct an annual Stewardship effort of time, talent and financial resources
- form a Stewardship Committee to develop and implement Stewardship efforts in the parish
- commit the parish to carry out Stewardship awareness efforts throughout the year
- thank people for all they do to serve God by serving others
- facilitate Stewardship discussions among committees
- ensure the Parish shows accountability for all gifts received – monetary and gifts of time
- encourage the parish to set an example for the parishioners by giving a portion of its offertory to community agencies and/or by committing to provide volunteers for community projects
- work to ensure that Stewardship is not just a one-time activity, but continues as an ongoing part of parish life
- publicly support all elements of Stewardship as a way of life for the parish
- evaluate "faithfulness" not "success"



## **Parish Council Standing Committees**

To be successful in Stewardship, the Parish Council as the leadership body must embrace Stewardship as a way of life in their parish community. This can then more easily become a vision of church all the committees and ministries share in. When Stewardship is the vision of the Pastor and Parish Council, all the committees then develop their mission statements to reinforce that vision through their ministries. While the Stewardship Committee's primary function is to facilitate this way of life throughout the parish, all committees have a role.

Regular communication between the Stewardship Committee and the other standing committees of the parish is very important. The Stewardship Committee should create ways to ensure that this happens. The key foundational element of Stewardship is that of building a caring and welcoming community. That is not the sole responsibility of one committee, but of everyone in the parish.

### **Some of the responsibilities of Standing Committees in the area of Stewardship:**

- assists in building a caring, welcoming community
- evaluates and responds to the needs of various populations within the parish, i.e. elderly, homebound, economically disadvantaged, young families, new parishioners, children . . .
- makes it a priority to respond to and thank people who share their gifts
- finds various ways to invite people into ministry
- creates ministry position descriptions
- develops ongoing training and formation for parishioners involved in their area of ministry





## **Stewardship Committee**

It is important to have an active Stewardship Committee to keep Stewardship integrated throughout the ministries of the parish, and to keep Stewardship education as a process that happens all year long, not just at certain times of the year. A Stewardship Committee devoted to this will ensure that proper attention is given to these efforts. The recommended committee model by the Archdiocese should be followed: The Stewardship Committee, as the standing committee of the Council, is the visioning/guiding body for this area of ministry. Subcommittees or task groups can be formed to help implement the work that flows from the vision.

The Stewardship Committee description taken from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Parish Committee Resource Book can be found in the Resource section.

### **Some of the responsibilities of the Stewardship Committee:**

- oversees the ongoing Stewardship efforts of the parish
- develops plans for educating the parish and harvesting the gifts of its parishioners
- collaborates with committees of the parish to incorporate Stewardship throughout all areas of ministry
- creates plans to ensure all parishioners, new and current, feel they are a valuable part of the parish



## **Stewardship Education for Children and Youth**

### *Stewardship Prayer for Children*

*Dear Jesus,*

*I thank you for everything you have given me.  
My gifts of time and talents are precious gifts,  
enable me to use them to do your will.*

*I offer you this day all my words, actions and  
good intentions to reflect my love for you and  
my neighbor.*

*Please help me realize that I need to share these  
gifts and all my gifts with the Church and others,  
help me to be generous, patient, forgiving and holy.*

*Amen.*

*‘Pray Always and Never Lose Heart’ Luke 18:1  
A Treasury of Private Prayers for The Christian  
Steward”*



If Stewardship is central to the way of life for our parish communities, then nurturing this in our children and youth as they grow into young adults is a natural part of the Stewardship plan. When our youngest community members have outward experiences of showing gratitude for their gifts and sharing to help others, they will most often carry that into their adult lives. Include Stewardship education not only in religious education programs, but in the parish school, as well. The Office of Parish Stewardship has many resources that can aid in developing plans for this. One very helpful resource is a curriculum guide for Stewardship education for children with grade-specific activities. The Resource Section of this manual also contains materials which can be helpful in this area.



## **Ideas for Children and Youth Stewardship Education:**

- enlist the support of the pastor, staff, Parish Council, principal
- educate the parish of the Children and Youth Stewardship effort; develop special communications to families with children and youth
- devote a special section in the bulletin to Stewardship for Children and Youth
- compile a separate time and talent list for children and youth; include adult ministries that would welcome their participation
- consider children's contributions envelopes with space for including how they have shared their time and talents
- form a Children and Youth Stewardship Committee as a subcommittee of your Stewardship Committee to address the needs of Children and Youth Stewardship
- train youth to serve as Eucharistic Ministers, Hospitality, Ushers, Lectors
- invite an articulate, involved young person to be a lay witness

All the faithful have a role in Stewardship, which is essential for carrying out the Church's mission. No matter how old, what level of income or vocation in life, we are all baptized into one Church. As the Bishops' state in their pastoral letter:

“We are . . . obliged to be stewards of the Church – collaborators and cooperators in continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church's essential mission. This mission – proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying – is our task. It is the personal responsibility of each one of us as stewards of the Church.

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

**all Catholics**, who give generous support – time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances – to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church;

**parishioners**, who work in concrete ways to make their parishes true communities of faith and vibrant sources of service to the larger community;

**parents**, who nurture their children in the light of faith;

*U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter,  
“Stewardship: A Disciple's Response”*