

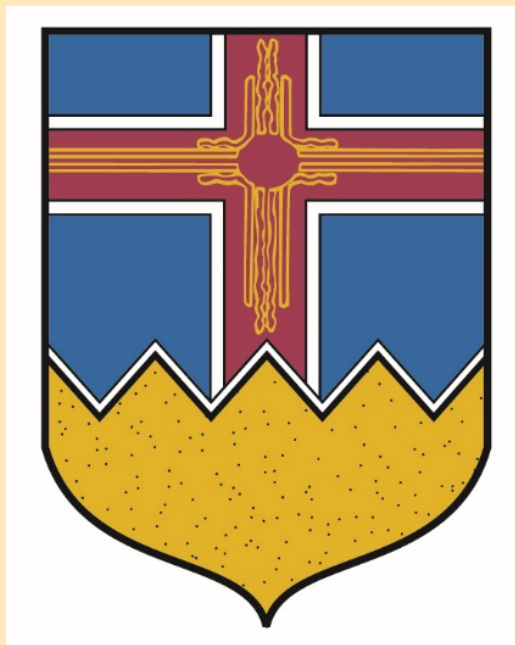
Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces

Diocesan Pastoral Priorities

Growing in the Qualities of an Engaging Church

Stewardship Addendum

Parish Self-Study Guide 2016-2017



*Holy Spirit guide us, renew us, and strengthen us
as we journey together as the people of the diocese.*

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Getting Started with Stewardship

Begin the leap of faith by encouraging parish leadership to meet with the diocesan stewardship staff to discuss your parish stewardship program.

Once the decision is made to move forward with the stewardship program, the pastor will appoint a parishioner to develop a stewardship committee.

The next step will be to invite the entire parish to a town-hall meeting to discuss stewardship. ¹

Most important to the success of this ministry is that the pastor remains positive, and encouraging. We sometimes underestimate the effect that even the slightest hint of negativity on their part has on the parish. Staying positive throughout the stewardship endeavor is crucial.

Forming a Stewardship Committee

In order to form a stewardship committee, consider the following criteria:

1. Spiritually Motivated

It is important that members be people of prayer and be concerned about parishioners' relationship with God; not about the needs of the church. If their primary concern is raising more money for the church, then they would not be appropriate for the stewardship committee. Look for people who are Eucharistic, who have a deep relationship with Jesus. People who are grateful for that relationship and who act on that gratitude.

2. Exemplify and Live Out Stewardship

Look for members who are already personally committed to stewardship as a way of life. They may not call it stewardship, but they live it. Those committed to stewardship will also be committed, regular and generous givers to the offertory.

3. Envision Where Stewardship can take the Parish

Ensure that all members of the stewardship committee have the same understanding of stewardship, at least in a general way, before they join the committee and, more specifically, after they join the committee and gain the understanding of what is needed. It is also important that the

¹ *Building up the Kingdom Today, A Guide to Parish Stewardship, Catholic Diocese of Charleston*

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

4. Have Personal Qualities that Contribute to Success

Look for people who are accountable. They do what they say they are going to do when they say they are going to do it. Other attributes include people who are persistent, optimistic, organized, patient, creative and willing to share their faith with others.

Questions for Stewardship Ministry Member Selection

To begin conversation with those interested in your stewardship program, the following questions are provided to get things started for you.

1. What is sacrificial giving?

Sacrificial giving is a gift of love; freely returning to God the first portion of what He has given us.

To “sacrifice” means to “make sacred.” Through sacrificial giving, we “make sacred” the work of our daily lives. We offer God, upfront, a gift of the fruits of our labor. It also means to go without something we truly value for the sake of something greater still.

The “first fruits” described in the Bible put the needs of the church first rather than giving to God what remains.

Prayerfully consider returning gifts in proportion: sacrificing 5% of wages to the parish, 4% to charities, and 1% to United in Ministry.

2. What are the personal benefits of sacrificial giving?

- ✚ A sense of purpose
- ✚ Strengthened trust in God’s love and care
- ✚ Peace and contentment
- ✚ Less concern for material goods
- ✚ Fewer conflicts concerning money

3. How can you begin Sacrificial Giving in your parish and in your family?

- ✚ Make a conscious commitment to begin your stewardship journey and ask God for His guidance.
- ✚ Evaluate your current giving and your current income.

- ✚ Ask yourself how much you can increase your gift in relation to your household expenses. Reflect upon the meaning of “sacrifice.” Is there something you or the family can do without?
 - ✚ Re-evaluate your gift as household income increases or decreases.
4. Are you (your parish) willing to take a leap of faith?

Only your committee can answer this question.

Importance of Prayer

As with all undertakings in the Diocese of Las Cruces, Bishop Cantú recommends beginning with prayer. Prayer is essential to our faith lives and inextricably connected to our call to conversion and discipleship.

A strong emphasis is placed on prayer throughout the stewardship process. A strong spirituality is the foundation for successful stewardship. Prayer cards blessed at Mass, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, specific times that the parish comes together in prayer are key to establishing the commitment to giving back to God.

Prayer Suggestions

Consider a creative gesture such as placing special cards in the church and leaving them there to serve as a weekly reminder of the commitments made by your parish to stewardship.

Be sure to include a prayer commitment card for each member of the family. Empower each member of a family to make their own commitment.

Offer a special blessing over the cards after Communion.

Consider creating a special intention book to be placed somewhere within the church – perhaps in the entryway.

Working with Other Ministries

The spirituality of stewardship is a good fit with other ministries in your parish, and it is recommended that the stewardship committee leadership reach out to the leadership in other ministries.

More often than not, these established ministries have a process in place used to identify desirable personal attributes in their committee members.

Ministry of Religious Education

Those involved in Religious Education are a natural fit with your parish stewardship program. Religious Education adds the flavor of a personal awareness of Christian value to the ongoing and constant human development of each individual, group and community. Its aim is the deepest development of the complete human being, which must include religious beliefs and convictions.²

Religious Education at its best guides one to adopt the lifestyle and attitudes of Jesus. Education attempts to continuously enable each believer to know Him and thus to love Him and to serve Him through love and service to others in His Name.

Rev. John Tickle teaches, “The center of church for the average Catholic is the parish. As you look at parishes in America today for the practical scope of religious education, some marvelous developments appear. Parishes will in the future continue to be hubs of life activities which foster and deepen faith and human development.”

Fr. Tickle goes on to say, “In the past the parish has thrown all of its religious education into a school, a CCD program, and adult discussion group, etc. A reassessment shows that a much more varied program needs to exist.”

A central idea behind Religious Education today is very clear that there are “teachable moments” in each person’s faith lives. Seek to realize the importance of seizing these moments to address the person in the name and ideas of Jesus. The message of Jesus is clear in your stewardship program.

The stewardship program will reach out to each parishioner and ask that they “get involved – share – spread the faith.”

The teaching of Jesus says to each of us that we are his disciples. We are his mystical arms, legs, voice and heart live, love and share His message in our time in His creation.

Children’s Stewardship Programs

Work with the Religious Education program in your parish. A children’s newsletter can be an effective way to communicate the stewardship message. Designing the children’s envelopes, or finding prepared programs are all ways to begin.

² Lay Ministries of Stewardship, Rev. John Tickle

Campus Ministry

Reach out to the Catholic students on campuses near you. Each day millions of students enter classrooms in colleges and universities across our nation. It is believed that approximately one-third of them are Catholic.³

The Catholic Church in America serves higher education through men and women in campus ministry. Priests, sisters, brothers and laypersons walk daily onto college campuses along with millions of students. Suffice it to say this apostolate is enormous.

Do not neglect reaching out to this constituency in your stewardship program. Many young people, active in campus ministry programs are potential candidates for involvement in their home parishes. The past years have shown that there are many more committed and interest Christian men and women on the campus scene than we ever believed. Just look at the increased interest in retreats and in all forms of spirituality as we have come into a more quiet form of campus ministry.

There are two Newman Centers located in our diocese.

Welcoming New Parishioners

In addition to working with established ministry leadership, it is equally important to cultivate new parishioners.

You might begin by reviewing materials already sent to welcome new parishioners. Make certain the materials are consistent with the parish's philosophy of stewardship, welcoming and hospitality.

Try to contact new parishioners within 48 hours of welcoming them. Provide them with opportunities to get involved with your parish.

As you build your committee, and you get to know the new families, you will be able to determine if they are a good fit for your stewardship committee, or recommend another ministry to the newcomers.

³ Lay Ministries of Stewardship, Rev. Stephen Macher, CM

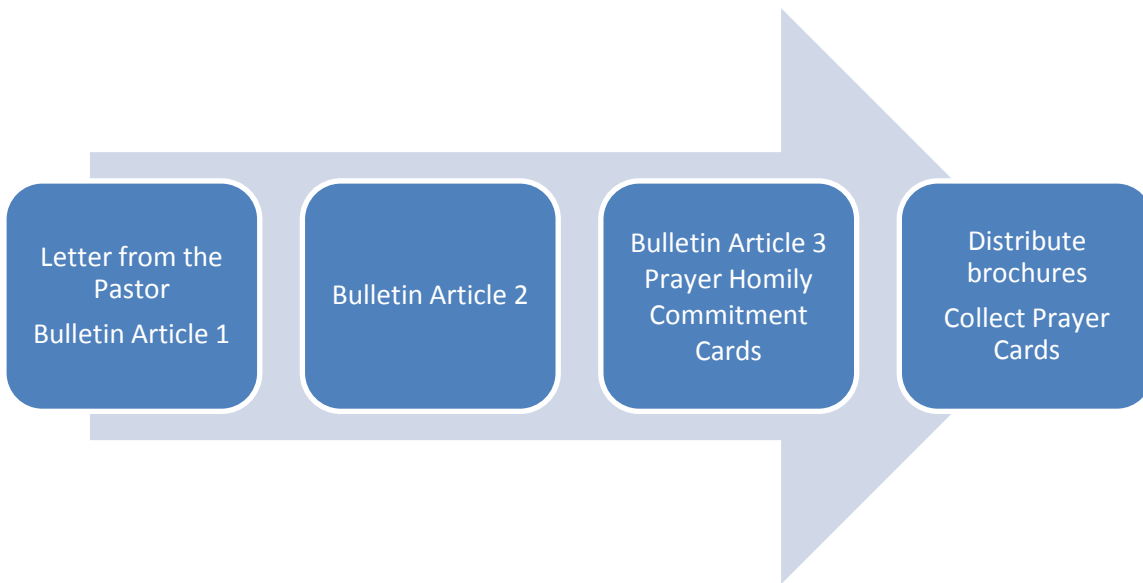
Suggested Weekly Income & Weekly Gift Chart

The following is a suggested weekly income and weekly stewardship gift chart.

Amounts depicted are in \$'s

Weekly Income	Suggested Weekly Gift			
	3%	5%	8%	10%
100.	3.00	5.00	8.00	10.00
150.	4.50	7.50	12.00	15.00
200.	6.00	10.00	16.00	20.00
250.	7.50	12.50	20.00	25.00
300.	9.00	15.00	24.00	30.00
400.	12.00	20.00	32.00	40.00
500.	15.00	25.00	40.00	50.00
750.	22.50	37.50	60.00	75.00
1,000.	30.00	50.00	80.00	100.00

Suggested Timeline



Samples for Bulletin Articles

Provide weekly, month, or quarterly reminders to parishioners reminding them of the importance of stewardship.

Bulletin Article #1

In the coming weeks you will be hearing about opportunities we, as parishioners of _____ Parish, can share our time and talent with others. Father _____ has asked us for a commitment to prayer, he will also ask us for a commitment to ministry. We all have a responsibility to give back our time and talent to build up the Lord's Kingdom here at _____ Parish.

Bulletin Article #2

Please keep an eye on your mailbox in the weeks ahead. You will be receiving information on how you and your family can become more involved in the activities here at _____.

Bulletin Article #3

On _____, _____ Parish will be hosting a _____. We encourage you and your family to make the time to learn more about the ministry opportunities here at your parish.

Bulletin Article #4

By now, each individual and family at _____ Parish has received in the mail a package from the parish office. This weekend we celebrate our stewardship commitment Sunday. We ask you to reflect on our commitment to be good stewards of our time and talents through ministry. If you have yet to receive a commitment card, there are cards available in the church. Please fill it out and return it to the parish office as soon as possible.

**Reprinted samples from the Diocese of Charleston*

Alternate Bulletin Article #1

We are all called to be good stewards; however, we must first hear the call. Jesus calls us to many things, but we can simplify these into three major areas. He calls us to share our time in some form, to share our talents with others, and to share our treasure for the building of His Kingdom.

God himself bestows these gifts of time, talent and treasure upon us. How we utilize these gifts tells us what kinds of stewards we are becoming. In basic terms, a steward is someone who is in charge of something that belongs to someone else. Over the past several years here in our parish, we have learned to become better stewards of the gift of time through prayer, the gift of our talents through ministry, and the gift of treasure through finance. Thus by returning a portion of these, we are embracing stewardship as a way of life.

"Stewardship" is not just a catch phrase. Although the term has come into more widespread use since the Second Vatican Council and the 1992 Bishops' Pastoral Letter entitled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, it is not a new concept in the church. This doctrine of shared responsibility and accountability has firm roots in the Old and New Testaments. Our parish will be exploring these roots and the other aspects of this call from Jesus as we continue to invite every parishioner to examine his or her stewardship of prayer, ministry and finance.

We begin the process this year with the stewardship of prayer, the basis of all other facets of stewardship and the firm foundation, which makes all things possible in our parish. Please watch your weekly bulletin and your mailbox in the coming weeks to learn how you and your family can respond to God's call to stewardship and thus open your heart to Christ.

**Reprinted sample from the Diocese of Baton Rouge*

Sample Transmittal Letter from Pastor

We are all called to be stewards of the gifts that God has given to us. These gifts He measures out in ways and for reasons only He knows. However, these gifts are not to be hoarded and kept out of sight; they are to be used for our own benefit and are to be shared with others.

We share our gifts by returning a portion of them back to God through time, talent and treasure. God has freely bestowed these gifts upon us. How we utilize them shows the type of steward we really are. Are we the type that uses these gifts to help improve the Kingdom of God on earth or are we the type that buries them so as not to lose them? As we saw in the Scripture story of the three stewards, God wants us to put our gifts to use for others and ourselves.

We return our obligations of time with our commitment of prayer, our obligation of talent with our commitment to ministry and our obligation of treasure with our commitment of finance. By returning a portion of what we receive, we are embracing stewardship as a way of life.

Last year we asked you to commit your talents to ministry. As we begin this year's campaign, we are asking you to commit to the stewardship of prayer. Prayer is the basis of all other facets of stewardship and the firm foundation, which makes all things possible in our parish and diocese.

In the coming weeks we will be focusing on the stewardship of prayer in the weekly bulletins. We hope that each member of your family will become a "Steward of Prayer," one who will commit to furthering the Kingdom of God here in our own parish.

Enclosed is your prayer commitment brochure and magnet. Fill out the commitment card and return it on commitment Sunday. The other half should be displayed using the magnet for your own reference and reminder.

**Reprinted sample from the Diocese of Charleston*

Guide for Stewardship Lay Witness Talk

Role of the Lay Witness

One of the most effective means of presenting the stewardship message is through the stewardship lay witness talk. This talk is usually given after the homily by people who are already practicing Stewardship in their own lives. It is often used in the United in Ministry campaign in our parishes. It is usually given after the homily by people who are already practicing stewardship in their own lives. It may be given by an individual, or a couple. In some cases, even 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

1. Introduce yourself

While many of your fellow parishioners will know you, some may not. Give a description of your family, number of years in the parish, etc.

2. Properly define Christian stewardship

We make a response in gratitude to God for what He has given to us. It is an intentional, planned, proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

3. Discuss how You began to practice 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 feeling of “discomfort.” How did your family react to the idea? Was the initial “lunge” difficult? How did you go about it?

4. 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 give your time and talent? Were you able to give full tithe (10%) right away? If not, how are you working towards that goal?

5. 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 God has given to them and make a generous response to His many gifts.

Tips for Presenting Lay Witness Talk

An important part of people's acceptance of the concept of stewardship is the personal witness and individual testimony you provide with the way you give your talk. The following are tips to help you prepare.

- ✚ Prepare your remarks so that you are comfortable with them. Use your own style, wording and delivery.
- ✚ Write out your talk word for word. Use notes of key words to guide you through your presentation so that it is more natural.
- ✚ It is best if you rehearse your talk aloud. If it is possible, practice it in the church when no one is there, using the sound system.
- ✚ Be comfortable 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 when speaking.
- ✚ 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.
- ✚

Do's and Don'ts for Lay Witness Talk

Do's

Do explain that stewardship means giving of the "first fruits" and not what was left over.

Do talk about the personal need of each Christian to give back in gratitude.

Do say, "Many of you, from your own giving experiences, know the truth of what I shared. Thus, you acknowledge that you are not alone in this."

Do stress the joy and fulfillment that comes to those who give God the first share of the time, talent and treasure as a way of expressing their gratitude and trust in God.

Do emphasize that it is important to give all three "time, talent and treasure."

Do explain that stewardship involves not only the church and the diocese, but also includes the community.

Don'ts

Don't talk in bargaining terms

Don't stress church needs or budgets

Don't talk in dollar amounts: "if everyone could give \$10 per week"... "we need \$2 more a week"... "give our fair share"... "if everyone could give 3 hours per week."

Don't use threats of possible consequences stemming from failure to give.

Don't suggest the parish stewardship program is an obligation.

Sample Stewardship Materials

In addition to the materials provided herein, the Diocese of Las Cruces development staff is standing by to work with all of the parish stewardship committees to develop additional materials, as needed.

Acknowledgements

The Diocese of Las Cruces' stewardship office would like to thank Bishop Cantú for his inspiration and guidance.

We would like to acknowledge the input of the Diocese of Charleston, and their willingness to share their stewardship planning.

We give a special thank you to Father John Tickle for his writing about Religious Education, and to others acknowledged herein.

We extend a very special thank you to the parishes that will be embracing and implementing the stewardship priority as a way of life in our diocese.



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