Commitment of Parish Leadership

With any parish effort, it is necessary to have the commitment of the leadership of the parish. Encouragement, commitment, and support from the Pastor, the Pastoral Council, Finance Committee, and the Pastoral Staff are the first steps for any stewardship effort to gain momentum in the parish.

Pastor

The pastor's involvement in stewardship is required for any successful stewardship effort. In addition to the pastor understanding the spirituality of stewardship, the pastor will be required to bring stewardship to life in his homilies and other occasions when it is appropriate to speak about stewardship. The pastor must set the expectation of all parish departments, parish school, ministries and formation that elements of stewardship be included in the curriculum.

The pastor will be the one single most important source inspiration for stewardship in the parish. The pastor will be expected to be proactive with the stewardship committee for bringing the spirituality of stewardship in practice and prayer to the parish. The success of the stewardship effort rests principally with the pastor.

The pastor must take time for reflection of his own personal responsibly of stewardship. Reflecting over Stewardship: the Disciple's Response (USCCB) annually renews and deepens his commitment to stewardship. The diocese may occasional offer days of recollection, ways to deepen prayer life and clergy Eucharistic Adoration. The pastor attending these opportunities is an excellent chance for personal renewal. Attending stewardship opportunities offered by the Stewardship Department insures that the pastor stays current with new ideas.

Pastoral Council

The pastoral council plays an important role in support stewardship at the parish. It is the pastoral council members' responsibility to read, reflect and discuss Stewardship: the Disciple's Response (USCCB) at their meetings. The pastoral council needs to realize that stewardship is not a program but a way of life and expectation for the parish. The culture of stewardship needs to be woven into the tapestry of the parish. The pastoral council members' commitment to for their
own responsibility to stewardship and insuring that stewardship permeates the parish vision, mission is essential for developing a culture of gratitude.

Once the pastoral council understands the spirituality of stewardship, they may desire starting a stewardship effort in their parish. It is helpful to begin a stewardship study group. The stewardship study group will discern over the *Stewardship: the Disciple’s Response* (USCCB). As members of the study group begin their own conversion to stewardship it might be appropriate to invite these members in the study group to enter the discernment process to begin a stewardship committee.

**Pastoral Staff**

The pastoral staff is the third partner to the overall success of stewardship as a way of life in the parish. Like the pastor and pastoral council members, the pastoral staff needs time to reflect on *Stewardship: the Disciple’s Response* (USCCB). Ongoing formation and educational opportunities need to be made available for the pastoral staff. The pastoral staff interacts with more parish members than any other group. It is important that they are committed to promoting and supporting stewardship at the parish.

**Stewardship Committee**

The stewardship committee has many responsibilities. The stewardship committee is expected to be a praying committee, in collaboration with leadership, keeps stewardship awareness alive. The most important responsibility is for maintaining the spirituality of stewardship at the parish by vetting stewardship material used at the parish. The stewardship committee will have a mission statement that compliments the parish’s mission statement. They will collaborate with the pastoral council, pastoral staff and other ministry chairs, to help bring quality stewardship material for use in the parish based on the seven steps of stewardship success as outlined in *Stewardship: the Disciple’s Response* (USCCB).
Formation of the Stewardship Committee

Stewardship Committee

The parish stewardship committee is comprised of 8-12 members, depending on the size of the parish. These members will be recognized in the parish as being spiritually motivated, people of prayer, and active in parish life. These members exemplify and live out stewardship as a way of life. The stewardship committee is most effective if it is under the Pastoral Council.

The stewardship committee works in collaboration with the pastor. The responsibilities of the stewardship committee may be different depending on the parish’s infrastructure. The core responsibilities of the stewardship committee are listed below:

- Carry out the stewardship effort of time, talent, and treasure.
- Develop an annual stewardship plan.
- Help to select individuals, families or couples to share their personal testimonies about stewardship.
- Prepare stewardship communications to the parish.
- Provide follow through of parishioners discerning a ministry.
- Evaluate stewardship efforts of the parish.
- Collaborate in developing effective welcome & hospitality committees.
- Develop a vetting process of educational material to be used in the parish.
- Define and follow through with different avenues of giving thanks to parishioners and volunteers.
Formation of the Stewardship Committee

Forming a Stewardship Committee

There are two ways to begin forming a stewardship committee. The parish may first begin with a Stewardship “Study Group”. The next step is membership discernment into the Stewardship Committee. The second way is the parish begins a stewardship committee invited by the pastor.

The stewardship study group is comprised of individuals that already exemplify stewardship as a way of life. This study group meets weekly for six weeks sharing and reflecting with each other the pastoral letter on Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response. At the end of this 6 week time, the pastor will invite those members interested to move on to the next formation to discern is they are being called to serve on the Stewardship Committee at this time.

The parish may decide to form a stewardship committee from the beginning. The new stewardship committee will also read, reflect and share with each other the pastoral letter, Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response.

It is helpful for existing stewardship committee members to retreat annually that renews and deepens their commitment to stewardship.

Qualities to look for in stewardship committee members:

Look for parish members that are already spiritually committed. These people have a deep prayer life; they have a genuine concern for other people, participate in the sacraments, and are in good standing with the church. You will recognize these people as already demonstrating the spirituality of stewardship in their way of life. They are generous with their gifts.

These people have the ability to collaborate with other people and ministries, have a working knowledge of the parish, are inclusive of diversity and looked up to already at the parish. These people share their faith openly and comfortably.

These people can envision the parish embracing the message of stewardship and living gratitude as a way of life.
Communication - CmUnik8shn

It is said that a message must be repeated 7 times to be heard. When you state your message seven times, people finally hear it once. Stating your message VII different ways is necessary for people to "get it" Be creative and state your message seven different ways to be noticed. If you want people to hear your message, try repeating it 3+4 times. You can never tell your story enough but 7 times is a good start. w'v lmD dat we must Rpeat somit 7 tyms 2B hurd.

Be bold and try a new way to communicate your message!

There is no one best way to communicate your stewardship effort to the parish. People will hear messages differently. Each parish is unique and so will the methods of communication. To ensure that your message reaches as many people as possible, it is important to have a comprehensive communications approach that includes the use of several different forms of communication. Please refer to the Annual Stewardship Assessment Tool – Communication and Education for more ideas.

Communication in print

- Banners/posters are a time honored way to communicate messages to a church.
- Pictures are sometimes more effective than words.
- Invite the parish young people to express their feelings about the spirituality of stewardship in poster form, poems or computer generated media.
- Consult with parishioners that have the gift of media development to help with annual stewardship brochures.
- Have a regular column in the bulletins that describe ministries in the parish.
- Have a regular column in the bulletin that interviews existing stewards in the parish. Help them to tell their story.
- Follow-up with all sacrificial giving commitments. When sending thank-you notes be sure to personalize the letters. Computer generated letters are appropriate and be sure to include a little handwriting note of thanks on the bottom.
- Communicate stewardship as a way of life in the parish in the new parishioner information packet.
Communication using audio-visual & computer generated media

- Consult with parishioners to share their expertise in developing quarterly newsletters.
- Send thank you letters to those that generously give of their time.
- Creating the parish own annual report on DVD is easier than ever with laptops and software.
- Never under estimate the value of a good web presence. When the website is maintained and kept current, parishioners will grow to depend on it for accurate information.
- Communication through education and formation programs that are already in place is an excellent way to teach stewardship all year.
- Education of adults in stewardship a priority.
- Education of children in stewardship a priority.

Person to Person communication

- Personal invitation to Mass and other activities in the church is one of the most effective ways of communication.
- Follow-up with visitors before and after Mass.
- Prayer groups.
- Use formation and education programs that are already in place as an excellent way to communicate and teach stewardship all year.
- Make stewardship discernment material available for use by small groups.
Lay Testimonials

"Thus, every person, through these gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal." (CCC 913)

"By virtue of their prophetic mission, lay people "are called . . . to be witnesses to Christ in all circumstances and at the very heart of the community of mankind" (GS 43 § 4). (CCC 942)

"The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: "All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks."§ 2 Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation: "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." (CCC 1816)

Lay Testimonials

Lay testimonials are powerful in that they help to inspire other parishioners to take the first step to living a life of stewardship. The impact of the testimony is intensified if the person or couple is respected within the parish community as a generous steward. By sharing their own testimony or story helps to bring the gospel message to life. These stories become living examples and an invitation for others to begin their own journey.

Stories and testimonials delivered by someone in the parish whose life has been changed are very powerful. They inspire us to believe that we can do the same. This is why lay witnesses are so important to a stewardship effort. It shows that living a life of gratitude is obtainable and within everyone's reach.

Selection of individuals and couples to share their story

- When selecting individuals and couples to share their stewardship story, choose individuals that believe and practice stewardship as a way of life.
- Select individuals that already have respect of the community.
- They should feel comfortable speaking in front of a group and be enthusiastic about the effect that stewardship has had in their life.
- Often, people will say they do not want to speak because they feel like it is "bragging." Take time to explain that you are asking them to share their story of how they experience the generosity of a wonderful God and inviting others to stewardship as a way of life.

**What are the responsibilities of the person giving the testimony?**

- Be able to attend a training meeting hosted by the diocesan stewardship department, the stewardship committee or pastor.
- Have a copy of the talk available for the pastor
- Be able to give adequate rehearsal time in the church using the microphone
- The presentation should be prepared by the individual and not by someone else. This insures that the presentation is in the person's own style.
- The presentation should contain the following components. Although the outline may be the same - the stories will be incredibly unique:
  1. Personal introduction.
  2. Their relationship to the parish.
  3. Detail of their personal journey.
  4. Explain that stewardship is accepting gifts gratefully, developing them responsibly, sharing them generously and returning them with interest to the Lord.
  5. Who or what inspired them to stewardship?
  6. Explain how their life has changed.
  7. How does the person, couple or family determine how much of time, talent and treasure to give back to God?
  8. A personal invitation to the parishioners to start their journey.

**Worth Mentioning:**

It is important to stress that the purpose of these stories is to inspire parishioners. The talk should never be told or "sold" in terms of what the church needs. Stewardship is not about giving to the church's needs. Stewardship is about the person's need to give. Using statements or conclusions like, "all you need to do is increase your giving by so much a week", "in order to cover the budget", "we won't be able to keep our school open", or "I gave this and God gave me that" do not uphold the spirituality of stewardship and should not be allowed.
References:


Diocese of Oakland
Sample Stewardship Committee By-Laws

A. Stewardship Mission

We become good stewards and live a lifetime journey of discipleship to grow in holiness.

B. Purpose Of the Stewardship Committee

1. The Stewardship Committee is a consultative body working in collaboration with Pastor to support and strengthen parish stewardship. This is accomplished by listening, studying, praying, and bi-directional communication with other parish council and the pastoral staff. This Committee’s ultimate goal is to assist parish ministries and parishioners by helping them live out their baptismal call to discipleship by fostering stewardship of Time, Talent, and Treasure.

2. It does this by:
   a. Grounding itself in the mission of Jesus and opening itself to ongoing conversion from the scriptures and teachings of the Church by USCCB’s A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship “A Disciple’s Response;

   b. Listening to the many voices of the people that make up the parish;

   c. Developing and vetting stewardship materials for adults and youth to be used as resources for the parish.

C. Membership

1. The Council consists of members reflecting the gifts and diversity of the parish. Membership may include:

   a. Pastor
   b. Representation of the pastoral staff
   c. Discerned stewardship members
   d. Representation of the pastoral council
   e. Liaison membership to other councils – ex officio

2. All discerned members of Stewardship Committee will serve for three-year terms, starting on January 1st and ending December 31st of the third year. Initially during the start up of this Committee some members will serve for 1 year, 2 years and 3 years so that membership term dates will be staggered

3. The recruitment and nomination process will be initiated by the pastor. Recommendations may be accepted from the pastoral staff, pastoral council, and finance council. Persons may nominate themselves for consideration for serving on the Committee.
Diocese of Oakland
Sample Stewardship Committee By-Laws

4. Candidates may complete a formal application and submit it to the pastor for review.

5. Candidates will attend a discernment session to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Committee.

6. Names of desired candidates will be submitted with applications to the pastor for approval.

7. Candidates that are chosen will be formally notified of their appointment in writing.

8. Newly appointed members, whose terms will begin in January of the following year, will be invited to attend a meeting to meet current Committee members and familiarize themselves with the order and function of the meetings.

9. A member may be appointed for a second consecutive term at the request of the pastor.

10. A member may be re-appointed to the Committee by the pastor after they have been off the Committee for one year following the end of their second term.

D. Organization

1. The Committee meets at least once a month in addition to ad hoc meetings scheduled to accomplish specific goals.

2. Members are expected to attend all meetings of the Committee. Failure to attend two consecutive meetings in any one 12 month period may prompt the chair to ask for the member’s resignation letter to the pastor.

3. The members, each year at the first quarter meeting, elect from among themselves:
   a. A Facilitator who is responsible for the overall leadership of the Committee.
   b. A Co-Facilitator who conducts meetings in the absence of the Facilitator.

4. Meeting agendas will be communicated two-weeks in advance of the actual meeting so that members have time to prepare.
   a. A portion of each meeting will include scripture reading, reflection and prayer.
   b. The agenda will include a section for approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, old business, new business, comments and action planning for future meetings.

5. Minutes of each meeting will be taken by a recorder.
   a. The role will rotate among lay members in alphabetical order by last name
   b. The recorder will take notes at the meeting, produce minutes and post them on Google Docs for review and approval.
Diocese of Oakland
Sample Stewardship Committee By-Laws

6. The decisions and action items from each meeting will be reviewed at the end of each meeting and included as a part of the minutes.

E. Relationship with other groups

1. Members are expected to keep their communities informed of the work of the Committee.

F. Communications

1. Liaison committee members are expected to provide communication between their respective groups.

2. Use of all media is encouraged so as to reach the most people possible in the manner they are accustomed to receiving news and information.

H. Desired Characteristics of a Committee Member:

   a. Be a good steward as described in the Pastoral Letter on Stewardship
   b. A working knowledge of Stewardship principles.
   c. Evidence of inclusion of stewardship principles in the member's everyday life.
   d. A registered and participating member of a parish community
   e. Understanding of the parish and Diocese of Oakland
   f. An ability to listen to the needs of the people of the parish
   g. An ability to articulate what has been seen and heard
   h. A desire for spiritual growth
   i. An openness to study and reflection
   j. An eagerness to help the parish carry out its stewardship vision
   k. An ease in working in groups
   l. An ability to lead and inspire others
   m. A willingness to delegate responsibilities
   n. An ability to follow through on commitments
   o. A desire to work with consensus decision making
   p. An availability of time and talent, as well as energy
   q. Easy access to e-mail since nearly all communications are done this way.

L. Review of By-Laws:

1. Will be done annually at the beginning of each year.
Minutes
Parish Name

Date:

Members: (Record attendance)
Pastor
Member’s Name -- absent
Member’s Name
Member’s Name

Prayer. State who lead the prayer and if possible include it as an attachment.

Minutes from (insert date from last meeting):

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<th>Approve w/changes</th>
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<td>1st to agree</td>
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Minutes follow the same format as the agenda.

Agenda Items:

Follow up items from last meeting:
Minutes are written record of the meeting. They often give an overview of meeting, starting with a list of those present, agenda items and a record of the discussion. Minutes are taken during the meeting by a designated “note-taker”. Since the stewardship committee is not a legislative body and decisions are made by consensus, following Robert’s Rules of Order in the strictest sense is not required. No formal motion, seconded or passed is necessary. It is important for the minutes to be brief and concentrate on material issues rather than being a verbatim report.

New Items – Internal relating to the Stewardship Committee:
- List items here if any

New Items – Relating to stewardship in the parish:
- List items here

Next meeting: List next meeting date

Person bringing prayer and reflection next meeting: Add Name

Summary of meeting including tasks noted with person or sub-committee responsible

Next meeting agenda items:
1.
2.
3.
Agenda
Parish Name

Date:

Members: (List names of all members here)
Pastor
Member’s Name
Member’s Name
Member’s Name
(Once the meeting begins it is easy to note who is present and absent)

Prayer. At the end of each meeting someone accepts the responsibility of bring the prayer and lead the group in reflection.

Minutes from (insert date from last meeting):

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<th>Approve as is</th>
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Agenda Items:
(Below are different sections to have in the agenda)

Follow up items from last meeting:
- List items here

New Items – Internal relating to the Stewardship Committee:
- List items here if any

New Items – Relating to stewardship in the parish:
- List items here

Next meeting: List next meeting date

Person bringing prayer and reflection next meeting:_______Add Name________

Summary of meeting including tasks noted with person or sub-committee responsible

Next meeting agenda items:
1.
2.
3.

Closing prayer and blessing

Adjourn

This agenda format is helpful to work as a guide during the meeting. There is space to add notations for minute approval, who will lead the prayer next meeting and specify agenda items for the next meeting.