

# The Parish Stewardship Committee: An Overview

Perhaps the most effective means of establishing a presence of stewardship in a parish faith community is through the assistance of a stewardship committee. It would seem contradictory for a parish to encourage appreciation and wise use of time, talent, and treasure without taking advantage of the time and talents of a core group of individuals to lead the way.

In their 1992 pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, the U.S. Bishops suggest seven steps to help pastors and stewardship committees promote sharing of the three T's in a manner consistent with the theology of stewardship and principles of effective development. These seven steps are:

- (1) Personal Witness
- (2) Commitment of Leadership
- (3) Hospitality, Evangelization, and Outreach
- (4) Communication and Education
- (5) Recruiting, Training, and Recognizing Gifts of Time and Talent
- (6) Stewardship of Treasure
- (7) Accountability

I have compiled the following suggestions to assist you in the practical introduction of a parish stewardship committee.

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## The Committee's Place within the Parish

- The stewardship committee should report to the Parish Pastoral Council rather than the finance council. If under the finance council, the perception is that the focus is placed on treasure. At least one committee member should serve as a liaison to Pastoral Council.

## Committee Purpose

- The committee exists to promote Christian stewardship, not as a temporary program to satisfy the Church needs, but rather an ongoing way of applying our faith to everyday life experiences.
- Once a parish embraces stewardship, it should make a genuine attempt to infuse a sense of wise stewardship in all liturgies, ministries, programs, councils, and committees.

## Committee Members' Qualifications

- Prospective members should have a genuine desire to serve others.
- They should give witness to the belief that everything placed before them in life is a gift from God that is meant to be shared.

## Number of Committee Members

- Consider starting with a core group of three or four.
- Members would devote initial meetings (perhaps the first six or more) to discussing and familiarizing themselves with the Church's interpretation of Christian Stewardship.
- Membership could be expanded once the core group determines how it will present stewardship to the parish. This will lead to identifying talents that committee members will need.

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## Committee Members' Formation in Christian Stewardship

- Provide these resources to each member:
  - Stewardship: A Disciple's Response – 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition***
    - A pastoral letter from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
    - Available from [www.USCCB.org](http://www.USCCB.org).
    - Also available from the diocesan Parish Life Office at a reduced cost.
    - Each: \$9.95 + S&H from USCCB; \$8.00 total from the Parish Life Office.
  - I Like Being in Parish Ministry: Stewardship***
    - An easy-to-read 45-page booklet from TwentyThird Publications
    - Available from [www.23rdpublications.org](http://www.23rdpublications.org).
    - Each: \$4.95 + S&H
- Individuals can search the internet for an extensive query of "Catholic stewardship" pages. Plenty of inspirational ideas are easily accessible.

## Meetings

- Nine or ten monthly meetings (skip summer and mid-winter months).
- Aim for consistency: plan to meet on the same day of the month (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, etc.)
- Try 90-minute meetings and adjust accordingly.

## Agenda

- Opening Prayer – all on the committee should become comfortable in leading the prayer. Consider proclaiming a reading for the upcoming Sunday; discuss it through the lens of stewardship.
- Initial meetings should focus on discussing different sections of the USCCB stewardship pastoral letter and its implications in the parish (ask the group to read the section(s) before the meeting.)
- Define stewardship educational, formational activities. Committee members "champion" various activities according to their talents.

## Diocesan Support

- Chris Ringkamp in the Parish Life Office continues to assist parishes and stewardship committees upon request.
- A comprehensive two-year process, *Stewardship: A Way of Life*, is available at no charge; it can help you launch the stewardship educational process in your parish. Included at no charge to the parish are posters, prayer cards, thank you notes, and enough brochures for all parishioners.
- Resource materials (books, audio tapes, video tapes) are also available much like library materials.
- Chris welcomes news of your stewardship successes and challenges so he can pass them along to your stewardship colleagues in parishes throughout our diocese.
- Contact Chris at (814) 693-9605 or [Ringkamp@dioceseaj.org](mailto:Ringkamp@dioceseaj.org).

*As each one has received a gift,  
use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.*

1 Peter 4:20