

Developing a Stewardship Committee



Stewardship Committee Overview

The Stewardship process encourages parishioners to identify their gifts, to be grateful for these gifts, to cultivate and use them responsibly, to share them lovingly in justice with others, and to return them back to God with increase. The Stewardship Committee generates ideas and implements steps needed to help parishioners better understand Stewardship and live it out in their lives.

Committee Description

The Stewardship Committee assists the pastor in developing Stewardship as a way of life in the parish, an attitude of the mind and heart that is expressed in action; emphasizing that all people, things, and experiences are gifts from God.

An active parish Stewardship Committee is an important and necessary element in designing, implementing and maintaining the parish Stewardship process. This committee is instrumental in assisting the pastor in the areas of education and formation, facilitation, communication, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the parish Stewardship process.

Responsibilities ⁽¹⁾

Stewardship Committee responsibilities will vary based on each parish's needs and situation, but should include some or all of the following:

- Assist the pastor and parish leadership in the overall design, implementation and evaluation of the parish Stewardship process.
- Develop a comprehensive timetable and related procedures to facilitate the annual renewal process.
- Pursue available forms of communication to build awareness of Stewardship and parish activities, such as bulletins, parish web-site, newsletters, witnesses, ministry fair, town hall meetings, homilies, etc.
- Coordinate Stewardship efforts with the parish welcoming program.
- Maintain a catalogue of parish ministries and organizations.
- Review and revise, if necessary, the parish time, talent and treasure commitment forms to be sure they appropriately represent the mission, ministries, activities, and structure of the parish.
- Consider format and use of youth time and talent commitment forms.
 - Host periodic Stewardship presentations to parish leadership explaining Stewardship in general, the parish renewal process and the importance of Stewardship in the parish community.

(1) Adapted from the Diocese of Wichita.



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- Work with the parish finance council relative to their role in receiving, recording and monitoring annual parishioner treasure commitments, if applicable.
 - Prepare letters, envelopes and other materials to be included in the annual renewal communication and invitation from the pastor.
 - Assist in seeking and selecting speakers for personal Stewardship witness presentations.
 - Recruit volunteers, if necessary, to assist the Stewardship Committee in the preparation, assembly, mailing, and/or other distribution of Stewardship materials and commitment forms.
 - Design and implement a timely thank you process to all parishioners who complete and remit commitment forms.
 - Send reminder letters to all parishioners who did not complete and remit commitment forms.
 - Promptly compile and distribute lists of volunteers to all parish/school ministry leaders.
 - **Work with the appropriate parish commissions and parish groups to ensure that those who volunteer are contacted and invited to become involved.**
 - Evaluate parish Stewardship and awareness efforts on an annual basis.
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Key Tasks:

There are a number of key tasks involved in performing the work of the Stewardship process. Depending on a parish's organization and active ministries, these key Stewardship activities may be performed by members of the committee or by drawing on the resources of other parish organizations. For example, Parish Pastoral Council may coordinate the Ministry Fair, the Finance Council may coordinate the commitment card distribution and data entry/analysis activities, etc.

The key Stewardship Committee activities include:

- **Leadership Retreat Coordination** – coordinating the invitation of all parish leaders (Stewardship Committee, Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, all Ministry Leaders, and Parish Staff) to the Stewardship Leaders' Retreat. Duties also include ensuring the execution of all plans the Stewardship Committee establishes for the retreat such as publicity, food, music, site preparation, worship aids, etc.
- **Mailing Coordination** – coordinating the assembly and mailing of all Stewardship related mailings by the date assigned. These mailings will include the commitment card mailing with accompanying material, reminder letters, thank you letters, and other occasional mailings relating to Stewardship. The assembly will include labeling and stuffing envelopes and arranging for the mail to get to the post office.
- **Education Coordination** – designing, creating and distributing educational material pertaining to Stewardship. The creation of this material would need to be done so that the design would carry through on all materials including the ministry catalogue, prayer journal, bulletin inserts, bulletin blurbs, etc. Consideration may be given to using a different theme each year.



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- **Lay Witness Coordination** – ensuring the selection and coordinating the scheduling of a lay witness at each Mass prior to Commitment Weekend. Duties also include providing the training/guidelines to the lay witnesses.
 - **Ministry Assessment and Coordination** – conducting a process to determine the purpose, viability, and need for resources in each ministry. This information is used to envision the role each ministry plays in the future work of the parish. It also provides the verbiage needed for compiling the ministry catalogue.
 - **Ministry Fair Coordination** – communicating this event to the ministry leaders and all in the parish. Duties include determining a theme, coordinating refreshments, publicity, site preparation and ensuring ministry leaders have the information they need to allow for their maximum participation.
 - **Commitment Card Coordination and Data Analysis** – coordinating the hand-out of commitment cards before each Mass on Commitment Weekend; entering pledges of time, talent and treasure from all returned commitment cards into an appropriate data base; and summarizing all pledge information once entered. Duties also include printing the appropriate reminder letters and thank you letters, which include the families' pledges, for the Mailing Coordinator to send.
 - **Follow Up Coordination** – creating lists of “parishioners interested in joining” for each parish ministry after the data has been entered by the Commitment Card Coordinator. The Follow Up Coordinator will then distribute the respective lists to the ministry leaders along with an explanation for the leaders to invite the “newly interested” to their next ministry meetings. The Follow Up Coordinator will arrange for feedback from the ministry leaders as to the success in their follow up with newly interested parishioners and will maintain communication with the leaders until all follow up is completed.
 - **Newsletter Coordination** – providing Stewardship related stories to the newsletter editor. These suggestions will include stories about active ministries in the parish, specific individual stewards in action, and general formational material on the spirituality of Stewardship.
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Membership

Experience reflects that the composition of the parish Stewardship Committee directly corresponds with the success of the parish Stewardship effort.

Key considerations in determining Stewardship Committee membership include:

How many members should be in the committee?

- The Stewardship Committee should have enough members to guarantee representation from the diverse membership of the parish, while ensuring that it is small enough to effectively come to consensus and make decisions.
- Typical groups range in size from 10-12 members, but will vary based on the specific objectives and activities of the group.

What are the typical committee member commitments?

- *Time Commitment* – One meeting a month plus participation on one other key task, special project or event
- *Prayer Commitment* – Reflect and pray about Stewardship
- *Educational/Formational Commitment* – Learn about the spirituality of Stewardship
- *Group Process Commitment* – Willingness to work in a group process of prayer, consensus building and planning
- *Duration of Commitment* – Variable, but generally two - three years.

Who should be on the committee?

- Membership will vary, but should include the pastor along with some combination of staff and parishioners including representatives from Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Parish Commissions/Ministries, Parish Day School, and other parish members with a past or emerging interest in Stewardship.
 - Membership should consist of a balanced group of males/females, age groups, single/married, and provide representation from the diverse membership of the parish.
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Getting Started

Keys to starting an effective Stewardship Committee include (1) identifying and inviting committee members, (2) conducting initial meetings to form the group and set its initial goals, and (3) organizing the group's efforts to accomplish those goals.

Identifying and Inviting Members

The first step in starting a Stewardship Committee is for a small leadership group (usually the pastor and 2-3 parishioners/staff members) to discern the desired committee member characteristics and a list of parish members who fit them. Typical Stewardship Committee characteristics include:

- Spiritually motivated
- Willing to be actively involved in the parish
- Exemplifying Stewardship by their own gifts of time, talent and treasure
- Able to envision the benefits of being a Stewardship parish
- Good communication skills
- Accountable
- Good organizational skills
- Comfortable working in groups and building consensus
- Willing to share their faith with others
- Knowledgeable of the spiritual, educational and social ministries and activities within the parish
- Not already overextended in their work in the parish.

Example 1.1 (page 14) provides a checklist to assist in identifying potential members.

Invitations to potential Stewardship Committee members can be done in a number of ways including written or phone invitations from the pastor, calls from committee members, and pulpit or bulletin announcements. Current Stewardship Committee experience indicates that the most effective invitations are personal invitations and when possible, are extended by the pastor. Examples of invitations via call, letter, and bulletin announcement are included in the example segment of this section of the manual:

- *Example 1.2. (pages 15-16)* - Request for interested parishioners via bulletin announcement
- *Example 1.3 (page 17)* - Pastor invitation
- *Example 1.4 (page 18)* - Letter from pastor with invitation to meeting to learn more about Stewardship, leading to recruitment of new members.

As a final step in identifying committee members, the leadership group should consider conducting an orientation session so that potential candidates may gain an understanding of what will be expected of them before they make a commitment to participate. *Example 1.5 (page 19)* contains a sample agenda for that orientation session.



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Conducting Initial Meetings

Each Stewardship Committee meeting should be planned, including agenda, intended outcomes, and assigned responsibilities for agenda items. Initial meetings should focus on member formation, group development, and goal setting. Subsequent meetings should focus on organizing the work of the committee to achieve its near term goals and objectives.

When planning initial Stewardship Committee meetings, consider the following:

- To help others along the journey of discipleship, it will be important for committee members to be able to reflect on and articulate their own sense of discipleship.
- The committee is not just task oriented, but also very concerned with the personal, spiritual growth of its members.
- Dedicate part of each meeting to prayer and faith sharing among members.
- Discern a committee chairperson – someone who has the gifts/skills necessary to help form and lead the initial committee into becoming a cohesive and productive group.
- Make use of available materials and resources on Stewardship, including: U.S. Bishops' Pastoral: *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, Diocesan Materials, and Stewardship Web-Sites. (See Additional Resources and Websites (pages 23-25) for ideas.
- Don't be discouraged easily – the process of adapting Stewardship as a way of life in the parish takes time, and grows over generations.

Example 1.6 (pages 20-21) contain initial meeting outlines for 2 sample parishes. The outlines are also listed below:

Sample Parish 1

- **First Meeting Outline:**
 - Opening Prayer – Every meeting should start with a prayer
 - Welcome the new committee and have everyone introduce themselves.
 - Introduce the concept of Stewardship as a way of life.
 - Establish a meeting calendar for the year – The committee should meet every month for the first year.
 - Discern a Chairperson and secretary, if this has not been done already.
 - Decide when your first Commitment Weekend will occur – this will determine the calendar for tasks to be accomplished prior to this weekend.
 - Give homework for spiritual formation – Meetings need to be formative. Starting with an in-depth review of the Bishops' pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, is a good first resource to use. It thoroughly explains the concept of Stewardship as a way of life. This will take several meetings to go through. Ask someone to take responsibility for leading the discussion at the next meeting.
 - Open the floor for questions
 - Give the next meeting date, thank everyone for coming and adjourn the meeting.



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- **Second Meeting Outline:**

- Opening Prayer
- Review homework for spiritual direction – This should take 15-20 minutes.
- Review the tasks necessary to create Commitment Weekend and a monthly calendar outlining each task and when it needs to be completed. Include tasks such as leadership retreat, mailings, newsletter stories, ministry assessments, creating a ministry catalogue, ministry fair, commitment card process, follow up, and data analysis.
- Committee sign-up to be responsible for or participation in one of the major tasks of Commitment Weekend. (See *Key Tasks*, page 5-6, to assist in understanding.)
- Review the steps necessary to establish a newsletter – create a subcommittee to establish it.
- Give homework – Meetings need to be formative. Ask someone to take responsibility for leading the discussion at the next meeting.
- Open the floor for questions
- Give the next meeting date, thank everyone for coming and adjourn the meeting.

- **Third (and Beyond) Meeting Outline:**

- Opening Prayer
- Review homework for spiritual formation – This should take 15-20 minutes.
- The bulk of the meeting will be discussing any of the following:
 - Current tasks in process leading up to Commitment Weekend
 - Review the follow up to Commitment Weekend
 - Review the process just completed for Commitment Weekend and make necessary changes for the coming year
 - Review the contents of the newsletter to make sure it has a Stewardship as a way of life connotation running through the articles.
- Give homework for spiritual formation – Meetings need to be formative. Ask someone to take responsibility for leading the discussion at the next meeting.
- Open the floor for questions
- Give the next meeting date, thank everyone for coming and adjourn.

Sample Parish 2

- **First Meeting Outline:**

- Prayer, scripture reflection (e.g. Read one chapter out loud of the Bishops' Pastoral Letter: *Stewardship – A Disciple's Response*. Discussion following the reading should be led by Pastor).
- Begin with open discussion. Using questions such as: "What are your hopes for the work of this committee? What should be areas of focus for this committee?"
- Consolidate and group ideas from above discussion.



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- **Second (and Beyond) Meeting Outline:**

- Prayer, scripture reflection (e.g. Read one chapter out loud of the Bishops' Pastoral Letter: *Stewardship – A Disciple's Response*. Discussion following the reading should be led by Chairperson).
 - Determine Committee Goals (based on prioritization of grouped ideas from last meeting).
 - Develop one, two or three short and long term goals.
 - Design specific objectives to achieve each goal.
 - Begin implementation of objectives.
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Creating Committee Work Groups

Upon completion of the initial meetings and upon the development of the committee's specific goals, the committee should be organized into work groups to act on and accomplish those goals. Typical work groups would be organized according to the *Key Tasks* section of this manual, page 5-6.

