



Stewardship and Development

SUGGESTED BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR TWO YEARS

YEAR ONE

January

As we begin a new year, let us take time to plan and make Stewardship of time and talent a part of our lifestyle and Stewardship of treasure a part of our budget.

Your first responsibility is to take care of your needs and the needs of your family – not necessarily all their wants. In looking at what we need versus what we want, we end up placing material things and money in their proper perspective.

“Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (II Corinthians 9:7)

All too often, Stewardship is presented only with the Church support or the funding of other charities as the goal. This is too limiting. Stewardship also involves time and talent.

“For your heart will always be where your riches are.” (Matthew 6:21)

February

Stewardship involves a willingness to give from the very core of who we are and what we have from substance rather than abundance.

None of those who cry out ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 7: 21) Jesus made it clear that being stewards of our time, talent and treasure is part of the will of His Father.

Stewardship of treasure asks only a percentage of income. Many people find that when they trust God and return a certain percentage of their income to the Church and other charities, they can live adequately on the rest of their income.

“Always seek to do good to one another and to all.” (II Thessalonians 5: 14)

March

“Your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts.” (Matthew 5:16)

Giving of our time, talent and treasure mainly involves a change of attitude about giving. It’s important to think in terms of giving in gratitude to God, of considering how blessed we are, of using our gifts and talents for the good of others.

In the area of time and talent, many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to prayer and charitable activities. In the area of treasure, some Christians choose the biblical norm of giving ten percent or more of treasure. Others might start at two, three or four percent, and work upwards.

April

Stewardship opens an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

Every one of us is talented in some way. Stewardship encourages us to use any talent we have to benefit an individual, the Church or the community.

“What shall I return to the Lord for all the Lord has given to me?” (Psalms 116:12)

Jesus asks us to demonstrate our love for Him through our generosity to others. In our everyday lives, He calls us to share our gifts of time, talent and treasure with others.

“While we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people – but especially to those of the household of the faith.” (Galatians 6: 10)

May

Jesus asks us to commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our treasure as an outward sign of the love and gratitude we have for Him.

How much time have you spent this week in prayer for others and for the work of the Church?

Have you ever thought about how many of your free hours you spend doing things for yourself versus how many you spend doing things for others?

“Let him with two coats give to him who has none.” (Luke 3:11)

June

Giving of our time, talent and treasure is not about giving until it hurts. Rather, it is about giving until you feel good about what you have given.

How much you have has nothing to do with generosity to God. If you don't give of your time, talent and treasure with what you have, you most likely won't do it if you have more.

“Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones.” (Luke 16:10)

You are just one person but you are important to God and His work. Be faithful as you give of your time, talent and treasure.

July

Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus; and where it has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed.

Stewardship engenders a spirituality that deepens our relationship with Jesus. Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

“Give and it shall be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will they pour into the fold of your garment. For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38)

“Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be mutually hospitable without complaining. As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure you have received.” (1 Peter 4: 8-10)

August

Have you ever taken a moment to figure out how much time, on the average, you spend a week volunteering in your church or in your community?

“Do not neglect good deeds and generosity. God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.” (Hebrews 3:16)

Have you ever taken some time to figure out what percentage of your income goes to the church and other charitable causes?

Stewardship is planned giving and does not leave giving to chance. It challenges us to plan. It asks us to appraise – deliberately – what we are doing with our time, our talent and our treasure.

September

Christian Stewardship provides a spirituality that you can take home from church, exercise at work, and express through personal involvement in the community and church.

Stewardship is not job-oriented or project minded. It is a way of life for a lifetime.

Christian Stewardship takes a positive view on money. It sees money not only as a medium of exchange, but as a symbol of the person who has it. The way we acquire it, use it, and share it, we are revealed in those actions.

Christian Stewardship trains us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. To give to God should be “from the top” – not from what may be left over.

October

“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or be attentive to the one and despise the other.” (Luke 16:13)

Stewardship is an important concept for our spiritual growth as Catholics. It is a way of thanking God for all God’s blessings by returning to him a portion of our time. Giving of our time involves being with God in prayer and worship and volunteering our time in the church and community activities that help others.

“Wherever your treasure lies, there your heart will be.” (Luke 12:34)

Sharing our talents arises from the fact that God has given each of us the ability and gifts to do certain things well, and we are to develop those talents for the good of others.

November

“Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful to his gifts.” (1 Corinthians 4: 1-2)

As we practice Stewardship, we find that we grow spiritually and that our faith is deepened.

As we approach Thanksgiving Day, let us take a moment to consider all the blessings we receive from God and how we in turn thank God for God’s blessings.

Stewardship of our time and talent and treasure is not limited only to the Church. Many give time and money to other groups in the community as well.

December

“Be generous, sharing what you have.” (1 Timothy 6:18)

We are all stewards – managers of the many gifts God has bestowed on us. Our challenge as Christians is to make good use of those gifts.

“Happiness lies more in giving than in receiving.” (Acts 20:35)

In our daily lives, we manage our family and work responsibilities. But to become occupied with these important matters to the exclusion of the need of others outside our home or work is a mistake we could carry into eternity.

The coming new year provides a good time to look at how blessed we are and to ask ourselves how we can say “thank you” to God.

YEAR TWO

January

It is important to measure our generosity not by what we give, but by what we have left.

Stewardship involves a change of heart, embodied not just in a single action, nor even a series of actions, but in one's entire life.

"...none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions." (Luke 14: 33)

Stewardship involves the conscientious, firm decision, carried out constantly in action, to conduct one's self as a follower of Jesus, regardless of the cost.

February

As Catholics, we are not to focus only on ourselves but are called by our Baptism to reach out and share our time, talent and treasure with our brothers and sisters.

"But let our people, too, learn to devote themselves to good works, to supply urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive." (Titus 3:14)

We don't give because we have a lot and can afford it; we give because of a desire to share what we have with others.

St. Paul is often misquoted as saying, "Money is the root of all evil." He said no such thing. Money helps feed the hungry, helps clothe the naked; it help build homeless shelters, schools and churches.

March

If we give according to God's principles, God will give back to us. The young man who gave his loaves and fishes didn't have to go without dinner.

Stewardship reminds us to count our blessings, acknowledge God's gifts to us, and express thanks to God by a proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

"God can multiply His favors among you so that you may always have enough of every thing and even a surplus for good works." (II Corinthians 9:8)

The decision to give has not so much to do with calendars and budgets. Really, the decision to give is really a matter of putting your life with God into perspective.

Stewardship is God's invitation to a way of life. It helps us to overcome our selfishness and love of things.

April

Stewardship of time, talent and treasure is chiefly a way to deepen our spiritual life, not a way to increase our giving, although living out Stewardship results in both.

"For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life for many." (Mark 10:45)

God has taught us that you cannot love without giving. That giving includes giving of our time, talent and treasure.

If we give ourselves to God and let Him use our talents to serve others, we will be amazed by the results. Not only will our lives be changed, but so will the lives of others.

May

Do we ever take the initiative in giving our time, talent and treasure, or do we always wait to be asked?

"In generous spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts." (Sirach 35:7)

Whatever time we have is a gift from God and we are asked to use it wisely, to serve God and others.

Stewardship of time, talent and treasure faces certain obstacles: greed, selfishness, irresponsibility and a lack of trust.

All of us are called to be good stewards of our time, but to different causes or activities according to God's specific call. What is God's call to me?

June

"With each contribution, show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy." (Sirach 35:8)

It is important that we budget our hours as we budget our income so we are able to give our time to be involved in church and community activities.

Stewardship of treasure is based on giving a percentage of our income that is just. If we have little income, we will give little. If we have greater income, we will give more. Whether we are poor or rich, we can each give a percentage of our income to church and other charities.

Why not keep a record for one week of how you spend your time? How much do the church and community organizations get of that time?

July

The heart grateful to God needs to find a way to express that gratitude. Some important ways to do that are through prayer, through service and through giving of one's resources.

It is only the hand that is open to give that is open to receive. God cannot give us what we refuse to take and God cannot give to us when our hands and hearts cling to things.

"For everything is from you, and we only give you what we already have received from you."
(1 Chronicles 29:14-16)

If we accept the challenge of putting God first in our time and treasure, our attitudes, priorities and spiritual lives will definitely change.

August

Have you given real thought lately to how good God has been to you? Do you give in proportion to what God has given to you?

Christ makes it quite clear that He expects us to be different. One of the ways He expects us to be different is by practicing stewardship of our many gifts.

"They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability." (II Corinthians 8:3)

"Love one another as I have loved you. I have chosen you to go forth and bear much fruit." (John 15: 12, 16)

September

Use what talents you possess. The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.

Those who practice stewardship see themselves as caretakers of God's gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and are eager to share their gifts out of love for God and for one another.

Stewardship calls us to share what we have with others generously as members of one Christian community. Stewardship focuses on our dependence on God, which goes against society's focus on independence.

Those who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all that they have and all that they are.

In a life committed to stewardship we are called to "possess lightly." Jesus taught about the dangers of clutching to material possessions, and pointed to the real treasures available to us in life.

October

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20: 21)

Giving and sharing are learned responses. It is our responsibility to teach our young people this lesson.

Stewardship is opening our hearts, schedules and hands to others – being available and willing to listen and give our time and our love. Those we give to can be neighbors, fellow parishioners, as well as those who are hurting.

The meaning of money is attached to its use. God never condemned money, as such, but rather insisted that it be used to further the Kingdom of God.

November

God has given each of us some special abilities. It is important that we use them to help one another, passing on to others the many blessings that God has given us.

“They gave their surplus wealth, but she gave from her want, all that she had to live on.” (Mark 12:44)

How much of your time, other than on Sunday, do you give back to God for the many blessings that you have received?

Give of your time, talent and treasure until your heart knows that you have done something for God.

December

Develop your talents to the fullest so that you can use them to benefit your church and community. Your abilities will grow with use; but unused, they may wither away.

“Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your labors.” (Proverbs 3:9)

Your church and community offer many opportunities for using your time and talent in God’s service.

Stewardship of treasure involves trust in God. You have to really believe in God’s Providence and trust that, if you give 10 percent of your income to church and charity, for example, God will help you live on the rest.

No one is ever poorer for giving to our God who is so rich in love, mercy and goodness.