



Stewardship and Development

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The committee's responsibilities can include the following:

1. Carry out the stewardship effort of time, talent and treasure on an annual basis.

The Archdiocesan "Thanks Be to God" program is a four week program that may be tailored to the individual parish and parish needs.

2. Recruit individuals and/or couples to share their personal testimonies about stewardship with parishioners.

The **lay witness testimonies** are probably the most educational, most motivational and most important part of the stewardship "effort." The lay witness talks make stewardship very real and practical for people in the pews. Lay witnesses should be individuals or families from the parish who believe and practice the concept of stewardship.

3. Prepare and keep current a time and talent list or catalog of parish activities and organizations.

A time and talent list or catalog gives parishioners the chance to become aware of the number and type of volunteer opportunities available in the parish. These opportunities can be listed in the bulletin with the appropriate contact person's information, or they may be written about more extensively in a Ministry booklet and used at the **Ministry Fair**.

4. Ensure that those who volunteer are contacted and asked to become involved.

It is important that the Stewardship Committee work with the appropriate parish commissions and groups to ensure that those who commit their time and talent are personally invited by commission or group leaders to become involved. This activity of the committee is probably its most challenging task. It takes planning and follow-up to make sure people end up actually volunteering for what they have committed. If people are not contacted and instead just have their names put on a shelf or in a computer, then they will not get involved in the stewardship effort in future years. They will also start to believe that all you wanted was their money.

5. Evaluate the stewardship efforts and awareness efforts on an annual basis.

All elements of the stewardship effort in the parish need to be evaluated. Review comments, criticisms and questions received with commitment cards. Evaluate the written materials used throughout the year – letters, brochures, bulletin announcements, newsletter articles, etc. Discuss the verbal presentations. Are the homilies and **lay witness testimonies** communicating the desired message? What more could be done to better communicate the stewardship message? What results are witnessed?

6. Publicize stewardship thoughts throughout the year in the parish bulletin on a weekly basis.

It is very easy to put a few lines about stewardship in the bulletin each week, and is an ideal way to keep the message at the fore. These reflections can include **Scripture quotes** from the Old and New Testament and **other** related thoughts.

7. Make appropriate stewardship literature available in parish booklet racks.

Including **stewardship brochures** in the booklet rack provides people the opportunity to read and learn more about stewardship apart from any brochures that may be used for the annual effort.

8. Publicize stewardship reflections in the parish newsletter on a quarterly basis.

Stewardship reflections could include profiles of individuals or couples in the parish who live lives committed to stewardship, commentaries on stewardship, etc.

9. Incorporate comments about stewardship in Sunday homilies.

The Stewardship Committee could suggest that priests regularly incorporate comments about stewardship in Sunday homilies. Within the three year cycle of gospel readings, there is at least one gospel per month with a stewardship-related message, in whole or in part, for all 36 months. In some instances, the entire homily may be on stewardship. In others, a few sentences can be incorporated into the context of the entire homily.

10. Encourage support for stewardship through the general intercessions at Mass.

The committee can develop Prayers of the Faithful with a stewardship message that can be prayed throughout the year – ideally prayed twice a month.

11. Develop a welcoming program for parishioners.

Work with the appropriate parish commissions to develop programs for welcoming parishioners, whether it be by personal visits, in group meetings, or through the mail. Be sure to include a discussion of, and materials about, stewardship in the presentation and/or the packet.

12. Add a children's stewardship component to your parish stewardship effort.

As stewardship is "a way of life," it is important to nurture children to recognize their blessings and to be good stewards of them.

13. Provide in-service and continuing education programs for your stewardship committee.

Study the bishop's pastoral letter. Read a book or view a video from Resources. Attend a stewardship-related conference. Contact the Vicariate Stewardship Coordinator for additional assistance.

14. Expand your focus beyond the parish.

Asking parishioners to share their gifts of time, talent and treasure with the parish presupposes that the parish is doing the same. Be certain to share your resources

Archdiocese of Chicago. Stewardship and Development. 312.534.7713