



## **A Guide For Parish Stewardship Renewal**

Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso  
499 Saint Matthews Street  
El Paso, Texas  
(915) 872-8412  
Fax (915) 872-8411  
Email: [foundation@elpasodiocese.org](mailto:foundation@elpasodiocese.org)  
Website: [www.elpasodiocesefoundation.org](http://www.elpasodiocesefoundation.org)

Tracy Yellen  
Interim Chief Operating Officer

Janine Young  
Progress and Grants Director

**(Adopted from *Stewardship: A Lifetime of Opportunity, Responsibility, Accountability, Archdiocese of Louisville, 2006*)**

## Contents

What is Stewardship	3
What is Meant by “Time, Talent, and Treasure”	4
Ladder of Motivation – Why People Give	7
Practical Steps to Conducting a Parish Stewardship Renewal Process	8
Parish Stewardship Renewal Materials	10
Time and Talent Catalog	11
Sample Pastor Letters	12
Intention Card	14
Intention Card for Children and Youth	15
Tips for the Lay Witness Talks	16
Thank You Card	17
Follow-up Procedures	18
Scriptural References to Stewardship	22
Stewardship Prayer	24

## **What is Stewardship?**

Who is the good steward? Jesus himself asks this question in the Scriptures.

*Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom the master will put in charge of the servants, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom the master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, the master will put that one in charge of all his possessions.* Luke 12:42-44

Stewardship is based on the daily practical recognition that we are not the absolute owners of ourselves, our time, our talents or material goods. We have received every gift of nature and grace from God. Through Baptism we are called to use our time, talent and treasure in a responsible manner for our families, our parish communities, the pastoral ministries of the diocese, and for the global ministries of the universal Church.

Stewardship is first and foremost an opening of ourselves to God's love, and then gladly returning that love. Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and teachings of Jesus; and where it has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed. Stewardship is living our Christ's instruction to "love one another as I have loved you." Stewardship pleases God because the good steward is careful of creation, is respectful of justice and charity, and is prayerful at all times.

We are good stewards chosen by God when we know who we are and appreciate and cultivate our unique gifts. We are good stewards when we know what God expects of us and take time in prayer to discern our unique vocations. We are good stewards when we recognize that everything belongs to God, the Owner. We are just the caretakers.

### **Isn't Stewardship just another name for fundraising?**

Absolutely not!

Stewardship is not about just giving in order to fill a need. It is about living a life that shows gratitude to our Lord for our lives, our skills, and our resources. The ultimate intent of stewardship is not to teach volunteerism or the need for donating money to good causes. These actions will naturally follow if we truly believe that God has blessed us in many concrete ways. These actions will follow when we believe that all that we have belongs to a generous and loving God. These actions will follow when we free ourselves from our devotion to material items. Above all, Stewardship forces us to look beyond ourselves, beyond our families, beyond our parish communities, even beyond our nation to the universal and timeless gospel precept of caring for all God's creation. Stewardship is a maturing of the sacrament of Confirmation. Stewardship is what we do after we say we believe. Stewardship is what we do with what God gives us.

## **What is meant by “time, talent, and treasure?”**

### **Stewardship of Time – Chronos and Kairos**

The disciple who accepts the lifestyle of a steward realizes the importance of time. Each week a steward is given 10,080 minutes. In these minutes there are various tasks that have to be completed. They range from the essentials of sleeping, eating, and working to the ones that carry with them a degree of choice, e.g. time with family, in recreation, and time in God’s presence or doing God’s work.

A steward’s lifestyle is built on the basis of time spent in God’s presence and doing God’s work. Time is divided into two different categories: chronos and kairos. Chronos is time doing ordinary or necessary things, but kairos is time spent that makes a difference. For a steward, kairos starts with prayer. It is in this special time that a steward recognizes how his life is a gift from God. It is here that a grateful lifestyle begins. It is from this time that those parts of life that have a degree of choice to them find their proper priority. Spending quality time with family and doing the portion of God’s work that each steward is uniquely called to do become easy choices when the proper amount of kairos time is spent. Unless a steward is willing to spend kairos time, knowing the blessings in his life and assigning the proper amount of time to express gratitude for them by being in God’s presence and doing God’s work is not possible. Of the 10,080 minutes a steward has each week, the first portion is always kairos time.

### **Stewardship of Talent – A Lifelong Process of Self Discovery**

Stewards are engaged in a lifestyle that starts with the basic belief that they are able to do what they can because they are using abilities that are given to them by God. Stewards live a life of discovery in which they discover not just what their talents are but how they can best be used. Stewards understand these talents are given for a purpose and their increase is an expectation of the giver. Stewards can articulate each God-given talent and how it can be used to build the community of faith that they entered in Baptism. Stewards never stop asking, “What else can I do?” This is a lifelong process of discovery that never ends until their life in this part of God’s kingdom stops.

### **Stewardship of Treasure – Living by the 10/90 Rule**

Treasure is the result of applied talent. Many people work 40 or more hours per week at one or more jobs to earn money. What is the purpose for the money earned? For most, it is to meet the financial obligations their lifestyle has created. For example, some work in order to be able to feed, house, and educate their children. Others work to provide for their future needs after their children are raised. Still others work to have a sense of security for now and for the future. In our consumer oriented society, many work to pay for luxuries that they want or deem necessary.

The following chart demonstrates how lifestyle costs consume a certain percentage of a person’s income as well as the corresponding number of hours in a 40-hour work week that are required to produce that income. This chart forces us to consider what we are working for.

Item	Percentage of Income	Number of Work Hours
Food	13.2%	5.3 hours
Housing	32.7%	13.1 hours
Apparel & Services	4.3%	1.7 hours
Transportation	19.1%	7.7 hours
Health Care	5.7%	2.3 hours
Entertainment	5.1%	2.0 hours
Insurance & Pensions	9.6%	3.8 hours
Other*	10.3%	4.1 hours

The “Other” category includes the cost of alcoholic beverages, personal care products and services, reading, education, tobacco products and supplies, cash contributions, and other miscellaneous expenses. If this category was divided evenly, it would mean that the work of God and community of faith would receive 1.5% of one’s total income or approximately what is earned during 40 minutes of the workweek.

For a steward this is not an acceptable total. A true steward tries to live by the 10/90 rule. God gets the first 10% off the top. The remaining 90% is left for the steward’s life. This is a difficult ideal for many to meet. Most live by the 98/2 rule with the first 98% for lifestyle expectations and the remaining 2% (if that much) is given to God. There is a vast difference between these two rules of living. One places God first while the other puts everything before God. A truly grateful steward cannot live by the 98/2 rule because he would not accept God’s work coming second to anything else.

### **Stewardship Throughout Life**

Becoming a mature steward is a lifelong process. It begins in youth with the process of discovering the many God-given gifts in life. It continues with a conscious decision to develop these gifts to their fullest potential out of gratitude for their presence in the steward’s life. During this time of development the steward begins to give back some of what is there.

As the steward becomes an adult, he or she begins making commitments to others and establishing lives of growth. This growth oftentimes includes the gift of children. A steward sees children as another of the many gifts from God. As the primary teacher of children, parents have the responsibility to be a proper example. Living justly and gratefully before a giving God requires conscious decisions to keep God first. This includes being in God’s presence the proper amount of time (Kairos). Celebrating the Eucharist with the community of faith is essential.

The search for midlife comfort and security often presents serious conflicts with commitments to God’s community. Upon reaching midlife, there is sometimes the tendency (after so much effort is expended in raising and walking with children) to say, “I am now finished.” But to continue setting God first is most necessary at this juncture in life. Thinking the job is done leads many to back away from commitments and seek lifestyles that have other priorities. Instead of looking for new ways to stay involved in communities of faith, many simply back away by making fewer commitments and changing the ratio on the 10/90 rule. A true steward never stops looking for new ways to live faith.

Retirement presents a new set of challenges for the steward. One has more time (Chronos) since life commitments involving jobs and earnings have usually ceased. In many cases, retirement and security have been attained but there may be lingering fears of having enough. This fear (in some cases very real) causes many to turn inward in worry. The anxiety of not having enough causes some to grasp too tightly to what they have. It causes blindness to the source of what is there. "Blessings to be shared" are replaced by "possessions to be held" in order to generate a sense of security.

In this final stage of life, it is the task of the steward to continually focus on the blessings present and think in terms of how these many blessings can be used even beyond his or her life in this world. Legacy is what is left behind. A steward's legacy is comprised of life works that reflect a deep faith in God. It celebrates the many gifts of God and leaves concrete foundations in terms of example and funding to see that one's life work is carried on.

Disciples who live their lives as stewards know what God has given, can demonstrate how these have been attended, leave evidence of their just sharing in the community of faith and finds ways for their gifts to continually increase before the ever-giving God. The life of a steward truly is a life filled with privilege and responsibility.

## Ladder of Motivation Why People Give

**1** Guilt/Fear (give if you hurt) – giving out of fear of punishment or compensation for things we feel guilty about

**2** Rewards (give if you get something back) – giving because we might get something out of it (raffles, games of chance, tax breaks)

**3** Social approval (give if someone's looking) – giving in order to be recognized by others or because of competition with others

**4** Need (give if someone else hurts) – giving to the parish because the roof is leaking; giving to feed the homeless, etc.

**5** Duty/Sacrifice (give until it hurts) – giving out of a sense of obligation and/or loyalty to the parish, the school, the diocese, etc.

**6** Gratitude (give until it feels good) – giving because we are truly grateful for what God has given us in our lives and we want to express thanks

## **Practical Steps to Conducting a Parish Stewardship Renewal Process**

### **I. Pre-Renewal Period (4 to 8 weeks in advance of renewal)**

1. Involve parish leadership in planning the annual Stewardship renewal process. Gather data from parish and finance councils as well as other parish groups for Stewardship materials and brochures. Look for volunteers to give witness talks – recruit Stewardship advocates.
2. Review parish Stewardship materials (intention forms, brochures, and time & talent catalogues) and update as necessary.
3. Provide parishioners with a written financial report two to three weeks prior to Intention Sunday. While parishes should provide accountability reports to parishioners on a regular basis, it is important that this report be provided to every household at least two weeks prior to Intention Sunday. Present financial information in a simplified accounting statement along with a graph/chart. Be sure to include a brief narrative explaining any significant variances, plans, and expenses.
4. Publish parish accomplishments in the weekly bulletin, web site, and parish and school newsletters. Acknowledge the good Stewardship already taking place in the parish. Set a positive tone for the upcoming renewal period.
5. Educate parishioners on the needs of parish ministries. For example, let people know how many persons are needed to fill the essential roles at a weekend Mass, or how many people are needed to help with the building and grounds upkeep.
6. Host a Stewardship Time and Talent Fair. Allow each parish ministry an opportunity to showcase its message and recruit new members. Fairs can be conducted with coffee and donuts following weekend liturgies.

### **II. Renewal Period (2 weeks prior to Intention Sunday through Sunday following Intention Sunday)**

1. Institute Lay Witness/Pulpit talks two weeks prior to Intention Sunday by parishioners who have embraced the Stewardship lifestyle. Suggestions for these talks along with other tips are available in this guide.
2. Distribute Stewardship renewal materials and forms approximately one week prior to Intention Sunday. This will allow parishioners time to pray and then decide what their commitment will be for the coming year.
3. Intention Sunday. Ask all households to return their forms at one of the Masses on Intention Sunday. Parishes may wish to consider having families bring their forms forward during the offertory and present them to the presider.
4. Follow-up Sunday. Use the Sunday following Intention Sunday to collect forms that were not returned on Intention Sunday.

### **III. Follow-up Period (4 to 6 week period following Intention Sunday)**

1. Begin process for entering information from pledge forms returned.
2. Issue thank-you letters/notes to those returning pledge forms.
3. Notify committee chairs with the names of individuals who have signed up to share their time and talent with that committee.

4. Begin personal contact and follow-up with parishioners who have not yet responded with an intention form.
5. Wrap up Stewardship Intention Renewal within 6 weeks of Intention Sunday.

#### **IV. Additional Stewardship Ideas**

1. Utilize all forms of parish communication to spread the message of Stewardship. This includes your web site, bulletins, parish gatherings and meetings, and newsletters.
2. Consider publishing a quarterly Stewardship newsletter.
3. Always look for the opportunity to inform your parishioners about the theology of Stewardship and our baptismal call.
4. Create parish Stewardship magnets or other items to spread the Stewardship message during the year.
5. Order Stewardship theme calendars for parish households to help spread the Stewardship message throughout the year.
6. Use the enclosed bulletin inserts and prayers of the faithful throughout the year to reinforce the message of Stewardship.

## Parish Stewardship Renewal Materials

Parish Stewardship renewal, when properly understood and implemented, offers an opportunity for all of us to “make a plan” to nurture and use our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Listed below are components that are inherent to a successful parish Stewardship renewal process.

- ✓ Time and Talent Catalog – The catalog contains brief descriptions of parish committees, ministries, and activities. It is helpful to include contact names and phone numbers.
- ✓ Pastor Letter – The pastor letter is a critical part of the Stewardship renewal packet that is mailed to parishioners. The pastor/pastoral administrator is encouraged to customize the letter. Sample letters are included in this guide.
- ✓ Intention Card – The intention card provides parishioners with the opportunity to make an annual commitment of time, talent, and treasure. The card should include all committees, ministries and activities and should be designed in a way that is simple to read, yet allows for the parish to gather detailed information. A sample intention card is included in this guide.
- ✓ Intention Card for Children and Youth – Children and youth must be included in the parish Stewardship renewal process. The opportunities provided on the intention card must be appropriate for this group. A sample intention card for children and youth is included in this guide.
- ✓ Tips for Lay Witness Talks - Pointers for those giving lay witness talks.
- ✓ Thank-You Card – Once a parishioner has completed and returned the Stewardship intention card, the pastor/pastoral administrator should immediately send a thank you card to the household. This card is an expression of gratitude and affirms the commitment made by the parishioner. A sample is included.
- ✓ Follow-up – Two weeks after Intention Weekend, the Stewardship Committee or volunteers make phone calls to all parishioners who have not returned the intention card. Two weeks later, the pastor/pastoral administrator should send a letter to those who still have not responded. A sample follow-up letter is included.

## **Time and Talent Catalog**

A Time and Talent Catalog can be a great benefit to parish participation. The goal of the catalog is to educate parishioners about the many opportunities and also to encourage increased participation in the ministries, activities, and services of the parish. People tend to be more comfortable committing time and talent when they know exactly what is expected. The Time and Talent Catalog accomplishes this goal.

The catalogs can offer a very simple listing of the ministries with a brief description of each. Ideally the catalog would describe the ministry, list the amount of time that will be necessary to fulfill the commitment, and give the name of a contact person in the event the parishioner either wishes to serve or is in need of the service. The Time and Talent Catalog should be updated annually.

One benefit of a Time and Talent Catalog is to highlight or list opportunities for participation by the children and youth of the parish. Notations can be made of ways that a family could be involved in the parish. The catalog can be given to parishioners prior to or during parish stewardship renewal. Individual parishes can decide on the timing that seems to be best for them. This catalog can also serve as an important asset to the materials given to newcomers to the parish as well as those seeking information before choosing a parish.

## Sample Pastor Letters

Letters from the pastor, when personalized and “tailored for your parish,” are major factors in the success of parish Stewardship renewal.

### Option 1 – Personalized Letter

<<Date>>

<< Name>>

<<Address>>

<<City State Zip>>

Dear <<Informal Salutation>>,

The message of stewardship is not always an easy one to follow in our culture. Our society celebrates individualism and possessions. It is easy to make our wants our first priority. However, to accept the invitation of Jesus to “come follow me” means to accept the idea that we are not owners but stewards. God is the owner of all. To accept the invitation of Jesus means we make God our first priority. To accept the invitation of Jesus is to accept a life of opportunity coupled with responsibility and accountability – the life of a steward.

The renewal of your stewardship commitment is a demonstration of your desire to once again say “Yes” to the invitation of Jesus. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure help to provide the human and financial resources needed to carry on the ministries and services provided by our parish. Therefore, I ask you to do two things. First, prayerfully consider what you have to share with our parish. Second, let us know your decision by filling out the enclosed commitment card. The renewal of your stewardship commitment demonstrates in a real way your desire to make God’s work your first priority.

Our parish depends upon our response to live as God’s stewards. We can accomplish much if all of us generously share a portion of the time, talent, and treasure that God has entrusted to us.

May God continue to bless the work of our parish.

God Bless You,

<< Pastor’s Name>>

## Option 2 – Non-personalized Letter

<<Date>>

Dear Parishioner,

The message of stewardship is not always an easy one to follow in our culture. Our society celebrates individualism and possessions. It is easy to make our wants our first priority. However, to accept the invitation of Jesus to “come follow me” means to accept the idea that we are not owners but stewards. God is the owner of all. To accept the invitation of Jesus means we make God our first priority. To accept the invitation of Jesus is to accept a life of opportunity coupled with responsibility and accountability – the life of a steward.

The renewal of your stewardship commitment is a demonstration of your desire to once again say “Yes” to the invitation of Jesus. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure help to provide the human and financial resources needed to carry on the ministries and services provided by our parish. Therefore, I ask you to do two things. First, prayerfully consider what you have to share with our parish. Second, let us know your decision by filling out the enclosed commitment card. The renewal of your stewardship commitment demonstrates in a real way your desire to make God’s work your first priority.

Our parish depends upon our response to live as God’s stewards. We can accomplish much if all of us generously share a portion of the time, talent, and treasure that God has entrusted to us.

May God continue to bless the work of our parish.

God Bless You,

<< Pastor’s Name>>

# Intention Card

Please place label here

## PARISH STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL INTENTION CARD

The time that we have been given here on earth, the skills and talents we have developed, and all of the material possessions that we own are gifts from God. We are encouraged to participate in making decisions from the back of the intention card. Your contributions are for one year. In addition, on the reverse side of this intention form you will find a parish census update.

Please place label here

### Renewal of Stewardship of Time & Talent

Prayer Commitment	Worship	Stewardship
01. Pray Daily for All Parishioners	32. Worship Committee	62. Stewardship Committee
02. Attend Mass Regularly	33. Liturgy	63. Volunteer Coordinator
<b>Administration</b>	34. Eucharistic Minister	64. Public Relations
03. Parish Council	35. Eucharistic Minister for Sick or Homebound	65. Stewardship Education for Children and Youth
04. Administration Committee	36. Altar Server	
05. Finance Committee	37. Gift Basket	
06. Summer Picnic Planning Committee	38. Choir	
07. Summer Picnic Booth Captain	39. Cantor	
08. Summer Picnic Volunteer	40. Musician	
09. Catholic Services Appeal - GSA	41. Usher	
10. New-leter Committee	42. Minister of Hospitality	
11. Parish/School Technology Team	43. Art and Environment	
12. School Annual Fund	44. Rejuvenation - Liturgy	
13. Grants/Projects	45. Rejuvenation - Food	
14. Collection Center		
15. Other items		

**In the section below, please indicate the Ministries/ Committees/ Events you wish to begin and those you wish to continue.**

Adult # 1: David (Example) \_\_\_\_\_

Adult # 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult # 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other hobbies, skills, etc. that I would be willing to share with the parish:**

Electrician \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Stewardship of Treasure**

In recognition that everything we have comes from God and as a sign of gratitude, I/we have decided that \$\_\_\_\_\_ is a fair portion to return **weekly** in the Sunday offertory envelope beginning \_\_\_\_\_.

(This card represents an intention only and is not legally binding)

## Intention Card for Children and Youth

Stewardship is a way of life that embraces the concept that all we have is given to us by God. As stewards of these gifts we have a responsibility to give back to God. Therefore, by giving a portion of our time, talent, and treasure – in proportion to our means – we can personally advance the ministry of the Church and build up the kingdom of God on earth.

This message must be conveyed to the children and youth. One way to go about doing this is through the use of a separate Stewardship renewal intention card designed specifically for children and youth. When they reflect, plan, and then fulfill the commitments that they have made, they take a step on the Stewardship journey. In order to help the children and youth develop an attitude of gratitude that is central to Stewardship, the card must include ministries and activities that are appropriate for every age. The sample below must be customized to reflect the actual opportunities and needs of the parish. Just as with any intention card received by the parish, the data must be recorded and the children and youth must be contacted for participation.

### Stewardship Renewal Intention for Children and Youth

Name <i>(e.g. Christopher)</i>	Ministries from list below <i>(e.g. 100, 104)</i>	Other ways I will use my gifts
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- |                                |                                      |                                                  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 100. Cross Bearer              | 106. Altar Server                    | 112. Help a neighbor or relative                 |
| 101. Lector                    | 107. Children's Church               | 113. Care for the environment                    |
| 102. Minister of the Eucharist | 108. Children's Church Assistant     | 114. Parish Facilities Clean-up                  |
| 103. Hospitality Minister      | 109. Vacation Bible School           | 115. Write cards & letters to sick and homebound |
| 104. Youth Choir               | 110. Vacation Bible School Volunteer |                                                  |
| 105. Gift Bearer               | 111. Special Needs Volunteer         |                                                  |

## **Tips for the Lay Witness Talks**

The Lay Witness Talk is one of the strongest components of Stewardship education. The talks are generally given after the pastor's remarks on the readings of the day. It is essential to select parishioners who live stewardship and are respected members of the parish community. An individual, couple or family, as well as young adults, could be considered to give a lay witness talk. The talks are designed to inspire people to become good stewards as well as provide real-life examples of how Stewardship is lived. The following are tips for the Lay Witness Talks:

- Include personal experience and humor if appropriate. People respond best when the speaker comes across as a real person.
- Motivate people to become good stewards of time, talent, and treasure by showing them that their everyday work, at home and on the job, is Stewardship.
- Challenge people to reflect on their own values and the priority of the Catholic faith in their lives as evidenced by the manner in which they utilize their many gifts from God.
- Explain the use of the intention card as a tool to evaluate past giving habits and a means to allow the parish to plan and budget for the upcoming year.
- Write out and memorize the talk, but have it with you for reference.
- Practice in church with the sound system.

## **Sample Format for the Talk**

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain your relationship to the parish.
- Provide details of your personal stewardship journey.
- Describe what good stewardship looks like.
- Speak about what or who inspired you to become a good steward.
- Explain how being a good steward has changed your life.
- Describe the way you decide and plan what and how much time, talent, and treasure you give back to God.
- Invite the audience to join in the journey.

## Thank You Card

It is important that the parishioner receives a thank-you card upon returning the completed intention card to the parish. This sign of appreciation serves as an affirmation of the importance of the commitment. The card is most effective when it includes not only the personalized salutation and signature, but also a brief note from the pastor/pastoral administrator. This effort does take time, but it is time well spent and will certainly benefit the parish in the years to come.

The following is an example of a thank-you card.

### ***Thank you***

*“The gift you have received, give as a gift.”*

Matthew 10:18

*Dear*

*The parish depends on the gifts of all parishioners to support the ministries of parish life. Thank you for sharing the gifts you have received with your parish.*

*May God continue to bless you and your family.*

*Yours in Christ,*

*(Pastor/Pastoral Administrator’s signature)*

## **Follow-up to Parishioners Who Have Returned the Stewardship Renewal Intention Cards**

Contacting all parishioners who have volunteered to serve the parish in any capacity is mandatory. It is important to contact children and youth as well as adults. This phone call serves as an affirmation of the commitment the parishioner has made. It also ensures that all people who have taken the time to volunteer are given the opportunity to serve. The majority of parishioners would gladly participate. They often just need the personal contact that comes from the phone call.

- It is imperative that time and talent intentions, as well as treasure intentions, are recorded in the parish database.
- The chairperson for the Stewardship committee should be given a master copy that includes the names of all volunteers for all ministries.
- The Stewardship committee should then give a copy of the names and phone numbers of the volunteers in a particular area (e.g. lectors) to the persons in charge of that ministry, committee, or event.
- Each of the volunteers should then be contacted. If a person has volunteered for an event that is several months in the future (e.g. fall festival), he/she should be contacted, thanked for the commitment, and given a date or time frame for future contact.
- At a very minimum, it is essential that all who are new to the committee, ministry, or activity should receive a welcoming phone call. By noting whether the person is beginning or continuing the involvement with the particular ministry, the parish office can make this a manageable task.
- It is the responsibility of the Stewardship chair to hold all chairpersons accountable for the contact of all volunteers.

## **Follow-up to Parishioners Who Have Not Returned the Stewardship Renewal Intention Cards**

An important component of parish Stewardship renewal is the follow-up to all parishioners who have not returned the intention card. The volunteers who work on the telephone follow-up can accomplish much more for the parish than just ensuring the completion of the Stewardship intention cards. They can help build relationships within the parish community. The volunteer has an opportunity to identify the true needs of the parishioners. It is also a chance to extend to parishioners a sense of welcome and belonging. This personal touch is crucial. It is the true value of the phone call. The following timeline will help to ensure that all parishioners return their intention cards.

- Two weeks after Intention Weekend, the parish office should provide the Stewardship committee with a list of parishioners who have not returned the parish Stewardship intention cards. Members of the Stewardship committee, the parish Stewardship coordinator, or other volunteers should begin the reminder phone calls to those parishioners. The telephone follow-up script can be found in this guide.
- As the intention cards are received, the names should be removed from the master list of people who need further contact. The commitments from each intention card should be entered into the parish database. If time constraints make this impossible for the parish staff, volunteers can be enlisted to record the time and talent commitments.
- Four weeks after Intention Weekend, the pastor should send follow-up letters to all parishioners who have not returned the intention card.
- Again, as the intention cards are received, the names should be removed from the master list of people who need further contact. The commitments from each intention card should be entered into the parish database.
- All phone calls should be completed within one month of Intention Weekend for maximum effectiveness.

### **Why Do We Need Telephone Follow-up?**

One goal of parish Stewardship renewal is to provide every parishioner with the opportunity to be involved in the parish community. Telephone follow-up greatly increases participation. The phone call is a way to encourage all parishioners to return the intention card. If properly trained, the callers can truly be ambassadors for the parish.

#### **Why follow up?**

- People often need a personal invitation. Stewardship, by its very definition, is an invitation. The phone call or letter shows parishioners that each individual is important to the parish community.
- People often do not respond the first time they are asked. The follow-up phone call and letter are important reminders to busy people.
- This component of Stewardship education reminds the parishioners that gifts of time and talent are just as important to the parish as gifts of treasure.
- Telephone follow-up allows the caller to be active in relaying the parish Stewardship message to other parishioners.
- Telephone follow-up provides an opportunity for the person who receives the call to voice concerns and observations. This is second only to home visits in giving parishioners the opportunity to tell what the parish can do for them. The concerns or

observations should be passed along to either the pastor/pastoral administrator or the appropriate committee chair.

### **Sample Format for the Phone Call to Parishioners Who Have Not Returned the Stewardship Renewal Intention Card**

1. Introduce yourself by giving your name and stating that you are a member of the parish.
2. Ask if the intention card sent out by the pastor/pastoral administrator has been received and returned to the parish office.
3. If the answer is yes, thank the person and tell them that this is greatly appreciated.
4. If the answer is no, ask the person if he/she would please fill it out and either place it in the collection basket or mail it to the parish office.
5. If the card has been lost or discarded, tell the person that another can be sent.
6. If a person says he/she does not want to participate, ask them to indicate this on the card and return it. If appropriate, explain that every intention card is important when the parish plans the ministries for the coming year.
7. If the person says he/she is already involved, thank them and ask that they mark those ministries since this is an annual update.
8. If a person is reluctant because of uncertainty over their finances, remind them that this is not a binding contract and can be adjusted at any time.
9. If a person objects to the intention card, remind him/her that it is not a legal obligation. It just helps the parish know the interests and talents of parishioners. In this way, the parish can better plan the ministries and activities offered for the year, thus being better stewards of the parish resources.
10. If the person asks for information not known to the caller, tell them you will pass the question along to the pastor/pastoral administrator or the appropriate committee chair.

The best time to call is often between 6:30-9:30 weekday evenings. Let the phone ring at least five times. The caller should not leave a message on the answering machine. For maximum effectiveness, all phone calls should be completed within four weeks of Intention Weekend. The pastor letter should be sent at the end of this period.

### **Sample Follow-up Pastor Letter**

Four weeks after Intention Weekend, the pastor/pastoral administrator should send a follow-up letter to every household that has not returned a completed Stewardship renewal intention

card. This allows time for the Stewardship committee to make the follow-up phone calls to those households beforehand. The follow-up is crucial for encouraging the return of additional Stewardship renewal intention cards. Before the letter is mailed, the parish secretary or volunteer should update the list of parishioners who returned the intention cards to include all names that responded, including those responding to the telephone follow-up.

Dear Parishioner,

The theme for our parish Stewardship renewal this year is 2006 is <<insert theme>>. The involvement of all parishioners is one way we go about communicating this theme.

Earlier, I sent a letter and your Stewardship renewal intention card to you. Our records indicate that we have not received your response. The information gathered from the intention cards is important to parish planning. It is also a tangible sign of your commitment to our parish. For these reasons, it is important that you complete the intention card and return it as soon as possible.

If you intend to continue with your current commitments, please indicate that on the intention card. If your current situation makes it difficult for you to make a commitment at this time, we would like to know that as well. If your intention card has been misplaced or discarded, we will be happy to send you another. Just contact the parish office.

I urge you to reflect prayerfully on your gifts of time, talent, and treasure and then decide on a fair portion to return to the parish. We look forward to your response.

You are in my thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

<<Pastor's Name>>

## **Scriptural References to Stewardship**

I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the temple treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood. Mark 12:43-44

As the Father has sent me, so I send you. John 20:19-23

You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of my followers, will certainly receive a reward. Matthew 10:37-42

If anyone wishes to rank first, he must remain the last of all and the servant of all. Mark 9:30-37

Go and sell what you have and give to the poor, you will then have treasure in heaven. Mark 10:17-30

Let the person with two coats give to the one who has none. The person who has food should do the same. Luke 3:10-18

Give, and it shall be given to you . . . For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you. Luke 6:27-38

I give half my belongings, Lord, to the poor. Luke 19:1-10

Teach children how to live, and when they are old they will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Matthew 25:35-36

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:8-10

The one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

We have talents that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Romans 12:6-8

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back. Luke 6:38

Think of us this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35

For we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 1 Timothy 6:7-9

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm, and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has not works, is dead. James 2:14-17

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21

Set apart a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is brought in yearly from the field. Deuteronomy 14:22

Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will be bursting with wine. Proverbs 3:9

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it. Psalms 24:1

If they want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their crosses daily and follow me. Luke 9:23

They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed; all shall give as they are able according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you. Deuteronomy 16:16-17

You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you commands so that you may love one another. John 15:16-17

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. Genesis 2:15

Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it" – when you have it with you. Proverbs 3:28

Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me. Matthew 26:40

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love . . . I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. John 15:9, 11

## Stewardship Prayer (from the International Catholic Stewardship Conference)

*Gracious and Loving God,  
We praise You  
for the gift of Your love  
made manifest in Your Son,  
and for the gift of Your Holy Spirit,  
who binds us in unity through  
the richness of our diversity.*

*We praise You for the  
gift of Our Lady,  
the Virgin Mary  
of Guadalupe,  
whom we honor as Patroness of the Americas.*

*Give us the wisdom  
to follow her example;  
to be good stewards of our faith, our church  
and of all those in need  
of Your loving care.*

*Teach us how to respond  
generously,  
with courage, prudence  
and hope.*

*And guide us on our pilgrim journey  
with Our Lady,  
who shows us the way  
to Your Son in justice and peace.*

*We pray this through Christ, Our Lord,*

*Amen.*