



**PARISH STEWARDSHIP MANUAL**  
**STEWARDSHIP FOR THE LONG TERM**  
**Part 4 of 4**



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## 28 Nurturing-Stewardship for the Long-Term

### 28.1 Introduction

**Nurturing is the Long-Term and continuing development and reinforcement of the initial parish Stewardship education programme.** Nurturing is the responsibility of the Parish Priest and the Stewardship Team. If terms of service on the Stewardship Team are staggered properly, there should be a seamless flow of Stewardship development in the parish.

Nurturing can be divided into two groups of activities. The first group is comprised of the **cyclic (usually annual) programmes**. The second group is comprised of the **continual activities** supporting Stewardship. These two sets of programmes are harmonious and are coordinated by the Stewardship Team.

### 28.2 Cyclic Stewardship Activities

**Cyclic Stewardship activities usually take place on an annual basis and are the formal reinforcement of the initial parish programme.** Often the annual nurturing programme is actually conducted by the parish on a six-month cycle. Initially, time and service might be emphasised using an event such as a time and service fair, held after Sunday Masses. Six months later, sacrificial giving is emphasised, and in six months another activity emphasising time and service is conducted.

Of course, parishes can also choose to conduct a comprehensive nurturing programme focusing on time, service **and** sharing, simultaneously, on an annual basis. The following are **some considerations** regarding the cyclic nurturing activities:

1. **Timing.** If the parish chooses to have a single annual overall programme that treats time, service and sharing, it is recommended that this renewal be scheduled so as not to conflict with the Charitable Works Fund Collections. The exception to this might be a parish conducting its sacrificial giving programme **in conjunction with the CWF**. If a parish uses the six-month format, alternating sharing with time and service, it is recommended that the sharing effort take place in November, and the time and service programme be conducted during the April-May time frame.
2. **Maintaining Interest.** Repeating the same programme year-in and year-out will cause parishioners to lose interest after two or three years. The exception to this seems to be the time and sharing fair. Because it is a fair, as well as a ministry experience, it does not lose its newness. It is recommended that these be varied from year to year, even if one programme seems very successful in a given year. Typically, a well-run programme should result in an increase of 10-20% in gifts of time and service and another 20-25% minimum increase in income sharing.

## **28.3 Continual Activities Affecting Stewardship**

In one way or another, almost **every parish activity relates to Stewardship** inasmuch as Stewardship is **nothing less than living our lives as Christ's disciples**. There are, however, a number of specific continuing activities that do or will strengthen Stewardship in a parish, often in ways difficult to measure. Several of these activities have been discussed earlier and these discussions **will not be repeated** in this section. Please refer to section 8.

**Stewardship Council/Team.** A smoothly functioning Stewardship Team is essential to ensuring Stewardship becomes a way of life in a parish.

**Hospitality Programme.** If the parish does not have a successful hospitality/welcoming committee it is important to consider establishing one as it strengthens the Stewardship effort.

**Church Bulletin/Newsletter.** The Stewardship Team should have one person responsible for ensuring that an article or note on Stewardship is printed **at least monthly**.

### **28.3.1 Suggested Monthly Bulletin Announcements for two years**

The following bulletin inserts may be used throughout the year.

#### **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 our financial resources 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 finances is part of the will of His Father.

Stewardship of our finances 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 finances 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 our finances, some Christians choose the biblical norm of giving 10 percent of their income. Some, because of circumstances, give more than that. 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 finances 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 finances 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, service and finances 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 finances 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 finances.

## **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 finances 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 finances.

“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.” (I 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 13:16)

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 finances.

### **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 also 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 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 His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and finances we have received.

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.”

(I Corinthians 4:1-2)

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

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

### **December**

“Be generous, sharing what you have.”

(I Timothy 6:18)

We are all stewards - managers of the many gifts God has bestowed upon 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.

## **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 finances 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 helps 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 Him by a proportionate giving of our time, talent and finances.

"God can multiply His favours 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. Rather, 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 finance 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 finances.

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 also will the lives of others.

## **May**

Do we ever take the initiative in giving our time, talent and finances, 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 finances 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 our finances 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 organisations 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." (I Chronicles 29:14-16)

If we accept the challenge of putting God first in our time and finances, 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 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 time, talent and finances.

"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 bush 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 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 neighbours, 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 have from her want, all that she had to live on." (Mark 12:44)

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

Give of your time, talent and finances 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; unused, they may wither away.

"Honour the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your labours." (Proverbs 3:9)

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

Stewardship of finances involves trust in God. You have to really believe in God's Providence and trust that, if you give 10% of your income to church and charity for example, He 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.

## **28.3.2 Additional Bulletin Inserts**

- As Catholics we are not to focus on ourselves but are called by our Baptism to reach out and share our time, our service and our income with our brothers and sisters.
- If we give according to God's principles, God will give back to us. The young man, who gave of his loaves and fishes, didn't have to go without dinner.
- The decision to give has not much to do with calendars and budgets. Rather, the decision to give is really a matter of putting your life with God into perspective.

- God has taught us that you cannot live without giving. That giving includes giving of our time, our service and our income.
- Do we ever take the initiative to give of ourselves, or do we always wait to be asked?
- Whatever time we have is a gift from God and we are asked to use it wisely, to serve God and others.
- All of us are called to be good stewards of our time, but to different causes, activities and vocations according to God's specific Call. What is God's call to you?
- The Heart, grateful to God, needs to find a way to express that gratitude. Some important ways to express that are through prayer, through service and through giving of one's resources.
- Open your door to those who might ordinarily avoid. Invite blessings into your life by giving blessings of your own.
- Those who practice stewardship recognise God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and all they are.
- God has given each of us special abilities. It is important that we use them to help one another, passing on others the many blessings that God has given us.
- The faithful steward makes an offering as act of love to God for his blessings. Giving becomes an act of worship, a faith stance, a spiritual way of life. Therefore, the motivation for giving is a spiritual one. A stewardship commitment is neither expressed in a single action or even in a number of actions but in an entire way of life. Stewardship means committing one's self to the Lord.
- What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ? Just look to the first two commandments: Love God and love your neighbour. The words are simple and task is clear. We give to our neighbour, the blessings we have received from God in appreciation for our bountiful gifts.

### **28.3.3 Stewardship – Prayers of the Faithful**

- Lord, you are the give of every gift, including the most precious and holy gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to remember how important it is for us to also be generous givers of gifts, so we can carry out Christ's mission for His Church on earth, we pray to the Lord.
- Lord, instil in our hearts a spirit of charity and compassion. Help us to be open to ways that can make a difference in our parish and community by being generous with our abilities and our financial resources, we pray to the Lord.
- Lord, grant us the ability to honestly evaluate our lifestyle that it might reflect a desire to walk closer with you, we pray to the Lord.
- Lord, help us to wisely use the gifts you've entrusted us to Steward, we pray to the Lord.

- Lord, give our parish family the desire to do your will, give generously of ourselves and our gifts for the mission of the Church, we pray to the Lord.
- Lord, we offer up a prayer of thanksgiving for the abundance of resources and abilities you have blessed us with. Give us the desire to joyfully share our gifts for the good of our Catholic community, we pray to the Lord.
- Lord, make us trustworthy Stewards of your abundant blessings. Show us ways that will enable us to fully embrace your teachings of charity, we pray to the Lord.
- That our gifts at today's Mass truly reflect our love and thanksgiving for the many blessings God has entrusted us with, we pray to the Lord.
- That we have the courage to be good Stewards of God's many blessings, we pray to the Lord.
- That we as a parish community, may understand and accept that living as Stewards will bring each of us a conversion and a change of heart, as we generously share our time, our service and our incomes with God, we pray to the Lord
- That as people of faith, we may accept God's challenge, and commit ourselves to being Christian Stewards, sharing our time, our service and our income to continue Christ's mission and ministry in our parish and community, we pray to the Lord.
- For all our parishioners who volunteer in our Church and within our community as they return gifts of time and service, that they might discover a deeper faith relationship with God, we pray to the Lord.

### ***28.4 Financial Reporting.***

Parishioners are more willing to give sacrificially if they know the parish is a good steward of its resources. One way to help this understanding is to **publish, at least quarterly, a parish financial report**. Some parishes publish monthly cash flow (receipts/expenses) reports. Almost all successful parishes also publish the collection receipts, ordinary and special, in the weekly bulletin for the previous week. Some Parish Priests have reported their collections have slowly increased after beginning to publish collection receipts, even though there have been no other known changes in the parish: no Stewardship programme, no pulpit talks, no specific focus on Stewardship, stable family counts, etc.

### ***28.5 Envelope Programme.***

Every parish should, near the end of the year, focus the attention of parishioners on using envelopes. From a Stewardship standpoint, envelopes are the wrappers for our gifts to the Lord. **There should also be available blank envelopes in the seats**. Loose contributions tend to be higher using envelopes because paper money, rather than coinage, tends to be placed in envelopes. In addition, if **a cheque from a parishioner is** given in a generic seat envelope, or from a non-registered Catholic living in the parish area, the parish office can send the donor a box of numbered envelopes and/or register the donor's family.

## **28.6 Ministry/Activity Booklet.**

Update annually. This booklet can also be used in conjunction with the ministry fair and the information is often included in parish directories.

## **28.7 Tracking Key Stewardship Indicators.**

No Stewardship Programme can be truly effective without some way of measuring certain elements of the programme. As we mentioned earlier, the spiritual elements of a parish cannot be measured in quantities, nor should they be. On the other hand, there are a number of data points that can be measured on a year-by-year basis. Many of these are already being reported to the diocese on a regular basis.

Stewardship Council/Teams should consider compiling and reviewing the following information on an annual (parish fiscal year) basis:

- Envelope income
- Registered Parishioners. Year- to-Year.
- Number of new families.
- Number of new families greeted by Hospitality Group annually.
- Number of families receiving envelopes.
- Number of families using envelopes more than four times a year.
- Percentage of families using envelopes.
- Changes in number of parishioners active (however you define it) in ministry or other parish activities.
- Mass attendance, by mass, for each weekend, then reported quarterly and annually.

## **28.8 Planned Giving.**

Planned giving education seminars are designed to educate parishioners in ways they can be good stewards in planning the disposition of their estates. Normally, this education takes place through seminars or workshops offered by the parish. However, planned giving seminars, sometimes referred to as “wills workshops,” are activities that should be scheduled only **after** the initial Stewardship Education Programme has been introduced to the parish. **Planned giving normally represents deferred income** to the parish or diocese.

The Diocesan Representative is available to assist parishes that have completed an initial Stewardship education programme in planning and conducting a planned giving workshop.

## **28.9 Assistance from the Diocese**

The Diocese is available to assist parishes in the following areas:

- Preliminary discussions to assist parishes in determining the best approach to developing a Stewardship education programme for the parish.
- Providing initial Stewardship orientations to parish groups.
- Training new Stewardship Teams.
- Working with Stewardship Teams to implement Stewardship Training in the parish.
- Assisting in developing the Long-Term nurturing and cyclic renewal effort in the parish.

- Assisting in obtaining resources to support (books, other programmes, printed materials, videos, etc.) parish Stewardship education efforts.
- Assisting in planning and conducting planned giving workshops.

## 29 Scriptural References

### 29.1 Scriptural Foundations for Giving

*Psalm 24.1. The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

At the very foundation of the discipleship position is the fact that God “owns” everything. We “own” nothing. Our jobs, houses, even our children - our health and the blood that runs through our veins were all made by God and He alone has authority over them.

- Why give?  
Motivation for giving is the subject of much study and many theories. For the believer, it is clearly spelled out in God's Word. There are definitely some Old and New Testament principles but one thing is clear - God wants us to understand that giving is important to Him and He desires obedience.

*Deuteronomy 16:17. Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.*

- Attitude Toward Giving  
Does it matter to God what a donor thinks or feels when they give a gift? We can see that this is a very important aspect of our relationship with God.

*Matthew 10:8. Freely you have received, freely give.*

- What Should I Give?  
Sometimes we look for opportunities to involve donors in ways other than financial gifts. Other times donors look for ways to “get out of” giving a gift of cash. Does one take the place of the other? Can we give “time” instead of cash?

Food and drink.

*Matthew 25:35. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.*

*I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.*

*I was a stranger and you invited me in.*

Hospitality.

*Matthew 25:35; Romans 12:13. Share with God's people who are in need, practice hospitality.*

Medicine and time.

*Matthew 25:36. I was sick and you looked after*

*Me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.*

- Matthew 25:14-30  
Parable of the Silver Pieces
- Mark 10:21  
Go and sell what you have and give to the poor, you will then have treasure in heaven.
- Mark 10:43-44  
“..Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all.”
- Mark 12:44  
“They gave from their surplus wealth, but she gave from her want, all that she had to live on.”
- Mark 13:34  
“He leaves home and leaves his servants in charge, each with his own task.”
- Luke:3:11  
“Let the man with two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same.”
- John 6:27  
“You should not be working for perishable food but for food that remains unto life eternal.”
- John 12:26  
“If anyone would serve me, let him follow me.”
- John 15:12-16  
“This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you...it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit.”
- John 20:21  
“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
- John 21:15-17  
“Jesus said, “Tend my sheep...Feed my sheep”

## **29.2 Key Principles**

- These principles are designed to show how solid Stewardship concepts are consistent with and grounded in solid Biblical principles. Those involved in the ministry of Stewardship should be well versed in these concepts in order to be as effective as possible.
- **The Benefit Principle**

*The benefit in giving always goes to the giver. Philippians 4:17-20.*

- **The Emotion Principle**

*Giving is predominately emotional. Luke 18:18-23; II Corinthians 9:7.*

- **The Treasure Principle**

*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be. Where your heart is, there your treasure will be. Matthew 6:19-21.*

- **The Principle of Fruitfulness**

*Fruitfulness always invites blessings and rewards. Matthew 25:14-30.*

- **The Principle of the Critical Few**

Focus on what and who are really important. Twenty percent of the activities will produce 80 percent of the results. Luke 10.

- **The Principle of Inspection**

*People will be more successful as we partner with them in the management of the programme. Delegation does not mean abdication.*

- **The Principle of Natural Prospects**

Jerusalem, Judea then Samaria. Start with those already committed then expand.

## **30 The Parish Self-Assessment**

As with almost any other type of programme, an effective Stewardship education programme must begin with an objective assessment of the parish. This assessment is important for two reasons:

1. It provides a **benchmark against which future progress can be measured.**
2. It helps in **determining exactly what type of programme and programme intensity** is needed. Either the parish self-assessment or the organisation of the parish Stewardship Team can take place first. However, because the self-assessment is fairly easy to complete, it may be useful for the Parish Priest and/or Parish Pastoral Council to complete this assessment before forming the Stewardship Team. The results can then be used to clearly show the need for a parish Stewardship programme and as a tool to “sell” parishioners on the need to volunteer to help the parish Stewardship programme.

3. Appendix B provides a sample Parish Stewardship Self-Assessment that can be modified, as needed, to suit a particular parish. The self-assessment process will require a parish to ask some tough questions, the answers to some of which may be embarrassing. Nevertheless, the questions must be asked if you are to make an informed decision concerning the future direction of your parish Stewardship programme. Some parishes have found it helpful to form a sub-committee of the Parish Pastoral Council to complete the self-assessment.

### ***30.1 Some Indications of Parish “Stewardship Temperature.”***

The following information is intended to provide a parish with enough information about specific Stewardship indicators that may surface during the self-assessment to assist the Parish Priest and Stewardship Team in evaluating the situation in a parish. This information is not intended to be any more than a tool to assist in evaluating parishes.

- Recent **trends in parishioner gifts** of time and service;
- **Number of people** giving 5% or more of gross income to the parish **if known**
- Percentage of **families using envelopes**, and the trend.
- Trends in the **Charitable Works Fund (CWF) Appeal** (amounts given, participation, etc.);
- Trends in **Envelope Giving** for the parish, both gross and on a family and per envelope basis.

### ***30.2 Choosing the Best Approach***

Given that there are three approaches to programme breadth (time and service only, sharing income only and all three) the self-assessment will assist the parish in making the best decision.

### 30.3 Appendix A - Parish Self-Assessment Template

## Parish Stewardship Self-Assessment Template

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

1. <u>Parish Data (Last 3 Years)</u>	Year ____	Year ____	Year ____
# Registered Families	_____	_____	_____
# Parishioners Registered	_____	_____	_____
# Envelopes Out (Distributed)	_____	_____	_____
Average # Envelopes Received Weekly	_____	_____	_____
Annual Income from 2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection	_____	_____	_____
Average Total Weekly Mass Attendance	_____	_____	_____

### 2. Spiritual Indicators

a. Describe programme(s) for evangelising alienated/non-practicing Catholics. How many parishioners are actively involved? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Describe your RCIA Programme and the level of participation. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Describe weekday Mass attendance. \_\_\_\_\_

d. Describe religious education programme offerings. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Ministry Indicators

a. Does the parish have Parish Pastoral Council? When was it formed? How is it organised?

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b. Does the parish have a Finance Committee? When was it formed? How does it function?

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c. Does the parish have a Stewardship Team? When was it formed? How does it function?

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d. Does the parish publish a ministry listing or booklet? Describe. Attach a copy \_\_\_\_\_

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e. Number of parish ministries \_\_\_\_\_ (or attach list.)

f. Does the parish have a volunteer recognition event (annual dinner, etc.)? Describe.

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g. Does the Parish council recognise/thank key volunteers when their term of service ends?  
(Certificate, gifts, etc.) Describe. \_\_\_\_\_

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h. Other ministry information \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 4. Financial Indicators

- a. Last years' regular weekly giving annual totals broken down to show number of donors who give an annual total within a certain range. Use whatever report your software provides that most closely approximates a report similar to that shown below. Attach a copy.

Example Statistical Giving Report

	<u>Total Annual Gift Totals</u>	<u># Donors</u>
\$ 0	- \$25	42
26	- 100	36
101	- 200	32
201	- 300	65
301	- 400	28
401	- 500	26
501	- 1000	13
1001	- 2000	11
	Etc.	

If available provide the above report for the past three (complete) budget years.

b. Describe how it is determined which parishioners receive envelopes

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c. Is there an envelope programme for children? Describe:

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d. Pick three recent, normal Sundays (not special or Holy Days) and provide the following information from the regular collection.

<u>Week-end Collection Information</u>	<u>Week1</u>	<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Week 3</u>
Envelopes in Collection	_____	_____	_____
Total Amount in Envelopes	_____	_____	_____
Total Amount Loose 2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection	_____	_____	_____
Total Amount of Collection	_____	_____	_____
<u>Total # Of Envelopes Containing Amount</u>	<u>Week1</u>	<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Week3</u>
\$ 1.01 - \$ 3.00	_____	_____	_____
3.01 - 5.00	_____	_____	_____
5.01 - 7.00	_____	_____	_____
7.01 - 10.00	_____	_____	_____
10.01 - 20.00	_____	_____	_____
20.01 - 50.00	_____	_____	_____
More than \$50.00	_____	_____	_____
Denominations in Loose Collections			

<u>Total Loose Collection</u>	<u>Week 1</u>	<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Week 3</u>
Number of \$ 5.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$10.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$20.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$50.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$100.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Total Coin Amount	_____	_____	_____

5. Stewardship-Focused Activities

- a. Does your parish publish financial reports to the entire parish on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis? Describe. Attach a copy of a recent report.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- b. Does your parish tithe? Describe.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- c. Has your parish had a “time and service day” or ministry fair within the past year? When? Describe.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- d. Has your parish held any special Stewardship-type programmes or emphasis within the past twelve months? Describe.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- e. How are new parishioners welcomed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- f. Has your parish contacted all parishioners personally within the past twelve months to ask if the parish can do anything for them? Describe.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- g. Are volunteers for ministry always contacted and thanked? Describe process.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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h. When was the last homily that focused on time and service?

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i. When was the last homily that focused on sacrificial giving?

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j. Has your parish recently had a lay witness give a presentation on Stewardship at mass? When? Describe.

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k. Do you have a parish newsletter (not the bulletin)? Attach a copy \_\_\_\_\_

l. Provide any other information that might be useful to your assessment.

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