Section 5:

Stewardship Commitment Process

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“This sharing [of money, time, and personal resources of all kinds] is not an option for Catholics who understand what membership in the Church involves. It is a serious duty. It is a consequence of the faith which Catholics profess and celebrate.”

~Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response, U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Stewardship
The Stewardship Manual provides a roadmap to implementing and sustaining a successful Stewardship process in a parish. The roadmap is divided into 6 sections:

1. Developing a Stewardship Committee
2. Assessing Ministries and Creating a Future Vision
3. Educating and Forming the Parish on Stewardship
4. Conducting the Ministry Fair
5. Committing Time, Talent, and Treasure
6. Sustaining Stewardship

The Manual contains 4 additional sections containing materials for:
- Appendix A – Discernment of Gifts
- Appendix B – Children’s Stewardship
- Appendix C – A Steward’s Prayer and Reflection Journal
- Appendix D – Sunday Homilies – Forming Communities in the Spirit of Stewardship

Each section provides an overview, suggested steps for implementation, lessons learned, tools, sample materials, and external resources that can be used to initiate and sustain Stewardship in a parish. This section (highlighted in gray above) addresses Committing Time, Talent, and Treasure.
Stewardship Commitment Process

Commitment Process Overview

The commitment process is the culmination of the efforts of the Stewardship Committee. Although all the efforts of the Stewardship Committee lead to the Commitment Sunday, the commitment process continues past this date with the compilation of the information and follow-up communication with parishioners.

Introduction

“I think it helps when I remember just whose earth this really is. It’s a truth that everything I have, including myself, is a gift from God. Nothing can be earned, nothing owned, nothing labeled with my name. When I remember that, my heart shifts focus. I lose sight of the “my” and “mine” of material possessions, and I reach out to worship not the gifts but the Giver.” – Joy Cowley (Parishioner, Trinity Cathedral)

Commitment is defined by Dictionary.com as “a pledge or promise; obligation; engagement; involvement.” The American Heritage Dictionary defines commitment as “being bound emotionally or intellectually to a course of action or to another person or persons;” and WordNet defines commitment as “the trait of sincere and steadfast fixity of purpose.” Commitment to Stewardship as a way of life is all of this, and more. As believers, we have an obligation to become sincerely involved spiritually, emotionally and intellectually on a course of action, our way of life, as we relate to each other and to our God.

“Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace; that is enough for me.”

- Prayer of Saint Ignatius Loyola

Ministry Assessment and Future Vision

The needs of a parish community change as the people within it change. Some people will move in and move out; others will have growing families; and still others will grow old there and have their own changing needs. It is these dynamics that make assessment and future visioning necessary, allowing a parish to keep pace with the needs of the people it serves. As ministry needs are constantly re-evaluated, and as leadership and involvement in those ministries change, a ministry catalog should be developed and kept up-to-date so as to provide accurate information to parishioners.
Stewardship Commitment Process

Ministry catalogs should include all parish ministries, contact information of ministry leaders, and a brief description of ministry activities. See Section 2, “Ministry Assessment and Future Vision,” for the recommended process to create a ministry catalog. Several weeks prior to the Ministry Fair the catalog should be reviewed and updated. New ministries should be included and contact information should be verified. A copy of the ministry catalog along with the pastor’s introductory letter (described on page 6 of this section of the manual in “Leading Up to Commitment Sunday”) should be given to every household in the parish. A copy should also be given to new parishioners upon registering. It may also be useful to have a copy of the catalog on the parish website.

Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

Conversion of hearts to a Stewardship way of life is a long process, occurring one heart at a time. Therefore, ongoing education and formation is a key component in developing and sustaining Stewardship at a parish. Many tools to help a parish accomplish this are provided in Section 3 of this manual, “Parish Stewardship Education and Formation” and on the Diocese of Cleveland Stewardship web site (go to www.dioceseofcleveland.org and click on the Stewardship Office link).

Ministry Fair

At the Ministry Fair parishioners have an opportunity to talk to leaders of the various ministries. They have the opportunity to see in more detail what the ministries do and ask questions to better discern if the ministry is right for them. The event should be an inviting, fun activity with food and beverages provided. All parishioners should be encouraged to attend. This is not a time for people to commit, but to gather information that will help them decide which ministries are best for them. See Section 4, “Ministry Fair,” for more details.

Commitment Sunday

One of the main efforts for the Stewardship Committee is Commitment Sunday. It is at this time that all parishioners are asked to return their completed commitment cards pledging their time, talent, and treasure for the coming year. See Examples 5.3 – 5.10, pages 13-21, for examples of commitment cards and other related items. The event should be incorporated into the liturgy of the day using the homily (Section 10, “Sunday Homilies – Forming Communities in the Spirit of Stewardship”) and Prayer of the Faithful (Section 3, “Parish Stewardship Education and Formation”) to emphasize the importance of each member of the parish making a commitment to serve their church. Although one weekend will be devoted to this event, reminders and follow-up announcements should be included in both pulpit announcements and bulletins in subsequent weeks. Examples of these are provided, again in Section 3, in this manual.
Getting Started

There are a variety of action steps to take in preparing for Commitment Sunday, effectively conducting the pledging process, and following up with the information gathered. Given below are guidelines with references to many examples that will help a parish successfully manage and execute this process.

Leading Up to Commitment Sunday

The commitment process is initiated by a letter from the pastor, which briefly reaffirms the concepts of Stewardship and reinforces the importance of each parishioner’s commitment to use their time, talent, and treasure for the good of the parish and all of God’s Church. The letter should mention the activities (Lay Witness Talks, Ministry Fair, etc) that will be leading up to the commitment weekend. Example 5.1, page 11, is a sample of such a letter for a parish’s initial year of Stewardship development, and Example 5.2, page 12 is a sample for the following recommitment years. Commitment cards and ministry catalogs should be included in a mailing to all households. It is important that this be done as a mailing so that even those who do not attend Mass on a regular basis are contacted.

Commitment Sunday Mechanics

With advanced planning, the ‘mechanics’ of Commitment Sunday will go smoothly, allowing for an experience that will be a prayerful and meaningful part of the liturgy for parishioners. Consider what printed materials are needed and how far in advance they must be prepared and printed; have extra commitment cards available for Commitment Sunday; determine how to incorporate the commitment process into the liturgy in a way that works for the worship style in the parish; determine what will happen with the cards after each liturgy (where to take them and who will be responsible for them). Remember to develop a schedule of how to ‘process’ the cards after Commitment Sunday.

Data Entry

As the commitment cards are returned, it is important to quickly aggregate the information. This data is used to provide information to ministry leaders for their contact and follow-up, to thank those who have committed, and to contact those who have not yet returned their forms. There are several methods and systems that may be used. Whatever the means, the following are important outcomes:

- Reports, by ministry, of new and current volunteers – The ministry membership list should provide ministry leaders with contact information for new and/or current members, as shown in Example 5.15, page 26. This information could also be used for mail merge documents and mailing labels.
Stewardship Commitment Process

- **Reports listing ministry leaders** – The ministry leader’s contact list would be useful to the Stewardship Committee in the process of passing on volunteer sign-ups from the commitment cards to ministry leaders. See *Example 5.16, page 27* for a sample of this report. This information can be used for mailing labels and mail merged letters when communicating the results of the Stewardship commitment process to ministry leaders.

- **Reports by individual, of time, talent, and treasure commitments** – The individual parishioner report of ministry activity can be used to summarize individual’s participation in the commitment process, as shown in *Example 5.17, page 28*. This information can also be used to develop mail merged letters that can be sent to individuals confirming their commitment form selections.

- **Thank you and follow up letters** – Gratitude is a basic element in a life of Stewardship. What better place for it to start than with communication from the parish to the parishioners. In addition, prompt follow up activity is critical step to success of developing Stewardship at a parish.

Ideally, the database utilized by the parish (i.e. ACS, PDS, OPRS, or any other) should be used, since it already provides demographic information and may already have the components necessary for the reports required. If the parish staff will not be entering the information, the disclosure of personal identifiable information should be protected. Efforts should be taken to restrict volunteers from having access to information not pertinent to the commitment process. If the parish database is not an option, a separate database and/or spreadsheet may be utilized for entering the information. (Sample Access database and Excel spreadsheets are provided on the Diocese of Cleveland Stewardship web page.)

**Contact Information for commonly used parish software:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACS Technologies</th>
<th>OPRS – K-12 PC Computers</th>
<th>PDS - Parish Data Systems</th>
<th>ParishSOFT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>180 Dunburton Dr.</td>
<td>7377 Ford Dr.</td>
<td>14425 North 19th St.</td>
<td>825 Victors Way, Suite 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence, SC 29501</td>
<td>Mentor, OH 44060-3521</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ 85023-6702</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI 48108-2830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(800) 669-2509</td>
<td>(440) 257-9714</td>
<td>(800) 892-5202</td>
<td>866.930.4774 x116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ministry Contacts**

Within two weeks after Commitment Weekend, reports of new volunteers should be provided to the ministry leaders such as that shown in *Example 5.15, page 26*. It is critical that the ministry leaders call these new volunteers soon after receiving their names. The new volunteers should then be invited to the next scheduled function or provided with information regarding the next available training or instruction session. After four weeks, the ministries should report the progress of their follow up to the designated Stewardship Committee representative responsible for member contacts and follow up. The Stewardship Committee and pastor should have a procedure in place for handling cases in which the ministry leader does not report back or contact new volunteers. Follow up with
new volunteers and warmly welcoming them into a ministry is one of the most important elements of a successful Stewardship process.

Parish Progress Updates

It is important to keep the parish informed as to the status of the commitment process. Thank you letters, such as those shown in Examples 5.11 and 5.12, pages 22-23, should be sent to parishioners who have returned their commitment cards. Reminders to return commitment cards should be included in both pulpit announcements and bulletins (Example 3.10, page 34 of Section 3, “Parish Stewardship Education and Formation”) and mailed to those who have not returned commitment cards (Example 5.13, page 24). Periodically, statistics as to the number of forms returned, new ministry commitments, and financial pledges should be announced. An option to help parishioners maintain their commitment throughout the year is to mail them reminders of their commitment of time, talent, and treasure on a quarterly basis (Example 5.14, page 25). A record of financial donations to date may also be included. A decision will have to be made as to whether to send such a report to inactive parishioners.
Lessons Learned (Tips and Tricks)

Lessons learned in establishing an effective Stewardship Commitment Process:

- **Plan!** – Begin planning early and give plenty of time to accomplish all tasks prior to the Commitment Sunday.
- **Keep it simple** – Commitment cards should be easy to understand and entry of information simple and easy.
- **Be thorough** – Be sure the commitment card includes spaces for all necessary information, including email addresses and cell phone numbers.
- **Think it through** – It is helpful for commitment cards to include a space for indicating “continuing involvement” or “new involvement”. This makes follow up with new volunteers easier.
- **Promote enthusiasm** – The pastor and staff must be positive and upbeat throughout the process.
- **Make it easy** – Have commitment cards available in pews on Commitment Sunday.
- **Set an example** – On Commitment Sunday, it is suggested that the pastor fill out his card in the presence of the congregation. Parishioners may be asked to fill their cards out at the same time.
- **Create lists** - Provide ministry leaders with the listings of new volunteers as soon as possible.
- **Be prompt** – Contacting new volunteers as soon as possible is important to the success of the commitment process.
- **Follow up on the follow up!** – Contact ministry leaders to be sure they have contacted those that have indicated an interest in their ministry.
- **Use a data base** – The database should be simple to use and should contain complete information needed for reporting to ministries, contacting new volunteers, and for tracking pledges.
- **Know your audience** – Prior to the process, decisions should be made as to who should receive commitment cards (all parishioners, registered parishioners, active parishioners).
- **Make choices** – Decide whether one commitment card should be used per person or per family and/or if a separate youth card should be used.
- **Send reminders** – It is suggested that quarterly reminders as to time, talent and treasure commitments be sent to individuals and families as a reminder of personal pledges made on Commitment Sunday.
Examples and Templates

Included in this section are sample materials for your reference, adaptation, and use in establishing a Stewardship Commitment Process.

Introductory letters from the pastor

- 5.1. For the initial year of developing Stewardship
- 5.2. For the renewal years of Stewardship

Commitment cards, automatic offering forms, Take a Step Chart

- 5.3. Commitment card – tri-fold sample 1
- 5.4. Commitment card – tri-fold sample 2
- 5.5. Commitment card – 1 page example
- 5.6. Commitment card – youth/teen
- 5.7. Commitment card – children/youth
- 5.8. Automated Offering Plan Form – sample 1
- 5.9 Automated Offering Plan Form – sample 2
- 5.10 Take a Step in Giving Chart

Thank you’s and follow ups

- 5.11 Thank you – sample 1
- 5.12 Thank you – sample 2
- 5.13 Follow up reminder
- 5.14 Quarterly reminder

Reports

- 5.15 Ministry Membership List Database Report
- 5.16 Ministry Leader’s Contact List Database Report
- 5.17 Individual Parishioner Ministries Database Report
Example 5.1.

Introductory Letter from Pastor for Initial Year of Stewardship

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Dear Parishioners:

For the past several months our Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and Stewardship Committee have been reflecting and planning with me about how best to encourage our parishioners to offer their gifts to God and our parish community. As St. Paul said to the Corinthians, each individual has a unique gift that he or she is able to offer. We have decided to use this period leading up to Pentecost as an opportunity for all of us to reflect on our gifts and their use.

During the weekend of ____________ we will have a Parish Ministry Fair. All of our parish commissions and ministry groups will be available in the ____________ after Mass to answer questions about the work they do and to invite you to participate. Enclosed in this letter is a Parish Ministry Catalog, please use it to familiarize yourself with the parish ministries and reflect on which activity(s) may best fit with your gifts and talents in preparation for attending the Parish Ministry Fair.

In the weeks to come, as you prayerfully reflect on your gifts of time, talent and treasure, we ask that you fill out the enclosed Commitment form. These Commitment forms will be collected during the weekend of ____________ at all Masses.

When filling out the Commitment forms, we ask that each member of your family consider their commitment, and that each individual fill out a separate form. We are also asking that you indicate your interest in an activity by using a C (for continuing), N (for New) and I (for interested in more information).

In preparation for this Commitment process, it might be helpful for you to reflect on the following:

• What talents do you most readily share?
• What talents or gifts are you most hesitant to share. Reflect on the reasons for your reluctance.
• What talents have you buried? What talents have you multiplied?

Is there something that you’ve always wanted to try but haven’t yet done so? Can you do it now?

Jesus says, “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

My personal prayer for you is that your life be abundantly full of the power and mystery and grace of God. God enters into our lives and transforms them, just as He transforms our gifts of bread and wine into the living body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The more we offer of our time, talent and treasure, the more God is able to transform our offerings to build up His Kingdom.

Thank you for the gifts you have given of your time, your talent and your treasure. I pray that this Easter season will be a holy and prayerful time for you and your families.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor
Example 5.2.

Introductory Letter from Pastor for Renewal Years of Stewardship

Dear __________________,

I am truly grateful to all of you who generously share your time, talents and treasure for the betterment of our parish community. In the next few weeks our parish will be focusing on the importance of stewardship to the mission of our parish.

“Members help the church to fulfill its mission by giving generous support

- time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances
- to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church.” (U.S. Bishops, Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response)

There are many materials distributed on the subject of stewardship, but the message is simple. What has God entrusted to each of us, and how are we stewarding what has been placed in our care?

At the Masses next weekend, members of our parish community will share with you their personal journey as stewards of God’s gifts. We are all aware of the very limited resources which are available to us as individuals. Sometimes we have to struggle to make ends meet. The same is true for our parish. Yet to accomplish the mission of the church, to continue the work of Jesus, is a vocation each of us accepted in Baptism, and to which we recommit ourselves each time we come forward to receive Holy Communion. Through stewardship we are asked to reexamine our priorities and determine if they are reflective of our commitment.

On (dates __________) we will have our Stewardship Commitment Weekend, an opportunity for us to prayerfully reflect on God’s generosity and to recommit to nurturing and sharing the gifts we have received. If our parish is to be effective both in the near and distant future, we need a grateful and generous sharing of time, talent, and material resources from all our parishioners.

I pray that God will inspire each of us to open our minds and hearts to the call of stewardship so we can continue to build the Body of Christ and bring God’s love and compassion to all.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor
Example 5.3.

Commitment Card Tri-Fold Sample 1

TALENT Cont.

- ○ Girl Scouts
- ○ Cub scouts
- ○ Brownies
- ○ RCIA
- ○ Vibrant Parish Life
- ○ Generations of Faith
- ○ Arts & Environment
- ○ Altar Cleaners
- ○ Ushers & Greeters
- ○ Social Justice
- ○ Holy Name Society
- ○ Bereavement
- ○ Eucharistic Ministers
- ○ Ministry of Praise

TALENT Cont.

- ○ Readers of the Word
- ○ Senior Servers
- ○ Servers
- ○ Ladies Guild
- ○ Seniors
- ○ Parish Advisory Council
- ○ Finance Committee
- ○ Stewardship Committee

My Time, Talent, & Treasure year
Commitment Card

(Parish Name)

“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

1 Peter 4:10

used with permission from St. Francis de Sales Parish
Example 5.4.

Commitment Card – Tri-Fold Sample 2

1. **Talent:**
   - **Adult Spiritual Enrichment:**
     - Adult Confirmation Preparation Process
     - Retreat Program Preparation Process
   - **Outreach Ministry:**
     - Caregivers
     - Marfan's Medical Mission
     - Hunger Fund & Food Collection
     - Pets Life Group
     - Help Clear Boundaries

2. **Talent:**
   - **Youth Programs:**
     - Boy Scouts
     - Cub Scouts
     - CYO Youth Athletics
     - Girl Scouts
     - Youth Ministry

3. **Time:**
   - **Spending Time with God in Prayer:**
     - Attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days
     - Attend weekday Mass at least one week
     - Spend 15 minutes a day in personal prayer
     - Pray together with my loved ones
     - Read the Bible for one hour a week
     - Pray the Rosary at least weekly
     - Go to confession every other month
     - Schedule time for a retreat

4. **The Gift of My Talent:**
   - When I can no longer make any excuses for the size of the gift (large or small),
   - When I honestly state that the gift is sacrificial and I offer it in thanksgiving to God,
   - When I can honestly state that in giving of my gift, I am being honest with God and with self.

5. **Talent:**
   - **Outreach Ministry:**
     - Hope House Volunteers
     - General Volunteer Opportunities
     - Library Volunteers
     - Lunch Room/Bus Assistants
     - Secretaries

6. **Name of Parish:**
   - 2007 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL
   - My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure
   - First & Last Name (One card per family)

7. **Address:**
   - City
   - State
   - Zip

8. **Telephone:**
   - Important

Please bring this card to Mass on February 4th and 5th, or mail using the envelope provided. Thanks and God bless you!

---

Talent

Using My Talents in Parish Ministries

You can read about each of the ministries listed below in your ministry catalogue. When you sign up, the leader will call to explain how to get involved.

1. **Talent:**
   - **Liturgy Ministry:**
     - Altar Servers
     - Children's Liturgy of the Word
     - Liturgy Team
     - Greeter Team
   - **Music Ministry:**
     - Altar Choir
     - Cantors
     - Celebration Choir
     - Children's Choir
   - **Parish Life:**
     - Baby-Sitting Co-op
     - Bereavement Ministry
     - Bridal Ministry
     - Coffee & Donuts
     - Couples Gathering
     - Couples Ministry
     - Elizabeth Ministry
     - Pages of Maps
     - Giving Tree
     - Golf Leagues
     - Knights of Columbus
     - NCCC
     - Parades/Parish Ministries
     - Pinhole Flight
     - Women's Ministry

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Treasure

Making a Consistent Gift to the Offertory

In thanksgiving for God's gifts, each household at [Parish name] is to give a specific percentage of household income based on the biblical teaching.

- **5% to Holy Family**
- **1% to the Diocese**
- **4% to Charity**

Percentage of household income:

- Weekly gift $ ________
- Monthly gift $ ________

Weekly giving based on proportion of income:

At [Parish name], each household is asked to work toward giving 5% of their income to the parish. Some families may have difficulty reaching this goal at first. If so, try increasing your weekly gift incrementally until you reach an amount that you know is right for you.

---

Weekly Giving Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Amount of Weekly Gift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$4000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Catholic Diocese of Cleveland

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used with permission from Catholic Stewardship Consultants
Example 5.5.

Commitment Card 1 page example

MY/OUR COVENANT TO GROW AS A STEWARD

Recognizing that all that I am/we are and all I/we possess are gifts from God, it is my/our desire to
grow as a steward of the gifts God has given me/us. I/we will covenant with God to grow as a steward
through prayer, gifts of time, talent and treasure through the parish.

Signature: ______________________ Daytime Phone: ______________________
Name: ______________________ E-Mail: ______________________
Address: ______________________ City: ______________________ Zip: ______________________
Signature: ______________________ Daytime Phone: ______________________
Name: ______________________ E-Mail: ______________________

Time Talent Prayer

___ I/we plan to attend Mass and pray regularly for God’s work through our Church and
archdiocese.

___ I/we plan to share my/our time, talents, skills, training, education or experiences to support
parish ministries and services. These are:

1. ______________________ 5. ______________________ 5. ______________________
2. ______________________ 4. ______________________ 6. ______________________

Treasure

I/we will prayerfully contribute to my/our parish community a planned, proportional and sacrificial gift.

___ I/we will commit to begin using the weekly offering envelope for fiscal year XXXX-YYYY.

AND/OR

___ I/we will financially support the ministries and services of my/our parish.

I/we will give $ ___________ ❑ weekly ❑ monthly ❑ quarterly ❑ annually
for a total of $ ___________ during the next 12 months.

used with permission from RSI, Inc.
Example 5.6.

Commitment Card – Youth/Teen

YOUTH/TEEN COMMITMENT CARD

Say not “I am too young.” To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.

Jeremiah 1:7-8

Our parish is pleased to offer the following opportunities to young people to offer their time and talent to our parish community. Ages are listed where there is a minimum age requirement.

Name ___________________________________________ Home Phone _______________________________

Address ___________________________________________ Grade _______________________

Please put a check next to any activity for which you would like to offer your time:

- Baking - when called, bake items for parish functions and bake sales
- Clerical/Accounting - help with mailings, folding, etc. after school and on weekends as needed
- Coffee and Donuts - high school age students needed to help serve and clean up after coffee and donuts on Sunday.
- Eucharistic Ministers - high school seniors or older needed to distribute communion at Masses. Training available spring of junior year.
- Lectors - Confirmed young people who are high school age or older needed to read at all Sunday Masses
- PSR Hospitality - high school age students needed to assist with PSR hospitality and welcoming
- Servers - individuals in the 5th grade or older needed to serve. Training sessions are advertised.
- Social Events Worker - individuals 7th grade and older needed to help set up, assist and clean up for parish events.
- Sunday Preschool - Young people in 5th grade or older needed as aides
- Youth Retreat - High School juniors or older needed to assist with Youth Retreat. Must attend planning sessions.
- Vacation Bible School - Young people in 7th grade or older needed as aides for one week in June, mornings only.
Example 5.7.

Commitment Card – Children/Youth

People of all ages are called to care for and share God’s gifts. The time that we have been given here on earth, the skills and talents we have developed, and all of the material possessions come to us from God as precious and irreplaceable gifts - to be cherished, nurtured, shared, and returned with increase to the Lord.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ministries from list below</th>
<th>Other ways I will Use my gifts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. Christopher)</td>
<td>(e.g. 100, 109)</td>
<td>(e.g. babysit for a couple in need free of charge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

used with permission from the Archdiocese of Louisville
Automated Offering Plan Form – Sample 1

(PARISH NAME)
GROWING IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE

NEW AUTOMATIC OFFERING PLAN

About Electronic Giving
The (PARISH NAME) Automatic Offering Plan is a safe, convenient and reliable way to make your contributions using electronic transfer. Similar to programs offered by banks, telephone insurance and utility companies, your contributions are automatically withdrawn from a regular checking account from any bank or credit union. Its 100% safe and you can cancel or change your contributions at any time. Best of all, it saves you time, and helps us keep track of our budget through the year.

This new program is a convenience for Parishioners who choose to participate. The benefits to you are:

► Commitment Helps you give your first fruits, instead of what is left over.
► Consistency Ensures that your vital contribution makes it to church, even when you can’t.
► Simplified Hassle free, as you don’t need to write checks.
► Flexible Allows you to change your amount at any time (maximum of 3 changes per calendar year).
► Convenience Gives you an easy and direct way to make your stewardship contribution.

How the Program Works
If you decide to take part in the program:

1. Fill out the adjoining form and return it to the parish office by mail or in your weekly envelope. Be sure to attach a voided check to the enrollment form. We will be unable to process your enrollment without it.
2. Parish staff will input your request and contact the necessary financial institutions.
3. Beginning on the payment option and start date you select, your contribution will be electronically withdrawn from your account and deposited into the parish bank account.
4. You will receive new envelopes that will allow you to select: I gave electronically.

Please note: This program is only for regular offertory contributions. Contributions for Special Collections will continue to be made by writing checks or using cash and enclosing them in the special envelopes.

AUTOMATIC OFFERING FORM
Please fill out the simple 4-step form, and mail or place in the collection basket.
ALL INFORMATION WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

1. Offertory Amount
   We would like to contribute to the mission of (PARISH NAME) Parish in the amount of $__________ to be paid:
   ◦ Weekly - Each Friday
   ◦ Semi-monthly - 1st and 15th of each month (or closest banking day)
   ◦ Monthly - 1st Day of Month (or closest banking day)

2. Personal Information
   Last Name __________________________________________ First Name __________________________________________
   Address __________________________________________
   City __________________________________________ State ____________ Zip ____________
   Telephone __________________________ Envelope Number __________________________

(OVER)
Stewardship Commitment Process

Example 5.8(cont’d).

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to participate in this program?
No, but it is highly recommended. This plan is offered to help you give of your first fruits, which in turn benefits the whole parish.

When will withdrawals begin?
Approximately 2-3 weeks for automatic transactions to begin.

What time of the month will the withdrawal be made in my account? You choose either:
1. Weekly transactions - Each Friday
2. Semi-monthly - 1st and 15th of each month
   (or closest banking day)
3. Monthly - 1st of the month (or closest banking day)

Do I have to enroll now?
You can enroll at anytime by completing this form and delivering it to the Parish Office either by mail, hand deliver or in the collection basket. Please allow 2-3 weeks for automatic transactions to begin.

May I use my credit card?
No. This program is being restricted to debit transactions from checking accounts only.

How can I change the amount of my offering or stop the withdrawal from taking place if my account becomes overdrawn?
Any changes to your direct withdrawal can be made by (NAME) (XXX-XXX-XXXX). Three changes per calendar year can be made.

How can I show my children the importance of giving to the church, if I’m not putting an envelope in the collection basket every week?
Your new envelopes will have a place to check saying that you give electronically. You will continue to receive envelopes for Special Collections.

Our Dream for the Parish

We seek to infuse the practice of stewardship into the life of the parish and to assist members of (PARISH NAME) to recognize and contribute their God-given gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Please help us realize this dream!

TIME - PRIVATE COMMITMENT TO SERVE GOD, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY
One element of Stewardship is TIME. How much and in what manner I spend my time with the Lord and deepen my relationship with God is very important.

TALENT - USING MY TALENTS IN PARISH MINISTRIES
Another element of Stewardship is TALENT. How I offer my gifts, skills, and talents to the community gives witness to my returning generously what I have graciously received.

TREASURE - MAKING A CONSISTENT GIFT TO THE OFFERTORY
A third element of Stewardship is TREASURE. What I am able to offer back to the Lord for the blessings received from God is my gift to the Church. Please reflect carefully on the treasure that God has given you. Consider God's abundant generosity throughout your lifetime.

3. Authorization
I authorize (PARISH NAME) Church, (STREET), (CITY), (STATE) (ZIP) to withdraw automatically my pledge offering from:

Bank Name _______________________________ Account Number _______________________________

Please include a voided check to provide the necessary routing information.
I have enclosed a voided check to provide the necessary routing information. This authority will remain in effect until I notify (PARISH NAME) Church in writing, to cancel (at least 30 days prior to the next withdrawal date). All information will remain confidential.

4. Signature must be one of the authorized signers on Account

X _______________________________ Date _______________________________

Signature _______________________________

used with permission from St. Mary Magdalene Parish
Stewardship Commitment Process

Example 5.9.

Automated Offering Plan Form – Sample 2

Automated Contributions

Effective today and as a response to this year’s Annual Stewardship Renewal, I, ______________, hereby authorize the Parish of (NAME OF PARISH, CITY; STATE) to change my existing automated debit amount to the new amount shown herein according to the terms I have indicated below.

New Amount $ _____________ Monthly on the first of the month.

This authorization is to remain in effect until the Parish of (PARISH NAME) has received written notification at least five business days in advance of the desired termination date.

_________________________________________ Date: ______________
(Authorized signature for above account) (Print Name)

If second signature is required:

_________________________________________ Date: ______________
(Authorized signature for above account) (Print Name)

Sample Ways to Communicate Automated Giving “Ads”

Looking for an easy way to give to God of your first fruits rather than just what is left over? With our new Automated Giving Program, the parish receives your donation automatically! No more mad rush to find your weekly envelopes or a pen to write a check. Planned and proportionate financial stewardship is made easier with this new option! Call the parish office at XXX-XXX-XXXX for more information!

Alternately (for Parishioners who already use online bill paying):

Do you use online services to make payments? If yes, planning your giving to the parish can now be as easy as POINT - CLICK - SHARE!! Now, by directing your online payment service to make the parish a regular recipient, it will be easy to give to God of your first fruits and not just what is left over! Your contribution will come to the parish automatically! Call the parish office at XXX-XXX-XXXX for more information!
**Example 5.10.**

**Take a Step in Giving Chart**

**TAKE A STEP IN GIVING**

1. Figure out where you are on the chart below based on your income.
2. Pray and reflect on your income and expenses as and individual and/or family.
3. Decide if you can take a ½ or 1% step up in giving.

**Weekly Giving to the Parish in Your Sunday Envelope**

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<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Yearly</th>
<th>2.0%</th>
<th>2.5%</th>
<th>3.0%</th>
<th>3.5%</th>
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<th>4.5%</th>
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<td>$150.00</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
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The benchmark for giving sacrificially is the biblical tithe—sharing ten percent of time, talent, and treasure. The practice of tithing is mentioned 39 times in the Old Testament and 11 times in the New Testament. The financial tithe is usually divided in this way: five percent of gross income to the parish Sunday collection, one percent to the Diocesan Catholic Charities, and four percent to your other charitable concerns.

What is important is that your contribution is planned and proportionate to your income. You may choose the manner that suits you best. You may give weekly, monthly, or annually. It is easiest for the parish if you use your envelope(s).
Example 5.11.

Thank You – Sample 1

It is important that parishioners receive a thank you card upon returning the completed commitment form 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. This effort does take time, but it is time well spent and will certainly benefit the parish in the years to come.

Outer Panel:

Thank you

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

Matthew 10:8

Inner Panel:

Dear

The parish depends on the gifts of all parishioners to support the ministries of parish life. Thank you for your commitment of time: ____________________________
talent: ____________________________
treasure: ___________________________

May God continue to bless you and your family.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor’s Signature
Example 5.12.

Thank You – Sample 2

Receiving Gratefully — Giving Generously

Dear __________________________:

Thank you for your wonderful response to our efforts in developing Stewardship. Many of you have expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn more about being a steward of God’s gifts and the opportunity to put that knowledge into practice.

As you know, it is important to plan wisely in any endeavor. There are many decisions that must be made in our parish based on parishioners’ statements of intent to provide human and financial resources. Your commitment to the ministry of Christ through the parish is making this possible.

There is an old saying, “The best is yet to come.” I believe that it is true for our parish. You have been willing to give yourselves to the challenge to grow as Christian stewards. God will bless you, and God will bless our parish because of your faithful response.

May God bless you.

Pastor/PLC/Deacon

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Example 5.13.

Follow Up Reminder

This letter is mailed with a copy of the Commitment Card to those who did not return the Stewardship Commitment Card on Commitment Weekend.

Receiving Gratefully — Giving Generously

Dear ________________:

These are really exciting days at [PARISH NAME]. During the last several weeks, many parishioners have been involved in developing stewardship at our parish.

You may not have had the opportunity to be a part of the excitement during the weekend as we all had the opportunity to acknowledge our response to practice stewardship. Many of your fellow parishioners have already made a commitment to share time, talent, skills, and financial resources so that many outstanding ministries and services can be supported through our parish and diocese.

Would you be willing to grow as a steward? Would you prayerfully consider sharing your time? Would you be willing to use your unique skills and talents for God through the parish? Would you be willing to increase your financial support? Because Scripture teaches that we should give in proportion to God’s blessings, we are challenging parishioners to grow in all areas of giving by taking a step to come closer to their commitment goal.

Enclosed you will find a Stewardship Commitment Card and envelope. Before you fill it out, I want to ask you to stop for a moment and pray this prayer: “Lord, what do you want to do through me to accomplish your will for your Church?” When you have prayed, do what you feel God wants you to do. Then return your letter to the parish office in the envelope provided.

Together we can do more for God's Kingdom than we could ever do alone. I am excited by the possibilities as we grow as stewards and as we see our stewardship make a difference in the lives of people.

May God bless you.
Pastor/PLC/Deacon

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Example 5.14.

Quarterly Reminder

LETTER:

(Parish Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear parishioner, we are sending the enclosed report to thank you for your generosity of time, talent, and treasure these past three months. It is our hope that this information will be a helpful service to you in assessing your actual giving with your commitment/pledge. This record is being provided for your information only - it is not a bill.

Your contributions of time, talent, and treasure enable us to accomplish the Gospel centered mission and vision of our Parish through the various ministries and services in which we together offer and participate. Once again, thanks for returning to the parish, the poor, and other charities a part of the many gifts God has bestowed upon you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor ____________________

CARD:

(Parish name)

Thank you for making the following commitments:

Stewardship of Time: __________________________________________
Stewardship of Talent: _________________________________________
Stewardship of Treasure: _________________________________________

To assist you in your tax records, the following is a report of your sacrificial giving

Name(s): ________________________________

(Year) Reporting Quarter(s):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Months</th>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>April, May, June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>July, August, September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>October, November, December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of weeks in the period above:

Amount received this year (Regular Sunday & Holy Day): $ _____
Average received per week: $ _____
Your weekly Financial Stewardship Commitment was: $ _____ (optional line)
### Example 5.15.

Ministry Membership List Database Report

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<thead>
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<th>Readers of the Word</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Joe</td>
<td>(555) 555-5555</td>
<td>2222 Maple Dr.</td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jlewis@email.com">jlewis@email.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maxwell Leo</td>
<td>(444) 444-4444</td>
<td>222 Happy Lane</td>
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## Ministry Leader’s Contact List Database Report

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<td>2222 Blossom Dr</td>
<td>Parma</td>
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<td>44134</td>
<td>(440) 555-6098</td>
<td><a href="mailto:smarys@church.org">smarys@church.org</a></td>
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<td>Sr. Mary</td>
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<td>Smith</td>
<td>2222 Sheraton ave</td>
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<td>44134</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:smarys@church.org">smarys@church.org</a></td>
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<td>Altar Cleaners</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>1111 Broadway</td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>44134</td>
<td>(216) 555-2345</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jonese@email.com">jonese@email.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cantors</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conrad</td>
<td>5789 Commonwealth</td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>44134</td>
<td>(440) 555-1111</td>
<td><a href="mailto:karen@mail.org">karen@mail.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eucharistic Ministers</td>
<td>Richard C</td>
<td></td>
<td>McElroy</td>
<td>222 Maple Ave</td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>44134</td>
<td>(440) 555-1234</td>
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<td>Handbell Choir</td>
<td>Cathy</td>
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<td>Cantor</td>
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<td>Parma</td>
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<td>Men's Choir</td>
<td>Richard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rogers</td>
<td>4567 Park Dr</td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>44134</td>
<td>(440) 555-2317</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rogersr@hotmail.org">rogersr@hotmail.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>New Life Singers</td>
<td>Annie</td>
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<td>Oakley</td>
<td>4545 Lofton Ave</td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>44134</td>
<td>(440) 555-7777</td>
<td><a href="mailto:oakleyann@mail.com">oakleyann@mail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td>John</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>123 Main</td>
<td>Parma</td>
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<td>George</td>
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<td>Strait</td>
<td>4567 Maplegrove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Servers</td>
<td>Fr. Robert</td>
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<td>Hoban</td>
<td>3434 George Ave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ushers &amp; Greeters</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brooks</td>
<td>4444 Grantwood</td>
<td>Parma</td>
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<td>Angel</td>
<td>1234 Rustic Oval</td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>44134</td>
<td>(440) 555-2212</td>
<td><a href="mailto:angelann@abcglobal.net">angelann@abcglobal.net</a></td>
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### Example 5.17

**Individual Parishioner Ministries Database Report**

#### Individual Parishioner Ministries

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<td>Strongsville</td>
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Stewardship Commitment Process

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND WEB SITES ON STEWARDSHIP

http://dioceseofcleveland.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=129&Itemid=255
Link to the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Stewardship Office. OR go to http://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/ and click on the Stewardship Office link.

Link to the International Catholic Stewardship Council.

http://www.cruzblanca.org/hermanoleon/
Link to a Catholic free clip art web site.

www.diometuchen.org/stewardshipoffice/prayer_treasures.htm
Link to Diocese of Metuchen --resources for weekly scripture selections based on stewardship themes.

http://www.stewardshipli.org/
Link to Diocese of Rockville stewardship page, with many free downloadable resources.

www.nccbuscc.org
Link for a variety of resources on stewardship and other topics from the US Bishops Conference.

http://www.archstl.org/stewardship/whatis/inserts.html
Link to the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and in particular, their bulletin inserts regarding weekly stewardship themes.

http://www.cdowk.org/stewardship_development/about_stewardship.shtml
Link to the Diocese of Wichita stewardship page with free downloadable resources.

http://kingdomassignment.com/welcome/
Link to learning more about this incredible journey of parishioners sharing gifts. St. Barnabas Parish in Northfield has had a remarkable experience with this approach.

http://livingfaithatwork.org
Link to a Catholic perspective and suggestions for fostering faith at work.

Useful Web sites for personal prayer/study:

www.activeparishioner.com/

www.centeringspace.org/
Stewardship Commitment Process

**www.creativecommunications.com**
This link leads to publications for use in parishes, particularly products to enhance the liturgical worship and personal devotional life for Catholic parishes. Their catalogs include hundreds of Christian print and electronic media products.

**www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.htm**

**dioceseofcleveland.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=25&Itemid=107**

**www.henrinouwen.org/home/free_eletters/**

**www.nccbuscc.org/nab/index.htm**

**www.jesuit.ie/prayer/index.htm**

**www.praythenews.com**

**www.sacredspace.ie/**

**wwwuniversalis.com**

**www.vatican.va**

Related DVDs available to borrow from the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Stewardship Office (call 216-696-6525 and ask for the Stewardship Office)

NOOMA, “Rich”, an engaging 10 minute DVD about the need to share our gifts with the larger world.

RSI Catholic Services Group, “Reflections on the Pastoral Letter”, an enlightening DVD featuring the late Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy who shares his experiences of chairing the Bishops’ committee that wrote the USCCB Pastoral Letter – Stewardship – A Disciple’s Response.

Books, articles and other links related to Stewardship


Buckingham, Marcus, *First, Break All the Rules* (see [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com)).

Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Evangelization Office, 1404 E. Ninth Street, Cleveland, OH, 44114 or call 216-696-6525. *All Are Welcome – A Manual for Parish Hospitality*.

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Diocese of Wichita, 424 N. Broadway, Wichita, KS 67202; Four Pillars of Stewardship, invites parishioners to experience, witness and live the stewardship way of life in response to their baptismal call to discipleship or go to [http://www.cdowk.org/stewardship_development/stewardship_pillars.shtml](http://www.cdowk.org/stewardship_development/stewardship_pillars.shtml).


Heart to Heart Communications, 40 University Avenue, Akron, OH 44308, 330-434-3278 or go to [www.H2HC.org](http://www.H2HC.org) (good resource for information on applying faith to work issues).


Hueckel, Sharon, *Stewardship by the Book* (Bulletin bits based on the Sunday readings), Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2004 or go to [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com).


Stewardship Commitment Process


Petro, Vicky and Palencar, Lee, Spiritual Gifts Experience is a Gifts Discernment workshop and workbook that is foundational to living and grooming exceptional stewardship. Call Vicky Petro for details and to schedule a presentation for your parish or group. at 440-506-0811.

U.S. Catholic Bishops, Office of Publishing and Promotion Services. Call 1-800-235-8722 or go to www.nccbuscc.org Numerous resources including: Stewardship – A Disciple’s Response (A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship); Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, reflections of the U.S. Catholic Bishops on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, and Global Climate Change, a religious and moral perspective on the need for environmental protection.


Our logo is designed to encompass elements of the Catholic Christian’s Stewardship journey. The three colored spheres signify the most common themes of Stewardship practice – time, talent, and treasure. The loop encircling the top of the cross represents the Church, where we are enabled and encouraged to live out our gifts in the hope of building God’s Kingdom on earth. This hope is rooted in the cross, the most basic tenet of our faith. In the death and resurrection of Jesus we are offered salvation and our place in the Kingdom. Living a life of Stewardship is living fully in the knowledge that God will supply all our needs through the gift we are to each other. The beautiful font, colors, and general design combine contemporary and traditional styles which reinforce the awareness that Stewardship is an age-old but ongoing process within our Catholic lives.