

FAITH SHARING

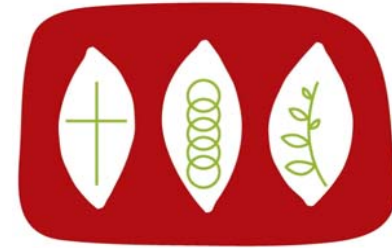
CONVERSATION THAT TRANSFORMS US

In this ever-changing, ever-expanding global world, our awareness that each person has an unique but limited experience continues to grow. Without conversation, honest and respectful dialogue, we have only our own truth. Conversation can call us out of ourselves to hear and consider the points of view and experiences of others.

When Christians gather to share faith and study the scriptures, they are gathering together as church. Jesus promised to be with us wherever two or more gather in his name.

Faith sharing is dynamic and relational. It requires participants to respect and honor one another. As a group, talk about what you value in how participants treat one another. Your group may suggest principles such as:

- ** Respect everyone. Each of us has his or her own unique experience that can contribute to the fuller truth the group sees collectively.
- ** Listen intently; pay attention to others' efforts to communicate their own story. Listening attentively is an act of respect.
- ** Communicate your experience; put it into words, share it with the group. Each must accept responsibility of contributing. Everyone's experience will be richer for it.
- ** Always ask questions when others' contributions do not make sense to you. Restate what you think you heard but ask for affirmation or clarification.
- ** Be comfortable with silent times; do not talk just to fill up quiet space.
- ** Keep conversations confidential. What is said in the room—stays in the room. When people share at a personal level, trust is essential.



ADVANCING
THE MISSION

Small Faith Sharing Group Five Week Program

for the
Stewardship Campaign:
Advancing the Mission

WEEK THREE SERVE ONE ANOTHER Service

Participant's Guide

GENERAL FACILITATOR NOTES

Prepare for the meeting; calculate a time frame to follow. Have details set and ready ahead of the appointed gathering time.

Welcome everyone at the door. Distribute nametags if needed.

If someone is missing from your session—arrange for a quick check in and inform the rest of the group.

Arrange seating so that everyone can see each other easily.

Encourage people to stay with the group—discourage looking ahead.

At the end of this session, decide who will serve as a facilitator for the next gathering.

Relax, enjoy one another, and let the Spirit do its work!

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bible	Candle/Matches
Crucifix	“Wrapped” Gift
Nametags	Markers, Pens, Pencils
Prayer Cloth	CD Player/Boom Box

Music Selections

(borrow from the Parish Media Center, the Choir Director, the Worship Committee, or the Faith Formation Staff)

SUGGESTED MUSIC

We Are Many Parts – Marty Haugen, GIA Publications

We Have Been Told – David Haas, GIA Publications

Go Make of All Disciples – Abingdon Press

The Servant Song – Richard Gillard, ASCAP

Servant Song – Donna Marie McGargill, OSM, OCP Publications

SUGGESTED READING

U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, “*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*,” Pastoral Letter of U. S. Bishops, 1992. See www.usccb.org/stewardship/index.htm

Judy Ball, Joan McKamey, ed., *Vatican II Today: Calling Catholics to Holiness and Service*, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005. See www.catalog/american catholic.org

Kevin McKenna, *You Did It For Me: Care of Your Neighbor as A Spiritual Practice*. Ave Maria Press, 2005. See www.avemariapress.com

Romero, Oscar, *The Violence of Love*. Plough Publishing House, PA, 1998. See www.plough.com

Serve One Another
Introduction to Stewardship
Week Three of a Five Week Series

developed for the
Stewardship Campaign:
Advancing the Mission



Authored by Jackie Staley for the
Department of Stewardship & Pastoral Services
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SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

*Some prayerful music is played before the closing prayer.
Spend those moments of silence in thanksgiving for
all the goodness shared and enjoyed together.*

Romans 12:9-16

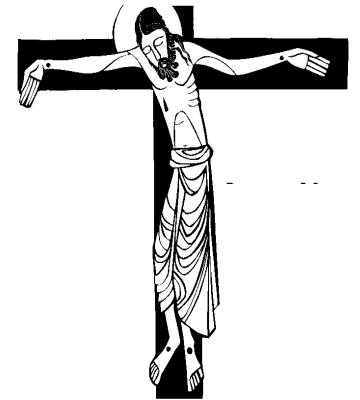
- Leader We will serve the Lord.
- Side I Let love be genuine; hate what is evil,
hold fast to what is good. Serve the Lord!
- Side II Love one another with mutual affection;
outdo one another in showing honor.
Serve the Lord!
- Side I Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit.
Serve the Lord!
- Side II Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering,
persevere in prayer. Serve the Lord!
- Side I Contribute to the needs of the saints;
extend hospitality to strangers.
Serve the Lord!
- Side II Bless those who persecute you; bless
and do not curse them. Serve the Lord!
- Side I Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep
with those who weep. Serve the Lord!
- Side II Live in harmony with one another; do not
be haughty, but associate with the lowly.
Serve the Lord!
- All We will serve the Lord!

Serve One Another

Week Three

Service

*Display a bible, crucifix, a lighted candle
and a wrapped gift on a cloth.*



The leader welcomes the members of the group. If new members are present, each introduces her/himself. The leader can begin the session by reading the introduction aloud.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus said that he came to us – not to be served – but to serve and give his life for all of us.

The cross symbolizes the extent to which he would serve—to his death on a cross. By the flame of the candle we are reminded of his resurrection and abiding presence with us in the Holy Spirit.

Our service is represented by the wrapped gift, the talents, the time, the skills that allow us to serve God and one another.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader Let us begin by asking God to bless our reflection and prayer time together.

Our prayer is from the Gospel of John.
John 15:8-16

“By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete.

No one has greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.

All This I command you: love one another.”

FAITH IN ACTION

1. Share the treasure of God’s love by volunteering at a St. Vincent de Paul store or local food pantry.
2. Serve your parish by volunteering for a liturgical, educational, outreach or youth ministry opportunity.
3. Give of your time this week to help a family whose gift of time is limited.
- 4 Give of one of your special talents this week to celebrate love in your family.
5. Set aside time to treasure the spiritual gifts God has given you.
6. Express your concern for the *common good* to your legislator on a regular basis on a multitude of issues..



FAITH SHARING

1. “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) Comment on this passage.
2. Considering your bounty of gifts from God, where does service to God and others rank for you?
3. “If our jobs do not contribute to the common good, we pray to God for the grace to give them up.” (Dorothy Day) What did she mean by “the common good”? How does stewardship relate to the common good?
4. How would you compare and contrast service to the common good from service to the church?



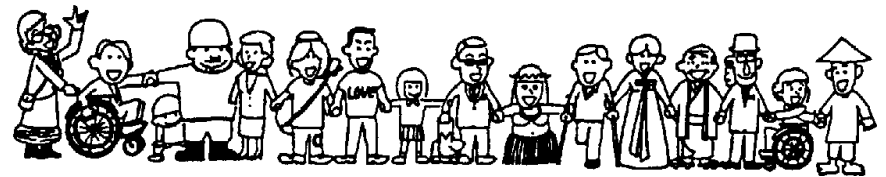
A READING

excerpted from the
U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops’ Pastoral Letter:
Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response (1992).

Because its individual members do collectively make up the body of Christ, that body’s health and well-being are the responsibility of the members – the personal responsibility of each one of us. We all are stewards of the church.

As “to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.” (1 Corinthians 12:7), so stewardship in an ecclesial setting means cherishing and fostering the gifts of all while using one’s own gifts to serve the community of faith...

There is a fundamental obligation arising from the sacrament of baptism...that people place their gifts, their resources – themselves -- at God’s service in and through the church. Here also Jesus is the model. Even though his perfect self-emptying is unique, it is within the power of disciples, and a duty, that they be generous stewards of the church, giving freely of their time, talent and treasure.



God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other. (1 Peter 4:7-1)

A REFLECTION

A poem by R. Tagore tells of a beggar by the side of the road and of a king who passed by. The king asked the beggar for a gift from his raggedy bag. The beggar was shocked. "The king should be giving something to me. What can I give him?" he thought to himself.

The beggar reached into his bag and gave just one piece of corn to the king.

Later that day the king stopped by the beggar again and gave him one piece of gold. The beggar was miserable, greatly regretting his failure to give the king all he had!

If I hold back on giving of my time, talents and treasure, I can't expect to receive a generous amount of time, talent and treasure in return.

"The measure with which you measure will be measured out to you." Mark 4:24

When we consider that all that we have and all we are is God's gift to us, we can give of ourselves and our goods generously and joyfully.

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

Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ..."

I Peter 4:10-11



Think of your gifts: leading, organizing, writing, singing, parenting, cooking, sewing, building, and on and on. The message from 1st Peter and the words of the bishops in their pastoral letter quoted earlier suggest that if we have a gift we are obliged to use it for the good of others. If we have time, we need to see if we are using it well. If we have monetary resources, are we sharing them generously?

Serving one another is a component of stewardship that flows clearly from the opening prayer of the 15th chapter of John's gospel. No one has greater love than this: "to lay down one's life for one's friends." Now Jesus did ultimately lay down his life for us with his death on the cross, but he also laid down his life for us in serving – healing, teaching, feeding, loving one person at a time.

We do the same when we give of our time, our energy, our resources, our goodness, sacrificing some comfort, some free time for the sake of another. Giving of ourselves to others makes us their friends. Jesus said it and we know it is true, even if we don't have a close relationship to the them.

"Love one another" is put into concrete action when we serve in those oh-so-many ways.

