



PARISH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE GUIDELINES



Diocese of Green Bay

DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY
STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Generous and loving God,
You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus
and good stewards of all your many gifts.

*Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness
and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.*

*Transform us through the power of your Spirit
to nurture a Stewardship way of life marked by
faith-filled prayer, service to our neighbor
and generous sharing.*

*Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.
With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold
The gifts entrusted to us.*

We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen

Copies of this prayer are available on prayer cards for distribution in English, Spanish or Hmong. Contact the diocesan office of Stewardship and Pastoral Services.

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OVERVIEW

Stewardship is a multi faceted concept too often maligned, misunderstood, and diminished into mere fundraising and fundraising alone by many Catholics. However, when all three concepts of Stewardship, the dimensions of prayer, service, and sharing, are understood and put into practice, countless Catholic parishes throughout the United States have experienced a revitalization and renewal of their faith communities.

Here in the Diocese of Green Bay, we hold a basic belief grounded in the stewardship concepts: that those who choose to live lives marked by faith filled prayer, compassionate service, and generous sharing of material and financial resources are forever changed through incredible, life changing experiences. When these three concepts of stewardship inspire and engage a parish community, hearts are opened, minds are changed, lives are transformed, and incredible things become possible in advancing God's Kingdom of justice and love.

Parishes grounded in the three concepts of Stewardship report increases in parishioners' faith filled personal and household prayer; growth in mass attendance and participation; a proliferation of parish service organizations and events supported by ever-growing numbers of volunteers; and the ability to not only meet but to exceed the parish budget, which in turn, enables the parish community to share financial resources with others.

The following pages outline some suggested basic steps for introducing Stewardship as a way of life in the parish community. The staff of the diocesan Department of Stewardship and Pastoral Services are also available for consultations, resources, and referrals. May the Spirit of God guide you in your faith journey and in your service to your parish and beyond.

GETTING STARTED

STEP ONE – PERSONAL PRAYER

Begin your exploration of stewardship with an openness to the Holy Spirit through prayer and a belief in the ability of our God to lead and guide you. Consider this possibility: chances are it is not just a quirk of fate that has brought you to an exploration of stewardship; consider the possibility that the Spirit just might be calling you to do something significant.

STEP TWO – STUDY

Do your homework; carefully read the contents of this booklet. Reflect on the theology of Stewardship practiced in the Diocese of Green Bay found in Appendix A. Go to the Diocese of Green Bay internet web site at www.gbdioc.org and click on the Stewardship icon for more information and resources. Study the US Bishop's document on stewardship. Visit www.usccb.org/stewardship/index. Go to any of the search engines and type in "stewardship" and "Catholic Stewardship". Prayerfully consider what you are learning.

STEP THREE – TALK WITH PARISH LEADERSHIP

Ask to meet with your pastor/parish director or key parish staff person. Share your interest in exploring stewardship. Listen to their thoughts and experiences concerning stewardship. Find out what level of interest or support they might have for introducing or nurturing stewardship in the parish. Ask for their advice. Find out if they know of anyone else in the parish who might be interested in being part of the parish stewardship effort. Determine which parish staff member, whether it be the pastor/parish director or another member of the parish staff, will work with the members of the stewardship committee.

STEP FOUR – TALK TO PEOPLE

Share with friends, fellow parishioners, neighbors, parish leaders such as chairpersons of pastoral and finance councils, trustees, committee chairpersons, staff members, etc. what you have learned about stewardship and that you are considering the possibility of organizing a parish stewardship committee. Get their reactions and advice. Ask for referrals to parish members with the gifts and talents and potential interest in the work of a stewardship committee. Assemble a list of potential committee members.

STEP FIVE – ORGANIZE EXPLORATION MEETING

Personally contact and invite each person on your potential committee member list to an exploration meeting. Promote the meeting in the parish bulletin and/or newsletter as well. Explain that the purpose of the meeting is to invite those who attend to hear the message of stewardship, to learn about the

BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OUTLINE & WORKSHEET FOR A PARISH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

I. GOAL STATEMENT

The following basic goals are an ideal starting point for a parish stewardship committee. Upon further study and reflection, based on dialogue with parish leaders, members of the committee may want to modify or add to these basic goals.

1. To help the parish leaders, the parish community, households and individual parishioners grow in their stewardship awareness and understanding, enabling them to lead a stewardship way of life.
2. To nurture faith-filled household and personal **prayer** and parish worship.
3. To foster and affirm greater parish, household and personal parishioner involvement in compassionate **service** within the parish and the greater community.
4. To promote increased levels of generous material and financial **sharing** by the parish, households and individuals.

II. CHAIRPERSON _____ (fill in name)

Basic Responsibilities – First, to prepare agenda and chair all meetings. Secondly, to be key communication link with pastor/parish director or designated parish staff person. The Chairperson should have a term of service of no longer than two years, renewable twice.

III. NOTE -TAKER _____ (fill in name)

Basic Responsibility - To take and distribute notes for each meeting that reflect the significant items of business addressed.

IV. PARISH STAFF CONTACT _____ (fill in name)

Basic Responsibility – Person to whom the chairperson and members of the committee are accountable. This may be the pastor/parish director or another designated staff person. This staff person should receive notes from

all meetings and serves as the “go to” person for support and approval for key programs and activities of the stewardship committee.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY _____(note structure)

The stewardship committee is usually a sub-committee of the parish pastoral council and also works with the finance council. The committee should communicate regularly, send copies of meeting notes and engage the parent organization in discussion of proposed significant programs and activities.

VI. MEETINGS _____(note day & frequency)

Most stewardship committees meet on a monthly basis, taking one or two months off for summer. It is helpful to choose the same time and day each month for meeting (i.e. second Tuesday of each month.)

VII. MEMBERSHIP _____(list members here)

The parish stewardship committee should have a minimum of 3-5 members and typically no more than 8 members. Members should be representative of parishioners according to age, interests, ethnic groups, etc. They should have a basic understanding of stewardship or be open to learning about it; preferably people who practice stewardship as a way of life by leading lives of prayer, service, and generous sharing.

VIII. ANNUAL ACTIVITY PLAN

The parish stewardship committee should take responsibility for at least four activities per year that coincide with the following four areas. (see page 12 for Best Practices in each area.)

1. **General Stewardship Education Activity** – can be done any time of the year. _____(note activity)
2. **Prayer Activity** – typically during the Lenten season.
_____ (note activity)

3. **Service Activity** – often done either in late spring as a way of giving thanks to those who have provided service or in late summer/early fall as a way to recruit volunteers for parish or community service.

_____ (note activity)

4. **Sharing Activity** – either in late fall to coincide with Thanksgiving season or after the first of the year to secure pledges that can assist the parish in budget preparation.

_____ (note activity)

IX. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

In the development of annual stewardship program plans, the stewardship committee is encouraged to both sponsor activities of their own, as well as work with/through various parish staff members, committees and organizations. Key groups might include:

Adult Faith Formation Committee _____ (note chair)

This group may help with general stewardship education and awareness raising programs for the parish.

Education Board or Committee _____ (note chair)

Besides helping children, youth and young adults to grow in their understanding and formation in stewardship – one of the most effective ways to educate parents in stewardship is by engaging their children in programs and stewardship activities.

Worship Committee _____ (note chair)

Prayer and worship are the focus of this committee and they can help with the resources and opportunities for the parish, household and individual faith-filled prayer.

Social Concerns Committee _____ (note chair)

This committee can help provide volunteer opportunities and training for those interested in development of parish pastoral care, as well as volunteer opportunities in the parish and outreach to the broader community.

Finance Council _____ (note chair)

This council is the body that assists the pastor / parish director in managing the temporal goods of the parish as well as fund raising.

Working with members of this group to promote generous material and financial sharing can be very productive.

X. BUDGET _____ (note annual budget here)

Investment of time, talent and treasure in the work of the stewardship committee will typically come back to the parish a hundredfold. Items that should be included in a budget for the stewardship committee might include the following:

- **Printing Costs** – educational materials that are inserted in the bulletin, or mailed to households. \$ _____
- **Program Costs** – for speakers, hospitality-coffee, donuts, annual volunteer recruitment and recognition events, prayer booklets or pamphlets for distribution to parishioners. \$ _____
- **Workshop/Conference Registration Fees** – for parish staff members, parish leaders, and stewardship committee members for their continuing education. \$ _____

XI. ANNUAL EFFORT REVIEW

At the end of each program year, typically in May or June, members of the stewardship committee should set aside one meeting to review and evaluate committee efforts conducted throughout the previous year. In light of that review, members should set priorities for the growth and development of parish stewardship for the coming year. _____ (set date)

Notes:

BENCHMARKS AND STANDARDS - KEYS TO SUCCESS

The following six components serve as benchmarks or standards in the promotion of stewardship as a way of life here in the Diocese of Green Bay.

1. **Use Prayer as a Cornerstone**
 - Allow quality time for prayer and faith sharing at start of every meeting
 - At least 10% of the time allotted for the meeting
 - Always be open to the guidance

2. **It is a 3-5 Year Effort - Not a Quick Fix**
 - It takes at least 3-5 years of effort to open hearts, change minds and transform lives
 - Plan to weave stewardship into the fabric of the life of the parish

3. **Use Multi-faceted Approach**
 - A message must be communicated at least 17 times in order to be “be heard”
 - Opening hearts and changing minds often requires even more time
 - Will need to communicate the message in wide variety of ways including homilies; adult education programs; bulletin inserts and fillers; newsletters; parish prayer, service, and sharing weekends; banners; mailings; etc.

4. **Establish Parish Stewardship Committee**
 - Ideally, a 6-8 member committee but a 3-5 member task force can also accomplish much
 - works with existing staff, programs, and councils:
 - Pastoral Council - Prayer (time) and Service (talent) aspects
 - Finance Council - Sharing (treasure) aspects
 - Also work with Social Concerns, Worship, and Education committees

5. **Lots of Witness**
 - Lay witness talks – highly effective
 - Pastor/parish director and parish staff provide role models
 - Parish practices what it preaches in budget and programs

6. **Promote Annual Personal Review and Commitment**
 - Use the observe, judge, and act model for personal review and recommitment to a way of life marked by prayer, service, and sharing
 - Invite parishioners to sign a commitment to 6 minutes a day in prayer
 - Provide annual financial pledge cards
 - Use annual volunteer commitment cards placed in the collection basket

PARISH STEWARDSHIP – TEN BEST PRACTICES

The following collection of ideas can be used to help parishes promote stewardship as a way of life marked by prayer, service, and sharing. Additional ideas and resources are available on the website for the Diocese of Green Bay at www.gbdioc.org

WAYS TO PROMOTE – STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION

1. Regularly include stewardship meditations or reflections and clip art in the parish bulletin or newsletter.
2. When appropriate, weave stewardship concepts and themes into the homily. Use homily helpers available at the diocesan web site.
3. Hang stewardship banners in the church and parish social hall.
4. Put stewardship books in the parish library; include book reviews of these materials in your parish newsletter.
5. Insert stewardship flyers and brochures into the Sunday bulletin.
6. Sponsor poster, essay, or poetry contests for kids that promote stewardship awareness, prayer, service, and sharing. Publish or display winning entries and give awards.
7. At Thanksgiving time – help parishioners give thanks to nurture an “attitude of gratitude”. On the weekend before Thanksgiving, insert a family prayer that could be used at the start of the Thanksgiving dinner.
8. Regularly use the song - “*What Return Shall We Make*” by Vince Ambrosetti, International Liturgy Publications, P.O. Box 50476, Nashville, TN 37205-0476; phone 410-544-3371.
9. Make copies of Bishop Morneau's *Theology of Stewardship* handout and place in the bulletin. Schedule an adult education program on the US Bishop's document *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*.
10. Invite parishioners to give brief witness talks on stewardship at an appropriate time during Sunday worship. Guidelines and suggestions for witness talks are available through the diocesan office of Stewardship and Pastoral Services.

WAYS TO PROMOTE - PRAYER

1. Consider the "Little Daily Prayer Books" which provide 6 minute meditations for use by parishioners. These are especially popular during Lent and Advent.
2. There are several Catholic prayer web sites on the internet; see the diocesan web site for suggestions (www.gbdioc.org). Publicize some of these web sites; write a review on one or more of them for your parish newsletter.
3. Encourage prayer before meals. Provide some suggested prayers and/or table tents to all parish households.
4. In partnership with the parish Adult Education Committee, offer a prayer course at the parish. Help parishioners look at traditional prayers, contemplative prayer, journaling, apostolic prayer, etc.
5. Download and promote the use of the parish meeting prayers available on the diocesan web site for all parish councils, boards, and committees. (www.gbdioc.org).
6. Reach out to parish shut-ins. Invite them to contribute to parish life through the development of prayer chains and networks.
7. Encourage subscriptions to the diocesan newspaper The COMPASS; consider full parish coverage. Encourage parishioners to prepare for Sunday worship with the many columns focusing on the upcoming Sunday's Scriptures.
8. Insert a copy of the diocesan stewardship prayer in the inside cover of the church missalette. As a community, say the prayer after communion. Copies are available on the diocesan website in English, Spanish, and Hmong. (www.gbdioc.org).
9. In partnership with the parish's education committee and staff, sponsor an inter-generational event on household prayers and rituals parishioners could use to enhance their Christmas season or Lenten journey. Consider drawing from ethnic rituals and traditions to enhance this experience.
10. Work closely with the parish worship committee to promote greater participation by parishioners in prayer and devotion to the Eucharist.

WAYS TO PROMOTE – SERVICE

1. Assemble a listing of all the volunteer and ministerial opportunities for service available at the parish. Invite parishioners to sign up and make a commitment of some specific time or service each year.
2. Advertise volunteer opportunities available in your local community.
3. Hold a volunteer fair.
4. Celebrate volunteers from the parish who serve the parish as well as the broader community; sponsor a volunteer appreciation banquet or party.
5. Ask for nominations of parishioners who give of their time and talent to the parish and broader community. Award them the “Way to Go Award” with a certificate and write up in the parish bulletin or newsletter. Consider this on a monthly or quarterly basis.
6. Promote parishioner participation in the national “Make a Difference Day” held annually each fall.
7. Promote or sponsor youth work camp projects. Contact the diocesan office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry for more information on these opportunities.
8. Encourage random acts of kindness. Ask parishioners to share what they did and what response they received.
9. Each year timed to coincide with the Super Bowl there is a national “Souper Bowl of Caring” food collection project. See the internet website www.souperbowl.org.
10. Work with your parish Social Concerns Committee to promote your parish as a community of service through jointly sponsored programs of direct charitable service and social justice efforts.

WAYS TO PROMOTE – GENEROUS SHARING

1. Annually distribute and ask parishioners to complete a pledge card.
2. Promote proportionate sacrificial giving.
3. Provide children's envelopes.
4. Promote generosity, not only to the parish for its own needs, but encourage and promote national Catholic collections as well as other community based charities.
5. Sponsor a food or clothing drive for one of the charitable groups in your community.
6. As part of the annual parish report – note the generosity of parishioners regarding their contributions to diocesan collections such as the Bishop's Appeal, Retirement Fund for Religious, Mission Appeal, Campaign for Human Development, etc.
7. Sponsor a reverse collection. Pass a basket at weekend liturgies filled with pre-prepared slips of paper inside; each slip naming an item needed by the local food pantry. Parishioners pick slips and are asked to bring the item listed to church the following weekend.
8. Make a list of items needed by the parish to operate each year, i.e., wine for masses, cost of heating the parish for a day, tuition for students in faith formation program, cleaning supplies, books for library, etc. Include costs for these items. Ask parishioners to pick at least one item from the list and ask for a special donation to cover that cost.
9. Ask the parish to model generous sharing by asking the Pastoral Council and Finance Council to give a percentage of the income, its "first fruits", to appropriate charitable organizations.
10. Work closely with the parish finance council to promote generous giving in a variety of ways.

THEOLOGY OF STEWARDSHIP (BY BISHOP ROBERT MORNEAU)

OVERVIEW OF STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is a way of life. For Christians who follow in the way of the Lord Jesus, stewardship is an expression of discipleship. When we recognize that God is the origin of all life, the giver of everything that we have and are, the source of our freedom and giftedness, the healthy person responds by thanking God through prayer, by serving God and God's people through ministry, by sharing our financial resources with those in need. Stewardship is a way of life based upon conversion of heart.

Why conversion? Because too often our hearts lack the vision and compassion that makes us true followers of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament the prophet Ezekiel, speaking for God, makes this statement: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). Our God is a promise-maker; our God is a promise-keeper. When the Holy Spirit breaks into our lives our hearts become prayerful, our ministry joyful, and our generosity extravagant.

Stewards, according to the pastoral letter Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, do four things:

- Receive God's gifts gratefully
- Nurture God's gifts responsibly
- Share God's gifts justly and charitably
- Return those gifts to God abundantly

Gratitude is the cornerstone of stewardship. All is gift for those who see life with the eyes of faith. God gives us our existence and talents, our time and our treasure, our family and friends. Stewards express their gratitude by a life of generosity.

Stewards are serious about naming and developing the gifts and talents given to them for the sake of the community. As one poet asks: "What have you done with the garden entrusted to you?" (Antonio Machado). Responsibility and accountability are part of our call as disciples.

Stewards share. What has been given to us is not simply for our own use. Recipients are to become benefactors. So we return to the Lord and our needy sisters and brothers a just and sacrificial portion of all that comes our way.

A theology of stewardship looks to the future. Our lives here on earth are relatively short. One day we return to the Lord from whom we came. If we have lived in Christ and in the Spirit, then we will bear fruit, abundant fruit. Stewards yield a rich harvest.

Stewardship as a way of life based upon conversion of heart is broad in its range and demanding in its claim. Stewardship embraces all of life and challenges us to be faithful to our calling. The following passage from the pastoral letter Stewardship: A Disciple's Response articulates the range of this way of life:

"Stewardship plays an important role in the lives of people who seek to follow Christ. In particular, Christians must be stewards of their personal vocations, for it is these that show how, according to the circumstances of their individual lives, God wants them to cherish and serve a broad range of interests and concerns: life and health, along with their intellectual and spiritual well being and that of others; material goods and resources; the natural environment; the cultural heritage of humankind."

Using the image of a garden we might ask ourselves the question – how well have we or are we tending the following gardens of our life?

- The garden of our body (physical garden)
- The garden of family – friends (social garden)
- The garden of the globe (ecological garden)
- The garden of choices (moral garden)
- The garden of our emotions (psychological garden)
- The garden of the city/nation (political garden)
- The garden of the "chip" (technological garden)
- The garden of history (historical garden)
- The garden of mind (intellectual garden)
- The garden of the arts (cultural garden)
- The garden of money (economic garden)
- The garden of our soul (spiritual garden)

Obviously, these gardens overlap and intersect. But each of them calls for a certain amount of tending and care. Each person must decide on how we allocate our limited time and resources in attempting to be good stewards of these many gardens.

STEWARDSHIP: A WAY OF LIFE

Over the years many people in talking of stewardship have used the categories of time, talent, and treasure. In our stewardship thrust, we will be using the terms prayer, service, and sharing.

STEWARDSHIP OF PRAYER

Prayer is about our relationship with God. The most recent doctor of the Church, St. Therese of Lisieux, speaks of prayer in this way: "For me, prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally, it is something great, supernatural, which expands the soul and unites me to Jesus."

Stewards nurture their relationship with God by having a prayer life. Whether that is two minutes or two hours a day, listening and responding to God is at the core of the disciple's life. At times the prayer will be that of thanksgiving. At other times the prayer will be that of praise or petition or forgiveness. Whether private or communal prayer, the purpose is to stay connected to God so as to do the divine will.

This dimension of stewardship can be measured to some degree. Of the 168 hours per week, of the 144 daily ten-minute slots, how much time do we use in prayer? And, of course, the most important prayer of all is the Eucharist in which we hear God's word and receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Stewards are eucharistic people.

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE

Ministry is about gifts and needs. We name and nurture the gifts God has given us; we place these gifts at the service of those in need. Ministries are many in number and find expression in the areas of worship, education, community, social justice, leadership, and evangelization. The Epistle of St. Peter reminds us: "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve another as good stewards of God's varied graces" (1 Peter 4:10).

A theology of ministry and service emphasizes that it is not so much that we do things for others but rather Jesus is doing something for others through us. Being aware of the difference between "for" and "through" changes our whole manner of service. That is why prayer is so important: it keeps reminding us that all stewardship is ultimately the work of the Lord taking place through the actions of faithful disciples.

Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Through baptism and confirmation we are called to a life of commitment to the wounded of the world. The Eucharist strengthens us in that mission and the Christian community hopefully supports us in our responsibilities.

ANNUAL PARISH STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM PLANNING WORKSHEET

For year July 1, 20____ - June 30, 20____

DURING THE COMING YEAR. HOW AND WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO...,

- I. Provide at least one **in-service or continuing education activity** that will increase the knowledge base of the members of the committee and support their efforts to make Stewardship a Way of Life for themselves.

- II. Promote **Stewardship - A Way of Life Education** on an on-going basis in a variety of different ways throughout the year.

- III. Encourage parishioner development and growth in **Prayer** by providing at least once a year, preferably during Lent, a program, resources and materials.

- IV. Encourage development and growth in **Service** by providing at least once a year, preferably in Spring, a program, resources and materials which encourage parishioners to lead stronger lives of service.

- IV. Encourage development and growth in **Sharing** by providing, at least once a year, preferably during the Fall, a program, resources and materials which encourage parishioners to do a better job of sharing the material gifts and blessings they have been called to "steward."

- V. Schedule **annual review** of parish stewardship efforts. Affirm what was successful and set some priorities for strengthening efforts throughout the upcoming year.

For additional resources, help and assistance – contact:

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