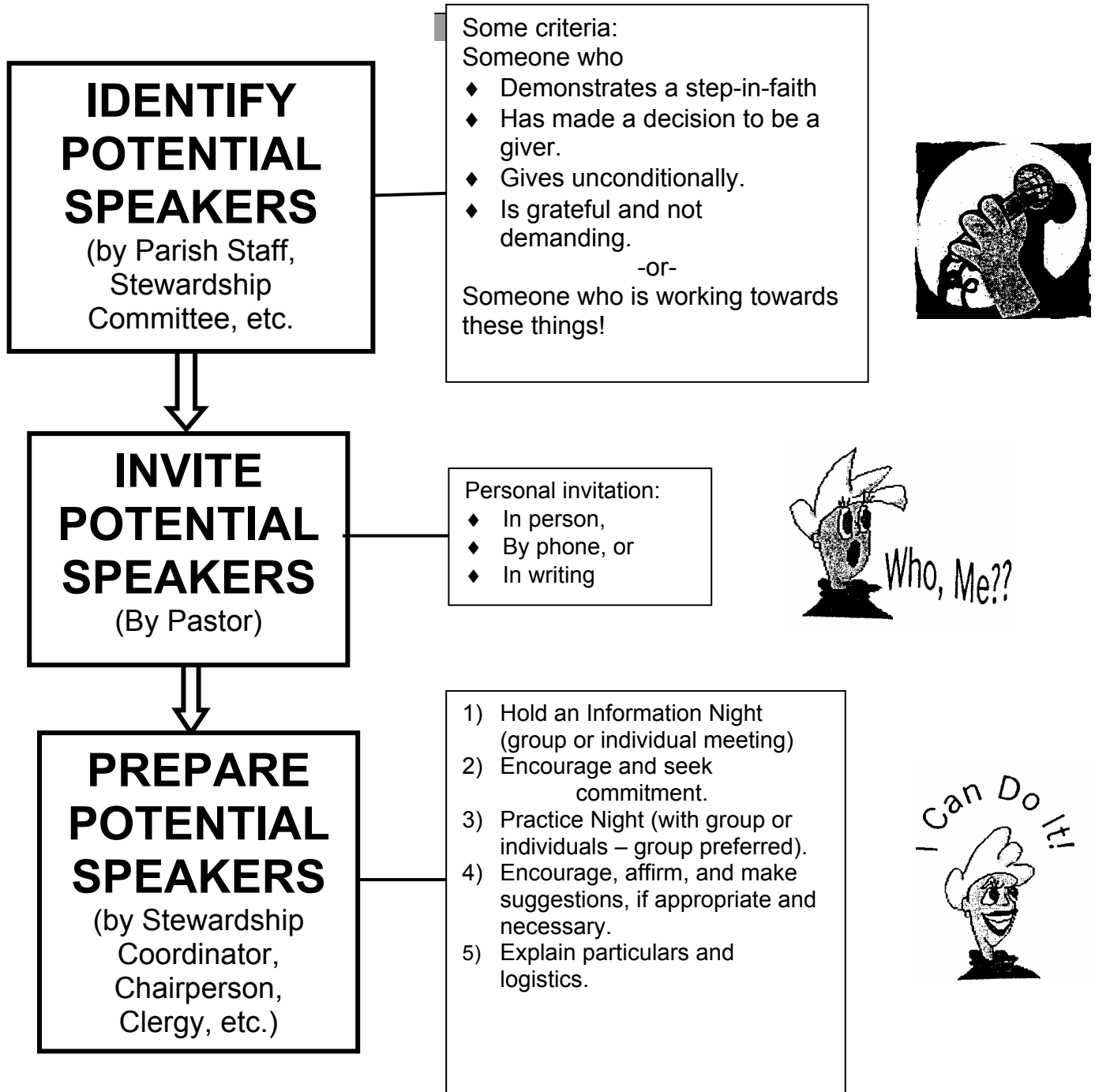


A Parish Model for Lay Witness Talks for Annual Stewardship Renewals



Witnesses and Witnessing for Financial Stewardship Renewal

(Note: Witness talks primarily focusing on Time and Talent will take place in the Spring of each year.)

Why Have a Witness Speak About Money?

Who likes to talk about money in church? For many it seems so unspiritual, so materialistic. However, in the Gospels we see that Jesus was not reluctant to talk about money. Over half of His parables concern money or other possessions. Jesus knew that few things reveal more about our spiritual condition than what we do with our money. Jesus pointed out that we reveal our values by our actions just as a tree reveals what kind of tree it is by the kind of fruit it bears. A wise priest once said, “Show me a person’s checkbook, and I’ll tell you a good deal about the state of his/her soul.” This is not much different from what Jesus Himself said, “*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*” (Lk 12:34).

We dread talking about money because so much of what we have heard on the subject has been bad news. Is there any way we can give people good news about money? There is—if we tell them about stewardship. To do so requires a radical shift in our thinking and approach.

Witness Selection and Recruiting

An essential part of the presentation of Parish Stewardship is individual testimony. This will require selective recruiting of individuals who will share with the parish family their personal life experiences in giving money (Fall phase) and time and talent (spring phase). In this Fall phase, individual testimony allows select parishioners to share with the congregation their own faith story and experience about how they relate their giving of money with their faith, and how they see their giving of money as an important expression of their faith.

Some criteria for selecting a lay witness speaker should be that the person is:

- ◆ a giver of time, talent and money;
- ◆ a communicator who articulates well before a group; and
- ◆ a prayerful individual who has an understanding of the theology and spiritual benefits of stewardship and sacrificial giving.

Many parishes have decided that the best way to invite and recruit potential lay witnesses is their personal approach, which can take either one of these forms.

- 1) The Pastor sends a letter affirming the individual’s faith, gifts, and grasp of stewardship principles, while inviting the person to make a lay witness presentation. (The Stewardship Committee in many parishes prepares the letter for the Pastor to modify according to his style and to approve.)
- 2) The Pastor calls by phone potential lay witness speakers and invites them to participate, while affirming their potential to “share their story” of faith as it relates to stewardship.

It is good to not have the same lay witness speakers all the time.


Witness Training and Practice Sessions

Parishes should invite those who have agreed to be lay witnesses to a brief introductory training session. It is also good for lay witnesses to practice a week or so before they are scheduled to give their talk. The practice should take place in the worship space where the actual talks will be given, using whatever p.a. system will be used.


Do's and Don'ts

What Does a Witness Do?

As a witness on the weekend of October 25/26 and November 1/2, 2003, your job is to share with your parish your personal experience of how you relate your faith to your own giving of money.

- 1) You are asked to prepare by doing the following:
 - a) Review the scripture readings used during Mass on the Sunday you are to witness.
 - b) Reflect on the call given to each of us in baptism to return, out of gratitude, a generous portion of our time, talent and money so that Christ's mission can continue.
 - c) Consider mentioning the topic of setting aside half your giving for the poor and other charities.
 - d) This year, try especially to connect your talk to our theme: **Stewardship: A Way of Life** and placing God first in your life. Feel free to express how you were able to "Take-A-Step" toward what you decided to give in gratitude this year.
 - e) Limit your talk to **no more than five minutes** in time.
 - f) If possible, set an appointment with the pastor or Stewardship Director to practice your talk (about two weeks prior). Ask him/her for feedback and trust the advice. It could be helpful to actually practice with the microphone and go over things like: times, date, where do I sit? when do I come up?, etc.
 - g) Pay particular attention to following the four comments in giving your witness talk:
 - "I first heard about stewardship when..."**
 - "My reaction to Stewardship was..."**
 - "What changed my mind was..."**
 - "Stewardship has benefited my life by..."**
- 2)  (if time permits and if any of these "fit" into your talk)
 - a) Explain that Stewardship of Treasure means giving the **first portion**, not the leftovers. (Do you give off the top or after everything else is paid?)



- b) Talk about the personal need of each Christian to give—"the need of the giver to give." This won't happen unless it is planned.
 - c) Emphasize "Many of you know from your own giving experience that what I have shared with you is true." (This thanks those who are already generous.)
 - d) Emphasize the joy that comes to those who give God the first share of their time, talents and money as a way of expressing their gratitude and trust in God.
 - e) Talk about planned and proportionate giving—tell what it means to you in your own giving experiences.
 - f) Talk about the giving of your time and that the giving of one type of gift does not substitute for the giving of another—there is a balance in the giving of all three: time, talent and treasure.
- 3)  Use bargaining language: "I gave this much and God did this for me."
- a) Use bargaining language: "I gave this much and God did this for me."
 - b) Emphasize church needs or budgets.
 - c) Talk about dollar amounts: "If we all just average \$10 a week," "If we all just give \$2 more each week" or "If we all just give our fair share."
 - d) Threaten the consequences of failure to give: "we won't be able to heat or air-condition the church" or "we'll have to close the school."
 - e) Talk about Stewardship or Sacrificial Giving as an obligation.

Why This Approach?

People relate far more readily to God's blessings than to a parish budget. When motivated to give out of gratitude and justice, they begin to give the gift God really wants: themselves. In so doing, they experience joy.

Emphasizing **church needs** encourages minimal giving. Emphasizing the **personal need of the giver to give** and motivating people to do so out of gratitude

and justice maximizes both giving and its spiritual benefits: deepened faith and Christian joy. Emphasizing **church needs** invites arguments about whether different needs are genuine (mission unites; needs divide). Emphasizing the **personal need of each individual to give** eliminates arguments. This need is universal.

Talking about dollar amounts, averages, “a fair share”, etc., is seldom fair. People’s circumstances differ widely. One person’s sacrificial offering is another’s “tip.” This approach also neglects the most important reasons for giving: gratitude, justice and trust.

Suggesting that Stewardship is an obligation invites challenges we can never answer. Making it voluntary places it where it belongs: it is one of the many things generous Catholics do – not out of law, but out of love.

The Spiritual Benefits

These outweigh all else. This, after all, is the fundamental reason for all the Church’s work – not to raise money, but to touch people. Money is merely a means to that end, albeit a necessary one. The trouble with so many “traditional” fundraising efforts is that they raise only money. They touch pocketbooks, but not persons.

Properly presented teaching about Stewardship of Financial Resources will deepen people’s faith and enable us, at last, to deliver a message about money that is good news. It is truly an idea whose time has come.

Three Examples of a Witness Talk

The following are actual presentations given by lay witnesses (except for minor editing). Witnesses should consult with the Presider and Team as to the appropriate time to give the se talks. They should feel free to use any of the elements in developing their own talks in ways they find most suitable. The important thing is to make it a personal story of one’s decision about sharing one’s gifts.

Lay Witness Talk – Sample #1

by Gina Agoglia, St. Mary’s Parish, East Islip, NY

Stewardship to me is not one big huge thing. Stewardship is made up of many different small components. Ever since I was little, I was told that God was in everybody, I just had to look for Him. It never really hit me what that meant until about five years ago. That is when I started involving myself in the church youth group. I met some people who to me seemed to know God and almost every aspect of Him. I wanted to be like them more than anything. So I remembered the earlier teaching that God was in everybody, and I started to look for Him. I looked at school, church, at home, and everywhere I went. But I couldn’t find him. I thought I must be doing something wrong or looking in the wrong places.

When I stopped looking I actually did find what I was looking for. I noticed that I was looking in the wrong places – well, in the right places but seeing right through Him. While looking for a deep understanding of God I found a very simple one. Just the simple act of helping another person allowed the Jesus within them and me to come through. For example, the other night I was out with friends and one got sick.

So I gave her my coat. Simple, right? That simple act made her feel better and I went to sleep satisfied that I helped her.

Stewardship is about giving other people the chance to allow God, to shine through them. I facilitate youth group on Thursday night and a few weeks ago the question was asked, "Who makes you feel welcome some place?" Now the usual answers came up: priests at church and teachers at school, but then I was surprised when a quiet kid in the back of the room raised his hand and said, "Gina makes me feel welcome here." That's what it's all about. It's an every day thing just to bring out the trash without being asked, or smile when walking past somebody. I give up much of myself to other people, and in that I receive the world.

I have a story that I would like to share with you. It is about a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six-pack of root beer and he started his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old woman. She was sitting in the park just staring at some pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old lady looked hungry, so he offered her a Twinkie. She gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. Her smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered a root beer. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word. As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old woman and gave her a hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever. When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." But before his mother could respond he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!" Meanwhile the woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face and he asked, "Mother, what did you do today that made you so happy?" She replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God." But before **her son responded she added, "You know,** he's much younger than I expected."

We all walk around every day together but do we realize we are walking with God? Stewardship just takes a little time and a big heart. I invite all of you today to recognize the steward within each one of you. Open your heart and have lunch with God.

Lay Witness Talk - Sample #2

by Anne Carter, St. Kilian's Parish, Farmingdale, NY

Good evening. My name is Anne **Carter and I'm a parishioner here** at St. Kilian. I've lived in Farmingdale for 30 years. I'm a registered nurse and I have two daughters. I've never spoken in front of a group this large before and I'm a little nervous about it but I asked to have the chance to speak with you about Stewardship and why it is important to me.

For the past few weeks, we've been reading about Stewardship in the bulletin and hearing about it from the pulpit. I first learned about it this past summer when Msgr. Swiger held an informational meeting. I went to the meeting because I really had no idea what Stewardship was but I suspected that it had something to do with money. Other words that I associated with Stewardship were "caretaker and custodian."

I learned that Stewardship did have something to do with money but that the heart of Stewardship really had to do with how I share myself as a disciple of Jesus. How good a caretaker was I of God's many gifts to me? How did I use my time and talents to make God's kingdom a living reality now? The meeting affirmed that Stewardship is a way of life. It's the way we take care of ourselves, our neighbors, our world and our resources. We use the Stewardship way of life at home and in the workplace. It's an attitude, not a *church program*. And it's done in thankfulness because we recognize that all we have been given is God's gift to us.

Five years ago when my husband died, I wasn't sure what direction my life was going to take. But I was fortunate enough to belong to a parish that takes its mission to serve very seriously. I was able to find the spiritual nourishment I needed to help me grow. I found RENEW, which is a faith-sharing small group community; I could avail myself of parish missions and scripture study; eventually I enrolled and completed a program in adult formation run by our diocese. When I look back on these past years, I'm awed by the generosity of this God. His greatest gifts to me are the people He puts into my life. In time I've been able to use my own gifts by becoming active in our parish's Nurse Ministry and Bereavement Ministry and I've learned to be thankful for what I do have rather than focus on what I don't have. Ordinary activities can be sacred when I look at each day as a gift.

Since I support myself my TREASURE is very important to me and I try to treat it responsibly. Until very recently I believed that the money I contributed to church and charities should be based on what's "safe" for me to give (after all I have my old age to think about!)

I've now come to understand that my treasure is just as much a gift as my talents. I can show my gratitude to God by using it to help bring about God's kingdom. The Gospel of Luke tells us that a group of women followed Jesus and supported him "from their resources." They obviously felt that he and his message were important. Well,... if I say that I believe that Jesus and his message are important today, then I also need to support him from my resources. I'm still not able to give at the suggested levels but I'm working on it and my attitude toward charitable giving is changing. I'm becoming more conscious of its importance and I don't want my giving to be an after thought. It was a real shift in my thinking when I began to see my treasure as the "first fruits of my harvest" which I should offer back to God in gratitude.

In a few minutes we'll be asked to take a step toward how we manage the part of the treasure we contribute to St. Kilian parish. For some of us it might mean putting more in the collection basket and for others of us it might mean taking a step toward seeing our treasure with new eyes, thinking about it differently.

I know that all of us here tonight have our own stories of God's generosity toward us. I invite you to think about your own gifts. Thank you for listening. Have a good evening and a great weekend.

Lay Witness Talk - Sample #3

by Toni and Ken Chebat, St. Sylvester's Parish, Medford, NY

Toni: Hi, we're Toni & Ken Chebat and we've been asked to talk today about how Stewardship is part of our lives. When we were asked to do this, both of us immediately thought "I can't do that," but to us part of Stewardship means saying "yes" to God, so here we are.

Ken and I have been coming to St. Sylvester's for about 11 years. Before that time we were away from Church, for reasons that are no longer important. But, about 11 years ago our youngest daughter started to ask a lot of questions about God and Religion and we agreed that it was important that we give our children the opportunity to learn about our Faith. So, we came to St. Sylvester's and asked what we could do. We learned about RCIA and our daughters then began their faith journey. We came to church every week and contributed to the collection. However, looking back, I realize that at first, we were really just observers and not participants in our Faith.

This changed gradually. We were welcomed by so many of the people in this faith community. We were encouraged to discover and use our gifts and talents. Eventually we joined several ministries that seemed to fit us. I became a Lector and helped with the Altar Servers schedule and RCIA and Ken became an Usher (you can probably tell he's much more comfortable being in the back of the Church than up here) and helps out with painting and "fixing up" around the Church. This made us feel good as we felt for the first time that we were truly living our religion and doing it together as a couple made our marriage stronger.

Then, one Sunday, there was a couple who spoke at Mass about Tithing, and how they embraced it as part of their commitment to God. They spoke about the importance of returning to God 10% of what they earned, which was really a gift from God. This concept intrigued (and frightened) me. I thought about the idea of "putting God first" in my budget and Ken and I discussed it. We decided this was the right thing to do, but we couldn't do 10% -- not at first. But we took a first step and began to regard our contribution to the Church as the first bill we paid every week. Our other bills are paid from what's leftover. It isn't easy, as you all know when you have children there are a million things they need or just want. We don't always have enough to pay all the bills, but the creditors can wait.

Then one summer we took the kids to Washington DC. Our youngest daughter, through her journey with RCIA had developed a social conscience. When we were walking around Washington, passing people begging at every corner, she said to me in a disappointed voice "Mommy, you just passed by 5 people you could have helped". I didn't have an answer for her then, but later that evening we discussed how we could help those people. I explained that we couldn't help everyone but we worked out a budget of how much we could give to help people each day for our remaining time in Washington and made her in charge of deciding who to help and giving out the money. I think that's when I realized that God was telling us that giving to the Church isn't enough -- we also needed to plan for giving in other ways to help all our brothers and sisters. Once again, we were led by a child.

Ken: We have a small group of friends with whom we used to exchange gifts on Birthdays, Anniversaries and Christmas. We got together one year and decided that instead of doing this we'd pool the money we would have spent and make a donation to a worthy charity at Christmas. Each year, we take turns choosing the charity and get together for dinner to discuss it and write our checks. We don't spend any more than we used to, but now we are able to give a substantial amount to help others. We all agree that this practice has given us far more pleasure than those gifts that we don't even miss. We've gained so much from our journey in Stewardship -- of sharing our gifts from God of time, talent and treasure. At this time of year, we review the level of our commitment of Treasure as compared to the gifts God continues to give us freely. We continue to "take steps" towards the 10% goal of 5% to the Church and 5% to other charities.

A favorite author of ours, Robert Fulgrum, wrote that all we need to know in life is the simple lessons learned in Kindergarten -- clean up after yourself, no hitting allowed, and share. We hope you'll decide to "take-a-step" up with us as you review your personal commitment to share your gifts with God. It will bring you joy.

(Many thanks to the people from our parishes who provided these Sample Lay Witness Talks.)

Liturgy and Related Items

Lay Witness Speakers at Mass

In 1999, the Office of Worship released guidelines in its publication: "Summit and Source" (developed by the Diocesan Liturgy Commission) for talks other than homilies during the Mass. Consult with your Clergy for more information or direction as to where lay witness speakers fit into your parish's Eucharistic celebrations.

The Offering of the Mass

There have been many changes in the Church since the Second Vatican Council. As the structure of the Church changes to reflect a shared ministry and a shared responsibility, the cost of operating parish and diocesan programs and services and maintaining facilities has increased. In addition to these needs, the needs of people in our communities have also increased. As lack of money becomes more and more an issue for us, there is a tendency, as there has been in the past, to approach the raising of needed funds for the Church and the poor in a practical or "gimmicky" way rather than from a faith foundation.

Without passing judgment on the variety of ways in which money is raised (bingo, candy sales, jog-a-thons, auctions, etc.) or on the social or communitybuilding value of these various methods, our primary expression of giving sacramentally takes place at the offering of the Sunday Mass. This is the time when we symbolically and concretely share with the community a portion of what God has given to us. This gives emphasis to the need of Christians to give in gratitude to God for what we -have been given and out of a sense of justice. One of the results of taking this giving stance in our relationship with God and the community is that the Church's practical needs are met.

The "fruits" of our labor (money) are presented to God and the community for the needs of the Church and the poor. Use of the weekly Sunday envelope by each person or family to present their gift should always be expected by Church leaders. The need and responsibility of Catholics to give in this way is just as great as are the financial needs of the Church. We are not so much asking people for their money as we are asking for their hearts. *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Lk 12:34).*

The gift of money in the weekly Sunday envelope and envelopes for special collections should be brought to the altar along with the other gifts for the Mass so that all can see what is happening and so that we may never lose sight of what we are doing or what we are about as God's people. Christian giving is not a private matter. It is a public matter. How *much we give is a private matter. But the fact is that others must see that we are giving. In seeing this they will know we are the disciples of Jesus.*

"No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:15).

N.B. Some pastors in our parishes have decided that liturgical ministers need to model financial giving during the Offering of the Gifts. So then the ushers collect from the liturgical ministers (clergy and lay ministers) as well as the congregation. This gives a wonderful witness to the concept that ALL are called to share their gifts; to give from their first fruits. See if this is a possibility in your parish. Speak with your Pastor for his ideas and guidance.

Liturgical Guidelines

It is most important that the Stewardship Committee be in close communication with the Parish Liturgy Commission thus eliminating any conflict in plans already formulated. Although there need not be a specific Stewardship focus in the liturgy, it would be awkward to present the assembly with various or competing elements. One thing that would be most helpful in communicating stewardship throughout the parish is if homilists become familiar with some of the "language" of the spirituality of stewardship and utilize it in their homilies during stewardship renewal times and all during the year. Making reference to spiritual concepts/ realities such as: Gifted by God, First Fruits, Place God First, Trust in God, etc. all help reinforce the "language" of stewardship.

There is little need to design any particular liturgy to focus especially on the Stewardship of Treasure. The integrity of the Sunday liturgy and the liturgical year ' to be respected. The nature of the Sunday celebration already requires that proper attention and sufficient time be given to the collection.

Early Church documents attest that the collection, like the sign of peace and the general intercessions, was viewed as an important element of the Mass. From the earliest days, Christians have understood the integral connection between their prayer and their love and concern for the life of the community. The second century St. Justin, for instance, speaks of the collection being "deposited with the president (presider), who aids orphans and widows-in short, takes care of all in need."

The collection of money at Sunday Mass need not be disguised, therefore, nor should we be embarrassed by it. Prior to the collection, the last General Intercession should acknowledge the money about to be collected. The collection itself deserves its own time and a sufficient number of ushers (men, women, youth) to ensure that it is not needlessly prolonged. The collection should never continue into the Eucharistic Prayer.

Experience has demonstrated that the most symbolic as well as effective system to be employed to gather the weekly Sunday offering is the passing of a basket by parishioners from one to another, with ushers standing at the end of each pew to assist in passing the basket from pew to pew and aisle to aisle. The monies collected may be brought forward to the altar (together with the bread and wine and any gifts for the poor), and placed not on the altar itself, but in some other suitable and visible location.

Scriptural Text References

Hebrew Scriptures:

"The measure of your own freewill offering shall be in proportion to the blessing the Lord, your God, has bestowed on you . . . No one shall appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each of you with as much as you can give, in proportion to the blessings which the Lord, your God has bestowed on you" (Dt 16:10, 16-17).

*"When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest . . . and, putting them in a basket . . . you shall go to the priest . . . (who will) set it in front of **the altar of the Lord, your God**" (Dt 26:1-4).*

As soon as the word spread, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything" (2 Chr 31:5).

"Neither in my youth, nor now that I am old have I seen a just person forsaken nor that person's descendants begging bread" (Ps 37:25).

"Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine" (Prv 3:9-10).

"In generous spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts. With each contribution show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy. Give to the Most High as God has given to you, generously according to your means" (Sir 35:7-9).

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house and try me in this," says the Lord of hosts. "Shall I not open for you the food gates of heaven, to pour down blessing upon you without measure?" (Mal 3:10).

New Testament:

"Your heavenly Father knows all that you need. Seek first God's kingship over you. . . and all these things will be given to you besides" (Mt 6:26-34).

"So by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt 7:20-21).

Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Mt 19:24).

"You cannot give yourself to God and money" (Lk 6:13).

"Give, and it shall be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will they pour into the fold of your garment. For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you" (Lk 6:38).

"What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and to destroy oneself in the process?" (Lk 9:25).

Scriptural Text References

New Testament (continued):

"Then [Jesus] said to the crowd, Avoid greed in all its forms. A person may be wealthy, but the person's possessions do not guarantee life" (Lk 12:15).

*"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and ... made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. **Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents... His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'** And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, Master... I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, - You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 25:14-30).*

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory... and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels... Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Mt 25:31-46).

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Lk 12:34) .

... nor was there anyone needy among them, for all who owned property or houses sold them and donated the proceeds. They used to lay them at the feet of the apostles to be distributed to everyone according to their need" (Acts 4:34-35).

"We have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed on each of us. One's gift may be prophecy . . . It may be ministry . . . a teacher . . . the power of exhortation. The person who gives alms should do so generously . . . the person who performs works of mercy should do so cheerfully" (Rom 12:6-8).

Scriptural Text References

New Testament (continued):

About the collection for the saints . . . On the first day of each week everyone should put aside whatever they have been able to save. . . " (1 Cor 16:1-2).

"A person who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and one who sows bountifully will reap bountifully. People must give according to what they have inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver. God can multiply favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works" (2 Cor 9:6-8).

"Everyone must give according to what they have inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7).

"What good is it to profess faith without practicing it? ... If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day and you . . . do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that? So it is with the faith that does nothing in practice. It is thoroughly lifeless" (Jas 2:14-17).

Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be mutually hospitable without complaining. As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure you have received" (I Pt 4:8-10).

Some Parables of Jesus That Deal With Money and Possessions

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| 1) The Hidden Treasure (Mt 13:44) | 12) The Rich Fool (Lk 12:16-21) |
| 2) The Costly Pearl (Mt 13:45) | 13) The Barren Fig Tree (Lk 13:6-9) |
| 3) The Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:23-35) | 14) The Tower Builder (Lk 14:28-30) |
| 4) The Generous Employer (Mt 20:1-16) | 15) The King Contemplating a Campaign
(Lk 14:31-33) |
| 5) The Wicked Tenants (Mt 21:33-46; Mk
12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19) | 16) The Lost Sheep (Lk 15:3-7) |
| 6) The Servant Entrusted with Supervision (Mt
24:45-51; Lk 12:42-46) | 17) The Lost Coin (Lk 15:8-10) |
| 7) The Talents (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:12-20) | 18) The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) |
| 8) Sheep and Goats (Mt 25:31-46) | 19) The Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1-7) |
| 9) The Two Debtors (Lk 7:41-43) | 20) The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) |
| 10) The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) | 21) The Unjust Judge (Lk 18:1-8) |
| 11) The Friend of Midnight (Lk 11:5-8) | 22) The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk
18:9-14) |