

Section 3:

Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

Section Contents:

<i>Stewardship Roadmap</i>	3
1. Stewardship Education and Formation Overview	4
• Objectives	4
• Components	4
2. Getting Started	6
• <i>Steward's Prayer and Reflection Journal</i>	6
• Bulletin Inserts and Bulletin Blurbs	6
• Posters	7
• Prayer of the Faithful	7
• Lay Witness Guidelines	8
• Message from Bishop Richard G. Lennon	11
• Leadership Retreat and Formation	11
• Parish Newsletter Guidelines	13
• Parish Stewardship DVD Guidelines	17
3. Lessons Learned (Tips and Tricks)	19
4. Examples and Templates	21
5. Additional Resources and Websites	72

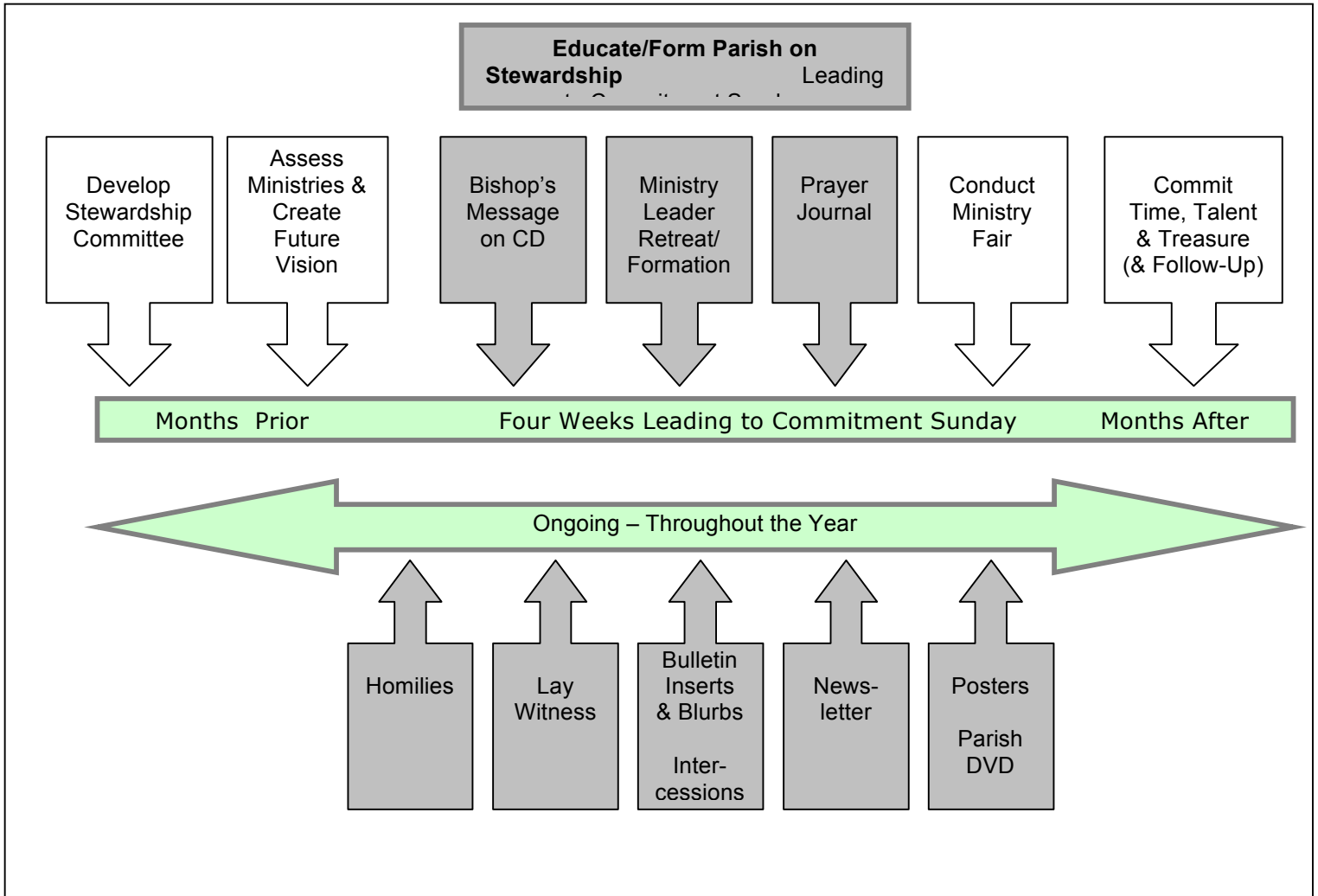
"In the lives of disciples, however, something else must come before the practice of Stewardship. They need a flash of insight – a certain way of seeing – by which they view the world and their relationship to it in a fresh new light."

~Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship



GOD'S GIFTS *for* GOD'S PEOPLE
| time, talent and treasure |

Stewardship Roadmap



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 **Parish Stewardship Education and Formation.**

Parish Stewardship Education and Formation



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation Overview

There is an old saying, “If you want to be heard, *whisper*.” Try it, it really works. But in the case of Christian Stewardship, it has been proven that the best approach in getting parishioners attention is to be loud and clear with the message of what Stewardship is about. This section has been designed to help clarify the concept of Stewardship through an on-going education and formation process for parishes. Stewardship is a way of life, an attitude of the mind and heart that is expressed in action.

Objectives

There are two objectives in the process of Stewardship Education and Formation of the parish:

1. To teach the four principles for growth as a steward as defined by the U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship– A Disciple’s Response*:
 - receive God’s gifts gratefully
 - cultivate them responsibly
 - share them lovingly in justice with others
 - return them with increase to the Lord
2. To challenge the parish to Stewardship in action.

Components

Parish Stewardship Education and Formation is an ongoing process and requires a variety of components. This is not something that can be accomplished in one day, one week, or even one year, but rather requires ongoing effort. Varied approaches to education and formation are needed to accommodate varied styles of learning and to reinforce the message as it is heard or received in different ways.

While approaches to Parish Stewardship Education and Formation continue to develop, the following components are provided in this manual:

- Steward’s Prayer and Reflection Journal
- Prayer of the Faithful
- Leadership Retreat and Formation
- Bulletin Inserts and Bulletin Blurbs
- Lay Witness Guidelines
- Parish Newsletter Guidelines
- Posters
- Stewardship Message from Bishop Richard G. Lennon
- Parish Stewardship DVD Guidelines



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

Another critical element in parish formation is homilies which help the faithful make the connection between the biblical underpinnings of Stewardship and actively living it out in their lives. To assist preachers in uncovering the themes of Stewardship in the Scriptures for any Sunday or feast day, *Sunday Homilies – Forming Communities in the Spirit of Stewardship*, written by the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, is included in Section 10 of this manual.

This resource provides “homily helps” built around six themes that are typically and repeatedly used in a period of six weeks. Four of the six themes correspond with the elements of a good steward as written in the USCCB Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship – A Disciple’s Response*. The remaining two themes are also basic to Stewardship with one referring to humanity’s creation in the image of a self-giving God and the other describing Stewardship as a way of life.

These “homily helps” will also provide value to those who are interested in developing prayerful reflections or retreats around the themes of Stewardship. The *Liturgical Index*, also provided in Section 10, serves as a useful tool in identifying the homily helps that focus on each of those themes.

A final component in the education and formation process is following the timing on the Stewardship Roadmap (*page 3*) and Bulletin Insert Index, *Example 3.1 (page 23)* for mailings, lay witness talks, bulletin announcements and inserts. Taking all these recommended steps will help provide value in making the greatest impact on the parish in developing Stewardship.





Getting Started

Ideas for educating and forming a parish in Stewardship can be as limitless as a parish and its committee allows them to be! What follows are ideas that have been used by many parishes around the country. Parishes are invited to implement these various components in a way that best fits their culture, and to add ideas of their own.

Steward's Prayer and Reflection Journal

Stewardship requires conversion – a conversion of heart in the realization that everything in life is a gift from God. Conversion requires prayer – prayer to open minds and hearts to God's will. The *Steward's Prayer and Reflection Journal* offers parishioners a four-week prayer journey to help them deepen their awareness of giftedness and God's presence in their lives, and encourages them to use those gifts in a way that builds the Kingdom on earth. This resource may be used in small group study or for one's own private prayer. The reflections in this journal compliment the themes found in the homily helps section of this manual – *Sunday Homilies – Forming Communities in the Spirit of Stewardship*. Section 9 of this manual.

Bulletin Inserts and Bulletin Blurbs

The parish bulletin is a familiar resource to all parishioners and can be built upon as a provider of formational material. Bulletin inserts (separate documents that can be inserted into a bulletin) and bulletin blurbs (small announcements that can be added to the text within the bulletin) can be used year round for catechesis of Stewardship as well as for specific messages to prepare parishioners for the various components of the annual Stewardship renewal process. The following regarding bulletin and blurbs are provided at the end of this section:

- Stewardship Initiative Bulletin Insert Index with Suggested Timeline
Example 3.1 (page 23)
 - Bulletin inserts specific to the Stewardship commitment process
Examples 3.2 – 3.11 (pages 24-35)
 - Bulletin inserts for general Stewardship formation throughout the year
Examples 3.12 – 3.13 (pages 36-40)
 - Bulletin inserts that correspond with the six themes used in *Sunday Homilies – Forming Communities in the Spirit of Stewardship* (Section 10)
Examples 3.14 – 3.19 (pages 41 – 46)
 - Bulletin Blurbs using Scripture references to Stewardship
Example 3.20 (pages 47-51)
 - Bulletin Blurbs providing short Stewardship reflections
Example 3.21 (page 52)
-



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

Posters

Sometimes a brief inspirational message as parishioners enter or exit the church is enough to serve as a reminder to put gifts to use in a way that builds God's Kingdom. These six posters may be used separately or in conjunction with the six themes of Stewardship used in the homily helps of *Sunday Homilies – Forming Communities in the Spirit of Stewardship* (Section 10). Posters are provided in the plastic sleeves immediately following this section under Tab 3 of this manual.

Prayer of the Faithful

Including Stewardship messages in the Prayer of the Faithful reinforces the understanding that Stewardship is a *way of life* which begins with our on-going dialogue with God.

According to *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter II, paragraph 70 the prayers should be in the following order:

1. for the needs of the church
2. for public authorities and the salvation of the world
3. for those oppressed by any need
4. for local community

Intercessions for Stewardship would generally fall under the category of the local community. They could be included once a month for a yearlong Stewardship reminder or just for the weeks of the parish Stewardship renewal.

The following are simple guidelines to keep in mind when writing intercessions. They should be:

- tied to the readings
- concise and to the point
- consistent and begin with the same wording. For example:

For those....

That....

May...

The following Examples of Prayer of the Faithful are provided at the end of this section:

- Prayer of the Faithful for a 4 week Stewardship renewal
Example 3.22 (page 53)
- Prayer of the Faithful for the parish family
Example 3.23 (page 54)
- Prayer of the Faithful corresponding to the months of the year
Example 3.24 (page 55)
- Prayer of the Faithful focusing on people as “stewards”
Example 3.25 (page 56)



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

- Prayer of the Faithful focusing on the elements in *Stewardship – A Disciple’s Response Example 3.26 (page 57)*
 - Prayer of the Faithful compatible with the six themes of Stewardship used in the homily helps section of this manual – *Sunday Homilies – Forming Communities in the Spirit of Stewardship Example 3.27 (page 58)*
-

Lay Witness Guidelines

As with the first disciples, Christians today are gifted by the Holy Spirit to share their experience of God’s presence, gifts, and blessings. They give evidence of their faith by sharing their experiences and relationships with others.

The practice of the Christian faith becomes evident in every circumstance of life and manifests through prayer, daily behavior, good works, and the words used to give practical testimony to the power of God’s Spirit at work in the Church. Through daily activities at home, work, church, and in local and global communities, one is afforded many opportunities to exercise belief in the Stewardship way of life.

True conversion to a Stewardship way of life requires true commitment to a life of gratitude. In growing as a faithful steward, one should follow the promptings of the heart to share how one has changed and what one is becoming. As witnesses willingly talk about personal successes and failures (not necessarily in a polished or dynamic way, but sincerely) they help the parish community to become more fully the Body of Christ.

The lay witness is a unique opportunity for the disciple to encourage others to be faithful stewards. In presenting the Stewardship message through stories of real people living real lives, others are inspired. It provides support for those facing challenges in their daily lives and invites them to a deepening of faith and spiritual conversion.

It is essential to continually educate parishioners about Stewardship. The expression of a sincere faith, although imperfect, is a powerful witness. This imperfect faith acknowledges failings and doubts while seeking God’s will through service practiced in small and loving ways.

Through reflection on the wisdom and commitment of its members, the parish community can develop a shared vision of how the Holy Spirit is leading it to grow in holiness and act with purpose and hope. Touched by the lives of others, faith is awakened and confidence restored. Members will also hear the call to discipleship and grow in faith and understanding.

Through sharing over and over again, listeners realize that many of the challenges and obstacles, as well as the opportunities and responsibilities they face, are common experiences in learning to be trustworthy stewards. They also learn that prayer, worship, discernment, and spiritual growth are essential.

Sample lay witness talks are provided as Examples 3.28 and 3.29 (pages 59-62). Given below are easy to follow instructions in choosing and preparing people in their lay witness efforts.



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

How to prepare a lay witness talk

- Pray – talk to God as when reflecting on His blessings in life and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- Set aside feelings of shyness, inadequacy, pride, and embarrassment. Recognize the opportunity to acknowledge, in this unique way, God's generosity.
- Attend information sessions, if available.
- Prepare the talk in a way that is comfortable, using natural words and a personal style of speaking.
- Write a personal testimony, word for word, underlining areas/words to be emphasized.
- Share the talk with the pastor or parish representative, seeking feedback.
- Rehearse aloud (in the church, if possible). Be comfortable enough to look away from the written words to the congregation.
- Remember that the message will be conveyed and accepted if the message is sincere, truthful and natural in the way the witness is delivered.
- A faithful response is all that is needed – God will do the work of changing hearts.

Who should present a lay witness talk?

Persons who:

- are recognized by the pastor and church leaders as faithful in efforts to live the Stewardship way of life.
- often share with others the gifts they have received as an expression of gratitude to God.
- try to express their faith in concrete ways daily through relationships at home, in the workplace, at church, and in the greater community.
- are respected and active in the church congregation.
- can share their Stewardship experience as a natural part of life.

Lay witness talks may be given by individuals or couples of all ages and walks of life. Often, the wisdom and experience of the elderly as well as the innocence and honesty of today's youth are able to touch the hearts of listeners.

Potential speakers should be discerned through the wisdom of the community by seeking input from the pastor, parish staff, Stewardship Committee, and ministry leaders.

The invitation to present a lay witness should be extended by the pastor or representatives from the Stewardship Committee either in person, by phone, or in a personal note.

Elements of a lay witness talk

The lay witness talk is developed from the personal experiences of the speaker. However, many of the following should be included in the structure of the talk:

- Introduction – describe background, family, religious formation, and involvement in the parish
- Define understanding of Stewardship and tell how Stewardship experience began



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

- Mention successes as well as failures, talking openly about efforts
- Express any reservations, knowing others will relate to discomfort
- If change of attitude or lifestyle was necessary, how did it occur – what motivated change?
- Reaction of family to Stewardship decision
- Effect Stewardship had on faith life
- Benefits obtained from Stewardship
- Share anecdotes and interject humor when appropriate
- Share experiences that have really mattered
- Express personal need to give back to God
- Share sense of joy and fulfillment
- Relate how giving of time, talent and treasure is determined
- Urge congregation to pray and respond to becoming better stewards of blessings received

How to present a lay witness talk

On the day of the presentation the Lay Witness should be sure to:

- Arrive 15 minutes before Mass
- Dress appropriately, and respectfully
- Meet briefly with the celebrant immediately before Mass and agree as to when the witness will be given – before, during, or after Mass; ask where would be the best place to sit
- Speak for no more than 4-6 minutes
- Deliver the witness slowly, in a loud and clear voice with enthusiasm, looking up at the congregation often. Conviction, not eloquence, is important
- Remain after Mass to share informally with others
- Graciously respond to feedback

Role of the Stewardship Committee for lay witness talks

Catholics, traditionally, are reluctant to share publicly how they live their faith and experience God at work in their lives. Since the sharing of stories is at the heart of how God's presence and love is manifest among Christians, the Stewardship Committee should promote parish participation in lay witnessing by providing:

- Encouragement and support to those invited to witness
- A strong message that giving a personal testimony is an opportunity to generously and gratefully acknowledge God's gifts. This can be delivered through bulletin inserts, newsletters, homilies of pastor and priests, inviting guest witnesses, video presentations during small group meetings, and various other means.
- Support and resources for preparing a lay witness through training sessions or individual meetings that:
 - explain the format and logistics



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

- include suggestions of what to say and how to express the witness according to one's own style
- coaching on important elements to be included or even excluded
- stressing the necessity of a positive message
- opportunity to role play
- helpful feedback and affirmation
- encouragement to practice the witness to the pastor or small
- Communicate with the celebrants of all the liturgies (pastor, associates, visiting priest) the strategies in place for encouraging parishioners' active participation in Stewardship.
- Continual information and resources to educate the parish regarding how the commitment to a life of Stewardship develops and grows through sharing the meaningful faith experiences that are a natural part of our lives.

The pastor and committee should be responsible for seeking out individuals in every age group and socio-economic status represented in the parish, who appear to be living daily in an attitude of Stewardship. Invite them to minister to and inspire the parish community through their real, practical, and personal story of using their time, talent, and treasure in gratitude to God.

Message from Bishop Richard G. Lennon

It is helpful to hear words from the teaching authority of the local church, and it is with that in mind that a message from Bishop Richard G. Lennon about Stewardship is included in this manual. His message is provided on both a CD (included in the pocket of the Stewardship Manual) and in print Example 3.30 (page 63) (in the event a parish would prefer to use it as a bulletin insert). His message provides words of encouragement and support in living a Stewardship way of life and his endorsement of it being a valuable component in being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Leadership Retreat and Formation

Developing Stewardship as a way of life is a journey as each of us understands what it means to become a mature disciple of Christ. Educating a parish as a whole, must begin with the parish ministry leaders. These leaders by virtue of their ministry to the Church are already good examples of Catholic Christian stewards; however, it is imperative that they gain a deeper understanding of Stewardship. Below are two different suggestions to deepen the understanding and spirituality of Stewardship among parish ministry leaders.

Leadership Retreat

Reaching a deeper spirituality of Stewardship begins with prayer, "Stewardship of time."

"Time is the result of God's precious gift to us: Life. Because He gave us life, He also gave us time. Our time on this Earth is very limited compared to the Eternity that awaits us. Since God created us to know love and serve Him in this life so that we may be happy with Him in eternal life, our use of time should



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

work toward that end. We are called to holiness—to be disciples—therefore the ways in which we spend our time reflects who we are and who we want to become. To be good stewards of time – knowing, loving and serving God – means spending time with God with family, with work, with our parish and community and with relaxation..... The Stewardship of time means using some of the time God has given us to refresh ourselves so that we will be able to serve well.”¹

A Leadership Retreat offers such refreshment as it provides a focus for the purpose of ministry and motivation for carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ. Below are steps to take in planning such a retreat.

- **Decide on who should attend.** Some parishes restrict the retreat to ministry leaders only, whereas others open it up to the whole parish. The parish should decide this based upon the personality of the parish and its stage of development in developing Stewardship as a way of life. Expected attendees would include: staff, Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Stewardship Committee and all ministry leaders.
- **Decide on date and format of the retreat.** It is recommended that the retreat be part of the renewal process each year and be scheduled for an evening and approximately half of the next day.
- **Choose a retreat leader.** The retreat leader should be someone with strong presentation skills and a deep understanding of Stewardship. As noted in Section 6 of this manual, *Sustaining Stewardship*, there are several speakers in the diocese. These include: Fr. Wally Hyclak, Fr. Norm Douglas, and Fr. Tom Dragga. There are many national speakers as well. Check with the Diocesan Stewardship Office for specific recommendations. A sample of a retreat outline may be found in Example 3.31 (page 64).
- **Select a location for the retreat:** Most retreats are conducted in parish facilities. Offsite facilities or retreat centers may also be considered.
- **Plan meals and refreshments well in advance:** Keep food and refreshments simple.
- **Send invitations and Thank You’s:** the ministry leaders should receive a personal invitation from the pastor, such as the one shown in Example 3.32 (page 65). Stewardship committee members or other appointed individuals should follow up with phone calls encouraging leaders to attend. Following the retreat, thank you notes should be sent to all who attended such as the one shown in Example 3.33 (page 66).

Leadership Workshop

Often times ministry leaders are confused as to the specifics of their role as a leader in the parish. Sometimes the ministry leaders have not had previous experience in a leadership role so even the basics of providing direction to others is new to them. Or, if a ministry leader has had previous leadership experience, their understanding of responsibility to budgets, development of volunteers and general reporting structures may be different in their jobs from the realities of parish life.

Because of these areas of possible confusion, it may be helpful to have a workshop to guide ministry leaders in the most effective ways for them to carry out their roles in the parish. Such a workshop is intended to offer direction to new ministry leaders as well as assistance to returning ministry leaders.

¹ Used with permission from the Diocese of Wichita: *Characteristics of a Stewardship Parish in the Catholic Diocese of Wichita*



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

The listing of examples and templates below are designed for this workshop to be conducted in a prayerful setting and stresses the spirituality of Stewardship.

- Ministry Coordinator's Leadership Workshop Invitation
Example 3.34 (page 67)
- Ministry Coordinator's Leadership Workshop Objectives and Agenda
Example 3.35 (pages 68-69)
- Ministry Coordinator Role Description
Example 3.36 (page 70)
- Ministry Coordinator Time and Talent Renewal Checklist
Example 3.37 (pages 71)

Another resource that may be helpful for training ministry leaders is a book entitled: Everything about Parish Ministry I wish I Had Known by Kathy Hendricks, Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic, CT. 2002.

Parish Newsletter Guidelines

Mathew 28:19 commands us as followers of Jesus Christ to spread the *Good News*. The more creative a parish can be to get the message out, the greater the benefit. A newsletter provides a way to reach all parishioners about how to live their lives as good stewards through the examples of other parishioners.

There are many decisions to be made *before* beginning a parish newsletter. Below are guidelines to consider when making these decisions, all of which should help in creating an interesting and valuable means of communication.

1. **Cost** – this is an important factor in planning a newsletter. In establishing a budget be sure to include the following elements, of which more will be said later in this section:
 - possible postage
 - possible use of a mail service
 - color print or black and white
 - number of pages
 - volunteer or paid writers and editor
2. **Description** – Will the newsletter have news type articles or rather focus on articles which educate parishioners on the meaning of Stewardship? Will the newsletter have overt soliciting of volunteers versus articles about ministries which inspire others to join that ministry? Will the newsletter advertise events and programs or instead provide diverse examples of ministries and good Stewardship in the parish? The answers to these questions will help define the type of newsletter the parish intends to create.

The following is a sample newsletter description:

The newsletter will contain a balanced blend of inspirational,



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

spiritual, educational and informational content to promote Stewardship among members of the parish. The publication will be written to meet the diverse needs and interests of all members of the parish—young and old, involved and uninvolved, committed or disaffected. It is not intended to be news oriented.

Along with the questions above, the following suggestions may help in the consideration of subject material for the newsletter:

- people-oriented articles
- new information – not old news, such as committee reports
- a variety of pictures of people

3. **Distribution** – A newsletter is an effective method of evangelization and a way to reach out to parishioners who are not attending Mass. With that in mind, should the newsletter be available only to those attending Mass or should it be mailed to all registered parishioners? This decision will likely be effected by budget considerations. The cost of postage is a factor as well as the decision on the use of a mailing service. If a mailing service is not used, it is recommended that a large group of volunteers be organized to apply mailing labels and prepare the newsletter for bulk mailing. If the use of volunteers and bulk mailing is the chosen method, be sure to check with the local post office for guidelines on proper preparation for bulk mailing.

In addition to parishioners, consider the following as recipients of the parish newsletter:

- nursing homes
 - assisted living facilities
 - senior citizen centers
 - parishioner-owned businesses, with their permission
4. **Format and execution** – How many pages and what size will the newsletter be? Will the newsletter be published once a month, every other month, or quarterly? Will it be printed in only black ink or will colors be used? In answer to all of these questions, remember that parishioners receive a large volume of junk mail and are bombarded with lots of printed media. Aim to make the newsletter stand out among the other options competing for their attention.

Listed below are elements found to be most common in successful parish newsletters, though budgets will play an important role in deciding what will work best for each parish:

- 8 ½ X 11 inches, folded or non-folded (a non-folded newsletter affects the cost when mailed). This size is created by using 11 X 17 inch paper.
- 8 pages is a common length (newsletters must contain multiples of 4 pages to allow for proper layout)
- monthly distribution
- 2 color – allows the use of screens and shading to make a more interesting product
- glossy paper
- consistently produced (same time each month or quarter)



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

5. **Name** – These suggestions may help when considering a name for the newsletter:
 - convey the mission of the parish and the goal of the newsletter
 - make it catchy and unique so it is recognized when mentioned in conversation
 - keep it simple so it is easy to remember
6. **Design** – Look at magazines and other newsletters to get ideas and notice what is interesting and appealing. Below are other points and thoughts to consider:
 - first page should be the same for each issue
 - if folded, keep the bottom half of the first page different each time to provide easy differentiation
 - liberal use of color through tints, bars, and graphics
 - interesting quotes as graphics to break up text and add color to pages
 - headings in italicized color text with color bars above and below
 - subheads in color text and different font to break up the text
 - lots and lots of photos throughout
 - easy-to-read type, at least 10 point with adequate leading
 - three columns of type instead of two
7. **Writing style/tone** – Some simple guidelines to follow in writing newsletter articles:
 - warm, personal, friendly tone is best received
 - light-heartedness when appropriate
 - personal perspectives with occasional use of first person point of view
 - liberal use of quotations with parishioners' names and photographs
 - fun to read
8. **Newsletter personnel** – There are a variety of people who participate in the creation of a newsletter. Each of these positions could be one individual or a combination of people:
 - editor in chief – should be a member of the parish staff or someone who works closely with the staff. The individual must be highly committed to the newsletter and to the process. Being responsive to the other personnel and very knowledgeable about what is happening in the parish are essential qualities for success. The editor's duties typically include the following:
 - determine the subject matter for the stories
 - consult with the Stewardship Committee and the staff for stories, comments and criticisms
 - obtain approval from the pastor for the stories
 - obtain review by the pastor for articles dealing with matters of faith or morals
 - assign the articles to the writers
 - arrange for photographs



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

- edit the articles
- determine the line-up of the articles
- arrange for submission of the articles to a graphic/layout artist
- provide final approval for the newsletter before submission to the printer
- maintain mailing list
- be available to parishioners for comments and criticisms.

An assistant editor may be used to help with editing of the newsletter, and assist the editor with the other duties mentioned above.

- writer or writing committee – Must be experienced in writing and if possible, newsletter writing, rather than asking parishioners to write articles. Otherwise a professional editor will be needed to help restructure stories, watch for sensitive issues, and possibly have to explain why an article is not used. Parishioners may have a fabulous story to offer but not know how to write it. Instead, parishioners should be interviewed for a story.

These additional thoughts may be helpful in considering writers or a committee:

- a committee of writers tends to slow the process because it creates more steps
 - articles must be assigned
 - more follow-up is needed
 - a central person collects/edits articles
- one writer commits more time and may require payment
- it is helpful for this person/these people to assist in editing
- this person/these people will participate in decisions about story line-up
- graphic/layout artist – Has expert knowledge of graphic design software. The two most popular types are Quark Express (Mac users) or InDesign (PC users). Microsoft Publisher is generally not usable by printers. The role of a graphic artist includes the following activities:
 - create the initial template
 - provide the layout for each issue, adding creative graphic touches
- photographer – Pictures are a very important part of the newsletter. Pictures of parishioners, ministries, or parish events add to the impact of the newsletter. Parishioners can submit their own pictures for articles as an alternative to using a photographer.
- printer and mailing service – The following suggestions may help in choosing a printer:
 - get quotes from at least three printers
 - determine if there are parishioners who are printers and will provide printing for a discount



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

- know that some bulletin companies also print newsletters at a reduced cost or free of charge
 - have the printer make the arrangements with the mailing service, if one is to be used
9. **Content of the articles** – Every parish has wonderful examples of Stewardship on which to write! When selecting the articles for each issue attempt to have a balance and variety of articles that include various ages and groups of parishioners such as youth, seniors, PSR families, school families, etc. Here are some ideas for recurring pages or articles:
- feature about a specific Stewardship theme such as gratitude, focusing on a parishioner who exemplifies that theme
 - letter from the pastor
 - reflection box on Stewardship fundamentals of time, talent, and treasure
 - page with photos of new parishioners
 - calendar of major events at the parish and holy days
 - treasure reports including the pastor's yearly report on parish finances
 - spotlight on parish staff and employees
 - ministry spotlight
 - article about a youth who puts his her faith in action

To see samples of parish newsletters, go to the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Stewardship web site by going to www.dioceseofcleveland.org and clicking on the Stewardship link; or call the Stewardship office for samples – 216-696-6525 X2120 or 800-869-6525 X2120.

Parish Stewardship DVD Guidelines

People are accustomed to living in a visual society, spending more and more time in front of the TV, computers, or looking at the video screen of their I-Pods. It is important to use all possible methods of communication to reach parishioners. Another creative vehicle for educating parishioners about Stewardship as a way of life is through a DVD. Listed below are guidelines to consider in creating this tool of education and formation.

1. **Determine the audience** – Will the DVD be shown at Mass? Will the DVD be given to all parishioners or just to new parishioners? Will the DVD be shown to ministry groups? These questions must be answered first to determine the length of the DVD. A DVD to be shown at Mass cannot be as long as a DVD given to parishioners to view at home. If being shown at Mass or to ministry groups, the audience is likely more sophisticated in their understanding of Stewardship. However, if the DVD is being sent to all parishioners, the message may need to be more basic.
2. **Determine the content** – Stewardship embodies numerous elements. Don't try to put too much information in one video. As a first step decide upon a central theme such as gratitude, enriching a relationship with God, or sharing gifts. Look at the readings for the dates of the parish Stewardship renewal and tie the theme into those readings.



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

Prepare an outline of the points to be made in the DVD. From the outline select the people that will support the message. Select a diversity of people: male and female, young and old, families and singles.

Preparation of content is critical for a high quality product. The Stewardship committee or a subcommittee should begin planning the content of the DVD early. Write a script for any voiceovers. Although witnesses can't be "scripted", the topic for each witness should be determined ahead of time.

3. **Determine if a video or "still photos" are preferred** – A great looking DVD can be created without being a movie producer! A video can be created by just using still photos with a voiceover. Software is available to create a "Ken Burns" documentary effect. Still images are brought to life by slowly panning and zooming over portions of the pictures, adding dynamic impact to the DVD. Transition effects can be added between pictures as well as subtitles, voiceover and background music.

If a video is the chosen medium, be certain of the sound quality of the recording. Most amateur video cameras pick up too much extra sound. When played over a church's sound system, with everyone listening quietly, bad sound quality is amplified and the impact of the Stewardship DVD will not be as positive as hoped. Do a test recording early to work out any bugs in the sound of the DVD.

4. **Video witnesses** – Prepare video witnesses in advance. While the Holy Spirit speaks through many witnesses, a rehearsed witness may be easier to watch than one who intersperses the message with frequent "uhs" and "you knows". The message also needs to be succinct. Watch interviews done on TV for examples.
5. **Resources** – Solicit help from parishioners who have experience in professional video production or film weddings.

Another wonderful resource is The Diocese of Cleveland Department of Communications Audio & Video Production Department which offers production services to parishes. For information contact 216-696-6525 X3820.



Lessons Learned (Tips and Tricks)

Lessons learned in developing communication tools for the Stewardship message:

- **Appearance counts!** – Use eye-catching, attention-getting, thought-provoking, excitement-generating materials! That sounds like a tall order but the fact is that eye appealing materials



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

make a difference. Remember that a picture is worth a thousand words so don't hesitate to use a lot of clip art and other types of graphics in written communications. Consider using color in the text and graphics, and glossy paper. While these aspects increase the cost, they may make the difference between the materials being read or set aside.

- **Personalize the material** – A different theme and logo each year is one way to make Stewardship material more interesting. These should appear on all documents associated with the Stewardship initiative.
- **Think beyond written material** – Consider other vehicles to use for Stewardship education that helps the message permeate life in a variety of ways. For instance, choose a hymn that can be played at Mass throughout the year that has a Stewardship theme and fits with the theme and logo that was selected. Hymns such as “We Are Called”, “Servant Song”, “God Has Chosen Me” are just a few of many that are popular. It is important that a variety of tools be used beyond the time of the Stewardship commitment process to help it be incorporated truly as a way of life.
- **Remain focused on the *Stewardship Roadmap*** – It is critical to the success of the Stewardship initiative because all of the steps build on one another.
- **Step by Step Tips for Coordinating Educational Material:**
 - Determine specific dates on the *Stewardship Roadmap* (page 3)
 - Review all Stewardship education materials provided in this manual
 - Customize the materials as needed
 - Decide on a theme and logo to personalize your Stewardship initiative
 - Decide on an appropriate method for production and distribution of the *Steward's Prayer and Reflection Journal* (Section 9)
 - Select and plan for use of bulletin inserts (Examples 3.2 – 3.19) and bulletin blurbs (Examples 3.20-3.21)
 - Select places to hang posters provided in plastic sleeve under tab 3 of this Stewardship Manual
 - Select or customize Prayer of the Faithful (Examples 3.22-3.27) and choose dates to have them read
 - Recruit and schedule Lay Witnesses for all weekend Masses and review guidelines with them (pages 8-11)
 - Select a date to share Bishop Lennon's Stewardship message via use of the CD (provided in pocket of the Stewardship Manual) at Sunday Masses or as an insert in the bulletin (Example 3.30)
 - Schedule a speaker for a Leadership Retreat and/or make arrangements for a Leadership Workshop (see pages 11-13)
 - Determine if a Parish Stewardship Newsletter will be created or if a parish newsletter currently in use will be modified to highlight Stewardship activity
 - Determine if a Parish Stewardship DVD will be created
 - Make assignments among team members for the execution of the activity selected above

Specific lessons learned for lay witnessing:



Parish Stewardship Education and Formation

- **Give direction** – Be clear and continually updated on the pastor's expectations and involvement.
- **Be flexible** – For a variety of reasons, many parishioners will never consent to standing before the congregation to tell their story. However, they may be willing to be interviewed or write their witness for inclusion in a parish newsletter or Stewardship promotional materials.
- **Pray!** – Choosing lay witness presenters should always be done through prayer and discernment of parish leaders and not by a blanket invitation to the congregation.

Specific lessons learned for parish newsletters:

- **Frequency** – The newsletter must be published often enough to make an impact on parishioners. It is recommended to publish a newsletter no more than monthly and no less than quarterly.
 - **The use of color** – While color adds cost to the newsletter, it also goes a long way in making an eye-catching product. Choose colors that are vibrant and lend themselves to shading. Be sure the printed type is in a legible color...black is a safe bet.
 - **Photographs** – The more the better! Also, remember that photographs, when not in full color, look better in black and white than other colors.
 - **Keep it unique** – The parish newsletter and parish bulletin are two separate documents. Be attentive to using the two for different purposes.
-

