

Stewardship Commitment Process



Lessons Learned (Tips and Tricks)

Lessons learned in establishing an effective Stewardship Commitment Process:

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



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Examples and Templates

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

Introductory letters from the pastor

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

Commitment cards, automatic offering forms, Take a Step Chart

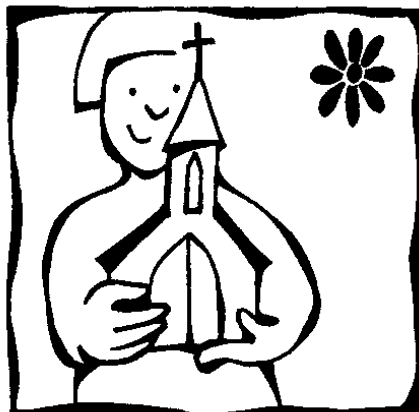
- 5.3. Commitment card – tri-fold sample 1
- 5.4. Commitment card – tri-fold sample 2
- 5.5. Commitment card – 1 page example
- 5.6. Commitment card – youth/teen
- 5.7. Commitment card – children/youth
- 5.8. Automated Offering Plan Form – sample 1
- 5.9. Automated Offering Plan Form – sample 2
- 5.10.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

Thank you's and follow ups

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

Reports

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

Introductory Letter from Pastor for Initial Year of Stewardship

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

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Dear Parishioners:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours in Christ,

Pastor



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Example 5.2.

Introductory Letter from Pastor for Renewal Years of Stewardship

Dear _____ ,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours in Christ,

Pastor

