

*The following text is from the Archdiocese of Mobile Stewardship Manual.  
Prepared in 2012 for the Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama  
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### **The Parish Stewardship Committee**

In order for stewardship of time, talent, and treasure to be understood, practiced, and nurtured in the lives of your parishioners and in the life of the parish itself, it is important to have an active Stewardship Committee. In fact, surveys have found that having a Stewardship Committee is one of the primary factors contributing to the long-term “success” of stewardship in a parish.

### ***Forming a Stewardship Committee***

We suggest your parish form a Stewardship Committee that has the overall responsibility for stewardship awareness, the initial Stewardship Initiative, and stewardship renewal. The Stewardship Committee should be represented on the Pastoral Council to help maintain a spiritual focus on stewardship. The size of the Stewardship Committee will depend on the size of the parish family. A smaller parish or mission may even need to add stewardship responsibilities to an existing committee or council. Stewardship Committee members, much like the Pastoral Council, should be selected to serve for a specific term (preferably three-years), with an option of renewing for a second term. To ensure having new members each year who will bring new ideas, ask your original committee members to commit to one, two, or three years for their first term. Always select both a chairperson and vice-chairperson to ensure the presence of qualified, experienced leadership.

***In recruiting parishioners to serve on the Stewardship Committee, consider the following qualifications or criteria:***

- Spiritually Motivated - It is important that members be people of prayer and be concerned about parishioners’ relationships with God. If their primary concern is raising more money or getting more volunteers for the church, then they would not be appropriate to serve on the Stewardship Committee. Look for people who are Eucharistic, who have a deep relationship with Jesus, who are grateful for that relationship, and who act on that gratitude. These will be the people who spend time in prayer, study Scripture, and are often the people who go to daily Mass.

- **Exemplify and Live Stewardship** - Look for members who already are personally committed to stewardship as a way of life. They may not call it stewardship 10 but they live it. Those committed to stewardship volunteer their time in various parish ministries and community activities. The pastor will certainly know or can find out about people's volunteer activities at the parish and may even know about a person's involvement in the community. Those committed to stewardship will also be committed, steady, and generous givers to the offertory. Again, the pastor will know who these individuals are.
- **Envision How Stewardship Will Deepen the Faith of the Parish** - It is important that all members of the Stewardship Committee have the same general understanding of stewardship before they join the Committee and that this remains so once they are members of the Committee. Some people may view stewardship only as tithing your money; others may see stewardship as recycling paper products; others may see it as volunteering one's time only to church organizations. Developing a working definition of stewardship will help to consolidate the diverse viewpoints of committee members. It is also important that the members develop a vision of where the parish can be five, ten, and fifteen years from now.
- **Have Personal Qualities that Contribute to Success** - Look for people who are accountable (they do what they say they are going to do when they say they are going to do it), persistent, optimistic, organized, patient, creative and willing to share their faith with others.

### ***Responsibilities of a Stewardship Committee***

1. *Sustain the Stewardship Initiative of Time, Talent, and Treasure on an Annual Basis.* These efforts usually run two to three weekends every year. On the first weekend of a two-weekend effort and on each of the first two weekends of a three-weekend effort, the pastor delivers a homily on stewardship and a lay person, or couple give personal testimony on how stewardship affects their life or lives. The last weekend is always Commitment Sunday, when parishioners bring their

commitment cards of time, talent, and treasure to Mass and place them in the basket.

*2. Recruit Individuals and Couples to Share Their Personal Testimonies about Stewardship with Parishioners.* The lay witness testimony is one of the most educational, motivational, and important parts of the Stewardship Initiative. The lay witness talk makes stewardship very real and practical for the people in the pews. Lay witnesses should be individuals from the parish who believe and practice the principles of stewardship in their own lives—those who give a portion of their time, talent, and treasure. Parishes that have been promoting stewardship for several years might want to consider producing a parish video with a focus on people and ministries instead of using lay witnesses.

*3. Prepare an Annual Time and Talent List or Catalogue of Parish Ministries and Organizations—Keep it Current.* A time and talent list or catalogue gives parishioners the opportunity to see what volunteer ministries are available in the parish. Some parishes may have ten volunteer ministries while others may have fifty. Ministries may range from altar servers to youth group counselors to grounds keepers to communication specialists. Some parishes develop pamphlets or 11 catalogues that provide detailed descriptions of each ministry. Others use survey tools such as “Strengths Finder” to help parishioners discern their talents. While the primary emphasis is on current ministries, those that you would like to start (such as a welcoming committee or homeless shelter crew) can be added. Many parishes have a stewardship ministry fair to promote their ministries with parishioners.

*4. Ensure New Volunteers are Contacted and Asked to Become Involved.* It is critical for the Stewardship Committee to work with the appropriate Parish Commissions and other groups to ensure that those who formally commit a portion of their time and talent are invited personally to become involved. This is probably the most challenging task of the Stewardship Committee. It takes planning prior to the two- or three-weekend effort and follow-up after Commitment Sunday to make certain those who volunteer for ministries are signed up and contacted by the Chair of each ministry. If people are not contacted and only have their names entered in a book or computer, they will not be engaged in the ministries that will draw them closer to God and to a life of stewardship. Those who signed up but were not employed may begin to believe stewardship is only about money. Some parishes bring their ministry leaders together for an appreciation event combined with an

opportunity to present the stewardship message and the importance of follow-up. When ministry leaders understand the importance of their position and the follow-up and training of new ministers, they are more likely to respond to the Stewardship Initiative in a positive and timely manner. It is suggested that training sessions for new ministers be scheduled and “on the books” prior to the stewardship commitment weekend. Therefore, ministry leaders must respond in a timely manner.

*5. Evaluate Stewardship Initiative.* All elements of the Stewardship Initiative in the parish need to be evaluated. Review comments, criticisms, and questions received with commitment cards. Evaluate the written materials used throughout the year—letters, brochures, bulletin announcements, newsletter articles, etc.; discuss the verbal presentations—are the homilies and lay witness testimonies getting the stewardship message across? What more could we be doing to disseminate stewardship information to parishioners? What are the results from the stewardship effort? Always look to the spiritual life of the parish when evaluating stewardship. Do these efforts bring people closer to God? What signs of spiritual change are evident in the parish? Establish SMART goals and track results.

*6. Publicize Stewardship Weekly Throughout the Year in Parish Bulletins.* It is very easy to put a few lines about stewardship in the bulletin each week. With little effort, it can be one way to keep the stewardship message in front of parishioners on a regular basis. Reflections can include quotes from Scripture, books, magazines, and newspapers; or ideas that you note while going about the work of stewardship in your parish.

*7. Make Stewardship Literature available in the Parish Booklet Racks.* Include stewardship brochures or pamphlets in the booklet rack to give parishioners the opportunity to learn more about stewardship. You may want to rotate three or four brochures throughout the year. There are several companies that produce good stewardship materials.

*8. Publicize Stewardship Reflections in the Parish Newsletter on a Quarterly Basis.* Stewardship reflections could include profiles of individuals or couples in your parish or other parishes in our Archdiocese who are committed to stewardship; questions and answers on stewardship; thoughts on stewardship; commentaries on stewardship; ministry spotlights, and so forth. You also might consider producing a special newsletter each year that focuses only on stewardship.

9. *Incorporate Stewardship Comments in Sunday Homilies.* The Stewardship Committee might ask the Pastor or Priests celebrating Mass to incorporate stewardship comments in their Sunday homilies once a month. In looking at the three-year cycle of gospel readings, there are many opportunities to convey a stewardship-related message almost every month. In some instances, the whole homily could focus on stewardship. In others, a few sentences could be incorporated into the context of the entire homily.

10. *Encourage Stewardship Through Weekly Intentions for Prayer of the Faithful.* The Committee could develop Intentions with a stewardship message for Prayer of the Faithful throughout the year. Typically, one stewardship intention among all the Prayer of the Faithful would be sufficient.

11. *Develop a Welcoming Program for New Parishioners.* Work with the appropriate Parish Commissions to develop programs for welcoming parishioners, both new and old. A system should be in place to greet visitors, welcome inquiries, and follow-up with newly registered parishioners during the first year. This can be through personal visits or by telephone. Be sure to include information about stewardship in the orientation presentation and/or packet.

12. *Develop a Commissioning Service for Parish Ministry Volunteers.* Work with the Liturgy Commission to develop and plan a Commissioning Service to be held at all Masses on Commissioning Sunday. Be sure to check with all ministry leaders to ensure that the new volunteers have been contacted and formed in their individual ministries. This is best done after the homily as part of the Prayer of the Faithful.

13. *Show Appreciation for All Involved in Parish Volunteer Ministries.* Gratitude is an important element of stewardship. Find ways to say “thank-you” to the people who volunteer in the parish. This could be as simple as an appreciation reception after Mass or as elaborate as a catered dinner.

14. *Develop a Stewardship Education Program to Incorporate in the Faith Formation Program for Children, Youth, and Adults.* Work closely with the Education Commission and Director of Faith Formation to ensure that the stewardship message becomes a part of the faith formation process. In many cases, incorporating stewardship language and terminology into the existing curriculum is all that is needed to promote stewardship among children and youth. The Archdiocese of Louisville (KY) has two stewardship curriculum books—*Good Things Are For Sharing*, for elementary grades, and *From the Heart: Stewardship*

*Education for Middle and High School Age Students.* Preparation for Confirmation should have a stewardship component. Work with your RCIA Director to ensure catechumens and candidates have a good understanding of stewardship. The adults of the parish might appreciate a stewardship presentation by a motivational speaker.

15. *Add Children's Component to Your Parish Stewardship Initiative.* In addition to including stewardship education in the faith formation curriculum, include children in your two or three weekend Stewardship Initiative. Consider forming a sub-committee to address the entire field of children's stewardship.

16. *Provide Opportunities for Discernment of Gifts.* Parishioners should be given opportunities to discover their own spiritual gifts and to use those gifts in service to others. Parish stewardship efforts can include programs and workshops on the discernment of gifts to help parishioners find the ministries best suited for them.

17. *Provide In-Service and Continuing Education for Your Stewardship Committee.* The chairperson of the Stewardship Committee should make sure each member receives current materials sent by the Office of Development and Stewardship. Committees should plan to attend diocesan, regional and national stewardship events and to promote these events with fellow parishioners and parishes.

18. *Develop an Annual Stewardship Plan.* Each committee should develop a detailed yearly plan that includes the organization and preparation for the two or three-weekend effort as well as monthly awareness activities.

19. *Expand Your Focus Beyond the Parish.* Consider spreading the message of stewardship beyond the parish. One way to do that is to encourage "*Catholic Week*" to print stewardship profiles or stewardship questions and answers.

<https://secure.mobilearchdiocese.org/documents/StewardshipManual.pdf>