

Stewardship Lay Witness Speaker Training Manual 2023 Stewardship Is a New Beginning



 stewardship is...
a new beginning

We are each made in the image of God. Stewardship is an invitation to develop our relationship with God, and with each other, through a deepening of our prayer lives, joyfully participating more directly in the life of the Church and generously sharing all of our gifts. Today, we humbly open our hearts and begin to build the life we were made for.

PRAYER
Recognize the gifts given to you each new day, and thank God daily for even the smallest blessings to build a lifestyle of endless prayer.

PARTICIPATION
You have a spiritual gift and it must be nurtured to fulfill Christ's mission, and becomes your joyful participation in the life of the Church.

GENEROSITY
Our humility creates an opening for God to work in our lives. Giving with an open heart and mind, shows that we are obedient to His will in our lives.

"Behold, I make all things new...I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water." Revelation 21:5-6

For more information visit: archstl.org/stewardship

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Formation





Stewardship Is a New Beginning



STEWARDSHIP LAY WITNESS SPEAKER TRAINING MANUAL

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PLANNING YOUR STEWARDSHIP LAY WITNESS TALK

1. Determine When You Are Scheduled to Talk

Ask your pastor or parish stewardship chair the following questions:

- What date are you speaking (usually the week after Stewardship Sunday- 9/24)

- At what Masses are you speaking? _____
- What time during the Mass will you speak (before Mass, after the homily or after Communion?) _____
- How long should you speak? (5-7 minutes is the recommended length) _____

2. Determine What Points Your Parish Needs You to Cover

- **Talks should stress:**
 - Take time to talk and listen to God in prayer every day.
 - We are called to serve God and others by participating in parish ministries and other community service.
 - We are called to advance the mission of the Church through our financial support.
- **Everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God.**
 - We should be grateful for our gifts and generously share all of them (time, talent, and treasure), not just the one or two we choose, especially the one gift that means the most to us.
 - Stewardship is a lifestyle; living a grateful and generous life.
 - Through good stewardship of all our gifts, we help each other get to Heaven!

Your parish may also want you to address any of the following points:

- An invitation to attend the Festival of Ministries.
- Review the Giving Guidelines on the back of the Stewardship Is a New Beginning one-page reflection.
- An explanation of the Covenant Card(s) and the importance of returning them.

3. Draft Your Talk Following the Five Components (Found on Page 10)



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*“Everyone who acknowledges me before others
I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.”*

Matthew 10:32

THOUGHTS ON Stewardship Is a New Beginning

This year the Archdiocese’s stewardship theme is **“Stewardship Is a New Beginning.”**

Stewardship is:

- Recognizing that everything we have and are is a gift from God.
- Being grateful and generous with our gifts.
- Understanding that we are not owners of anything, merely stewards of God’s gifts.

Living a stewardship lifestyle means:

- Placing our complete trust in God.
- Sharing all of our gifts, especially the one that means the most to us.
- Keeping God first in everything and not placing other “gods” before God.
- Living a more God-centered and less self-centered life.
- Expecting nothing in return and recognizing no gift is too small to share.

Prayer – we open our hearts in gratitude so they overflow with generosity
– in prayer we listen for God’s response, this is best done in silence

Participation – we are called to nurture and develop our gifts, not keep them buried
– we accept and embrace our role in God’s plan

Generosity – many Catholics are generous, but are we generous in proportion to all that we
have been given?



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TALKING ABOUT PRAYER

- When we think of giving **time**, we often consider it to be the same as giving talent. We think that we give our time and our talent when we volunteer at the parish. In reality, stewardship starts when we spend time with God, deepening our relationship with Him. By talking about **prayer** instead of time, we make that distinction very clear.
- Prayer is absolutely critical in the life of the individual steward and to the success of transforming the parish culture to a stewardship lifestyle.
- When we pray, we must be careful that our prayers do not become a litany of telling God what we want Him to do. Our prayers must not be an endless list of requests and favors. Rather, our prayers must include praise and gratitude for all that God has given us. We also must ask God what He wants us to do with our gifts and then we must be quiet enough to listen for God's answer.
- St. Paul gives us a simple three-part guideline for our stewardship prayer. *"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."* - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. If we can follow St. Paul's advice, then stewardship will become our natural response.
- By spending some time with God every day:
 - ✠ We feel how deeply God loves us and how abundantly He has blessed us.
 - ✠ We recognize God as the Master of our lives, and thus, we are able to give up our own strong control.
 - ✠ We can see more clearly how God is calling us to live our lives and share our gifts.
 - ✠ We establish the close relationship with Jesus that allows us to put our lives into His hands and to trust Him completely.
 - ✠ We are more able to make the kinds of sacrifices that stewardship calls us to make, because we know that God is in control of our lives.
- What we are asking is for people to have daily conversations with God and develop a personal relationship with Him.
- Stewardship calls us to start with prayer. However, prayer is not the final goal. Prayer is not the end. Our prayer must lead us to action. Prayer must eventually lead us to participation and generosity.

Reflection for Prayer:

"Lord, what do You want me to do with all the gifts You have given me?"



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TALKING ABOUT PARTICIPATION

- When we talk about giving **talent**, sadly, some parishioners may feel that they have no unique or special talent to share with their parish. When we talk about **participation** we are sending out a message that says, ***“All are invited. All are needed.”***
- It is important to remember that our participation in the parish must start with our participation in the Eucharist. If we are not in communion with Our Lord and our parish family, then we may be great volunteers, but we are not really Christian stewards. We may be involved in activities that please us, benefit us or give us fulfillment, but we may not be involved in the most important things. We may not be putting God in the center of all of our busyness.
- When we talk about participation, we should make it very clear that **all** are invited. Research shows that most people will positively respond when they are personally invited to participate in some ministry or parish activity. Although you may be speaking to a large crowd of parishioners, make every attempt to give the feeling that you are extending a personal invitation to each person.
- Stress the benefits of participation. Many active stewards state that they get so much more than they give. The active participation in parish ministry can be a cure for loneliness, self-centeredness, anger or fear. Talk about the ways that participation has made your life better.
- It is important to recognize that everyone has different talents. Mention some of the many parish ministries but be sure to include a variety of different ministries that might appeal to those with different talents. Encourage people to find a ministry that matches their unique gifts and remind them that everyone has a gift to offer – even if it is only a warm, welcoming smile or a steady hand to open a door or pour a cup of coffee. **(No gift is too small or insignificant.)**
- Recognize that everyone is busy. Research has shown that because of busyness, today more people would rather be asked to give money than to give any of their time. Acknowledge that Jesus calls even the busy to serve. If we think we are too busy, we should ask God to help us restore balance in our lives. Maybe we are busy with work that must be done. However, maybe we are busy because of choices we have made.

Reflection for Participation:

“Lord, how would You like me to become more fully involved in the life of your Church.”



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TALKING ABOUT GENEROSITY

- When we talk about **treasure**, we are asking people for their financial support. **Generosity** asks us to dig deeper. It is important to remember that all giving is not necessarily generous. Stewardship calls us to give back to God **just as generously as** God has given to us. *“Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.” - Luke 12:48*
- When we think of generosity we think of going above and beyond, of abundant giving, of unselfishness. The good steward is called to give in an unselfish, abundant or even lavish manner. No matter how much or how little we have, we are all able to be generous if our gift is unselfish or abundant. The Poor Widow (Mark 12:41-44) is probably one of the most generous people we meet in the Gospels.
- Generous giving usually involves some sacrifice – it costs us something. Jesus taught us, *“Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.” - Matthew 10:8*
- Tithing (10%) is the guideline for generosity. However, most Catholics give 1% of their income. The first step in giving is to determine what percent we are giving now. Then ask ourselves if that amount is a fair reflection for all that God gives to us. We can gradually increase our annual percentage of giving to move towards a full tithe.
- Many Catholics are generous, however, the hard truth is that most Catholics are not generous in proportion to what they have been given.
- When we really understand that everything belongs to God, we realize we are not asked to **give** our money to God. We are asked to **return** to Him a share of what He has given to us.
- Never be afraid or embarrassed to ask people to contribute to the work of the Church. You are extending a holy invitation. We all should feel honored that God invites us to play an active role in the mission and ministry of the Church.

Reflection for Generosity

“Lord, how would You like me to be generous with all the gifts You have given me?”



LITURGICAL GUIDELINES FOR STEWARDSHIP LAY WITNESS SPEAKERS

Please note that according to liturgical guidelines, a stewardship lay witness talk can **never** replace the homily from the celebrant or appropriately designated homilist.

The text below from “Redemptionis Sacramentum” a decree from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments spells out the current teaching on the importance of the homily.

Redemptionis Sacramentum

64.] The homily, which is given in the course of the celebration of Holy Mass and is a part of the Liturgy itself, "should ordinarily be given by the Priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating Priest or occasionally, according to circumstances, to a Deacon, but never to a layperson. In particular cases and for a just cause, the homily may even be given by a Bishop or a Priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate."

[65.] It should be borne in mind that any previous norm that may have admitted non-ordained faithful to give the homily during the eucharistic celebration is to be considered abrogated by the norm of canon 767 §1.[145] This practice is reprobated, so that it cannot be permitted to attain the force of custom.

[66.] The prohibition of the admission of laypersons to preach within the Mass applies also to seminarians, students of theological disciplines, and those who have assumed the function of those known as "pastoral assistants"; nor is there to be any exception for any other kind of layperson, or group, or community, or association.



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STEWARDSHIP HOMILY

The priest's stewardship homily plays a critical role in setting the stage for a successful stewardship effort. As the spiritual leader of the people, the priest must remind the parishioners that it is God who calls us to live as stewards. This is done by reflecting on sacred scripture and on the Baptismal promises we all make. As the administrator of the parish, the priest also must remind the people of the important role good stewardship plays in the future of the parish. This is done by reflecting on the history of the parish and the accomplishments of the parishioners – both past and present.

The stewardship homily should contain four elements:

- Reflection on Sacred Scripture, both Old and New Testament. These reflections remind parishioners that stewardship is not some new fad or some idea made up by Church leaders. Stewardship is God's idea and it goes back to the very roots of our faith.
- Reflection on our Catholic heritage, made possible by the sacrifices of previous generations.
- Reflection on the mission of your own Parish. If your parish has a Mission Statement or Vision Statement, it might be appropriate to reflect on how stewardship fits into that.
- Reflection on the charge given to each of us in baptism to return to God, out of gratitude, a generous first portion of our time, talent and treasure, so this mission can continue.

Increasingly, clergy are finding that it is also helpful to include a personal reflection of how stewardship is real in their lives. This can be a memory from childhood, reflecting on the stewardship of parents, an example of the priest's own personal stewardship, or a reflection on the stewardship of friends or family. This kind of personal reflection lets the parishioners see that the priest really does understand the challenges and sacrifices of stewardship.

Additionally, parishioners are further motivated to live as stewards when they realize that their priests also make stewardship sacrifices.



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SELECTING YOUR LAY WITNESS SPEAKERS

Lay witness pulpit talks play a critical role in the success of any stewardship education program. That is why it is important that you think carefully about who your lay witness speakers will be. Here are some tips to guide in your selection.

- Pick new speakers every year. If you keep using the same speakers, the parishioners will begin to believe these are the only stewards in the parish.
- It is not necessary to have the same speaker for every Mass. Sometimes it is helpful to have a different speaker at each Mass. This allows you to select speakers who can address the general demographics for each Mass – for example, a senior citizen at a Mass that older parishioners generally attend or a parent at a Mass that families generally attend.
- While it is tempting to pick a parishioner with public speaking experience – lawyers, teachers, salesmen, and professional communicators are often first choices – be sure that, first and foremost, your speaker really does understand and embrace a stewardship way of life.
- Your stewardship speaker should be someone who is recognizable to the parish community, not a “behind-the-scenes” person. Lectors, choir members, ushers, and parish leaders are good choices.
- A video can be used in place of the “live” lay witness speaker.
- Husband and wife teams can make excellent lay witnesses, especially when they talk of their own struggles to accept one another’s beliefs about stewardship.
- Every four or five years, a pastor’s talk can be used in place of a lay witness. The pastor could witness to all the many things that have been accomplished over the years because of the stewardship of the parishioners and encourage even greater stewardship. In this case the pastor would speak at all Masses, not just the ones where he is celebrant.
- A team approach can be used, where several different parishioners each give a short reflection about what stewardship means to them or how it has made a difference in their lives. In this case, one parishioner would serve as narrator and give the final directions to the congregation about filling out the intention card and attending the Festival of Ministries.



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COMPONENTS OF LAY WITNESS TALK

Research and experience around the country shows that the most effective stewardship programs include public witnessing by people who are already practicing stewardship in their own lives. Such talks are especially powerful when given by lay people. The Pulpit Talk has two purposes: to inspire people to become good stewards and to share “daily life” examples of stewardship. A Pulpit Talk on Stewardship of Time, Talent, and Treasure should include the following five basic elements: *introduction, personalization, scriptural reference, detail, and invitation.*

1. Introduction

Begin your talk by telling people who you are, how long you have been in the parish and maybe a little bit about your other family members. Tell them what your topic will be. You may introduce your topic by:

- Telling how you felt when you were asked to speak on stewardship.
- Giving a definition of stewardship. (Stewardship is recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God, taking time to be grateful for those gifts, and returning a portion of those gifts to God – understanding that what God gave us He expected us to share.)
- Asking a question.
 - Do you give from your “first fruits” or from what is leftover?
 - When God asks you “what have you done with the gifts I have given you?” How would you respond?
 - Do you put other “gods” (money, power, ego) before God?

2. Personalization

People love to hear a story. A story catches attention. A story brings an idea down to earth and makes it real. Thus it is important that the stewardship pulpit talk includes a personal story about how stewardship is real in your life. Your story could be about any of the following:

- When and how you first realized the importance of stewardship.
- How stewardship impacts your daily life at home, at work, or in the parish.
- What joys you have experienced as a result of your stewardship.
- How you have overcome a challenge to your stewardship. (It’s okay to say that sometimes stewardship is difficult!)



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3. Scriptural Reference

Stewardship is **not** some new idea that your parish or the Catholic Church just invented to raise money. Stewardship is a concept that is as old as Sacred Scripture. Throughout the Old and New Testament God has clearly asked us to live as stewards, giving back to him a grateful portion of all the blessings that He has given to us.

It is important that your pulpit talk include a reference to Sacred Scripture in order that parishioners understand that stewardship is not your idea. It is God's request. A list of stewardship-related scripture quotes can be found in the next section of this manual.

4. Detail

It is critical that your talk gives parishioners the details of what your parish wants them to do. If we do not encourage parishioners to take some action, compelling stories and beautiful scripture quotes are wasted. Often the most critical detail is to remind parishioners how important it is for them to complete and return their stewardship commitment card. Page 2 of this manual recommends that you talk with your pastor or stewardship committee to determine what points you should be stressing in the detail part of your talk. Return to page 2 step 2 to determine what details to include in your talk.

5. Invitation

Personally invite your fellow parishioners to commit to a life of stewardship:

- Invite them to reflect on their own blessings and personal gifts and to consider if their giving reflects their blessings.
- Stress that every parishioner has some gift to offer, some role to play in the parish community. Invite them to give that gift...to play the role God has planned for them.
- Invite them to try something new – a new parish ministry or a new level of giving. Remind them that they will never know what can give them joy until they try it.
- Ask them to go home and figure out what percentage of their income they are giving back to God. Remind them that God asks us to give as He has given to us and that throughout sacred scripture 10% has been set up as the guideline of how much we should return to God.
- Invite them to begin the journey to greater stewardship by increasing their giving by even as little as a ½ of a percentage point.
- Invite them to know the joy that comes from sharing their gifts. Invite them to give not until it hurts but until it feels right.
- Invite them to be a part of all the wonderful work that happens in your parish.



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Pastor's Note: The pastor or celebrant may want to be prepared to repeat and reemphasize the detail and invitation part of the talk after thanking the lay witness.

A Stewardship Test

You may want to walk parishioners through this test as part of your reflection on the giving of treasure.

If you want to know how much God asks you to give back to Him in return for all that He has given to you, here's an easy formula.

- Take your pre-tax income.
- Round it to the nearest thousand.
- Then take off the last three zeros. For example, a person making \$40,000 annually would take off the last three zeros and be left with \$40.
- This is the amount you should be giving every week, if you are giving 5% back to God through your parish.
- **What about the other 5% that makes up a full 10% tithe?** The Church recommends that Catholics distribute that amount to whatever charities have meaning for them - including schools, hospitals, social service agencies, missions, religious orders and, of course, the Archdiocesan Annual Catholic Appeal and the Kenrick-Glennon capital campaign. So, in order to be giving a full tithe, a person making \$40,000 a year would strive to give \$40 a week to the parish and \$40 a week to other charities.

If you're not sure the formula works, check the math. 5% of \$40,000 is \$2,000. Divide by 50 weeks. (Easier and quicker than 52 weeks.) You would give \$40 a week.



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SCRIPTURAL TEXTS RELATING TO STEWARDSHIP

On Responsible Stewardship:

The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it. Genesis 2:15

All tithes of the land, whether in grain from the fields or in fruit from the trees, belong to the Lord, as sacred to Him...The tithes of the herd and the flock shall be determined by ceding to the Lord as sacred every tenth animal as they are counted by the herdsman's rod. Leviticus 27:30, 32

Son, give alms in proportion to what you own. If you have great wealth, give alms out of your abundance; if you have but little, distribute even some of that. But do not hesitate to give alms; you will be storing up a goodly treasure for yourself against the day of adversity. Tobit 4:8-9

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow. Proverbs 3:9-10

The just man's sacrifice is most pleasing, nor will it ever be forgotten. 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 he has given to you, generously according to your means. For the Lord is one who always repays, and he will give back to you seven-fold. Sirach 35:6-10

Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruits. Matthew 21:43

He said, "Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more." His master said to him, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy. Matthew 25:20-21

Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. 1 John 3:17-18



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Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:21

He must increase, I must decrease.

John 3:30

On Gratitude:

No one shall appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each of you with as much as he can give, in proportion to the blessings which the Lord, your God, has bestowed on you.

Deuteronomy 16:16-17

But who am I, and who are my people, that we should have the means to contribute so freely? For everything is from you and we only give you what we have received from you. For we stand before you as aliens: we are only your guests, like all our fathers. Our life on earth is like a shadow that does not abide. O Lord, our God, all this wealth that we have brought together to build you a house in honor of your holy name comes from you and is entirely yours.

1 Chronicles 29:14-16

What the Lord has given us to live on is certainly enough for us.

Tobit 5:20

The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it.

Psalms 24:1

Know that the Lord is God, he made us, his we are; his people, the flock that he tends. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name for he is good.

Psalms 100:3-5

How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good he has done for me?

Psalms 116:12

Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?"

Luke 17:17-18

All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:15



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On Prayer:

Take care to keep my Sabbaths, for that it is to be the token between you and me throughout the generations, to show that it is I, the Lord, who make you holy. Exodus 31:13

For six days work may be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath rest, a day for sacred assembly on which you shall do no work. The Sabbath shall belong to the Lord wherever you dwell. Leviticus 23:3

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart you will find me with you. Jeremiah 29:11-14

This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done... Matthew 6:9-10

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. Mark 14:37-38

"...always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:15-18

On Participation:

The word of the Lord came to me thus: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations, I appointed you...To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord. Jeremiah 4-5,7-8

"Why do you stand here idle?...You too go into my vineyard." Matthew 20:6, 7

But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many. Matthew 20:26-28



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Amen, I say to you. Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.
Matthew 25:40

“Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” He said to them in reply, “Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.”
Luke 3:9-11

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do.
John 14:12

Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
John 20:21

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plenty but the laborers are few.”
Matthew 9:37

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does.
James 1:22-25

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
James 2:14-17

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever.
1 Peter 4:10-11

For as in one body we have many parts, and all parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them.”
Romans 12:5-6

“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 12:4-7



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Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? "Here I am," I said; "send me!"

Isiah 6:8

On Generosity:

This is what the Lord then said to Moses: "Tell the Israelites to take up a collection for me. From every man you shall accept the contribution that his heart prompts him to give me."

Exodus 25:1-2

From all the gifts that you receive, and from the best parts, you are to consecrate to the Lord your own full contribution.

Numbers 18:29

Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows in the field you have sown...so that the Levite who has no share in the heritage with you and also the alien, the orphan and the widow who belong to your community, may come and eat their fill so that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake.

Deuteronomy 14:22 & 29

The measure of your own freewill offering shall be in proportion to the blessings the Lord, your God, has bestowed on you...

Deuteronomy 16:10

It is the Lord's blessing that brings wealth and no effort can substitute for it.

Proverbs 10:22

One man is lavish yet grows still richer; another is too sparing, yet is the poorer. He who confers benefits will be amply enriched, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

Proverbs 11:24-25

Let not your hand be open to receive and clenched when it is time to give.

Sirach 4:31

Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.

Matthew 10:8

There is no need for them to go away. Give them some food yourselves.

Matthew 14:6

Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

Luke 12:48

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

Luke 21:1-4



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On Trust:

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, That there may be food in my house and try me in this way, says the Lord of hosts; Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven to pour down blessings upon you without measure? Malachi 3:8-10

So do not worry and say "What are we to eat?" or "What are we to drink?" or "What are we to wear?" All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Matthew 6:31-33

Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith? Mark 4:40

Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you. Luke 6:38

He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Romans 8:32

On Materialism:

No one can serve two masters. He will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Matthew 6:24

What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself? Luke 9:25

Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it...This is the meaning of the parable. The seed is the Word of God...As for the seed that fell among thorns, they are the ones who have heard but as they go along, they are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life and they fail to produce mature fruit. Luke 8:7,11,14

Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions. Luke 12:15

Every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:33

For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it. If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that. Those who want to be rich are falling into temptation and into a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge them



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into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils and some people in their desire for it have strayed from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains.

1 Timothy 6:7-10

On True Treasure:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroy, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

Matthew 6:19-21

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field which a person finds and hides again and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Matthew 13:44

If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

Matthew 19:21

But God said to him, "You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?" Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.

Luke 12:20-21

Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

1 Timothy 6:10

It is better to give to the poor than to store up gold.

Tobit 12:8



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BASIC EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The pulpit speaker should be thoroughly familiar with the three basic components that make up the stewardship mailing: a one-page reflection, a letter from the pastor and a Covenant Card. Each piece is important in its own way. **You should contact your parish office to receive actual copies of the one-page reflection, letter, Covenant Card, and any other materials which your parish will be using this year.**

The One-page Reflection

The 2023 one-page reflection is entitled *“Stewardship Is a New Beginning.”*

Elements of the one-page reflection, that you might want to talk about include:

- Begin each day with a prayer of gratitude.
- Engage more joyfully in the life of the church.
- Generously share all your gifts, including your treasure.

The main point of stewardship is:

- Helping each other strengthen our relationship with God.
- Helping each other get to Heaven!
- Understanding how we use our gifts is our gift back to God.

The Pastor’s Letter

Check with your parish office for a sample of your parish letter. The most important aspect of the letter that you might want to stress in a pulpit talk is that the pastor has personally written to each parishioner and you hope everyone will take the time to read the letter and materials he has sent.

The Covenant Card

The typical Covenant Card gives parishioners an opportunity to renew their covenant by spending more time with God, to sign up for any parish ministries that are of interest and to make a financial pledge. It is good to have a sample of the Covenant Card to show during your talk. Also find out from your parish stewardship committee when and how the Covenant Cards will be collected. These are details that you should mention. Remind parishioners this is an opportunity to “renew your covenant with God.”



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SAMPLE OF PASTOR'S LETTER

<<DATE>>

<<ADDRESSEE>>

<<ADDRESS LINE 1>>

<<ADDRESS LINE 2>>

<<CITY>>, <<STATE>>, <<ZIP>>

Dear <<SALUTATION>>,

“Behold, I make all things new...I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water.” (Rev. 21:5-6)

This year, we have heard the phrase “All Things New” many times as our parishes, schools and ministries are participating in the archdiocesan strategic planning process. Intentional Stewardship is a guiding principle in this process, which centers on our own personal, interior transformation of our hearts.

As we approach this year’s Stewardship Awareness Sunday, let us remember that all good things come from God, and we are sent to do His will. Spend some time in quiet prayer reflecting on how you will renew your stewardship covenant this year. Use the enclosed material to guide your reflection. Together, let us recommit to each of the three key elements of living a God-centered life:

- **We are rooted in prayer.** Everything we have in life is a blessing from God. Consider beginning every day by thanking God for all He has given you – and you may soon find yourself talking with Him all day long!
- **We are committed to participation.** You have a charism, a spiritual gift, which is given to us by the Holy Spirit. Spend time in prayer to discern the gifts the Holy Spirit has given to you - and then, let’s use them in strengthening our community!
- **We are called to generosity.** God never asks anything of us that he has not already given. Jesus was God’s first fruits, the best of humanity, which He gave up for us. We are invited to share all of our gifts, including our money, with those around us.

In the beginning, we were created in God’s image. At the end, we strive to live eternally with God in Heaven. Today, we must humbly open your hearts and live the life we were made for. Stewardship is this new beginning. We were made for more. We were made for God!

Gratefully,

<<PASTOR NAME>>

<<PARISH NAME>>

PS: As you pray, consider the words of the prophet Isaiah: *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?’ ‘Here I am,’ I said, ‘send me!’” (Isaiah 6:8). How will you answer, “Here I am, Lord” this year?*



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STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL LAY WITNESS TALK

1. Pray to the Holy Spirit for help and guidance.
2. Get inspired! Review all the materials in this manual and the Sunday readings for the weekend you are scheduled to speak.
3. Read books on the lives of saints for inspiration.
4. Write your talk. This is not the time to “wing it.”
5. Make it “hearable.” That means little words that are commonly understood. This is not the time to impress with your vocabulary. Rather impress them with your message. (Strive for an 8th grade reading level.)
6. Be sure to include the five components of a stewardship talk.
7. Be yourself! Talk naturally. Use words and phrasing that are really you, not contrived.
8. Have someone you trust review your talk. (PLEASE REVIEW YOUR TALK WITH YOUR PASTOR AND/OR STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE!)
9. Be careful not to list all the parish ministries you belong to – this may scare people. Your purpose is to inspire, not brag about yourself.
10. Prepare your script so that it is easy for you to refer to, while you also make lots of eye contact with your audience:
 - Do **not** staple the pages. Use a paper clip and number each page boldly on the upper right hand corner so you can see that pages are in the right order.
 - Use numbered and bulleted lists rather than long sentences.
 - Consider double-spacing.
 - Use a font size that is easy to see – at least 12 or 14 pt.
 - **Don't** try to make your script bigger by using all caps. This is very hard to read and our eyes are not accustomed to reading all caps.
 - Highlight sections that you are afraid you will forget.
11. Practice until you are able to make lots of eye contact and you don't have to read the script word for word. (Practice in front of a mirror and time yourself or use your phone to record yourself).

BASIC COMPONENTS

1. *What was my life like before my conversion?*
2. *What happened to cause the change (over time or all of a sudden)?*
3. *What is my life like now?*



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12. Include in your talk names of places you worked or went to school. These places of reference become good ice-breakers for people to talk to you after Mass.
13. If possible, practice at the pulpit from which you will be speaking. Make sure you can read your script in that light. Also, check to see if you will need to adjust the microphone.
14. Speak slowly, pausing as necessary and making eye contact.
15. Relax and put your trust in God. You are delivering His message to your friends and parish family. It will be a wonderful and rewarding experience. **YOU WILL BE GREAT!**



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FINAL CHECKLIST

Once you have completed the first draft of your pulpit talk, compare it to this checklist.

Overall

- Did I keep my personal introduction very brief and avoid unnecessary details?
- Did I give a positive definition of stewardship, emphasizing that stewardship means a total giving of ourselves? God owns everything. We are only on earth to share our gifts.
- Did I remind people that the stewardship way of life is deeply rooted in sacred scripture, both the Old and New Testament?
- Did I emphasize the joy and fulfillment that I (and my family) have found in the stewardship way of life?
- Did I ask people to reflect on what's good in their lives? Ask them if God gets any credit for this goodness? Ask them how they show their thankfulness to God for this goodness?
- Did I share a brief story of what stewardship means to me or how stewardship has become a part of my life? Did I include my own struggles along the way?

Prayer

- Did I talk about spending more time with God, so that we can know how God expects us to share our gifts?
- Did I stress that stewardship flows from our loving and grateful relationship with God? If we do not have God at the center of our lives, it is difficult for us to be good stewards.
- Did I emphasize that we must ask God each day what He wants us to do with the gifts He has given us?

Participation

- Did I invite people to become involved in the ministry of the parish?
- Did I encourage people to offer their unique talents?
- Did I stress how much more rewarding the parish experience can be when a person is actively involved in the ministries of the parish?
- Did I give examples of different kinds of parish ministries that need volunteers now?



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Generosity

- Did I stress that a grateful share is the first share? Stewardship means giving the “first fruits,” giving “off the top,” not the “leftovers.”
- Did I encourage people to know what percentage they currently give to God? Did I ask them to think about whether that percentage truly reflects their gratitude to God?
- Did I talk about the need to plan our giving, explaining that stewardship means making a commitment to give a definite percentage on a regular basis, not just once in a while?
- Have I avoided talking about a specific dollar amount for each person to give, realizing that we are all called to give as God has given to us?
- Did I present tithing in a positive way – not as a strict and difficult mandate but as a helpful and fulfilling guideline?
- Did I suggest that the entire family be involved in the decision about the family’s giving?
- Did I avoid talking about parish needs and instead talk about the need that all of us have to give back to God with our time, our talent, and our treasure?

Conclusion

- Did I praise the good stewardship that already exists in the parish?
- Did I strive to create a sense of pride in the parish and a desire to be more deeply involved and invested in this great parish?
- Did I warmly invite others to share the joy that comes to those who give God the first share of their time, talent, and treasure?
- Did I clearly outline what steps the parish is asking parishioners to take at this time?

Presentation

- Have I prepared my talk so that it is easily readable while I am at the pulpit? Have I avoided using ALL CAPITAL LETTERS BECAUSE OUR EYES CANNOT QUICKLY AND EASILY READ THIS WAY? Have I used bullets and highlights to help me move through the talk more easily while maintaining eye contact?
- Have I read my talk out loud several times to make sure it sounds natural and that sentences are not too long?
- Have I kept my talk to a recommended length – not more than 5-7 minutes? Since the average person speaks 200 words or less a minute, this means the talk should be no more than 1,000 – 1,400 words.



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SAMPLE STEWARDSHIP LAY WITNESS TALK

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning. My name is Steve Smith, and I'm here to talk for just a few minutes about stewardship.

You may remember that stewardship is giving some of your time, talent and treasure back to God in appreciation for all that He has given you. I'd like to share my personal experience in trying to be a good steward in our parish.

PERSONALIZATION

I am very thankful to both God and our parish for allowing me the opportunity to participate in different parish ministries. I have worked with many of you in our children's sports program and on our parish picnic committee. When I first came here, I didn't have a clue how I would be able to participate. But, at our first parents' meeting I took a chance and raised my hand and said, "Sure, I'll get involved. What do you want me to do?" Looking back, I'm grateful for the invitation to join and the welcome that my family and I had received.

Wow, did my life change! I began associating names with faces I would see at Mass each week. The parish was no longer a bunch of strangers, but a group of friends, a family. After committee meetings I would find myself energized and eager to attend the next meeting. I can't begin to tell you the joy and happiness I have received as a member actively contributing and working in this parish. My involvement provided me with a sense of belonging. Accomplishments were being made and I was participating.

SCRIPTURE

I also discovered that it was true what Jesus told us in Matthew, Chapter 6, verse 21 – "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." In keeping with God's command to give back the first fruits to Him, my wife and I made a commitment to give a percentage of our income every month to the Church, before we do anything else. This isn't always easy, but it's been very gratifying to know that we are doing the right thing and helping our parish stay strong for future generations. And I can tell you that somehow God has always provided for us and our heart truly is in our parish and that is a joyful thing.



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DETAIL

I don't tell you all of this to brag about what I have done, but rather to encourage you, too, to know the joy and happiness that my family and I have found by giving time, talent, and treasure to our parish. This weekend after all the Masses we are having our Festival of Ministries in our Parish Hall. I encourage you to take a few minutes to stop by and see all that is happening in our parish. Pick up a copy of our parish Time & Talent Catalog. (*Hold up a copy.*) It lists all the parish organizations, and I bet you'll find an organization that needs your talent. And I promise you that you'll see that your gifts of treasure truly help us to do God's work here in Our Town, MO.

In the mail, you should have received a letter from our pastor, a one-page reflection, and a covenant card. (*Hold up a copy of the Covenant Card.*) Please take the time to read what Father has to say, study the one-page reflection and then think about all that happens in our parish. Use the covenant card to let us know what gifts you wish to give to our parish this year. Can you give us a little of your time? Do you have some special talent you could share? Does your financial support truly reflect all the blessings God has given you? Once you have prayed about these questions, please complete and return the covenant card next Sunday. This covenant card is very important to our parish because it will help us plan for our future needs and activities.

INVITATION

I encourage you to get involved. Don't be afraid. Good things will come to you when you share your time, talent, and treasure. Believe it or not - the lawn will still get cut, the homework will still get done, the dishes will still get washed, the bills will still get paid and you will know the deep joy that comes from being a part of God's work here on earth.

In closing, I leave you with this thought on giving thanks to God. "Today is all we have, if we wait for another time or a better time to show our gratitude to God, we will spend our lives waiting. Now is when we must act. Tomorrow we can thank God for the blessings He gives us tomorrow. Today we must thank Him for all that He is giving us now."



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A LAST WORD – You Will Be Terrific!

Your stewardship pulpit talk will be successful if you remember the following:

- Pray.
- Prepare.
- Practice.
- Be yourself. Be natural.

Take encouragement from the words the Lord spoke to Jeremiah when Jeremiah complained that he was not ready to be God's prophet.

*"To whomever I send you, you shall go;
whatever I command you, you shall speak.
Have no fear before them, because I am with you..."*

- Jeremiah 1:7-8

Offer Your Parish the Opportunity to Get Extra Mileage from Your Talk

Please make the text of your talk available should your parish want to publish all or part of the lay witness talk(s) in the bulletin, on the parish website, as a bulletin insert or in a parish newsletter. Excerpts or the full text of the lay witness talk(s) and/or the pastor's stewardship homily could also be mailed in a follow-up letter to parishioners who do not return an intention card.

If you have questions as you prepare your talk, feel free to contact:

Dave Baranowski – 314.792.7215 – davidbaranowski@archstl.org

Please send or email a copy of your completed talk to:

Dave Baranowski
Director of Parish Stewardship & Leadership Formation
20 Archbishop May Drive
St. Louis, MO 63119
Email: davidbaranowski@archstl.org

Thank You!!