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1. Background Information

In order to understand the origins of this manual, it might be helpful to read this brief historical overview.

In 1992, the American Bishops published a pastoral letter entitled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* to encourage people to accept the concept of being "God's steward".

In 2004, Tony Abela, the diocesan business manager for the diocese of Wollongong attended an International Catholic Stewardship Conference in the United States. He was very impressed by what he heard so on his return he talked to officials in his diocese and then to personnel from other dioceses.

Following this, Jim Kelley, from the diocese of Charlotte in North Carolina, gave a presentation on stewardship at the National Catholic Church Administrators Conference in Sydney in 2005. He also visited the dioceses of Maitland-Newcastle, Broken Bay and Wollongong where he spoke to clergy, diocesan and parish personnel.

In 2006, two Stewardship Institutes were held in Sydney and fifteen dioceses from Australia were represented. Bishop Brian Heenan, Fr Bryan Hannifin, Mrs Mary Loch, Mrs Donna Mitchell and Ms Margaret Hallinan participated in one of these Stewardship Institutes. On their return to Rockhampton, the bishop established a Stewardship Task Group for the diocese.

The task group organised for Jim Kelley to visit Rockhampton in June 2007 for a two day workshop on Stewardship. Bishop Heenan then invited Bishop Peter Ingham from the diocese of Wollongong to visit the diocese in March 2008. Bishop Ingham met with the priests to explain stewardship and then offered an information session to interested people in Rockhampton.

Bishop Heenan wrote a Pastoral Letter to the people in the diocese to launch a "Stewardship Year" on Trinity Sunday, 18th May 2008. A copy of this letter and the letter to the priests and pastoral leaders is included in the following section of this manual. Brochures were distributed at all masses to outline the spirituality and focus of Stewardship. The bishop also encouraged people to continue the practice of praying the diocesan Stewardship Prayer each day at midday.

The bishop explained in his letter that a Manual on Stewardship for parishes would be available in August. This manual has been written for Priests, Pastoral Associates, Parish Pastoral Councils and Parishioners in the Diocese of Rockhampton. It is based on a manual prepared by the Diocese of Broken Bay and we are very grateful for their permission to use their ideas and resources.

The manual is **not** a blueprint nor is it prescriptive. It offers resources to help parishes to understand Stewardship and to develop their own vision of a Stewardship Parish and a Parish Pastoral plan that will focus on discipleship and a spirituality of gratitude to a loving God and service to one another.

3. What is Stewardship?

If a person recognises that God is the origin of all life, the giver of everything that they have and are, the source of their freedom and giftedness, then they can respond by thanking God through prayer, by serving God and God's people through ministry and by sharing their resources with those in need.

They behave like "stewards" who understand that all they have – their families, talents, resources, and their very lives – are all gifts given to them by a good and gracious God.

Gratitude is the cornerstone of stewardship. All is gift for those who see life with the eyes of faith. God gives each person their existence and talents, their time and financial resources, their family and friends. Stewards express their gratitude by a life of generosity. Stewards are serious about naming and developing the gifts and talents given to them for the sake of the community. They are inspired by this extract from the first letter of Peter, "**Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.**" (4:10)

Stewards share. What has been given to them is not simply for their own use. Recipients are to become benefactors. They return to the Lord and their needy sisters and brothers a just and sacrificial portion of all that comes their way.

In summary then, stewards do four things:

- receive God's gifts gratefully
- nurture God's gifts responsibly
- share God's gifts lovingly and with justice
- return those gifts to God with an abundant increase

Stewardship is a way of life. For Christians who follow Jesus Christ, stewardship is an expression of discipleship. Responsibility and accountability are part of our call as disciples.

Stewardship is a way of life based upon conversion of heart, mind and values. Why conversion? Because too often people lack the vision and compassion that will make them true followers of Jesus Christ. Stewardship as a way of life based upon conversion of heart is broad in its range and demanding in its claim. Stewardship embraces all of life and challenges Christians to be faithful to their calling.

A theology of stewardship looks to the future. Life on earth is relatively short. One day each person will return to the Lord from whom they came. If they have lived in Christ and in the Spirit, then they will bear fruit, abundant fruit. Stewards yield a rich harvest.

- There are then, four essential elements to stewardship: ***gratitude, responsibility, generosity, and accountability.***
- Gratitude as people acknowledge that all that they have each day - their talents, families and material goods – are gifts from God.
- The gifts given by God are to be used to benefit each family, the Church, the community, and the world.

- Stewardship is giving because people want to give in gratitude for what they have been given, not giving because they feel obligated.
- Stewardship asks everyone to assess their gifts and then to make a conscious decision as to how much and what part of these gifts they will return to God by giving to those in need and our Church.
- Stewardship bonds the spiritual with the physical dimension of life. It is a free commitment in faith to use all God's gifts: the environment and its resources, products of the economy, time and talent, to support the value and dignity of all persons.
- Stewardship can never be reduced to occasional acts of charity or volunteer work. It is a way of life, the response of mature disciples to discover and develop their gifts.
- Stewardship is a life of total accountability and responsibility – acknowledging God as creator and owner of all material goods and resources.
- Stewardship is NOT a program to be 'done' and then forgotten. Stewardship demands a change of heart - a conversion that infuses lives with an attitude of gratitude to God for God's loving kindness and generosity, and with a burning desire to express that gratitude through loving, generous service to others.
- Stewardship is what people do after they say they believe. It is ***faith in action!***
- **Stewardship is what each person is called to do in response to Jesus' invitation, "Come follow me"**
- Stewardship brings peace of mind and balance to the good steward's lifestyle, since he or she is freed from an over-attachment to the things of the world.
- A stewardship lifestyle is counter-cultural to a materialistic, individualistic society. Stewards are called to be caretakers, not owners, of time, talents, and resources.
- Stewardship asks Christians to follow faithfully, share generously and lovingly, live responsibly and possess sensibly.
- Christians recognise Jesus, who gave his life for all, as the ultimate steward. Through the Eucharist, Christians are challenged and strengthened to become more like Jesus each day.
- A steward needs to be a Christian seven days of the week – their actions demonstrate to those around an attitude of hope, faith, charity and welcome.
- Christians are called to share their faith - evangelisation.
- Christians are called to challenge that which seems unjust in society.
- Stewards use the resources of God's gift of the earth wisely.

- Stewards are faithful and generous out of gratitude and love not out of duty.
- Stewardship requires ongoing faith education and formation creating a spiritual way of life that leads to conversion and a deeper relationship with Jesus.
- Stewardship requires intentional, planned and proportionate giving of resources
- Stewardship challenges Christians to give the first fruits of their time, talent and treasure, NOT just what is left over.
- Christians are called to become a community of disciples of Jesus working together and stewarding the life of the parish and our lifestyles.
- Stewardship will translate the Diocesan Vision Statement into reality -

**As a community of believers
we live out the call of Baptism
through personal faith in Jesus
witnessing together
to the Good News of the Kingdom**

Stewardship is not:

- Based on the Church's need to receive, but on each person's need to give in thanksgiving.
- Limited to treasure, but has an equal focus on time and talent.
- A gimmick to raise funds or recruit volunteers.
- Limited to the Church, but also includes the community.

A Stewardship faith community is a caring faith community. Stewardship is responsible management of our God-given resources of time, talent, and treasure. It enhances our relationship with God and one another.

4. The Introduction of Stewardship in a Parish

The introduction of Stewardship in a parish involves a consultative approach by the Diocese. It begins with discussions with the Parish Priest, who then consults the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Committee to ensure that there is an atmosphere of acceptance throughout the parish.

Stewardship must not be viewed as a stand-alone effort or program. Rather, it is a way of life that encompasses making Christ first in a person's life. Stewardship provides the overarching spiritual structure for all that is done as people of God in the Diocese and in a parish.

The following steps outline a sequence that a parish may take to implement Stewardship – they are suggestions only.

Step 1: Discussion – Parish Priest, Pastoral Council and Finance Council

The priest and parish councils discuss Stewardship as an option or approach for the parish. They may invite a Diocesan representative to provide them with information and advice. They may undertake some formation in the theology and spirituality of Stewardship – such as studying the American Bishop's Pastoral letter.

Step 2: Stewardship Team Appointed

If the parish decides to implement Stewardship, they appoint a Stewardship Team usually under the direction of the Parish Pastoral Council to coordinate this initiative.

Step 3: Formation of Stewardship Team

The parish decides who will deliver a presentation to the Parish Stewardship Team to explain what Stewardship entails. The presentation will address two main topics:

A. What is Stewardship?

- Stewardship challenges each person to review how they use time, talent and treasure to benefit themselves and others and to serve the kingdom.
- Being a Christian steward will help each person to discover talents inside each person waiting to be used
- Cultivating a generosity of spirit and an attentiveness to the needs of others
- The potential impact of Stewardship on parish life and the challenge to be a disciple of Jesus in today's world

B. What is the Stewardship Team called to do?

- Responsibilities of the Stewardship Team (see Section 5)
- Questions and Answers

Step 4: The Stewardship Team in Action

In consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council, the Stewardship Team plans how to implement Stewardship as a way of life. They will build on the ministries already in the parish. They will require assistance from a number of volunteers who will undertake a variety of tasks and roles (see Section 6). Some of the tasks may include:

- Parish Education and Formation on Stewardship (see Section 7)
- A Parish Census
- A Parish Report
- A Ministry Booklet for the Parish
- A Parish EXPO
- A Process to discern God-given talents and gifts

A Parish Census

Before embarking on Stewardship, it is important to ensure that parish records are as current as possible so it is recommended that the parish conducts a census unless one has been conducted in the past year.

If it is considered necessary to conduct a census it is important to allow at least three weeks to ensure that all parishioners' details are captured. Once finalised, it will be necessary for the parish database to be updated by the parish secretary or by a volunteer. It is important that all involved are attentive to privacy issues.

A Parish Report

A parish may spend some time to develop a report that highlights their achievements as well as their plans for the future. In some dioceses, parishes are invited to conduct an "assessment" of the parish that considers spirituality indicators, ministry indicators and financial indicators. (Appendices H and I offer some suggestions.)

Ministry Booklet

A significant part of Stewardship involves parishioners being asked to review the ministry activities of the parish and considering in which area(s) they feel they would like to make a contribution of their time and service. To enable them to identify what ministries are available and what volunteering would entail it is necessary to either develop a new Ministry Booklet or update an existing Booklet.

The booklet should include details of the ministry, what commitment is needed to be involved eg hours per week, who is involved and how often they meet etc. A general comment from the leader of each group explaining what he or she sees, as the benefit obtained by contributing, is also helpful.

Parish EXPO

To provide more information on a one on one basis the holding of an EXPO where all ministries are represented provides potential volunteers with the ability to learn first hand what is involved in joining a ministry. The EXPO could be held at each Mass over a weekend to help parishioners to make the important decision of where they will direct some of their time and ability to helping others in the parish and in the community.

It is recommended that as part of the EXPO the parish serves morning and/or afternoon tea and encourage people to stay to learn more about parish ministries and to enjoy the hospitality.

Where a parishioner responds favourably to the Ministry Booklet and/or the EXPO and volunteers for a ministry it is important to ensure that contact is made with the volunteer by the sub-committee or the parish administration within the next week.

A Process to discern God-given gifts of time talent and treasure.

It is vital that parishes develop an effective way to encourage people to use their God-given gifts of time talent and treasure for ministry and the Church's evangelising mission.

Many Christians today are looking for ways their gifts and passions can be expressed in ministry through their other life roles – in their homes, their neighbourhood, at work, in their recreational community, in the wider community – as well as through their local churches.

There are a variety of different resources that can be utilised so that a Stewardship Team can enable parishioners to discern their God-given gifts and talents for ministry within, through and beyond their parish.

'Discovering and Using God's Gifts' Rev Dr Graham Beattie

Step 5: Annual Renewal

Parishes are encouraged to plan and conduct regular annual renewal efforts so that with continual nurturing Stewardship may flourish.

5. Responsibilities of a Stewardship Team

It is suggested that each parish form a Stewardship Team, which will function year-round. Stewardship is 'a way of life' - not a one-time event. The Team will be the focal point for Stewardship within the parish. The team operates as an adjunct of the Parish Pastoral Council, NOT the Parish Finance Council. The members will be responsible for the on-going communication of the message of Stewardship to the parish and the coordination of Stewardship initiatives in the parish.

Each parish team will develop ideas and action plans based on the particular gifts God has placed within each parish community. The team's responsibilities may include but are certainly not limited to the following:

1. Emphasise stewardship on an annual basis

The emphasis on stewardship could happen over two or three weekends every year. On the first (and second) weekend, the Parish Priest would deliver a homily on stewardship and a lay person or couple would give a personal testimony on how stewardship is lived out in their life or lives. The last weekend would always be a Commitment Sunday, where parishioners would bring their commitment cards of time, service, and sharing to Mass and place them in the plate.

2. Recruit people to share their personal stewardship testimonies

The lay witness testimony is probably the most educational, motivational and important part of the stewardship effort. The lay witness talk makes stewardship very real and practical for the people in the pews. The lay witnesses should be individuals from the parish who believe and practice the principles of stewardship in their own lives—those who give of their time and service and share their finances.

It is important to select the right people for the job, as a job not well done could de-rail the efforts of many other people in the process. Those selected need to be reasonably articulate and speak with sincerity about their involvement in the parish, the school and ministry groups etc. Given that this person also needs to discuss:

- Past achievements
- Future challenges

it is possible that they will have some current or past involvement on the Finance Committee or Parish Pastoral Council.

Some parishes promote their Planned Giving programs just before the beginning of a new financial year. It would be beneficial to do this from the perspective of Stewardship with an evident link to people's giving of their time and talent.

It is important for those selected to deliver the same message on the parish finances and the direction the parish is heading. To ensure that this message is consistent it will be important for each presenter to script their talk and then discuss it with the Parish Priest. It is also recommended that some training/rehearsing of the talk take place during the week prior to the presentations.

3. Prepare and keep up to date the parish ministry booklet

A time and service list or booklet gives parishioners an opportunity to become aware of the number and type of volunteer ministries available in the parish. Some parishes may have ten volunteer opportunities; others may have fifty. They may range from altar server to youth worker. Some parishes develop an actual pamphlet or booklet that provides a detailed description of each group or activity. Others may use a simple listing with little details. While the primary emphasis is on current groups or activities, items that a parish would like to start, such as welcoming team or an activity in support of the homeless, can be added.

4. Ensure volunteers are contacted and asked to become involved

It is important that the stewardship team works with the appropriate parish groups to ensure that those who commit of their time and service are personally invited to become involved. This activity of the team is probably its most challenging task. It takes planning before the two or three weekend Stewardship focus and follow-up after commitment Sunday to make sure people who volunteer actually become involved.

If people are not contacted and instead just have their names put in a book or in a computer, then they will not get involved in future stewardship efforts. They will also start to believe that stewardship is only about money.

5. Evaluate the stewardship effort and awareness efforts annually

All elements of the stewardship effort 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 the parish be doing to get stewardship information out to people? What kind of results is the parish getting 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 symptoms of spiritual change are evident in the parish?

6. Publicise weekly stewardship thoughts and reflections in the bulletin

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 people on a regular basis. These reflections can include Scripture quotes; quotes from books, magazines and newspapers; or ideas that people jot down while going about stewardship work in the parish. *Stewardship by the Book* and *Bulletin Bits* are available for download from the net.

Stewardship reflections could also be included. They would include profiles of individuals or couples in the parish who live lives committed to stewardship, questions and answers on stewardship, thoughts on stewardship, commentaries on stewardship, ministry spotlights, etc. The parish may also want to consider producing a special newsletter each year that focuses only on stewardship.

7. Make appropriate stewardship literature available

Including stewardship brochures or pamphlets in the booklet rack provides people the opportunity to read and learn more about stewardship apart from any brochures that may be used for the annual effort. The parish may want to rotate three or four brochures throughout the year.

8. Incorporate comments about stewardship in the Sunday homilies

The team could suggest that the priest(s) incorporate comments about stewardship in the Sunday homilies on a monthly basis. In looking at the three-year cycle of gospel readings, there are 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 can be incorporated into the context of the entire homily.

9. Encourage support through the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass

The team can develop Prayers of the Faithful with a stewardship message that can be prayed at regular intervals throughout the year. Typically one stewardship prayer among all the other Prayers of the Faithful would be sufficient. Examples of such prayers are available in the appendices as a starting point.

10. Develop a welcoming program for new parishioners

Work with the appropriate parish teams to develop programs for welcoming parishioners, whether it is by personal visits, in group meetings, or through the mail. Be sure to include a discussion of and materials about stewardship in the presentation and/or in the material distributed.

11. Commissioning service for those who volunteer

Work with the Liturgy Team 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 Prayers of the Faithful.

12. Develop stewardship education for children, youth and adults

The question of stewardship education for children and young adults is being addressed at Diocesan level and further information will be available in due course.

It is important to work with your RCIA team to ensure the catechumens and candidates have a good understanding of stewardship.

13. Add a children's component to your parish stewardship effort

Include children in your two or three weekend stewardship effort. Consider forming a sub-team to address the entire field of children's stewardship. Providing envelopes to children may be considered. The envelopes can be used to include a portion of their pocket money or a few lines on a piece of paper explaining how they lived that week as a steward. Personal testimony from school children who have taken part in a particular "giving" activity is very powerful.

14. Provide continuing education for your stewardship team

The chairperson of the Stewardship team should make sure each member receives the most current stewardship awareness information provided by the Diocese.

15. Develop an annual plan

Each team should develop a detailed yearly plan that includes the organisation and preparation for the specific two or three weekend effort as well as monthly awareness activities.

“These differences belong to God’s plan, who wills that each receive what he or she needs from others, and that those endowed with particular talents share the benefits with those who need them. These differences encourage and often oblige persons to practice generosity, kindness and sharing of goods.”- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1937

6. Transforming Volunteers into Ministers

Volunteers

There are many tasks that need to be performed such as to folding bulletins, handing out cards/sheets and mailing information to parishioners. A group of volunteers will be critical to ensure that the process runs smoothly without causing too much stress to two or three hardworking individuals.

Parishes have always had systems for finding lay volunteers for various ministries in the Church. Some have worked well; others have not. Traditionally two systems have been used. Does either of these seem familiar?

Recruit! Recruit! Recruit!

In this system church leaders invest a lot of time in *recruiting* people whom they believe are the appropriate people for the job; whether it be a catechism teacher, lector, youth minister, etc. Then they put them to work and forget them. There is little time spent matching the person to the ministry. The volunteer minister is provided minimal orientation and often left with little or no follow-up, support or supervision. This system certainly does not provide encouragement for others to come forward.

Pleading from the Pulpit

This system is characterised by fussing over the need for more volunteers. Sometimes even good old fashion “guilt” is employed as the Parish Priest or lay leader pleads from the pulpit for more involvement – *“Our children won’t have Catechism Classes this year if we don’t get more people to volunteer as teachers!”* Often volunteer sign up sheets will be distributed at Mass on Sunday. Some parishioners in the pews will respond; of those that do some may never receive a call, and disillusioned by offering to help yet not being called, may never volunteer again.

These two approaches, while working to some extent, never result in sustained volunteer ministry growth. The reason for this is that it is usually the same people every year working in lay ministries. These members are over-worked and suffering burnout from lack of support and training. Others are satisfied being passive recipients of ministry, rather than being actively involved in the life of the parish community. In addition, some very gifted volunteers leave the church to serve elsewhere when the church is too poorly organised to respond to the offer of their gifts.

A better approach – motivation through belief!

How do we motivate people to move from “pew-sitters” to “volunteers”?

How do we transform “volunteerism” into “shared ministry”?

A shared ministry system, based upon the principles of Stewardship, is the answer to the above questions. Each person has a unique gift package of interests, motivations, experiences, dreams, needs, skills, strengths and weaknesses and much more. In a shared ministry system parishioners are encouraged to discover their gifts. Stewardship takes the process from “volunteerism”, or **responding to a need**, to “shared ministry”, or **responding to a call** – our baptismal call. This happens as people begin to see their individual talents as a gift from God. Understanding and believing this they are then motivated to act out of a sense of gratitude for the gifts of each day (time) and the talents God has bestowed on them. Sharing their time and skills becomes an expression of their faith; it is their faith in action!

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them ‘Go in peace, keep warm and eat your fill’, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what good is that? So faith by itself, if it has no works is dead.” James 2:14-17

Having properly motivated people through belief, they are now ready to take action. There are some processes that need to be followed to develop parish ministries. They include, and these will be explained in more complete detail in the following pages; planning, designing, recruiting, matching, training, support, evaluating and managing. The needs of the parish must be established with input from the community. This is the first step in planning. Parishioners then must discern their individual gifts. It is important for people to be given the opportunity to reflect upon their gifts before they give consideration to becoming involved in a ministry. They must be invited personally, given the opportunity to share their skills where best suited, and supported with training and encouragement. Stewardship empowers the faith community. In addition to people recognising their own skills as gifts from God, they come to see each other as a gift from God and a gift to the community.

A Process for Developing Lay Ministries

At the centre of the various ministries of the parish are the gifts of the people. If the gifts of the people are to be connected to the challenges and opportunities of the community, the following process developed by Jean Morris Trumbauer in *Sharing the Ministry - A Practical Guide for Transforming Volunteers into Ministers*” may be helpful.

1. Planning

There are several important factors to consider when planning ministries in a parish. These include the size of the parish, and the existing attitudes toward the sharing of time and skill. There may not yet be a sufficient number of motivated parishioners to implement all the ministries the parish would like to see developed. What does the parish community see as the ministry needs of the Church and community? Having the input of parishioners empowers them to take ownership of the ministry.

2. Designing

There are three concepts to keep in mind when designing a ministry – *intentionality, creativity, and diversity*. A parish cannot continue to do what's always been done. They must intentionally plan their response to the needs of the parish. Creativity refers to the need to be open to new ideas in how to plan ministries. Diversity means the parish must draw on the many diverse experiences, interests and talents of the parish community.

3. Recruiting

One method of recruiting presented in this guide is the "Time and Service" opportunities form. Two things are critical to the success of this form. First, the form must provide enough information. This will avoid the comment "*I did not realise that the church even offered that service to our community.*" Secondly, immediately follow up with those who respond. Another method of recruiting, **personal invitation** is a most effective method. Furthermore it can be done anytime, and as frequently as needed, whereas "Time and Service" opportunity forms are distributed usually just once a year.

4. Matching

There are two differences between those who sign a recruitment form and those who receive a personal invitation. The latter is likely a good match for the ministry. The individual signing up will likely require more information in order to ensure a good match. Once this has been established and a commitment made, it is very important that the individual receives acknowledgement through a thank you letter.

5. Training

Training can take place in many different ways. Whatever is used, training gives the person confidence and stresses the importance of the ministry.

6. Supervising

As lay ministers develop in their ministry, there are five commonly asked questions.

- Why am I here?
- Where am I going?
- How am I doing?
- Where can I go when I need help?
- What's in it for me?

The Parish Priest and/or lay leader provides a supervisory role. He or she is the resource person the lay minister looks to for leadership.

7. Supporting

"*No one ever said thanks.*" Gratitude is very important! There are many ways to say thank you. Many parishes hold annual Lay Minister Appreciation social events. Whatever is done, showing gratitude for the sharing of their time and talent is vital. Support also involves encouragement and help along the way.

8. Evaluating

Evaluating does not mean checking up on people. The goal is to help lay ministers assess their own growth and identify additional resources required. It also provides an opportunity to share ideas for ways to improve their ministry. Supervisors can also learn how they can be more helpful.

9. Managing Data

How can a parish know where they are going if they do not know where they have been? Managing data involves the following two processes; the first, is keeping track of what has worked and what has not in the ministry so it can guide the ministry in the future. The second is to have a good system of coordinating the people who have offered to share their time and talent so that no one falls through the cracks. Parish personnel don't want to hear *"I offered to help but no one has ever called me"* or *"I've only been called once!"*

7. Parish Education and Formation on Stewardship

A parish has established an informed and highly motivated Stewardship Team. What's next? How do they bring stewardship into the lives of the entire congregation? The process contained in this section of the guide will assist the team in doing just that.

The goal in this process is to motivate parishioners to embrace stewardship as **a way of life!** What motivates people? What moves a person to take action?

People are commonly motivated to act in order to get something or to avoid something. They take action because they perceive a benefit or pleasure as a result of the action taken, or they want to avoid pain or discomfort. Different emotions move people to take action, including fear, guilt, desire and jealousy. Often people are motivated by the media's image of who they should be and what they should have. This kind of motivation is usually short-lived. Once they have gained pleasure or avoided pain they are no longer motivated.

A source of motivation that is lasting and results in real commitment is belief. When a person believes in something – be it faith, mission, goals etc. – they act not for personal gain, but because their actions support their beliefs. The emotions involved may include, love, caring, respect and gratitude.

8. The Challenge of Change

By implementing the stewardship education process in a parish one can expect that some parishioners will become more actively involved in parish life. This happens as they come to realise the place of God in their lives and the responsibility to share a living active faith, with their families and their communities. They will develop a greater desire to be Christ to one another, to care for each other, and to share their gifts with those in need.

As stewardship grows in the parish, more parishioners will make themselves available to serve others. There might be some resistance, however. People might resist change. It may be helpful to consider why there is resistance to change:

- ❖ A desire not to lose something of value. If a small few have “*always taken care of things*”, they may feel that others cannot do it as well as they did. It helps to understand that God has given **ALL** people individual talents, and that when they share these talents in the community all benefit.
- ❖ Misunderstanding change can be the greatest obstacle to change. Good communication from the beginning of the process will help deal with this problem. Education is extremely important. Education leads to knowledge and understanding, which leads to belief. The key to motivation is belief, but the education component included in the process is critical.
- ❖ Others will resist out of “fear”. They may not be ready to step out of their comfort zones. They may respond by saying, “*But I’ve never done anything like this before*” or “*I don’t feel like I have the necessary skills or knowledge*”. It is important to remember that, they must seek to discover and develop the gifts that God gives to each person – gifts that enable them to fulfil the various vocations to which they are called.
- ❖ Some still may not see the joy of stewardship. Patience, persistence and prayer is needed. Stewardship as a way of life involves a gradual conversion.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.”

Romans 12:2, 6-8

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BIBLIOGRAPHY STEWARDSHIP

The resources listed below can be obtained from The Cathedral Book Store Rockhampton
OR

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Smith, Colleen **“Catholic Stewardship – Sharing God’s Gifts”** Our Sunday Visitor
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“Children’s Stewardship Manual” ICSC

Appendix A:

To Be a Christian Steward: A Summary of the U. S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10)

What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means more. As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.

DISCIPLES AS STEWARDS

Let us begin with being a disciple - a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' disciples and Christian stewards recognize God as the origin of life, giver of freedom, and source of all things. We are grateful for the gifts we have received and are eager to use them to show our love for God and for one another. We look to the life and teaching of Jesus for guidance in living as Christian stewards.

As members of the Church, by virtue of our baptism, Jesus calls all of us to be disciples – no exceptions. This has astonishing implications:

- Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost.
- Christian disciples experience conversion—life-shaping changes of mind and heart—and commit their very selves to the Lord.
- Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. Stewardship has the power to shape and mould our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live.

STEWARDS OF CREATION

The Bible contains a profound message about the stewardship of material creation: God created the world, but entrusts it to human beings. Caring for and cultivating the world involves the following:

- Joyful appreciation for the God-given beauty and wonder of nature;
- Protection and preservation of the environment, which would be the stewardship of ecological concern;
- Respect for human life—shielding life from threat and assault, doing everything that can be done to enhance this gift and make life flourish; and
- Development of this world through noble human effort—physical labour, the trades and professions, the arts and sciences. We call such effort work.

Work is a fulfilling human vocation. The Second Vatican Council points out that, through work, we build up not only our world but the kingdom of God, already present among us. Work is a partnership with God—our share in a divine—human collaboration in creation. It occupies a central place in our lives as Christian stewards. Work is the primary ministry of the Christian Steward. Christ calls each of us to be stewards of our personal vocations, which we receive from God.

STEWARDS OF VOCATION

Jesus calls us, as his disciples, to a new way of life—the Christian way of life—of which stewardship is part.

But Jesus does not call us as nameless people in a faceless crowd. He calls us individually, by name. Each one of us—clergy, religious, lay person; married, single; adult, and child— has a personal vocation. God intends each of us to play a unique role in carrying out the divine plan.

The challenge, then, is to understand our role—our vocation—and to respond generously to this call from God. Christian vocation entails the practice of stewardship.

STEWARDS OF THE CHURCH

Stewards of God's gifts are not passive beneficiaries. We cooperate with God in our own redemption and in the redemption of others.

We are also obliged to be stewards of the Church—collaborators and co-operators in continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church's essential mission. This mission—proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying—is our task. It is the personal responsibility of each one of us as stewards of the Church.

All members of the Church have their own roles to play in carrying out its mission:

- parents, who nurture their children in the light of faith;
- parishioners, who work in concrete ways to make their parishes true communities of faith and vibrant sources of service to the larger community;
- all Catholics, who give generous support—time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances—to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church.

OBSTACLES TO STEWARDSHIP

People who want to live as Christian disciples and Christian stewards face serious obstacles.

In Australia and other nations, a dominant secular culture often contradicts religious convictions about the meaning of life. This culture frequently encourages us to focus on ourselves and our pleasures. At times, we can find it far too easy to ignore spiritual realities and to deny religion a role in shaping human and social values.

As Catholics who have entered into the mainstream of Australian society and experienced its advantages, many of us also have been adversely influenced by this secular culture. We know what it is to struggle against selfishness and greed, and we realise that it is harder for many today to accept the challenge of being a Christian steward.

It is essential, therefore, that we make a special effort to understand the true meaning of stewardship and live accordingly.

A STEWARD'S WAY

The life of a Christian steward models the life of Jesus. It is challenging and even difficult, in many respects, yet intense joy comes to those who take the risk to live as Christian stewards. Women and men who seek to live as stewards learn that "all things work for good for those who love God" (**Rom 8:28**).

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her ministry in a spirit of fidelity and service; she responded generously to the call.

We must ask ourselves: Do we also wish to be disciples of Jesus Christ and Christian stewards of our world and our Church?

Central to our human and Christian vocation, as well as to the unique vocation each one of us receives from God, is that we be good stewards of the gifts we possess, that we develop the gifts we have been given and share them generously in justice and love to help others. God gives us this divine-human workshop, this world and Church of ours.

The spirit shows us the way.

Stewardship is a part of that journey.

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2002). *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response: A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*. Indianapolis: Saint Catherine of Siena Press, pp. 59-62.

Appendix B:

Prayer

Evangelisation through Stewardship

**Heavenly Father,
we thank you for the gifts
you have given us.
You ask us to develop these gifts
and share them with others.**

**Help us also,
to recognise the gifts in others,
so that together,
we may respond to the call of Jesus,
to spread the Good News
in our communities.**

**May your Spirit of Love
guide us on our journey.
Amen.**



Appendix C: Scriptural References

Creation

Psalms 24:1 *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

Giving

Deuteronomy 16:17 *Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.*

Matthew 10:8 *Freely you have received, freely give.*

Matthew 25:35. *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.
I was a stranger and you invited me in.*

Hospitality

Romans 12:13 *Share with God's people who are in need, practice hospitality.*

Stewardship

Matthew 25:14-30 *Parable of the Silver Pieces*

Mark 10:21 *"Go and sell what you have and give to the poor, you will then have treasure in heaven."*

Mark 10:43-44 *"Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all."*

Mark 12:44 *"They gave from their surplus wealth, but she gave from her want, all that she had to live on."*

Mark 13:34 *"He leaves home and leaves his servants in charge, each with his own task."*

Luke 3:11 *"Let the man with two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same."*

John 6:27 *"You should not be working for perishable food but for food that remains unto life eternal."*

John 12:26 *"If anyone would serve me, let him follow me."*

John 15:12-16 *"This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you...it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit."*

John 21:15-17 *"Jesus said, "Tend my sheep...Feed my sheep"*

APPENDIX D: An overview of the process in a parish

One week prior to the official launch: The Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council will present a Parish Report, which will include:

- Recent achievements as a Parish community
- Future challenges as detailed in the Parish Plan
- Financial position over the past 3 years
- Weekly income and planned weekly expenditure
- How can parishioners help

Mail out:

- 1st Stewardship letter and brochure (see Appendix M)

Official Launch

Week 1:

- Formally commence the introduction of Stewardship with the announcement of the Chair/Deputy Chair and members of the Parish Stewardship Team + blessing
- Homily on the topic “The Spirituality of Stewardship” (see Appendix N)
- Advise that the Parish EXPO will be held after Masses next weekend

Week 2:

- Parish Ministry Booklet providing details of all ministries will be distributed after Mass
- Distribute 2nd Stewardship letter + a Gift Reflection form incorporating a listing of the Parish ministries requiring support and seeking involvement (Time & Service Sheet)
- Parish EXPO will be held including light refreshments
- Presentation at each Mass by parishioner(s) who wish to share their life experiences of Stewardship
- Introduction of the Parish Stewardship Prayer

Week 3:

- Return of Gift Reflection form/Time & Service sheet
- Homily will be on the topic of “Sharing God’s Gifts”
- A letter asking parishioners to share their financial resources with the Parish will be available for collection after Mass. Included will be a Sharing Card, which is to be filled out and returned to the parish on Week 4.

Week 4:

- Return of Sharing Cards to be placed on the collection plate

Week 5:

- Generate and mail out thank you and follow up letters
- Results of the introduction of Stewardship advised
- Contribution envelopes collected after Mass
- Thank you from the Parish Priest

Week 6:

- Complete a lessons learnt exercise
- Stewardship Team to continue Stewardship education and carry out regular review of level of income

Appendix E: Task List

Commencement Date	Action	By Whom	By When
	Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meeting held to discuss Stewardship		
	Identify members of the Stewardship Team including Chairman and Deputy Chairman and request their involvement		
	Training for Stewardship Team		
	Identify volunteers who are able to assist in mail outs –		
	Conduct Parish Census (if not already done)		
	Update Parish Data Base after Census (if not already completed)		
	Update or publish Parish Ministries Booklet		
	Recruit Lay Presenters to speak about Stewardship at each mass		
	Prepare a Parish Report		
	Contact all Ministry Leaders to arrange a Parish Ministry EXPO and ensure they are prepared for all booths to be staffed at all Masses		
	Meet with Lay Presenter(s) to discuss content and approach		
	Complete Parish Self Assessment		
	Prepare Parish Bulletin for implementation of Stewardship		
	Meet with Lay Presenter(s), review what they have written, recommend changes (if any), conduct a rehearsal		
	Prepare mailing labels or print envelopes (mail merge) for 1 st mail out (<i>It is important to ensure that each envelope has a return address on it</i>)		
	Arrange catering for EXPO		
	<i>Parish Report presented by Chairman of Parish Pastoral Council or representative and copies distributed at all Masses</i>		
	Insert Stewardship notices in the Bulletin		
	Ensure that the Stewardship Prayers of the Faithful are included with normal Prayers of the Faithful		
	Volunteers prepare first mail-out and envelopes Post all letters		
	<i>Stewardship Launch – Homily “Spirituality of Stewardship”</i>		
	<i>Introduce the Stewardship Team during Mass and ask for God’s blessing on them</i>		
	<i>Complete pulpit announcements</i>		
	<i>Introduce Lay Presenter(s) to speak at all Masses – “What Stewardship Means to Me”</i>		
	<i>Complete pulpit announcements - Everyone to take up the Bulletin and say the Stewardship Prayer at the conclusion of Mass – Encourage everyone to take home a copy</i>		

Commencement Date	Action	By Whom	By When
	Prepare mailing labels or print envelopes (mail merge) for 2 nd mail out (<i>It is important to ensure that each envelope has a return address on it</i>)		
	Review Time and Service sheet and add or delete ministries included		
	Insert Stewardship notices in the Bulletin		
	Print 2 nd letter for mail out (mail merge) & print Time and Service sheet for inclusion with the letter		
	Volunteers fold letters and place them in the envelopes with the Time & Service Sheet included – place them in the back of the Church for collection after Mass. Any not collected will be mailed out		
	Provide priest with pulpit announcements and sample homily		
	Ensure that the Stewardship Prayers of the Faithful are included with normal Prayers of the Faithful		
	<i>Hold EXPO after each Mass</i>		
	<i>Introduce Lay Presenter(s) to speak at all Masses – “What Stewardship Means to Me”</i>		
	<i>Complete pulpit announcements - Everyone to take up the Bulletin and say the Stewardship Prayer at the conclusion of Mass – Encourage everyone to take home a copy</i>		
	Post letters for 2 nd mail out not collected after Mass		
	Prepare mailing labels or print envelopes for 3 rd mail out (<i>It is important to ensure that each envelope has a return address on it</i>)		
	Insert Stewardship notices in the Bulletin		
	Print 3 rd letter for mail out (mail merge) –		
	Volunteers fold letters and place them in the envelopes with the Giving Guidelines and Sharing Card – place them in the back of the Church for collection after Mass. Any not collected will be mailed out		
	Provide Father with pulpit announcements and sample homily for 20/21 March – see Manual		
	Ensure that the Stewardship Prayers of the Faithful are included with normal Prayers of the Faithful		
	<i>Homily – Sharing Gods gifts</i>		
	<i>Complete pulpit announcements - Everyone to take up the Bulletin and say the Stewardship Prayer at the conclusion of Mass – encourage everyone to take home a copy</i>		
	Deliver letters for 3 rd mail out not collected after Mass to the Post Office		
	Update Parish Database as Time and Service sheets and Sharing Cards are received		
	Insert Stewardship Notices in the Bulletin		
	Provide Father with pulpit announcements		
	Ensure that the Stewardship Prayers of the Faithful are included with normal Prayers of the Faithful		
	<i>Complete pulpit announcements - Everyone to take up the Bulletin and say the Stewardship Prayer at the conclusion of Mass – encourage everyone to take home a copy</i>		

Commencement Date	Action	By Whom	By When
	Print mailing labels or print envelopes (mail merge) for thank you letters		
	Print thank you letters for those returning time and service sheets and sharing cards and update database		
	Fold letters and place them in envelopes for posting		
	Ministries advised of volunteers with instructions to make telephone contact within a week		
	Insert Stewardship Notices in the Bulletin		
	Provide Father with pulpit announcements		
	<i>Complete pulpit announcements</i>		
	Insert Stewardship Notices in the Bulletin		
	<i>Everyone to take up the Bulletin and say the Stewardship Prayer at the conclusion of Mass – encourage everyone to take home a copy</i>		
	Print mailing labels or print envelopes (mail merge) for follow up letters for those who have not responded by completing a Time and Service sheet or a Sharing Card		
	Print follow-up letters for those not returning time and service sheets and sharing cards		
	Fold letters and place them in envelopes for posting		
	Insert Stewardship Notices in the Bulletin		
	<i>Everyone to take up the Bulletin and say the Stewardship Prayer at the conclusion of Mass – encourage everyone to take home a copy</i>		

Appendix F: Parish Census

Before embarking on Stewardship as a parish initiative it is important to ensure that parish records are as current as possible. In this regard the conducting of a census is recommended unless it has only been conducted in the past year.

PARISH INFORMATION SHEET

We are seeking updated personal details to give us a profile of our parishioners and to assist us in our pastoral planning. *(All responses optional)*

Surname.

Address

Phone(s) (h)..... (m).....

Email

Christian Names	Title	Religion	Occupation	Marital Status
-----------------	-------	----------	------------	----------------

[1]

[2]

Children at home	Religion	Birth Date	School & Year	Sacraments
...../.../....	B R C E
...../.../....	B R C E
...../.../....	B R C E

Children at home	Religion	Birth Date	Occupation	Sacraments
...../.../....	B R C E
...../.../....	B R C E

Where do you **usually** attend Mass? Please tick appropriate box

6.00 pm Sat Church

6.30 am Sun Church

9.00 am Sun Church

..... Church

Sacraments: Please circle all sacraments received. B – Baptism R – Reconciliation C- Confirmation E – Eucharist

Privacy Note: In accordance with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000, we are committed to protecting your privacy. The information you provide may be used for a variety of purposes including the provision of pastoral services, maintaining and developing Parish records and communication with you on what is happening within the Parish.

Appendix G: Lay Witness talks – suggestions

The purpose of the Lay Witness Talk is to help parishioners to realise that Stewardship is possible on a practical level in their own lives. This message is for everyone, no matter how much they have to give or where they are in their faith journey. The purpose is not to preach but simply to share from actual experience. The speaker(s) should be candid, humble and authentic (from the heart). This three to five minute talk by a fellow parishioner can have more impact than anything else.

The talk should include answers to the following questions:

- When did I first hear about stewardship?
- What was my initial reaction to the concept of stewardship?
- What motivated me to accept stewardship as a way of life?
- What difference has stewardship made in my life?
- How do I see my work as my primary ministry?
- When did I begin to experience the benefits of stewardship as a way of life?
- How does my family give of our time and talent?

Do

- Talk about the personal need of each one of us; the need of the giver to give
- Arouse feelings of gratitude for all God gives us
- Talk about giving God a grateful share of your income
- Point out that a grateful share is the first share
- Emphasise the joy that comes to those who give God the first share of their time, service and income
- Tell how you have experienced this joy yourself
- Say “Many of you know from your own experience that what I have told you is true.” Invite others to share our experience. (This thanks those who are already generous and emphasises the positive.)
- Explain that the Catholic heritage of sacrifice has provided the impressive network of churches, schools, hospitals and other institutions we enjoy today.
- Reflect on the many ways that the mission of the church touches each of us, spiritually, socially and academically through our Parish lives

Don't

- Use bargaining language: I gave this much and God did this for me
- Emphasise Parish needs
- Get too personal or specific
- Talk dollar amounts: “If we all just average \$10 a week” give \$2 more each week”....our fair share.”
- Threaten the consequences of failure to give: “We won't be able to heat/air condition the church”....”We'll have to close the school.”

Talk Outline

The following is intended as a general outline. Please use your own words. The speaker should practice the talk in front of the others and also review it with the Parish Priest.

1. Introduction

“Good morning, my name is-----, Father asked me to share a few words as fellow parishioner about Stewardship.”

2. Reaction to Stewardship

- Share what you like about the Stewardship approach:
- Emphasis on faith/spirituality
- Positive inspiring message
- Better understanding of importance of giving

3. Personal Experience

Share the joy that you experienced when you made sacrifices to be truly generous with time, service and income

3. Invitation to Participate

“God has blessed each of us with different kinds of gifts. When we combine our gifts together, we will benefit individually and collectively as a parish family/community.

Lay Witness Sample Presentations

The following are actual presentations given by lay witnesses. While these presentations are individualised and cannot be used as they are, they serve as models for how lay witness presenters can express their thoughts.

Lay Witness Sample Presentation - 1

Stewardship means different things to different people. Let me share with you what stewardship has come to mean to me. Reflecting back on the time spent growing up, I've realised more and more not only how loving my parents were but also how wise they were. I learned a lot from my parents, but there are four things I learned from their example that have had a particular impact on my life. First was that God loves us. He is good and we can trust Him. Second was that each of us is given certain gifts and talents and one of our responsibilities in life is to discover what those gifts and abilities are, develop them and use them to benefit others. Third was that to whom more is given, more is expected. Fourth was that having a job and spending time with your family is important but not enough. We also need to spend time being with and helping others.

With that kind of learning and my parents' kind of example, I did not have a great deal of difficulty in grasping the concept of stewardship of prayer and service. I didn't call it that, but I did it. From the time I was in high school onward, I made sure I spent time doing things for and with other people, mostly through different types of volunteer work. As I continued to give of my time and service, I realised that I was growing spiritually. God and other people became a more important part of my life.

After graduating from university, I continued to give of my time and service through various church groups and community boards. Yet something was still missing. You see, I gave of my time and service but not my financial resources. I reasoned that I spent so much time in church and community activities that I didn't need to give regularly to the church or other community groups. Sure, I gave some, but it was sporadic and unplanned.

It wasn't until my wife and I completed a course for engaged couples seven years ago that I started to look even more seriously at my relationship with God. We realised that we couldn't hold back on any area of our giving because God wasn't holding back on any area of His giving. We also decided that we wanted God to be the centre of our marriage. That led us to a decision to start giving of our finances in a planned and proportionate way. We started giving two percent of our income to the church and other charities in 1984. Five years later, we are giving at eight percent of our income to the church and other charities.

As we continued to give, we've learned that we are growing more spiritually and that our faith is deepening. By giving as we have, we have tried to place material things and money in their proper perspective. That has caused us to look at what we need versus what we want. For example, when we bought a new home almost two years ago, we bought a somewhat smaller house than we might have if we hadn't been practicing stewardship of our financial resources.

Stewardship has become a way of life for us. It's not always easy, but we try to live it. Presently, I am spending eight hours a week in volunteer work outside of my job and my wife is spending three hours per week in volunteer work. In the area of sharing of our financial resources, 80 percent of our giving is church-related while the other 20 percent goes to community agencies. My wife and I are planning to move to the biblical tithe, 10 percent of our income, next month. Stewardship of time, service and sharing has been and will continue to be an important part of our lives.

Lay Witness Sample Presentation - 2

Stewardship: What is it? How do we do it? Will we like it? Does it hurt? Will it work for us? Why should we do it? These are many of the questions that passed through my mind as we first considered stewardship as an initiative in my parish. We looked at various programs in existence and the more I looked at them the more I became convinced stewardship was something our parish should do. I guess I was really experiencing my own conversion to stewardship as a way of life. I kept seeing that the Church could never flourish and grow if everyone was supporting it like I was, with a contribution each week that I would never miss.

As I look back at my own decision on stewardship over last recent years, I notice that my ideals have changed. There were lots of reasons that I felt we should begin stewardship in our family. God has been very good to us. My husband and I have two healthy, happy children.

We have finally passed through the struggling years in our own business and now had time to think about other things. As I began to think about the church and what it meant to me, I realised that if everyone was making the kind of limited volunteer and financial commitment that I was then the church would not be here for my children. There was no other way it could continue without a higher level of support from me and other parishioners.

Besides, I had great expectations of the Church. It should be well equipped to teach my children all about the wonders of God. It should be able to care for the sick, feed the needy, care for the elderly.

If my expectations were right, then I had to do my part to make them a reality. I was already giving some time to the church and with that time my skills. But there had to be a strong commitment of time and a commitment of sharing my finances if the church was going to be able to do all the things I wanted it to.

Once I decided that perhaps stewardship was something our family needed to think about, I was rather hesitant to bring it up for family discussion. My husband is non-Catholic. Would he feel the same as I do? How would we handle contributions of time and finance to two churches? After we talked about how we felt and agreed that it was something we would try, my husband offered a simple solution. We would give one-fourth of our financial resources and time to his church and three-fourths to my church since our two children were members of our parish. We have never had a problem with this method.

Since we made our decision on stewardship, I think our outlook on lots of things has changed. We have become more supportive of various worthwhile needs and organisations in the community. I think it opened an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

I came to embrace stewardship through the church but I have grown in stewardship to include the entire community. I feel that God expects us to minister to all people. My gift that fulfils my stewardship may be given to anyone who needs it. It is the giving and the support of God's children that is important. The spiritual rewards, the feeling of accomplishment that you are following God's way is the important things that you will reap from stewardship. You will know you are succeeding when the spirituality and feelings of stewardship far surpass the questions of how much you should give.

Lay Witness Sample Presentation - 3

I am here because our parish has meant so much in my life and in the life of my family. I have come to respect and appreciate the faith and parish family that previous generations passed on to us. Through stewardship, we are asked to make that same commitment, so that our faith and parish family will continue to prosper and become the heritage we pass on to future generations.

It is not my intention to provide you with any bad news about what might happen if we don't give more of our time, service and financial resources. I am here to talk about good news. The good news is that each of us present here today has a distinct need to give.

The whole principle behind stewardship is how we use the time, skill and financial resources that we have; the gift that God gives us. We must develop that need to give ---a positive feeling about giving.

Years ago, we would probably have been termed as convenient givers, or givers of leftovers after other needs were dealt with. The amount of time and money would frequently vary based on what was remaining.

After committing to stewardship, we found that things did work out in our lives and that it became a matter of setting our priorities and putting more trust in God, as we relinquish some of material things and some of time. We have been able to identify things that indicate the abounding generosity of the Lord.

I am not trying to tell you that I exemplify the perfect giver. I haven't reached that stage yet. But what we donate weekly represents a gift that we give voluntarily and feel good about doing. And the time that we give represents a gift.

Our objective is to develop an awareness of stewardship and to examine our list of priorities. It is also to reflect on the Lord's generosity, so as to discover the need to return to the Lord the "first fruits" of our labour, not what is left over. I think a good feeling results from giving back to God our first gifts of time, service and financial resources.

We ask that you prayerfully reflect during the next 2 weeks over your commitment of time, skill and financial resources. It should be a commitment that you feel good about, a fair return for the abundance that the Lord provides in our lives.

It is through your sacrifice that the Church can continue its mission and give to coming generations a faith as strong as the one given to us. In short, stewardship is our response to the love and generosity of a kind God.

Appendix H: Sample Parish Report

Recent Achievements

Since settling in the area, we, the Catholic Community of....., have:

- Worshipped here since
- Built our first church/school in the
- Formally established a parish in
- Over the years built and extended churches, schools, halls and presbyteries
- Assisted with the establishment of the surrounding parishes
- Opened our present magnificent church in and worked throughout the years, to build a loving, caring and sharing Christian community for the people of

Future Challenges – Parish Plan

We need to:

- Minister to People & Families – our top priority
- Develop the sacramental life ministries and programs particularly for children
- Teach our children their Faith, both in Catholic and State Schools
- Develop our ministry to youth – our future
- Reach out to, and show our love for the poor, the sick, the troubled, the elderly etc. – within or beyond our parish boundaries
- Prepare for a changing Church – with fewer priests and religious to do things

All this will cost a good deal of money. Much still remains to be done and we cannot rest on our laurels.

Can we meet the challenge?

Yes we can – but we will struggle on our present income. In addition to using the time and service of many good people, we will need the regular and committed financial support of all of our parishioners.

Weekly Collection Income.....

Planned Weekly Expenditure

Appendix I: A Parish Self-Assessment

As with almost any other initiative, an effective Stewardship education program must begin with an objective assessment of the parish. This assessment is important for two reasons:

1. It provides a **benchmark against which future progress can be measured**.
2. It helps in determining exactly what **type** of approach and what intensity is needed. Either the parish self-assessment or the organisation of the parish Stewardship Team can take place first. However, because the self-assessment is fairly easy to complete, it may be useful for the Parish Priest and/or Parish Pastoral Council to complete this assessment before forming the Stewardship Team. The results can then be used to clearly show the need for a parish Stewardship focus and as a tool to “sell” parishioners on the need to volunteer to help the parish Stewardship initiative.
3. This appendix provides a sample Parish Stewardship Self-Assessment that can be modified, as needed, to suit a particular parish. The self-assessment process will require a parish to ask some tough questions, the answers to some of which may be embarrassing. Nevertheless, the questions must be asked if you are to make an informed decision concerning the future direction of your parish Stewardship approach. Some parishes have found it helpful to form a sub-committee of the Parish Pastoral Council to complete the self-assessment.

Some Indications of Parish “Stewardship Temperature”

The following information is intended to provide a parish with enough information about specific Stewardship indicators that may surface during the self-assessment to assist the Parish Priest and Stewardship Team in evaluating the situation in a parish. This information is not intended to be any more than a tool to assist in evaluating parishes.

- Recent **trends in parishioner gifts** of time and service;
- **Number of people** giving 5% or more of gross income to the parish if known
- Percentage of **families using envelopes**, and the trend.
- Trends in the **Charitable Works Fund (CWF) Appeal** (amounts given, participation, etc.);
- Trends in **Envelope Giving** for the parish, both gross and on a family and per envelope basis.

Parish Self-Assessment Template

Parish: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

1. <u>Parish Data (Last 3 Years)</u>	Year	Year	Year
# Registered Families	_____	_____	_____
# Parishioners Registered	_____	_____	_____
# Envelopes Out (Distributed)	_____	_____	_____
Average # Envelopes Received Weekly	_____	_____	_____
Annual Income from 2 nd Collection	_____	_____	_____
Average Total Weekly Mass Attendance	_____	_____	_____

2. Spiritual Indicators

- Describe program(s) for evangelising alienated/non-practicing Catholics. How many parishioners are actively involved?
- Describe your RCIA Program and the level of participation.
- Describe weekday Mass attendance.
- Describe religious education program offerings.

3. Ministry Indicators

- Does the parish have Parish Pastoral Council? When was it formed? How is it organised?
- Does the parish have a Finance Committee? When was it formed? How does it function?
- Does the parish have a Stewardship Team? When was it formed? How does it function?
- Does the parish publish a ministry listing or booklet? Describe. Attach a copy
- Number of parish ministries _____ (or attach list.)

- f. Does the parish have a volunteer recognition event (annual dinner, etc.)? Describe:
- g. Does the Parish council recognise/thank key volunteers when their term of service ends? (Certificate, gifts, etc.) Describe.
- h. Other ministry information

4. Financial Indicators

- a. Last years' regular weekly giving annual totals broken down to show number of donors who give an annual total within a certain range. Use whatever report your software provides that most closely approximates a report similar to that shown below. Attach a copy.

Example Statistical Giving Report

<u>Total Annual Gift Totals</u>		<u># Donors</u>
\$ 0	- \$25	42
26	- 100	36
101	- 200	32
201	- 300	65
301	- 400	28
401	- 500	26
501	- 1000	13
1001	- 2000	11
Etc.		

If available provide the above report for the past three (complete) budget years.

- b. Describe how it is determined which parishioners receive envelopes
- c. Is there an envelope program for children? Describe:

- d. Pick three recent, normal Sundays (not special or Holy Days) and provide the following information from the regular collection.

<u>Week-end Collection Information</u>	<u>Week1</u>	<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Week 3</u>
Envelopes in Collection	_____	_____	_____
Total Amount in Envelopes	_____	_____	_____
Total Amount Loose Collection	_____	_____	_____
Total Amount of Collection	_____	_____	_____
 Total # Of Envelopes Containing <u>Amount</u>	 <u>Week1</u>	 <u>Week 2</u>	 <u>Week3</u>
\$ 1.01 - \$ 3.00	_____	_____	_____
3.01 - 5.00	_____	_____	_____
5.01 - 7.00	_____	_____	_____
7.01 - 10.00	_____	_____	_____
10.01 - 20.00	_____	_____	_____
20.01 - 50.00	_____	_____	_____
More than \$50.00	_____	_____	_____
 Denominations in Loose Collections			
 <u>Total Loose Collection</u>	 <u>Week 1</u>	 <u>Week 2</u>	 <u>Week3</u>
Number of \$ 5.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$10.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$20.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$50.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Number of \$100.00 notes	_____	_____	_____
Total Coin Amount	_____	_____	_____

5. Stewardship-Focused Activities

- a. Does your parish publish financial reports to the entire parish on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis? Describe. Attach a copy of a recent report.
- b. Does your parish tithe? Describe.
- c. Has your parish had a “time and service day” or ministry fair within the past year? When? Describe.
- d. Has your parish held any special Stewardship events or emphasised Stewardship within the past twelve months? Describe
- e. How are new parishioners welcomed?
- f. Has your parish contacted all parishioners personally within the past twelve months to ask if the parish can do anything for them? Describe.
- g. Are volunteers for ministry always contacted and thanked? Describe process.
- h. When was the last homily that focused on time and service?
- i. When was the last homily that focused on sacrificial giving?
- j. Has your parish recently had a lay witness give a presentation on Stewardship at mass? When? Describe.
- k. Do you have a parish newsletter (not the bulletin)? Attach a copy
- l. Provide any other information that might be useful to your assessment.

Appendix J: Bulletin Announcements – First Six Weeks

Week 1

Stewardship – a way of life

Last week you should have received a letter introducing stewardship and a brochure titled “Stewardship: A Disciples Way of Life”.

Today our parish is embarking on a journey of Stewardship. In the next few weeks we will be exploring in detail together the concept of Stewardship. A simple definition of Stewardship is as follows:

Stewardship is a complete lifestyle, a life of total accountability and responsibility acknowledging God as Creator and owner of all. As disciples of Christ, stewards see themselves as caretakers of all God’s gifts. Gratitude for these gifts is expressed in prayer and worship and by eagerly sharing these gifts out of love of God and one another.

Stewardship Team

Together with the Parish Council I am delighted to announce that the following parishioners have accepted roles in the new Stewardship Team:

Chair

Deputy Chair
Team

What does the Stewardship Team do?

The Team will be the focal point for Stewardship within the parish. It is a permanent team that will function all year long. The members will be responsible for the on-going communication of the message of Stewardship to the parish and the school.

Parish EXPO

Next weekend at all Masses we will be conducting a Parish EXPO where all Parish ministries will set-up a stall and provide information and advice to parishioners. We have prepared a Ministry Bulletin (a copy will be available for each family) which provides details of each ministry e.g. what is involved, who to contact and what commitment is required to be involved as a volunteer.

It is important from a Stewardship point of view that everyone in the Parish is aware of the ministries we have and give consideration to becoming involved in one or more where new volunteers are required. We strongly encourage you to spend some time at EXPO and to join in the hospitality to be provided.

Week 2 – Bulletin Announcements

Stewardship News

This week a letter will be available for collection after Mass regarding Stewardship. Should anyone not attend Mass at this Church this weekend the letter will be mailed or delivered through the school.

You will find the material to be quite positive and uplifting. Included with the letter will be the Ministry Bulletin and a Time and Service sheet that lists the various organisations and ministries of the parish requiring additional volunteers. Please indicate those areas where you are currently involved and consider other areas where you may be able to share your gifts with your parish family.

Parish EXPO

Today is EXPO Sunday and you are strongly encouraged to visit the stalls where detailed information will be available. This information will enable you to reflect on your gifts, where you can share them with the parish family and to complete a Time and Service sheet.

Stewardship Prayer

Week 3 – Bulletin Announcements

Stewardship News

Parish EXPO

Thank you to everyone who made the EXPO such a huge success last weekend. The ministries were well represented and the excellent morning and afternoon teas provided by the Stewardship Team were impossible to refuse.

The interest shown by all parishioners was very encouraging and we trust it will help you to determine how you will become more involved in parish life.

Gift Reflection/Time & Service

God blesses us all with skills. Now we are asked to return that blessing by sharing our skills and ourselves with God and our neighbours. Please devote some time this week, if you have not already done so, to gather your family together and consider your gifts and the Stewardship of your time and skill.

Please return your completed Gift Reflection/Time and Service sheets in the offertory collection at Mass next Sunday. If you have not received a Gift Reflection/Time and Service sheet please pick one up from the back of the Church.

Sharing

This week a letter will be available for collection after Mass regarding Stewardship of Sharing. Should anyone not attend Mass at this Church this weekend the letter will be mailed or delivered through the school.

As stewards, each of us is called to share our blessings according to our means. If we trust in God's love for us we will experience the joy of giving from our hearts. May God bless you for your generosity.

Sharing Card

Please plan to drop your Sharing Card into the offertory collection next week. Remember that our Lord cannot be outdone in generosity. "Give and it shall be given to you. For the measure you measure will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

Stewardship Prayer

Week 4 – Bulletin Announcement

Stewardship News

Through Stewardship, we have an opportunity to express our own faith in God in a way more meaningful than words. Through our offerings, we help ourselves as well as our brothers and sisters in the mission of the Church, thus doing the Lord's will.

Gift Reflection/Time & Service and Sharing Cards

It will soon be necessary to contact those parishioners who have not yet returned their time, service and/or sharing cards so please do so by next Sunday if possible.

Envelopes

Please remember to collect your new set of envelopes from the back of the Church, they are in order so should not be too hard to find.

Stewardship Prayer

Week 5 – Bulletin Announcement

Stewardship News

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the introduction of Stewardship to our Parish and thank you to all our parishioners for your thoughtful commitment of time, service and income. Your efforts are helping to build the Kingdom of God in our community. (See Stewardship Results below)

Please keep an eye out in the bulletin for further Stewardship initiatives in the weeks and months ahead. Remember Stewardship is a way of life and we will be living it as a Parish all year round.

Stewardship Results

The following results have been achieved by the Parish:

- Time and Service
 - Numbers involved in ministries: Previously Now
- Income Sharing
 - Number of envelope contributors: Previously Now
 - Value of contributions: Previously Now

Stewardship Corner

Do we ever take the initiative to give of ourselves, or do we always wait to be asked?

Stewardship Prayer

Week 6 – Bulletin Announcement

Stewardship News

The many members of God's family that will benefit from your generosity may never have an opportunity to extend their personal thanks to you. Through your sacrifices, the ministries of our parish will reveal to each of us the goodness of the Lord, for which we are truly grateful. Thank you

Stewardship Prayer

Appendix K: Suggested Bulletin Notices – Two year cycle

The following bulletin inserts may be used throughout the year.

Year One

January

As we begin a new year, let us take time to plan and make stewardship of time and talent a part of our lifestyle and stewardship of our financial resources a part of our budget.

Your first responsibility is to take care of your needs and the needs of your family - not necessarily all their wants. In looking at what we need versus what we want, we end up placing material things and money in their proper perspective.

“Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (II Corinthians 9:7)

All too often, stewardship is presented only with the Church support or the funding of other charities as the goal. This is too limiting. Stewardship also involves time and talent.

“For your heart will always be where your riches are.” (Matthew 6:21)

February

Stewardship involves a willingness to give from the very core of who we are and what we have; from substance rather than abundance.

“None of those who cry out ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Jesus made it clear that being stewards of our time, talent and finances is part of the will of His Father.

Stewardship of our finances asks only a percentage of income. Many people find that when they trust God and return a certain percentage of their income to the Church and other charities, they can live adequately on the rest of their income.

“Always seek to do good to one another and to all.” (II Thessalonians 5:14)

March

“Your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts.” (Matthew 5:16)

Giving of our time, talent and finances mainly involves a change of attitude about giving. It’s important to think in terms of giving in gratitude to God, of considering how blessed we are, of using our gifts and talents for the good of others.

In the area of time and talent, many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to prayer and charitable activities.

In the area of our finances, some Christians choose the biblical norm of giving 10 percent of their income. Some, because of circumstances, give more than that. Others might start at two, three or four percent, and work upwards.

April

Stewardship opens an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

Every one of us is talented in some way. Stewardship encourages us to use any talent we have to benefit an individual, the Church or the community.

“What shall I return to the Lord for all the Lord has given to me?” (Psalms 116:12)

Jesus asks us to demonstrate our love for Him through our generosity to others. In our everyday lives, He calls us to share our gifts of time, talent and finances with others.

“While we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people - but especially to those of the household of the faith.” (Galatians 6:10)

May

Jesus asks us to commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our finances as an outward sign of the love and gratitude we have for Him.

How much time have you spent this week in prayer for others and for the work of the Church?

Have you ever thought about how many of your free hours you spend doing things for yourself versus how many you spend doing things for others?

“Let him with two coats give to him who has none.” (Luke 3:11)

June

Giving of our time, service and finances is not about giving until it hurts. Rather, it is about giving until you feel good about what you have given.

How much you have has nothing to do with generosity to God. If you don't give of your time, talent and finances with what you have, you most likely won't do it if you have more.

“Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones.” (Luke 16:10)

You are just one person but you are important to God and His work. Be faithful as you give of your time, talent and finances.

July

Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and finances allotted to us.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus; and where it has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed.

Stewardship engenders a spirituality that deepens our relationship with Jesus. Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and finances.

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

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

August

Have you ever taken a moment to figure out how much time, on the average, you spend a week volunteering in your church or in your community?

“Do not neglect good deeds and generosity. God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.” (Hebrews 13:16)

Have you ever taken some time to figure out what percentage of your income goes to the church and other charitable causes?

Stewardship is planned giving and does not leave giving to chance. It challenges us to plan. It asks us to appraise - deliberately - what we are doing with our time, our talent and our finances.

September

Christian Stewardship provides a spirituality that you can take home from church, exercise at work and express through personal involvement in the community and church.

Stewardship is not job-oriented or project-minded. It is a way of life for a lifetime.

Christian Stewardship takes a positive view on money. It sees money not only as a medium of exchange but also as a symbol of the person who has it. The way we acquire it, use it, and share it, we are revealed in those actions.

Christian Stewardship trains us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. To give to God should be “from the top” - not what may be left over.

October

“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or be attentive to the one and despise the other.” (Luke 16:13)

Stewardship is an important concept for our spiritual growth as Catholics. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and finances we have received.

Giving of our time involves being with God in prayer and worship and volunteering our time in the church and community activities that help others.

“Wherever your treasure lies, there your heart will be.” (Luke 12:34)

Sharing our talents arises from the fact that God has given each of us the ability and gifts to do certain things well, and we are to develop those talents for the good of others.

November

“Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful to his gifts.”
(I Corinthians 4:1-2)

As we practice stewardship, we find that we grow spiritually and that our faith is deepened.

Stewardship of our time and talent and finances is not limited only to the Church. Many people give time and money to other groups in the community as well.

December

“Be generous, sharing what you have.”
(I Timothy 6:18)

We are all stewards - managers of the many gifts God has bestowed upon us. Our challenge as Christians is to make good use of those gifts.

“Happiness lies more in giving than in receiving.”(Acts 20:35)

In our daily lives, we manage our family and work responsibilities. But to become occupied with these important matters to the exclusion of the need of others outside our home or work, is a mistake we could carry into eternity.

Year Two

January

It is important to measure our generosity not by what we give, but by what we have left.

Stewardship involves a change of heart, embodied not just in a single action, nor even a series of actions, but in one's entire life.

"... none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions." (Luke 14:33)

Stewardship involves the conscientious, firm decision, carried out constantly in action; to conduct one's self as a follower of Jesus, regardless of the cost.

February

As Catholics, we are not to focus only on ourselves but are called by our Baptism to reach out and share our time, talent and finances with our brothers and sisters.

"But let our people, too, learn to devote themselves to good works, to supply urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive." (Titus 3:14)

We don't give because we have a lot and can afford it; we give because of a desire to share what we have with others.

St. Paul is often misquoted as saying "Money is the root of all evil." He said no such thing. Money helps feed the hungry, helps clothe the naked; it helps build homeless shelters, schools and churches.

March

If we give according to God's principles, God will give back to us. The young man, who gave his loaves and fishes, didn't have to go without dinner.

Stewardship reminds us to count our blessings, acknowledge God's gifts to us and express thanks to Him by a proportionate giving of our time, talent and finances.

"God can multiply His favours among you so that you may always have enough of every thing and even a surplus for good works." (II Corinthians 9:8)

The decision to give has not so much to do with calendars and budgets. Rather, the decision to give is really a matter of putting your life with God into perspective.

Stewardship is God's invitation to a way of life. It helps us to overcome our selfishness and love of things.

April

Stewardship of time, talent and finance is chiefly a way to deepen our spiritual life, not a way to increase our giving, although living out stewardship results in both.

"For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for many." (Mark 10:45)

God has taught us that you cannot love without giving. That giving includes giving of our time, talent and finances.

If we give ourselves to God and let Him use our talents to serve others, we will be amazed by the results. Not only will our lives be changed but also will the lives of others.

May

Do we ever take the initiative in giving our time, talent and finances, or do we always wait to be asked?

"In generous spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts." (Sirach 35:7)

Whatever time we have is a gift from God and we are asked to use it wisely, to serve God and others.

Stewardship of time, talent and finances faces certain obstacles: greed, selfishness, irresponsibility and a lack of trust.

All of us are called to be good stewards of our time, but to different causes or activities according to God's specific call. What is God's call to me?

June

"With each contribution, show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy."
(Sirach 35:8)

It is important that we budget our hours as we budget our income so we are able to give our time to be involved in church and community activities.

Stewardship of our finances is based on giving a percentage of our income that is just. If we have little income, we will give little. If we have greater income, we will give more. Whether we are poor or rich, we can each give a percentage of our income to church and other charities.

Why not keep a record for one week of how you spend your time? How much do the church and community organisations get of that time?

July

The heart grateful to God needs to find a way to express that gratitude. Some important ways to do that are through prayer, through service and through giving of one's resources.

It is only the hand that is open to give that is open to receive. God cannot give us what we refuse to take and God cannot give to us when our hands and hearts cling to things.

"For everything is from you, and we only give you what we already have received from you."
(I Chronicles 29:14-16)

If we accept the challenge of putting God first in our time and finances, our attitudes, priorities and spiritual lives will definitely change.

August

Have you given real thought lately to how good God has been to you? Do you give in proportion to what God has given you?

Christ makes it quite clear that he expects us to be different. One of the ways he expects us to be different is by practicing stewardship of our time, talent and finances.

"They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. (II Corinthians 8:3)

"Love one another as I have loved you... I have chosen you to go forth and bear much fruit."
(John 15:12,16)

September

Use what talents you possess: The bush would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.

Those who practice stewardship see themselves as caretakers of God's gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and are eager to share their gifts out of love for God and one another.

Stewardship calls us to share what we have with others generously as members of one Christian community. Stewardship focuses on our dependence on God, which goes against society's focus on independence.

Those who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all that they have and all that they are.

In a life committed to stewardship we are called to "possess lightly". Jesus taught about the dangers of clutching to material possessions, and pointed to the real treasures available to us in life.

October

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (John 20:21)

Giving and sharing are learned responses. It is our responsibility to teach our young people this lesson.

Stewardship is opening our hearts, schedules and hands to others -- being available and willing to listen and give our time and our love. Those we give to can be neighbours, fellow parishioners, as well as those who are hurting.

The meaning of money is attached to its use. God never condemned money, as such, but rather insisted that it be used to further the Kingdom of God.

November

God has given each of us some special abilities. It is important that we use them to help one another, passing on to others the many blessings that God has given us.

"They gave their surplus wealth, but she have from her want, all that she had to live on." (Mark 12:44)

How much of your time, other than an hour on Sunday, do you give back to God for the many blessings that you have received?

Give of your time, talent and finances until your heart knows that you have done something for God.

December

Develop your talents to the fullest so that you can use them to benefit your church and community. Your abilities will grow with use; unused, they may wither away.

"Honour the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your labours." (Proverbs 3:9)

Your church and community offer many opportunities for using your time and talent in God's service.

Stewardship of finances involves trust in God. You have to really believe in God's Providence and trust that, if you give 10% of your income to church and charity for example, He will help you live on the rest.

Appendix L: Additional Bulletin Inserts

- As Catholics we are not to focus on ourselves but are called by our Baptism to reach out and share our time, our service and our income with our brothers and sisters.
- If we give according to God's principles, God will give back to us. The young man, who gave of his loaves and fishes, didn't have to go without dinner.
- The decision to give has not much to do with calendars and budgets. Rather, the decision to give is really a matter of putting your life with God into perspective.
- God has taught us that you cannot live without giving. That giving includes giving of our time, our service and our income.
- Do we ever take the initiative to give of ourselves, or do we always wait to be asked?
- Whatever time we have is a gift from God and we are asked to use it wisely, to serve God and others.
- All of us are called to be good stewards of our time, but to different causes, activities and vocations according to God's specific Call. What is God's call to you?
- The Heart, grateful to God, needs to find a way to express that gratitude. Some important ways to express that are through prayer, through service and through giving of one's resources.
- Open your door to those who might ordinarily avoid. Invite blessings into your life by giving blessings of your own.
- Those who practice stewardship recognise God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and all they are.
- God has given each of us special abilities. It is important that we use them to help one another, passing on others the many blessings that God has given us.
- The faithful steward makes an offering as act of love to God for his blessings. Giving becomes an act of worship, a faith stance, a spiritual way of life. Therefore, the motivation for giving is a spiritual one. A stewardship commitment is neither expressed in a single action or even in a number of actions but in an entire way of life. Stewardship means committing one's self to the Lord.
- What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ? Just look to the first two commandments: Love God and love your neighbour. The words are simple and task is clear. We give to our neighbour, the blessings we have received from God in appreciation for our bountiful gifts.

Bulletin Inserts on Hospitality and welcome

3 simple steps to Hospitality and Welcome

1. **SMILE:** A smile sets the tone. It has a positive effect on your attitude and it has a positive effect on other people's attitude, too!
2. **ACKNOWLEDGE** – a friendly 'hello' says 'you are important' 'I know you are here and I will help you.' Use a person's name!!! It creates a personal connection
3. **SERVE** – even as Christ loves and serves.

Hospitality & Welcome Resolution

1. **Be committed!** Be aware of your commitment to Hospitality & Welcome. Monitor yourself. Hear what you say.
2. **Be Consistent!** Work on developing good service habits. Today, pick one 'less than excellent' thing you are doing and stop doing it – pick one excellent trait to practice and start doing it
3. **Be Tenacious!** Love the unlovable. Listen actively, look for a win-win solution
4. **Be Patient!** A commitment to excellence is a process! Be patient with yourself as the good habits you practice become ignited.
5. **Remember to serve and to be Kind!** KINDNESS is the secret to EXCELLENCE.

Points to Consider

1. Every interaction we have with a parishioner, or guest or stranger is an interaction with the Church. How are we representing the Church
2. Service is nothing more than a reflection of the esteem in which we hold others.
3. The challenge to be extraordinarily kind brings out the best in everybody.
4. The real test of an organisation is the actual experience of the 'customer'. What is important to your parishioners? What level of esteem is being reflected in the service you give to your parishioners? What level of esteem is being reflected in the service you give each other?
5. The **MOMENT OF TRUTH** is the moment there is any interaction a parishioner has with our Church. What message are we giving to our guests and parishioners during these moments of truth?

Appendix M: Sample Letters to Parishioners

Week 1 – Sample Introduction Letter

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner
Street
Town Qld 4000

Dear Fred and Betty,

I am very pleased to send you the enclosed brochure entitled, **Stewardship: A Disciple's Way of Life**. Please take a few minutes to read it.

Spiritual growth and renewal are a continuing part of the life of any Christian. They are also basic parts of our parish life.

An important part of this spiritual growth is embodied in the principle of stewardship. Through stewardship, we thank God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, service and the financial resources He has given to us.

During the next few weeks, you will be hearing more about stewardship and what it means in terms of your personal spiritual lives. You will be asked to reflect on the three areas of stewardship and how they are lived out in your life. Among the important questions are:

Time. How much time do you set aside each week in prayer and involvement in volunteer activities in your parish and in our community?

Service. How you are using your talents for the betterment of our parish family and for the community as a whole?

Sharing. What percentage of your yearly income do you presently give to support your church and community activities?

During the next several weeks, I suggest that you and members of your family spend time in prayerful thought about stewardship and your relationship with the Lord.

Yours in Christ,

Father

Week 2 – Sample Letter – Gift Reflection/Time and Service Sheets

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner
Street
Town Qld 4000

Dear Fred and Betty,

**“Such as My love has been for you...
so must your love be for each other.”**

In a letter and brochure you received last week, I asked you to reflect on the many blessings you have received and consider this as a time for personal renewal in your relationship with the Lord. I asked you to think about stewardship of time, service and sharing - and how you and/or your family might make a new commitment to giving:-

Your Time - For many of us, time is our most precious commodity. The demands of work, school, community, parish and family are overwhelming at times. Occasionally, when we feel out of control, we must get off the merry-go-round and rethink what life is all about. We must seek to balance our time against what we know we must do. I would hope that you consider re-examining your priorities to give more of your time to our parish and the larger community.

Your Service - Every one of us is talented in some way. It may be in music, art, writing, organising, planning, driving a car, supervising a program, even making other people laugh. Our parish provides each and every one of you with an opportunity to use any talent you have. I hope you will consider committing a greater share of your talents to our parish and community.

Your Sharing - Your financial support is a major reason why we are able to continue to provide our religious, education and social ministries. The primary source of our parish's financial support is the weekly offertory collection. Stewardship of sharing involves committing a regular portion of our income to our church and our community. It is important that a portion of this go to our parish. I hope you will consider committing a percentage of your annual income to our parish and making your contribution on a regular basis.

This weekend at all Masses you will hear from me and from (name/names of lay witnesses) who will talk about their personal experiences with stewardship.

Accompanying this letter is the Ministry Bulletin and the Gift Reflection Guide and the Time and Service Sheet. Once you have visited EXPO, reviewed the Bulletin and completed the Gift Reflection Guide I would be grateful if you could prayerfully consider how you and your family could make a difference in our parish and complete the Time and Service Sheet and place it in the plate next weekend.

In the name of Christ,

Father

Week 3 – Sample Sharing Letter

Mr and Mrs Tom Parishioner
Street
Town Qld 4000

Dear Mr and Mrs Parishioner,

We thank you for reviewing the instructional materials you have received on Stewardship and urge you to participate with our whole parish in this initiative.

Once a year we will dedicate special time to celebrate together the gifts that God has given each of us as individuals, families and collectively as a parish family. Together, we can give special thanks to God for all our blessings and experience the joy of generosity in our own lives. In recognising God's call to share our gifts, we are each asked to restate our intentions to give of our time, service and income to Him and His people of this parish.

Accompanying this letter is Giving Guideline and a Sharing Card. Please remember that the amount you complete on the Sharing Card is not a binding commitment should your circumstances or considerations change. Trusting God in the area of our financial resources seems the hardest thing to do. How much you give each week or month isn't as important as giving in proportion to what you receive.

Please review the Suggested Giving Guidelines, and then decide what is right for you in good conscience. Please enclose your Sharing Card in the envelope and drop it in the collection onSunday, If you are away, you can bring it the following week or mail it to the parish office.

Thank you for your generosity I know that you will be rewarded.

If you have not already returned your prayer and service sheet, you may enclose it in the envelope provided along with your Sharing Card.

Yours in Christ,

Father

Income Sharing Guidelines

How to move gradually toward stewardship – giving that is planned, proportionate and thankful

1. Find your household income at the left of the chart below. Move across on the same line to find the amount you currently give weekly in the parish Sunday envelope. Move straight up the chart to find out what percentage of your income your current gift to your parish represents.
2. Please consider pledging at the next level (to the right). For example, if you are presently giving 2% to the parish, consider pledging 2.5% or even 3% now. **If you were to give the first hour of your income weekly to the work of the parish it would amount to around 2.5% of your income.**
3. Consider setting your eventual goal at 10% (5% to the parish and 5% to other charities). It may take a few years to get there, but it can be done by taking just one step at a time.

Weekly Giving to Parish Envelopes




Household Income						Weekly	to	the	Parish*				
Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	1%	1.5%	2%	2.5%	3%	3.5%	4%	4.5%	5%	
2.90	115	500	6,000	1.25	1.75	2.25	3.00	3.50	4.00	4.50	5.25	5.75	
4.25	170	735	8,840	1.75	2.50	3.50	4.25	5.00	6.00	6.75	7.75	8.50	
4.90	192	850	10,190	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00	
7.20	290	1,250	15,000	3.00	4.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	
9.60	385	1,665	20,000	4.00	6.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	15.00	17.00	19.00	
12.00	480	2,085	25,000	5.00	7.00	10.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	19.00	22.00	24.00	
14.50	575	2,500	30,000	6.00	9.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	20.00	23.00	26.00	29.00	
16.75	675	2,915	35,000	7.00	10.00	13.00	17.00	20.00	24.00	27.00	30.00	34.00	
19.25	770	3,335	40,000	8.00	12.00	15.00	19.00	23.00	27.00	31.00	35.00	38.00	
24.00	960	4,165	50,000	10.00	14.00	19.00	24.00	29.00	34.00	38.00	43.00	48.00	
29.00	1,155	5,000	60,000	12.00	17.00	23.00	29.00	35.00	40.00	46.00	52.00	58.00	
33.50	1,345	5,835	70,000	13.00	20.00	27.00	34.00	40.00	47.00	54.00	61.00	67.00	
38.50	1,540	6,665	80,000	15.00	23.00	31.00	38.00	46.00	54.00	62.00	69.00	77.00	
43.50	1,730	7,500	90,000	17.00	26.00	35.00	43.00	52.00	61.00	69.00	78.00	87.00	
48.00	1,925	8,335	100,000	19.00	29.00	38.00	48.00	58.00	67.00	77.00	87.00	96.00	
96.00	3,846	16,666	200,000	38.00	58.00	77.00	96.00	115.00	135.00	154.00	173.00	192.00	

**You are asked to give an equal percentage to other charities (for example if you are giving 2% to the parish, give an additional 2% to other charities for 4% total giving). Other charities might include the Charitable Works Fund and the Project Compassion appeal.*

Please complete and return the enclosed Sharing Card

Sharing Card

Please tick one:

Expiry Date..../.....

Please debit my Bankcard/MasterCard/Visa Card Account

On the.....day of each month/quarter for

A term ofyears expiring on.....with the

Sum of \$.....I understand that this authority may be cancelled in writing at my option.

Sharing God's Gifts

Signature:.....Date:.....

Name:..... Address:..... 	Present Envelope Number 			
My old pledge was: \$ Weekly	Or \$ Each			
My new pledge will be: \$ Weekly	Or \$ Each			
Thus my pledge is: (Please Tick)	<input type="checkbox"/> An Increase	<input type="checkbox"/> The Same	<input type="checkbox"/> A Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> A 'New' Pledge
Signature:.....Date:.....				
<i>Sharing God's Gifts</i>				

Sample of Stewardship Letter - 1

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner
Street
Town QLD 400

Dear Fred and Betty,

Thank you for generously responding to the introduction of Stewardship in our parish. Through your thoughtful commitment of time, service or income sharing, you are helping to build the Kingdom of God in our community.

Living our faith is a great challenge in today's world. As Christian stewards of God's many gifts to us, we are called to share those gifts with others. Through your generosity, you have heard that call.

Thank you for your planned contribution of \$ per week or \$ per year. Your strong financial commitment to our parish is of great assistance in planning responsibly for the future.

Your investment in our faith community will pay lasting dividends in the hearts of those our parish serves and you will be rewarded many times over for your generosity.

It takes many hands to build the Kingdom of God. Thank you for joining in this vital work. May God bless you (and your family) for your generosity.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father

Sample of Stewardship Letter - 2

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner
Street
Town QLD 400

Dear Fred and Betty,

I want to thank you for your generous response to Stewardship. More than (number) households responded with by returning their Gift Reflection/Time and Service sheets. This is an excellent response.

It has been encouraging to see the number of people who responded to our Time and Service opportunities. I hope you are contacted soon and invited to share your gifts. If you are not contacted, please let me know!

You have responded that you will contribute \$ for the year. This indicates your strong financial commitment to our parish, and it helps our Finance Committee and me put together a responsible budget for our parish needs. I know I can count on you to do your best to live up to your financial commitment.

Again, thank you for your response to our Stewardship process. I hope it has brought you great joy to give thanks for what you have been given by sharing with others.

Sincerely in Christ

Father

Follow-up Letter – Gift Reflection/Time & Service/Sharing Cards not Returned

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner
Street
Town QLD 400

Dear Fred and Betty,

Recently I witnessed and shared the joy of all the members of our parish family who committed themselves to returning to God, in gratitude, a first portion of the gifts God will bestow on them during the next year. Sacrifices like these have made possible all the work of our parish over the years.

I am writing to those who did not return their Gift Reflection/Time & Service sheets and/or their income sharing cards, because this process allows us to plan in advance our parish ministries for the year ahead.

More importantly, I sincerely believe this commitment serves as a vehicle of faith through which we can more fully appreciate our daily life. I want you to share the joy and peace of those who intend to be stewards of God's many blessings.

Please take a few minutes to re-examine the brochures we provided and then indicate your decision about Stewardship on the Gift Reflection/Time & Service sheet and the income-sharing card. You can return them to the parish office, or place them in the offertory collection at Mass this weekend. If you need replacement copies of the sheet/card or brochures, or if there is anything I can do to make your participation possible, please call or write to the parish office.

Please join with all of us who have decided to return to our Lord the first fruits of His generous blessings. It can change your life.

Sincerely and Gratefully in Christ Jesus,

Father

Follow-up Letter Where New Commitment Not Made but is Existing Contributor

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner
Street
Town QLD 400

Dear Fred and Betty,

Recently I witnessed and shared the joy of all the members of our parish family who re-committed themselves to returning to God, in gratitude, a first portion of the gifts He will bestow on them during the next year. As you are no doubt aware sacrifices like these have made possible all the work of our parish over the years.

I am writing to those who did not return their Gift Reflection/Time & Service Sheets and/or their Income Sharing Cards, because this process allows us to better plan our parish ministries for the year ahead.

While you have demonstrated that you live your life as a generous steward of God's many gifts by your support of the parish, we would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to re-examine the brochures we provided and then indicate your decision about Stewardship on the Gift Reflection/Time & Service sheet and the Income Sharing Card. You can return them to the parish office, or place them in the offertory collection at Mass this weekend.

Should you prefer to maintain your existing commitments to the parish ministries and/or planned giving (your existing pledge is \$ per week or \$ per year) without completing the abovementioned forms you need take no further action as we will note parish records accordingly. However, if you wish to make a change, simply telephone the parish office for assistance.

Sincerely and Gratefully in Christ Jesus,

Father

Appendix N: Ideas for homilies

The Spirituality of Stewardship

Did you ever have a thirst, which no matter what you tried, you couldn't seem to satisfy? This "thirst for satisfaction" is a very basic element of our human nature. It is carried over into many parts of our lives. We find ourselves often wanting or wishing things to be new and different. Our cars, homes, jobs, relationships, finances – even when on the surface seem to be quite satisfactory, and we thirst for more. It is an attitude ingrained in us by our culture.

The story of the young, rich man in the Gospel is the story of most of us. We are good people, we work hard and we are honest. Compared with much of the rest of the world, we could also be called wealthy in terms of material possessions. And yet, with all we have, many times we still seem to be unsatisfied.....still thirsty. At some point this may lead us to ask, what really is it that is missing in my life? Despite all of his riches, the young man in the Gospel asked a similar question.

“Good Teacher, what must I do to share in everlasting life”? Having followed the commandments, Jesus looked into his heart and gave him the answer he asked for, but did not what to hear, “Go and sell what you have and give it to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. After that, come and follow me. At that, the young man's face fell and he went away sad.” He couldn't do it. After all, these were his possessions.....he earned them....he had a right to them. He could believe in God up to a point, but he could not give up control of what he owned. Sadly, by that choice, he would never quench his thirst for satisfaction.

Most of us experience that same intense pride of ownership. Not just in relationship to material possessions but also to our talents and accomplishments. We like being able to call things *our own* and we tend to protect these “belongings” of ours.

Stewardship means to take care of or to manage. To be a steward assumes that we are not the true owners of the possessions...merely the caretakers. Christ isn't asking each of us to literally sell all that we have. But He is asking us to recognise that all we have – every possession, skill relationship and circumstance – is only by the grace of God. Each day that we awaken is really a gift in itself. When we accept this perspective, we experience a tremendous freedom and peace.

The problem discussed in today's Gospel is that the more possessions we have....the more self-pride or self reliance we experience and the harder it is to recognise God as the gracious provider of what we have. That is why the young man went away sad. That is why Christ tells us in the Gospel “it is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.” And that is why some of us continue to be thirsty – lacking in true satisfaction. Understand that it isn't the possessions themselves that are bad. It is our attitude towards them that can get in our way.

What is it that you might be possessing too tightly in your life? It could be something material or something else, like an excessive hobby. Think about it. Is there something that you would be afraid you couldn't live without? Could you let go if God asked you to in order to follow him more closely? To do so requires you to stretch your faith – to place your trust in God, as a child trusts his father or mother. What God wants is to show us how much He loves us and will care for us, *if we let him*. By our free will, He leaves the choice to us. If we *choose* to cling too tightly to our possessions, like the young rich man, we too will go away sad.

Stewardship calls us to evaluate our possessions on three levels – time, service and finances. Some people give generously in a financial sense, but guard their time very precious as their own. Others share their time and service but hold back financially because they worry about their own needs. As we study Stewardship over the next few weeks, we will learn to appreciate how our time, service and incomes are gifts from God and we will look at ways to put them to use as his grateful Stewards. Those who choose to respond will experience the true joy of giving, and the only thing that will satisfy their thirst for lasting satisfaction – God Abiding lover

Suggestion 2 - Homily

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

This passage is one of many in Scripture which helps us understand and become aware of what the concept of stewardship is all about, and how, by discovering its true meaning, we will undergo a personal transformation.

Contrary to what many people feel or assume, stewardship is not a hidden term for fund-raising. It is a powerful concept that will change our faith life and the faith life of our parish. For stewardship is a way of life. It is based on the biblical view of God as Creator and us as His servants. We are accountable to Him for the use of our gifts of time, service and income that He gives us during our life on earth.

Stewardship means that we are not owners of all that we have on earth but we are only stewards.

Stewardship provides us with the foundation for a deepened faith, for all of us, and our parish.

Stewardship begins with an awakening of the need that we have that no one can dispute, because it is universal and ever-present. It is the personal need of each one of us to return to the Lord, a portion of the gifts He has given us of time, service and income...in gratitude for what He has done for us.

Stewardship is the giving of the “first portion”, not the portion of the gifts that is left over. You will find when you decide to give to God the first portion of your time, service and income that what, at first, seemed difficult soon becomes easy for us to do.

What we have left over is often more than enough for our own needs. Putting God first in our lives by practicing stewardship deepens our faith in a way that we never dreamed possible. As you are aware, we are focussing on Stewardship in our parish, and I hope you are giving prayerful consideration to how you might commit your time and service, and your financial resources to our parish.

Today we are distributing the second letter about stewardship, which includes a Time and Service Sheet. Please review it and then decide prayerfully whether you would like to make a first time commitment to a ministry or to maintain or increase the time and service you give to assist the parish.

Let us prayerfully reflect on the power of stewardship and let this concept transform our hearts so that we may live a life of greater fulfilment and peace.

3 Homily – Sharing

The Gospel passage about blind faith also relates to our call to Stewardship.

God our Father asks us to put our trust in Him rather than material possessions....to put Him first rather than to take care of our own needs and then give Him whatever might be left over. In our culture today, this may be the most difficult challenge that we face as Christians and by the same token, it may be the most rewarding.

Do you ever worry about money? How about the things that has brought you (cars, clothes, etc.) It seems that in our society, those who don't have money worry about how to get it, and those who do have money worry even more about how to keep it. Scripture teaches us and many Christians who practice Stewardship share with us, that the proper handling of money and material things requires only faith. With absolute trust in God's care for us, money never has to be a worry again.

The first step to this worry-free living is to acknowledge that what you have now and what you will receive tomorrow are because of God's goodness. The second step is to trust that God really will take care of you according to what is best (maybe not what you would wish for, but what is best). Do you trust God or money? It cannot be both. Putting your trust in God doesn't mean you can be idle or irresponsible with regard to your money. Prudent Stewardship means that you do your best to take care of what God has blessed you with by constantly seeking His will and grace.

The third step is to give out of gratitude a generous portion of your income as a sign of your trust in God and willingness to serve Him. My purpose though is not to tell you how much you should give. You should decide in good conscience whether this guideline is appropriate for you. Whatever you decide, be faithful to it.

In any case the sacrifice of giving of ourselves is far outweighed by the reward. When we practice giving in this way, we grow into an even closer relationship with God, resulting in a peace and joy beyond material measure.

Appendix O: Prayers of the Faithful

Each Week – Prayer of the Faithful

Last Prayer of the Faithful before the Collection

Lord God, we thank you for the gifts, talents and abilities you have given each of us. These are represented by the contributions we are about to collect and offer at the altar. May these gifts enable us more effectively to carry out the mission of our parish. For this we pray to the Lord.

Week 1 – Prayer of the Faithful

Lord, you are the giver of every gift, including the most precious and holy gift of Your Son Jesus Christ. Help us to remember how important it is for us to also be generous givers of gifts, so we can carry out Christ's mission for His Church on earth, we pray to the Lord.

Week 2 – Prayer of the Faithful

For all members of our parish, that through their Stewardship of time and service, they find a deeper relationship with the Lord and other members of the parish and the wider community. We pray to the Lord.

Week 3 - Prayer of the Faithful

Lord, grant us the ability to honestly evaluate our lifestyle that it might reflect a desire to walk closer with you, we pray to the Lord.

Week 4 – Prayer of the Faithful

For all parishioners and community supporters contributing to our parish's fiscal needs, may their gifts be an expression of the gifts God has given them, let us pray to the Lord.

Stewardship – Prayers of the Faithful

- May we continue to generous givers, so we can carry out Christ's mission for His Church on earth, we pray to the Lord.
- May our hearts be filled with a spirit of charity and compassion. We pray to the Lord.
- May each of us use wisely the gifts you've entrusted us to Steward, we pray to the Lord.
- May our parish family give generously of ourselves and our gifts for the mission of the Church, we pray to the Lord.
- May our gifts at today's Mass truly reflect our love and thanksgiving for the many blessings God has entrusted us with, we pray to the Lord.
- That we have the courage to be good Stewards of God's many blessings, we pray to the Lord.
- That we as a parish community, may understand and accept that living as Stewards will bring each of us a conversion and a change of heart. We pray to the Lord
- That as people of faith, we may accept God's challenge, and commit ourselves to being Christian Stewards, sharing our time, our talents and our resources. We pray to the Lord.
- For the gifts, talents and abilities you have given each of us. We pray to the Lord.
- May each of present at this celebration continue to be generous givers of gifts. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For all members of our parish, that through their Stewardship of time and service, they find a deeper relationship with the Lord and other members of the parish and the wider community. We pray to the Lord.
- For all parishioners and community supporters contributing to our parish's needs, may their gifts be an expression of the gifts God has given them, let us pray to the Lord.

APPENDIX P: Reflecting on our Gifts

The leaders of our faith community invite and encourage you to help build our *Community of Gifts*. Our faith community's most valuable assets are its people, so it is critical to our ministry to help you discern, affirm and make wise choices about applying your gifts.

We need your response regardless of your age, previous involvement in our faith community, or time available for ministry.

My gifts/interests are: (Please mark with a X all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> gardening	<input type="checkbox"/> recruiting others
<input type="checkbox"/> athletics	<input type="checkbox"/> leading	<input type="checkbox"/> sewing
<input type="checkbox"/> building consensus	<input type="checkbox"/> library work	<input type="checkbox"/> sharing new ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> caring and compassion	<input type="checkbox"/> listening/discussing	<input type="checkbox"/> social justice
<input type="checkbox"/> children's activities	<input type="checkbox"/> maintenance team	<input type="checkbox"/> teaching
<input type="checkbox"/> clerical work	<input type="checkbox"/> marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> team building
<input type="checkbox"/> communication	<input type="checkbox"/> mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/> telephoning
<input type="checkbox"/> computers	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> video taping
<input type="checkbox"/> cooking/serving food	<input type="checkbox"/> organising/coordinating	<input type="checkbox"/> visiting others
<input type="checkbox"/> dancing	<input type="checkbox"/> photography	<input type="checkbox"/> welcoming & hospitality
<input type="checkbox"/> delegating	<input type="checkbox"/> planning	<input type="checkbox"/> working hard
<input type="checkbox"/> dramatics	<input type="checkbox"/> praying	<input type="checkbox"/> writing
<input type="checkbox"/> evaluating programs	<input type="checkbox"/> promoting programs/ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> youth ministry
<input type="checkbox"/> facilitating groups	<input type="checkbox"/> public speaking	<input type="checkbox"/> other gifts
<input type="checkbox"/> following up on tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> recording/sound systems	<input type="checkbox"/>

My three greatest areas of experience (E) are: (mark 1,2,3)

My three greatest areas of interest (I) are: (mark A,B,C)

E	I	E	I
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> aging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> new members
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> caring/pastoral care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> personnel/human resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> church at large	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> property management
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> communications/media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> shared ministry & volunteerism
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> community outreach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> small group ministry
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ecumenism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> social/fellowship
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> education: children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> spiritual growth & development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> education: teens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> stewardship
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> education: adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> vocations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> evangelism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> worship, arts, music
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> finance/business management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> youth
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ministry in daily life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> other

Sharing our Time and Talents

In order for our parish to plan its ministries for the coming year, we depend on your participation to guide us in selecting and budgeting for our ministries.

I/We are willing to assist our parish by volunteering to help with the following ministries:

Please mark with an X and circle those ministries where you are currently active and mark with an X any additional one(s) you would like to be involved with. Should you wish to discontinue involvement in a ministry please telephone the Parish Office.

If there is a new ministry that you consider should be offered in the parish please record details on the bottom of the list and we will discuss its introduction with you.

Ministry Involvement for the next 12 months

Name: Address:
 Phone : Mobile:

Liturgical Ministries

- Welcomer
- Altar Server
- Procession of Gifts
- Reader
- Minister of Communion
- Singer/Instrumentalist
- Collector
- Preparing church for Mass
- Sacristan
- Liturgy Preparation

Spirituality

- Rosary Group
- Charismatic Prayer Group
- Meditation Group
- Prayer Circle
- Prayer Support Person
- Exposition & Adoration

Outreach Pastoral Ministry

- St Vincent de Paul
- Ecumenical Group
- Sacramental Team
- Bereavement Team
- Baptismal Team
- State School Catechist
- Children's Liturgy of the Word
- Care & Concern Team
- Casserole Bank
- Home Visitation
- Hospital Visitation
- Communion to Sick

- Transport assistance
- Home Help
- Cuppa after Mass
- Social Committee
- Social Justice Group
- Evangelisation Group

Education/Formation

- Scripture Discussion Group
- Lenten Discussion Group
- Adult Faith contact person

Administration & Maintenance

- Counter
- Thanksgiving program
- Church cleaning
- Brass polishing
- Church Linen laundry
- Minor Repairs
- Working Bees
- Fund Raising
- Office assistance
- Church help for special days (distribute pencils, envelopes)

Other Areas

- Parish Fair
- Cathedral Tours
- Cathedral Gift and Book Store
- Other

APPENDIX Q: Commissioning Service – Example

COMMISSIONING CEREMONY FOR MINISTRIES *(It is recommended that this take place after the Homily)*

PRIEST: Today we rejoice for God has given us a great gift. The Good News, which is his Son Jesus, has been given to us. We have and share in a responsibility of ministering to others, passing on the Good News, to announce Christ by word, to believers and unbelievers. Some of the members of our parish have responded in a special formal way to proclaim this Good News. We now call them forth.

COMMENTATOR: (may be a parish leader, such as a head of the pastoral council). Let those about to be commissioned as ministers in our parish come forward. [Call the name of each ministry to be commissioned and the names of the people for that ministry.]

PRIEST: My brothers and sisters, Jesus said, ‘Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations.’ Will you continue to grow as disciples of the Lord by making every effort to hear the Word of God, integrate the Word into your lives and share the Word with others?

MINISTERS: I Will.

PRIEST: Are you prepared to fulfil all the responsibilities, which your ministry requires in fostering the faith of those directly entrusted to you (in the ministry of ____)?

MINISTERS: I Will.

PRIEST: Then this community of faith gratefully accepts your willingness to respond to God’s call, and I commission you to be ministers to the parish community. [turning to the community] My brothers and sisters, realising that we all share the call to ministry, do you pledge your support, through prayers, witness, and participation, for these men and women called by God from our midst and commissioned as ministers in our parish

COMMUNITY: We Do.

PRIEST: [to the ministers]. Receive this (some appropriate physical object) as a sign of your commitment to the ministry of _____ in our parish community. It carries with it our pledge of support through witness, work, and prayer.

BLESSING OF MINISTERS:

PRIEST: May God Bless you who will minister to this community, so that carefully performing the tasks entrusted to you, you may shepherd and feed the people of this parish and give glory to God in Heaven.

COMMUNITY: Amen.

COMMENTATOR: Let us show our support and recognition of their commitment. (through applause or whatever method is appropriate.)