



Stewardship System Resources

December 2020

2020 is coming to a close, and what a year it has been! Our communities have weathered many storms. There is damage to be repaired and new insights into the needs of our community that will allow us to be the love of Christ in the future. Now is the time to say “thank you” for all the ways your parishioners have stepped up to support each other and the church’s ministries during this difficult year. Check out our [Annual Report Samples](#) and consider how you might share the good news of the past year.

We highly recommended producing an end-of-year letter with an ask for a Christmas gift. We find it likely that you’ll raise 10% of your annual giving as a result of that letter; well worth the time and effort. We’ll include a link to our guide and sample letter in the Stewardship System email.

As always be assured of our prayers for your success and [let us know](#) how we can be of assistance to you in your stewardship ministry,

Sincerely,
Denis Greene, President
Church Development
cell: 816-560-3641

Monthly Stewardship Committee Agenda December 2020

Instructions: use this agenda template to run your monthly stewardship committee meeting. Transfer the content to a Word document. You may modify or adjust the agenda as needed. Add your church logo and print a copy of the agenda for each committee member. The chair of your committee should lead the meeting.

Stewardship Committee Agenda

[Enter your church's logo here]

[Enter the Date Here]

1. Open in prayer
 - a. Read Matthew 2:11. "On entering the house, the wise men saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."
 - b. *Despite the fact that your church may have recently conducted its annual stewardship appeal, it's good to remember that Christmas and the end of the year provide additional opportunities for your congregation to be especially generous. Some things to think about:*
 - i. *Do you use this time of the year to encourage giving to charities? Some churches commit their Christmas receipts or a portion of them to outside groups serving the needy.*
 - ii. *Do you encourage year-end donations to your church?*
 - iii. *Do you encourage people to fulfill their annual pledge by the end of the year?*
2. Review Action Items from last meeting
3. Read this month's Stewardship System Insight provided by Church Development
4. View Stewardship System training video.
5. Review your [Stewardship System Checklist](#)
 - a. Determine action for any stewardship culture building activities for the month
 - b. Determine action for next special appeal letter.
 - c. Monthly Stewardship System Checklist
 - i. Place stewardship inserts in bulletin
 - ii. Recruit layperson to give stewardship testimony
 - iii. Place article in newsletter
 - iv. Set date for next month's Committee Meeting
6. Update on status of annual stewardship campaign efforts.
7. New items of business
8. Close in prayer

Stewardship System Insight December 2020

How to raise 10% of your income in a year-end appeal

Now that it's the holidays, nonprofits are ramping up their solicitations for gifts. December is often when people are most generous—25% of philanthropic dollars are donated this month! Be proactive in inviting your community members to remember your church in their holiday and year-end donations. Read on to learn why so much money comes at the end of the year and how to structure your year-end appeal.

Why end of the year?

The three highest giving months for churches are January, May and December, and yes, tax season plays a factor in each. May sneaks in right before the classic summer giving slump, but it also shows up after most of us have filed our taxes the month before. In knowing what we're getting back or owe on the year, we're often able to turn our attention to the needs of others. In recent years, we've seen an increase in people waiting to give until January, as they want the tax benefits the following tax year, rather than in the one that's just ended.

Regardless of whether your congregation's gifts come at the end of one year or the start of another, one thing is clear: December is the month people are in the mindset to give. However, the #1 reason non-profits (including churches) don't receive is because they don't ask. Lots of organizations are competing for access to your church member's wallet. You need to be proactive. Invite folks to give to the church in order to avoid being forgotten!

To get on the nice list, we recommend you send out an end-of-year ask letter to your congregation. As 25% of charitable donations are made in the month of December, and January is also a top giving month, an end-of-year ask letter is key to engaging consistent and irregular attendees of your church. This is especially important for your top 12 donors who are concerned with the tax incentives of charitable donations. With this in mind, let's talk about how to effectively set up your ask letter so people actually read it.

Checklist & Advice

Letter Structure:

- Keep it to one page
- Use a mail merge to personalize your letters
- Use a blue ink signature
- Include a bolded P.S. summary statement
- Share a story to engage people with your first sentence / paragraph

- Talk about the end-of-year gift several times in church and communicate the message via email, social media, the church website, etc.

Additionally:

- Send the ask letter to arrive just after Christmas, but leave the response date open a little longer to allow people to give in January (if they want the tax benefits the following year)
- Make sure people can give online
- Have givers designate these gifts—on their check / online—as being for the “end-of-year gift”
- In your letter, share some of the highlights of the past year, what their giving has helped do already, and then how it will bless people in the future
- Ask people to "make a Christmas gift"

For a full guide and sample template of what to say in your end of year letter download, check your Stewardship System email.

Monthly Leadership Training Video:

[The Year-End Appeal](#)

Instructions: show this video during your monthly stewardship committee meeting. These video clips will provide meaningful training for your team.

Monthly Stewardship Newsletter Article – [December 2020](#)

Instructions: place this article in your monthly church newsletter under a “Stewardship Column” heading. You might title the column: “Stewardship Corner” or “Time, Talents, and Treasures.”

Grateful

As a church, we try to say “Thank You” as often as possible. Thank you for your presence, thank you for your financial support, thank you for inviting new persons to visit our church, thank you for your suggestions and encouragement, especially in this difficult year.

During this Christmas season, we want to say “Thank You” once again. We are blessed by all you do for our church community. Merry Christmas.

Weekly Bulletin Inserts – December 2020

CATHOLIC BULLETIN INSERTS

December 6, 2020

2nd Sunday of Advent

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Mark 1:2-3

The role of a steward is often to make crooked paths straight. We do this by helping those less fortunate, by providing for the needs of our church community, by being voices of moderation and encouragement, by being examples of faith and hope for those around us.

December 13, 2020

3rd Sunday of Advent

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Isaiah 61:1-2a

These familiar words of the prophet are welcome during Advent... really, at any time. For God's spirit has fallen upon each of us, and in our own way, each of us has been anointed to bring good news, to bind up, to proclaim liberty and release. Think of those who will experience the Lord's favor through our faith and our actions.

December 24, 2020

4th Sunday of Advent

(The angel Gabriel said), "for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Luke 1:37-38

The mother of Jesus is held up to us as the example of a faithful servant who put her life totally into God's hand. This can be a difficult choice, for we often have no idea what God's plan for us will be. We do however have the promise of Mary's son that God is a loving parent, the one who will always be with us and carry us into God's kingdom.

December 27, 2020

The Holy

Family

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed." Luke 2:34-35a.

As part of his blessing over the Holy Family, the holy man Simeon makes these prophetic comments about Jesus. Obviously this little infant's life is to become one of struggle and conflict, and we know it ends on the cross. But not really... the real ending is not on the cross but in Jesus' resurrection and exultation. Christmas invites us into the deeper mystery of Jesus, the one truly a baby but also the saving presence of God.

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY (PROTESTANT) BULLETIN INSERTS

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December 27, 2020

1st Sunday after Christmas

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Monthly Stewardship Testimony December 2020

Instructions: Have a lay person deliver a stewardship testimony this month. For your convenience, we have provided guidelines for the person giving the testimony to follow. You may want to have this person touch base with the pastor or the person in charge of service programming to go over the testimony prior to delivery. Use this script or share a similar stewardship-related vignette during services on the first Sunday of the month.

Stewardship Campaign Testimony Guidelines

Thank you for agreeing to share your stewardship testimony at a service this month. This is a great opportunity to show how God has used giving to help you grow spiritually and help build His Kingdom. We greatly appreciate your willingness to assist our stewardship training efforts so others will also grow in the grace of giving.

These guidelines are provided to help you prepare your remarks. If you have questions, please contact your pastor or priest. God's blessings to you as you share.

1. **Suggested length:** your testimony should be two to three minutes long.
 - 1.1. Please time yourself prior to sharing so that you are certain your comments will fit the time frame.
2. **What to talk about:** Make sure to start your talk by including a definition of "What is stewardship?"
 - 2.1. Personal stories are always best.
 - 2.2. Recount the ways in which you've been blessed.
 - 2.3. Please share from the heart about why you give of your time, talent, and treasure.
3. **Where you will stand:** please come to the front of the church and the pastor will provide you with a microphone.
4. **During what part of the service will I speak?** You will share just before the sermon.
5. **What other tips can you give me to help deliver a successful testimony?**
 - 5.1. Speak clearly and at an easy pace.
 - 5.2. Look at your audience
 - 5.3. Share from the heart
 - 5.4. Animate your voice
 - 5.5. Tell stories
 - 5.6. Practice beforehand
6. **Sample Testimony:**
 - 6.1. My giving journey began when I was in college. I was working at Little Caesar's Pizza earning a check for the first time. I attended a Christian Rock Concert where they were promoting sponsoring a child in a third world country. When I looked at my take home pay, I realized that the monthly sponsorship cost was equal to about 10% of my earnings. For \$20 a month, a child would receive food, clothes, education, and Christian training. I felt very strongly that God was calling me to do it, so I sent off for a packet and received a picture of Pierre Juanil, a little Haitian

boy. From that day on I was hooked on giving. It was so great to see the impact even a small donation could make, and since that day, I have always given 10% or more of my monthly income to groups that do God's work. The bible says that if you sow generously, you will reap generously, and I can say that I've found this to be true. God has blessed me for giving obediently, and the real reward has been that I've grown in my faith and grown closer to Him. I hope this year's stewardship campaign will be a moment where your life intersects with God's plan and you experience the joy of giving.

Congratulations! You have completed all the tasks for this month's Stewardship System. Have your committee follow-up any action items as needed. We will send next month's information two weeks before the first day of the month.

If you have questions, or if we can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us [via our website](#) or through our Stewardship System hotline at: 816-333-8111.