



Stewardship System Resources

April 2021

Hello,

April arrives just in time for Holy Week and the beginning of the Easter season. What, for many Christians, is the most important liturgical season of the year can also be a fruitful time for your stewardship ministry. Invite members to become more engaged in the parish/congregation life in this time when faith is renewed.

He is Risen! Happy Easter.

[Let us know](#) how we can be of assistance to you in your stewardship ministry,

Sincerely,
Denis Greene
President
Church Development

Monthly Stewardship Committee Agenda April 2021

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 Luke 24:1-6. *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!*
 - b. Discussion Questions: The death of Jesus and his resurrection are obviously very important themes for any Christian. But those events often seem long ago and far away. So... what in those events touches me about discipleship, stewardship, generosity? Which of the many details of the death and resurrection stories intrigues me, calls me, speaks to me?
3. Review Action Items from last meeting
4. Read this month's Stewardship System Insight provided by Church Development
5. View Stewardship System training video.
6. 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
7. Update on status of annual stewardship campaign efforts.
8. New items of business
9. Close in prayer

Stewardship System Insight April 2021

Saying Thank You - An Easter Gratitude

*This article is taken from *The Stewardship System* by Denis Greene. [Download the full ebook here.](#)*

How do we create a culture of gratitude for our gifts from God? How do we say thank you to the good stewards who are so willing to share and who, in turn, make the mission of the church happen?

Dr. Molly Marshall (Marshall 2009) calls the prayer type of thanks the “attitude of gratitude.” This fundamental perspective on our relationship with God guides us as we consider how we treat those who have shared their blessings with our church. Do we have an attitude of gratitude that stimulates us to express our thanks?

Remember the last time someone asked you for a gift? If you’re like others, the ask set in motion a decision-making sequence much like a computer software program reacts when it runs. This involuntary reaction has two primary logic paths.

- How much did I give to this organization the last time they asked?
- How did they treat me after I made a gift?

Once the subconscious mind addresses those two issues, then another involuntary reaction happens: the seeking of objections to prevent the hand from writing a check. That’s a subject we’ll handle in another chapter.

Thanking donors is an absolute necessity if we want them to make a contribution in the future. The inner circle of a church’s membership may vehemently oppose any manner of thanking. They may angrily criticize a person who is organizing the thanking process, so be prepared. When the criticism comes, consider that they may be communicating that they, personally, do not need a thank you. It is likely they understand the idea of stewardship and think the money we are spending on thanks could have a better use. So bless them when they criticize you and, if appropriate, share why you are spending resources on thanking donors. For the rest of the world, the outer two-thirds of your church, they not only need a thank you, they need a gift, and five thanks during the next year. This small, consistent reinforcement can help them grow into regular and more generous givers.

THANKFULNESS FOR WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN US

All belongs to God. We are God’s stewards. All blessings come to us from God and flow through us to do God’s work. We are God’s hands and feet in this world. Stewardship is asking, “God, what would you do through me?” Understanding this principle helps us remember to express thanks to God.

Rosemary Williams, (Williams 2007) in an article titled, *Stewardship is Everything*, makes this comment, “Stewardship is personal and corporate. What we do on one level affects the other. Nothing is insignificant. Stewardship is the preservation, care, and continuance of creation. It is how we live our lives, how we respond with the sacred gift of life placed in our hands. How do we use our finite amount of time? How do we use the gifts given us? How do we use the resources put into our hands?”

Stewardship is about our being fully human, fully alive. It is about our intention, our voice, and our action.”

OUT OF THANKFULNESS, WE SHARE WITH OTHERS

Peter tells us that as stewards of God’s many graces, we are to serve one another with the gifts He gives us (1Peter 4:10). Out of thankfulness, we desire to share with others. Becket, a movie from the 1960s starring Richard Burton, has a wonderful scene in the cathedral that speaks to the joy of giving. As he assumed the role of archbishop, Becket was required to give away all his earthly possessions to the poor. While he passed out all his lavish clothing and jewelry to the poor, he stopped and turned to look at Jesus on the cross. He joyfully called out, “You, you are the only one who knows how easy this is! Everyone else thinks this is hard.” Becket experienced the joy of giving. He understood that when you truly understand giving, you are experiencing the joy that Jesus wants us to experience.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLE MODELING

Generosity of time, talent, and treasure is a response to God’s blessings. God has blessed us inordinately with health, wealth, time and energy. We give to our church, to charity, and to each other as a response or as a conduit for God’s blessings. In the same manner, when individuals donate their time or treasure to their church, it is appropriate to thank them for their generosity. When we thank donors, it models us thanking God for giving to us. Our actions are a way of thanking God. Our thank you notes are a way of thanking individuals. A critical component of church culture is the generous members’ role modeling. Individuals, leaders in particular, who are committed to the Christian lifestyle should be examples of generous giving. For new and mature Christians alike, the most important influence on their stewardship is observing members of the congregation who live out what it means to be good stewards.

1Chronicles 29:1-17 portrays King David as a stewardship role model. He announced before the whole assembly that he was providing for the house of God as far as he was able to be sure that his son would have what he needed to build the temple. He also noted that he was giving more of his own treasures because of his devotion to the house of God. This gesture inspired the other leaders at all levels to make freewill offerings. Seeing the leaders set the example, the people rejoiced. David’s example was the catalyst for a time of prayer and praise for the generosity of all. King David acknowledged that everything was from God while he took joy in the people’s willingness to freely give back to God.

SAY THANK YOU TO MINISTRY PARTNERS

Living in a culture of gratitude includes saying thank you to our ministry partners. One of the best ways to say thank you to those who support the mission and ministry of the church is to let them know how the church used their resources to make a difference. Church members give out of a desire to make difference. Seeing results can be meaningful and rewarding. Supply members with statistics, facts, and stories in your worship services or publications. Share as much detail as you can about progress, people you have reached, and the effectiveness of efforts. For example, if the project was a Habitat for Humanity house, present a story about the family. If the program was after school mentoring, obtain the improvement in scores for the students. Members are interested in changed lives and like to know what part they had in achieving that result. In the movie, Scrooge, the character Scrooge bursts into a song that church leadership could easily sing at a yearly appreciation banquet for church ministry partners.

Research Insights

GIFTS INCREASE DONOR RESPONSES

The Association of Fundraising Professionals reported in a May 2009 study in which researchers tested response rates based on the number of gifts they included in a solicitation mailing. They found that a single gift increased response rates by 10% and four premiums doubled response rates. National Public Radio consistently employs donor level premiums. When they analyzed the stratification of gifts, they found that 90% of gifts cluster around the minimum dollar amount required to earn a donor premium.

THANKFULNESS HAS HEALTH BENEFITS

“Grateful people report being more content and hopeful, which has direct health benefits,” says Robert Emmons, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis (Emmons 2008). Emmons states that people who write down what they are thankful for are 25% happier, exercise 33% more a week, sleep 30 minutes longer each night, and have 10% lower blood pressure.

Application Ideas

Following are some methods leaders can use to thank donors.

- Send all donors an acknowledgement letter from the pastor signed in blue ink (so the recipient knows it is not a photo copy). Ideally, the pastor would add a brief note or P.S. that is relevant only to that specific member (shows personal appreciation).
- Thank all donors by name in a newsletter.
- Give donors a token gift that reflects the culture and history of the church.
- Send all donors a handwritten note from a volunteer.
- Have a party to celebrate the success of the campaign.

Expressing gratitude is common sense. A thank you gift after a capital or annual campaign is the giver’s final memory of the campaign. A gift with spiritual significance can help to commemorate the moment. The monetary value of a gift is not the object. One of the best examples of heartfelt thanks came from a stewardship committee that hand made the paper on which they wrote their thank you notes. Church ministry partners desperately need appreciation from leaders in small ways. The following small ways to show appreciation can yield big dividends for both the giver and receiver.

Conduct an annual gratitude event that recognizes each different contributor of time, talent and treasure as an individual, as part of a group, and as part of the larger church. This celebration should be held annually, should be socially fulfilling, spiritually uplifting, be entertaining, and it should be a celebration at the conclusion of the church’s year. It should carry with it an annual report informing others how the church invested their contributions of time, talent and treasure.

- Be positive. Smile at your ministry partners.
- Recognize personal needs and problems.
- Unexpectedly bring snacks to a ministry meeting.
- Accept individuality.
- Take time to listen.
- Respect sensitivities.
- Promptly reimburse assignment-related expenses.

- Send birthday cards to your ministry partners.
- Provide childcare for meetings if needed.
- Use Thanksgiving as a time to send thank you notes to each ministry partner pointing out how each has contributed to the success of the ministry.
- Carefully match the person to the task. Consider skills, temperament, and interest in the task.
- Praise ministry partners to their friends and family.
- Provide ministry partners with the tools and materials they need to complete the tasks.
- When you are wrong, admit it.
- When the ministry partner is right, admit it.
- While small thank you gifts can express your appreciation, avoid expensive baubles or plaques.
- Instead, find inexpensive and personal ways to express thanks in a way that connects members to the mission.

Monthly Leadership Training Video:

Realistic Expectations for a Church Capital Campaign

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

All Church Development training videos are now available online in a video library format. The site can be found under the Resources main menu tab on the website. [Click here to view the video library](#). Note: you will need internet access to view this video. You may also need projection equipment and sound system for acceptable viewing quality.

Monthly Stewardship Newsletter Article – [April 2021](#)

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.”

A RESURRECTION STORY

It started with an act of kindness.

In 1964, Jean Vanier invited two men with developmental disabilities to share a house near Paris. It was a life-changing move for the Canadian philosopher that would, over time, radically improve the lives of many others.

Vanier had been a spiritual seeker most of his life, but the major turning point came a year earlier when he visited people with disabilities who were living in psychiatric hospitals and other institutions. One of them reportedly asked him, “Will you be my friend?”

Though the two men, Raphael Simi and Philippe Seux, had been institutionalized and essentially shunned by the world, Vanier reached out in recognition of their shared humanity. That first leap would serve as the spark for L’Arche International, today a global network of residential communities in which people with and without disabilities share their lives.

Recently passed away in 2019, Vanier was honored to receive the Templeton Prize, given annually to a person who “has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life’s spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works.”

It started with an act of kindness... “Yes, I will be your friend.” A resurrection story.

Thank you for all the acts of kindness you perform, for our church, for our neighborhood, for our world. Happy Easter.

Weekly Bulletin Inserts – April 2021

CATHOLIC BULLETIN INSERTS

April 4, 2021

The Resurrection of the Lord - Easter Sunday

Then Peter said: "They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day..." Acts 10:39-40

Death cannot hold the creator and giver of life. Jesus invites each of us to live the fullness of life in our love for God, our neighbor and our self.

April 11, 2021

Second Sunday of Easter

Although the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." John 20:19

The world can be a frightening place for us. The disciples too had much to fear, but Jesus encourages them, and so us too, to put aside our fear and be at peace within ourselves and with those around us.

April 18, 2021

Third Sunday of Easter

He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is me. Touch me and see." Luke 24:38-39

We are the Body of Christ, and hopefully all who encounter us are able to touch Jesus. Easter invites us to be stewards to all those who need the reassurance and support that Jesus offers.

April 25, 2021

Fourth Sunday of Easter

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:11

A good steward is a good shepherd. A good steward sees and responds to those in need, whether near or far. A good shepherd cares, supports, encourages.

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY (PROTESTANT) BULLETIN INSERTS

April 4, 2021

Easter Sunday

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Monthly Stewardship Testimony April 2021

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.