

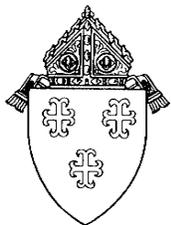


TIME · TALENT · TREASURE

A

GUIDE

FOR IMPLEMENTING
STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE



PREPARED BY:

**THE OFFICE OF STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT
DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND**

THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

A national survey of Roman Catholics produced results indicating that we contribute an average of less than one percent of our household income to the Church. Financial support is critical to the effectiveness of a parish community of faith. This financial support should come from the entire parish family.

As stewards and disciples of Jesus Christ, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly with others, and return them with increase to the Lord. Good stewardship involves the sharing of our time, talent, and yes, treasure, as a sign of our overwhelming gratitude to God for all His many blessings. Through our gifts of service and the generous sharing of our treasure, we are doing our part to build up the Kingdom of God on earth. By supporting our parish, we live out the message found in the Gospel of Luke 6:38, which states, "Give, and it shall be given to you."

FIVE ESSENTIAL STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Step # 1 – Draft and Mail

Conduct a Stewardship of treasure phase in much the same way you did when implementing time and talent. An introductory letter from the pastor serves to remind parishioners about the general theme of stewardship (*please refer to Appendix C1*). A second letter from the pastor (*please refer to Appendix C2*) invites parishioners to participate as a member of their parish family by completing a commitment of treasure card on Commitment Sunday. As a follow-up, the pastor sends a letter (*please refer to Appendix C3*) to those parishioners who did not respond by completing a commitment card. Also, *please refer to Appendix G* for a sample phon-a-thon script for those parishioners who do not respond. For those who do complete a card, the pastor sends a letter (*please refer to Appendix C4*) thanking the parishioners for their generous response.

Step # 2 - Design and Print

Design and print a card that parishioners can use to indicate their increased commitment of treasure. You may choose to design your commitment card using the vertical format design (*please refer to option #1 or #2 in Appendix D1*). The Office of Stewardship & Development can provide to your parish, free of charge, a vertically designed stewardship of treasure commitment card (with dimensions of 3.5 x 6). Or, if you prefer, you may choose to design a horizontal commitment card (*please refer to Option #1 or #2 in Appendix D2*). If you opt for the horizontal format, we recommend placing a sample planning guide for parishioners on the reverse side of the card (*please refer to Appendix E*). In place of the traditional "commitment card," a "Stewardship of Treasure Intention Form" (*please refer to Appendix F*) may also be used as a way for parishioners to commit their stewardship of treasure. Please note that these commitment cards and Intention Form completed by parishioners are not legally binding and can be increased or decreased because of changing circumstances.

Step # 3 – Promote and Preach

During the weekends leading up to Commitment Sunday, the parish Stewardship Committee should continually promote Commitment Sunday through the use of pulpit and bulletin announcements (*please refer to Appendix B*). Be sure to insert "Stewardship Thoughts for the Week" (*provided to pastors annually by the Office of Stewardship & Development*) into the parish bulletin. Also, it is very important that stewardship themes be incorporated within the celebrant's homily.

Step # 4 - Recruit and Train

Recruit and train individuals or couples from the parish to deliver a brief lay witness presentation immediately following the celebrant's homily at all Masses celebrated on Commitment Sunday (*please refer to A Guide for the Stewardship Lay Witness Presenter*). A lay witness presentation is a wonderful opportunity for parishioners to hear, first-hand from a fellow parishioner, how embracing the concept of Christian stewardship has changed their lives forever.

Step # 5 – Present and Share

On Commitment Sunday, place a sufficient number of treasure commitment cards and pens at the end of each pew prior to the start of Mass. Be sure to replenish the supply of cards after each Mass. As an alternative method, commitment cards can also be mailed to parishioners with a letter from the pastor two weeks prior to Commitment Sunday. Parishioners could then fill out their card at home and return to church on the appropriate weekend.

After the celebrant's homily, the lay witness then shares his/her story about how stewardship has become for them, a way of life. Immediately following the presentation, parishioners are afforded the opportunity to complete their commitment card. Parishioners are asked to complete commitment cards regardless if their stewardship of treasure has remained unchanged. Completed commitment cards are then collected in church by the usher, or simply have a representative from each family approach the altar where they can symbolically offer their family's commitment of treasure.

SOME TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN IMPLEMENTING STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

- 1. Keep the pastor actively involved** - The pastor's involvement in implementing stewardship is critical. The effectiveness of stewardship education within a parish depends on the leadership skills of the pastor. Pastors must continually communicate how, as Christian stewards, we must all be responsible and accountable for the many gifts entrusted to us by God (*please refer to A Guide for Pastors of Stewardship Parishes*).
- 2. We give because we are grateful** - Stewardship should not be viewed as just another diocesan program or fundraising gimmick. We willingly share our gift of treasure because we are grateful stewards of God's countless blessings. Stewardship is based on the need of the giver to give, and not on the need of the parish to receive. Stewardship is not about giving to needs, it is about needing to give. When we generously return a portion of our God-given gift of time, talent, and treasure, we respond to our baptismal promise and therefore, grow in our spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ.
- 3. Always keep the spirit of stewardship alive** - Stewardship is not just a one-time activity but continues as a permanent part of parish ministry. The process of stewardship requires a long-term commitment and should be renewed on an annual basis. Once people become involved with sharing their time and talent within parish ministries, they will soon begin to observe the good work that is being accomplished by the Church. It is then that parishioner's stewardship of treasure will automatically follow. Stewardship should be the thread that is woven into the fabric of parish life.

APPENDIX A – Sample Timetable for Implementing Stewardship of Treasure

Stewardship of Treasure Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
September 5	Mailing - letter from pastor focusing on general theme of stewardship
September 9/10	Homily - general theme of stewardship, pulpit and bulletin announcements*, Prayer of the Faithful
September 16/17	Homily - stewardship of treasure, pulpit and bulletin announcements*, Prayer of the Faithful
September 23/24	Homily - stewardship of treasure, pulpit and bulletin announcements*, Prayer of the Faithful
September 28	Mailing - letter from pastor inviting parishioners to participate by completing commitment of treasure cards on Commitment Sunday
October 7/8	Commitment Sunday Homily - stewardship of treasure, pulpit and bulletin announcements*, Prayer of the Faithful Lay Witness Presentations Commitment cards and pens are placed in pews
October 19	Mailing - letter from pastor reminding those who did <u>not</u> respond to Commitment Sunday
November 1	Mailing – letter from pastor thanking those who responded to Commitment Sunday

**** Please refer to Appendix B***

APPENDIX B – Sample Pulpit and Bulletin Announcements

PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(To be used one week prior to the mailing introducing stewardship of treasure - only if your parish decides to mail commitment cards to parishioners.)

This week you will receive an important letter from the pastor that will include a commitment card and planning guide. We ask you to prayerfully reflect upon the giving of your stewardship of treasure, and why we should give as Christians. You will be specifically asked to decide the portion or percentage of your income that you will give to the parish during the coming year. Next Sunday you will hear some of our parishioners describe, in their own words, why they give sacrificially and what this has meant to them as stewards of God's many blessings.

(To be used one week prior to Commitment Sunday – only if commitment cards are mailed to parishioners and presented to the altar during the procession of gifts.)

During the past week, you should have received a letter from Father James along with a treasure commitment card. Please bring your completed commitment card with you to Mass next week for Commitment Sunday. It is a special day when our sacrificial giving commitment cards are presented to the altar during the offertory procession with the rest of the gifts as our “first fruits” returned to the Lord.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(To be used one week prior to Commitment Sunday – only if commitment cards are placed in the pews and are presented to the altar during the procession of gifts.)

During the past week, you should have received a letter from the pastor focusing on stewardship and sacrificial giving. You were asked to prayerfully reflect upon what the priorities of your life are and where God fits among these priorities. In this letter, you were asked to decide the portion or percentage you will give to the parish. Next weekend is Commitment Sunday. On this weekend, you will hear a brief talk about stewardship by a fellow parishioner. Immediately following this presentation, you will have an opportunity to complete a stewardship of treasure commitment card. A family representative will be asked to present your individual commitment cards during the offertory procession with the gifts of water and wine.

(To be used one week after Commitment Sunday.)

Next Sunday will be a follow-up for those parishioners who were unable to attend Commitment Sunday. If you have not already done so, please bring your treasure commitment cards with you to Mass next Sunday. Completed commitment cards will be collected by the ushers.

APPENDIX C1 – Sample Pastor Letter Introducing General Theme of Stewardship

**Saint Alfred Parish
123 Main Street
Anytown, RI**

Dear Parishioner,

As summer ends, hopefully a pleasant one for you, we look forward to the season of autumn and a return to our “regular” schedule. In the coming weeks we will continue to talk about stewardship which we started in the spring.

We have received many gifts from God. Stewardship expresses a basic attitude of gratitude to God for all His many gifts to us. As stewards, we are called to use these gifts to further God’s purposes.

In Saint Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, he says, “Let me say this much: He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully. Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver. God can multiply his favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works.”

As we continue our stewardship journey, let us remember this message and prayerfully allocate our time, talents, and treasures and share them with others.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father James

APPENDIX C2 – Sample Pastor Letter Introducing Stewardship of Treasure

**Saint Alfred Parish
123 Main Street
Anytown, RI**

Dear Parishioner,

Spiritual growth and renewal are a continuing part of the life of any Christian. These are essential ingredients for an enriching parish community. 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, talent, and treasure He has given to us.

We now ask you to reflect on the treasure aspect of stewardship and to spend time in prayerful thought about stewardship of treasure and how giving of your first fruits will enhance the lives of others and also your relationship with the Lord.

You are asked to consider giving at least one hours wages per week to the church. The current weekly, monthly and pew collections will be combined into one weekly collection of the parish. Special diocesan and national collections will continue and are in addition to the giving level noted above.

Please complete the enclosed commitment card, noting your level and method of giving and mail to the church or place in the collection basket by October 15.

Thank you for taking this opportunity to make Christian stewardship a part of your life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father James

APPENDIX C3 – Sample Pastor Letter to Those Parishioners Not Responding

**Saint Alfred Parish
123 Main Street
Anytown, RI**

Dear Parishioner,

Over the past year you have been asked to examine the role that Christian stewardship plays in your daily life and the relationship you have with your parish family. The commitment to the last element of stewardship, that of returning a portion of your treasure to God in thanksgiving for your many gifts, is still underway.

In Saint Luke’s Gospel, Jesus said, “But if you give what you have as alms, all will be wiped clean for you.”

Some families have not yet responded to this opportunity. You are asked to prayerfully consider committing to share a portion of your treasure with your parish and to respond by November 19.

Please note that additional commitment cards are available in the vestibule of the church.

May God continue to bless you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father James

APPENDIX C4 – Sample Pastor Letter Thanking Those Parishioners Who Responded

**Saint Alfred Parish
123 Main Street
Anytown, RI**

Dear parishioner,

Thank you for accepting the invitation to express your gratitude to God by signing a commitment card to share your stewardship of treasure.

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.

It is through parishioners like you that the message of Christ will be spread throughout the community. Thank you for returning to God some of the gifts He has given you. God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father James

APPENDIX D1 – Sample Treasure Commitment Cards (vertical design format)

Option # 1



**Freely we have received...
freely we give** (Matthew 10:8)

**In prayerful thanks for the many
blessings from God, this is my/our
financial commitment ***

**I / We will return to God through my /
our support of Saint Alfred Parish
community the following:**

\$ _____ Weekly

or

\$ _____ Monthly

Name _____

Signature _____

**Thank you for continuing to answer
the call to be faithful stewards of your
treasure.**

* This is your personal commitment only and not a
binding contract.



Option # 2

**Stewardship
as Part
of Life**

After reflecting on God's goodness to
me, I will give to my parish:

Weekly \$ _____

Monthly \$ _____

Quarterly \$ _____

Annually \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ (H)

_____ (W)

Signature(s) _____

I / We understand that this pledge
amount may be increased or
decreased because of changing
circumstances.

*** Please note that the actual dimensions of these commitment cards is 3.5 x 8.5.**

APPENDIX D2 – Sample Treasure Commitment Cards (horizontal design format)

Option # 1

Saint Alfred Parish
Stewardship Treasure Commitment

I understand stewardship and sacrificial giving and I want to support my parish as generously as possible.

Last year, I returned ___\$5.00 ___\$10.00 ___\$20.00 ___\$ each week to God through my support of Saint Alfred Parish.

For the coming year, I will give ___\$10.00 ___\$20.00 ___\$30 ___\$40.00 ___\$50.00 each week.

Name _____
Street _____
City / Town _____ State ____ Zip _____

I presently use budget envelopes. I would like to start using budget envelopes.

If you have been giving \$10.00 or less per week, please consider doubling your donation. Thank you for your generous stewardship.

Option # 2

Saint Alfred Parish
Stewardship Treasure Commitment

For the coming year, I will return

\$10 \$20 \$30 \$40 \$_____

each week to God through my support of Saint Alfred Parish.

Name _____

We appreciate your sacrificial giving and generous stewardship.

*** Please note that the actual dimensions of these commitment cards is 3.5 x 8.5.**

APPENDIX E – Sample Planning Guide for Weekly Parish Offertory Envelope

Please note: Enlarged for easy viewing, placement of this planning guide is recommended on the reverse side of the horizontal design format commitment card (*please refer to Appendix D2*).

Directions: 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 envelope. Then move straight up the chart to find what percentage of your income your current gift to the parish represents.

Household Income				Weekly Giving Through the Parish Offertory Envelope									
				1%	1.5%	2%	2.5%	3%	3.5%	4%	4.5%	5% Weekly to Parish	
Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly										
\$ 2.90	\$ 115	\$ 500	\$ 6,000	\$ 1.15	\$ 1.75	\$ 2.25	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.50	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.50	\$ 5.25	\$ 5.75	
5.00	200	875	10,500	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	30.00	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	
\$72.00	2,885	12,500	150,000	29.00	43.00	58.00	72.00	87.00	101.00	115.00	130.00	144.00	

If your household income does not exactly match those listed on this sheet, please approximate by using combinations of two or more amounts listed.

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE INTENTION FORM



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**“Where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.”**

Luke 12:34

In gratitude for God’s many gifts, I / we intend to make a gift of...

\$ _____ each week

\$ _____ each month

\$ _____ each year

...to support the parish.

Please print:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

This intention to give at a certain level is between you and God. It is not legally binding and, of course, can be changed if necessary. Moreover, each year you will have an opportunity to renew this intention form, raising or lowering the amount as circumstances dictate. Remember, too, there is a “Money Back Guarantee.”

This form is for office use only and is strictly confidential.

Please return this form to the parish office by either mailing it or putting it in a sealed envelope; mark it “Stewardship of Treasure Intention Form” and drop it in the collection basket.

APPENDIX G – Sample Phon-A-Thon Script for Those Parishioners Not Responding

Please remember to:

- Relax
- Smile when you are speaking
- Speak sincerely
- Speak slowly
- You are a special person, and so is the person you are calling regardless of the outcome of the call.

“Hello. This is _____ (use your full name) calling from (your parish name). May I speak with _____?” (Use the parishioner’s full name: make sure to speak with an adult.) “_____ (use their first name), this is _____ (use your first name), a volunteer from _____ (name of church). Father _____ asked me to follow-up with you on our parish stewardship initiative. Have you received a commitment card in the mail?” (If yes move on. If the answer is “no” – offer to mail the information to them and write the person’s name and address down and then continue).

“I am calling to see if you have any questions about the stewardship renewal. Have you had the opportunity to hear our priests or our lay witness speakers talk about stewardship over the past few weekends at Mass?” (allow for an answer)

“I want to invite you to bring your commitment card with you to Mass on Sunday, _____ (insert date). Our goal in this effort is 100% participation from the entire community and I hope that you will consider taking a step with us in faith.”

If they are awkward: “If you are uncomfortable in making a decision, please write the word ‘prayer’ on your commitment card. This way we know that you are with us in spirit. It also saves on the follow-up phone calls we will be making after the renewal.”

“Thanks for your consideration and have a great evening!”

**If you would like more information about implementing stewardship of treasure,
please contact:**

**Office of Stewardship & Development
Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence
One Cathedral Square
Providence, RI 02908
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