



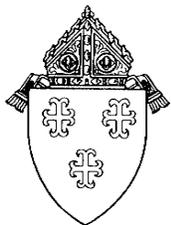
TIME · TALENT · TREASURE

A

GUIDE

FOR PASTORS

OF STEWARDSHIP PARISHES



PREPARED BY:

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

THE ROLE OF A PASTOR OF A STEWARDSHIP PARISH

As with all areas of parish life, the pastor's role and commitment will be extremely important in ensuring the success of the parish's stewardship education efforts. From the early stages of recruiting lay leaders to serve on the Stewardship Committee, to delivering homilies helping parishioners understand the concept of Christian stewardship, to his attendance at the parish Ministry Fair, the pastor's participation is critical.

The chief role of the pastor is to continually convey the stewardship message thereby enabling parishioners to take that first step on the road to discipleship, growing in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. By his example of stewardship, he will motivate and inspire parishioners, helping his fellow stewards discover ways they can share their gifts of time, talent, and treasure as they respond in gratitude to God for all His many blessings.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PASTOR

1. Pray that parishioners will grow spiritually as a result of their embracing stewardship as a way of life (*please refer to Appendix G*)
2. Spend time reading and studying about stewardship so you may fully understand its meaning. Convey the message of stewardship through letters addressed to parishioners (*please refer to Appendix A1, A2, and A3*).
3. Form a Stewardship Committee consisting of 6 to 15 members and attend meetings for the first six to twelve months. Be sure to recruit parishioners who are spiritually motivated, who exemplify and live out stewardship, and who envision where stewardship can take the parish.
4. Assist the Stewardship Committee in planning a parish Time and Talent Ministry Fair. Select a theme for the fair that will serve to provide stewards of the parish with wonderful opportunities to share their God-given gifts of time and talent within a particular ministry (*please refer to A Guide for Planning and Organizing Your Ministry Fair*).
5. Select lay witnesses to speak at Masses. In their presentations, they will tell their fellow parishioners how stewardship has impacted their lives (*please refer to A Guide for the Stewardship Lay Witness Presenter*).
6. Incorporate thoughts about stewardship through the use of stewardship intercessions (*please refer to Appendix C*) and bulletin inserts (*please refer to Appendix D*). Also, incorporate stewardship scripture messages and parables within your homilies (*please refer to Appendix E*).
7. Promote hospitality and thank people for all they do to serve God by serving others (*please refer to Appendix B1 and B2*). Consider a Commissioning Service to recognize those who come forward to serve their parish community (*please refer to Appendix F*).
8. Provide accountability. Provide summary reports of the gifts of time, talent, and treasure given to the parish in the weekly Sunday bulletin as well as an annual Stewardship Report to parishioners (*please refer to Appendix E in A Guide for Your Annual Stewardship Renewal*).
9. Along with the Stewardship Committee, commit the parish to carry out stewardship awareness efforts throughout the year. It is very important to conduct an annual recommitment of time, talent, and treasure (*please refer to A Guide for Your Annual Stewardship Renewal*).

APPENDIX A1 - Letter to Parishioners Introducing Stewardship

Date

Mr. and Mrs. John Steward
555 Oak Street
Anytown, RI

Dear John and Carol,

Saint Alfred Parish has a history of being the spiritual center in the lives of many people. Reflecting on our lives and renewing our commitment to our faith is an important aspect of our spiritual growth. As a parish and as individuals, we have been blessed with many tangible and intangible gifts. These gifts from God come with the challenge to use them responsibly.

You will be hearing the word stewardship used frequently during Mass over the next few weeks. Stewardship will appear in the bulletin and throughout the halls of our parish center. At the heart of its definition, stewardship is a way of life in which we live each day expressing our gratitude for the blessings we have received. This life calls us to share our gifts of time, talent and treasure with those in our family, our community and our world.

Please take a moment to read the enclosed brochure on stewardship and reflect on its meaning in your life. Saint Alfred Parish is about to take steps forward to draw our community closer through stewardship. Joining us plants another seed in our parish journey while providing you with many opportunities to examine your personal journey towards fulfillment.

I look forward to sharing with you all that lies ahead.

Sincerely,

Father James

Rev. James Smith
Pastor

APPENDIX A2 - Letter to Parishioners Announcing Stewardship Weekend

Date

Mr. and Mrs. John Steward
555 Oak Street
Anytown, RI

Dear John and Carol,

I trust that this letter will reach you at the conclusion of a peaceful and relaxing summer season. Enjoying the company of family and friends calls us all to pause and give thanks for the life we have been given.

A few months ago, our parish family began a transformation to a full, complete life of stewardship. We have heard many aspects of stewardship discussed both formally and informally. The smiling faces you meet at the doors of church as well as those who have been responsible for after-mass hospitality are members of the Stewardship Committee. They have dedicated a large portion of their time planning and executing events within the parish over the last few months.

On behalf of the committee, I am pleased to announce that Saint Alfred's First Annual Stewardship Weekend will take place October 14 and 15. If you have been pondering different ways to share your time and talent, Stewardship Weekend will showcase all parish ministries. You will have the opportunity to stroll the booths of our different parish ministries. Don't miss the many desserts baked by fellow parishioners as well as the family carnival area. Further details will be available as the weekend draws closer. In the meantime, please mark your calendar and be certain to join your extended family at what is sure to be a memorable weekend.

Feel free to contact Sue Green, Stewardship Committee member, at 401-123-4567, with any questions about the weekend. You are our most vital ingredient to a connected, vibrant parish. I, along with the Stewardship Committee, look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Father James

Rev. James Smith
Pastor

APPENDIX A3 - Letter to Parishioners Introducing Treasure

Date

Mr. and Mrs. John Steward
555 Oak Street
Anytown, RI

Dear John and Carol,

Saint Alfred Parish has been alive with momentum. From our after-mass gatherings to Stewardship Weekend, parishioners have been bustling with activity. The past six months have seen tremendous growth within our parish - my gratitude to you for joining us on this journey and helping to make it so successful.

As a parish, we have examined the time and talent aspects of stewardship. Through this exploration, we have begun to alter our motivation and have extended more of those gifts to our family, friends and the greater community. Now I ask you to begin the same reflection on the third aspect of stewardship, treasure.

As part of this reflection, I am asking parishioners to consider increasing their gift to the weekly budget collection. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generous support of our parish and its endeavors. Realizing how much we count on your participation, I encourage you to continue your generosity that has helped to propel our parish to the level it currently enjoys. By sharing more of your many gifts of treasure, you allow us to not only run the parish more efficiently, but also to expand our outreach efforts to others within our diocesan family and to the community at large.

Thanking you for all that you do for our parish and asking your continued prayers and support for the good of the parish, I am,

Sincerely,

Father James

Rev. James Smith
Pastor

APPENDIX B1 – Postcard to Parishioners Who Attended Stewardship Weekend

THANK YOU for joining with your Saint Alfred Family for Stewardship Weekend. Over 850 parishioners were present for the Weekend celebration making it the most successful event in parish history.

Your presence during the weekend is a testament to the strong community you belong to at Saint Alfred. I hope you were able to walk through the Ministry Fair and explore the many involvement possibilities available within the parish. As you could see, Saint Alfred is bustling with activity. Our diligent volunteers have developed many outreach programs for the community as well as many parish-centered groups. Please keep these in mind next weekend as ministry commitment cards are distributed. During the Mass, you will have the opportunity to increase your involvement by joining a parish ministry. All cards will be presented during the offertory symbolizing the bond you continue to strengthen with Saint Alfred Parish.

Watch the entrance to church for photos of this memorable weekend. Your support of parish life is truly appreciated. Thank you for all you do to make Saint Alfred Parish a home to so many.

Gratefully,

Father James

Rev. James Smith
Pastor

APPENDIX B2 - Postcard to Parishioners Who Joined a Ministry During Stewardship Weekend

THANK YOU for joining with your Saint Alfred Family for Stewardship Weekend. Over 850 parishioners were present for the weekend celebration making it the most successful event in parish history.

Your presence during the weekend is a testament to the strong community you belong to at Saint Alfred. As you could see, Saint Alfred is bustling with activity. Our diligent volunteers have developed many outreach programs for the community as well as many parish-centered groups. The _____ Committee is pleased to welcome you and looks forward to seeing you at their next gathering. _____ will be calling you soon to inform you of the group's latest endeavors. You will receive a commitment card during Mass next weekend. Please complete this card with the ministry you chose. All cards will be presented during the offertory symbolizing the bond you continue to strengthen with Saint Alfred Parish.

Watch the entrance to church for photos of this memorable weekend. Your support of parish life is truly appreciated. Thank you for all you do to make Saint Alfred Parish a home to so many.

Gratefully,

Father James

Rev. James Smith
Pastor

APPENDIX C - Stewardship Intercessions

Time and Talent

- For all members of our parish, that through their Stewardship of time and talent, they find a deeper relationship with the Lord and other members of the parish, we pray to the Lord...
- For all parishioners who take on a leadership role here at (insert parish), may they realize and perpetuate greater personal and community faith, we pray to the Lord...
- For (insert ministry name), that through their good works, they may be nourished by the Bread of Life, we pray to the Lord...
- For all parish leaders, that through their stewardship of time and talent, may they find a deeper relationship with God as they serve our community, we pray to the Lord...
- For all those who care for the needy, may their offerings be true expressions of gratitude to God for his many blessings, we pray to the Lord...
- That we find true happiness, joy and peace only by putting God first in our lives, we pray to the Lord...
- That we embrace our responsibility for caring for our parish and our community and so become shining examples of Christian faith, we pray to the Lord...
- That we have the courage to be good stewards of God's countless blessings, we pray to the Lord...
- We pray that gifts we offer at today's Mass truly reflect our love and thanksgiving for the many blessings that God has entrusted us, we pray to the Lord...
- Lord, instill in our hearts a spirit of love and compassion. Inspire us to make a difference in our parish and community by being generous with our Time, Talent, and Treasure, we pray to the Lord...

Treasure

- 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, we pray to the Lord...
- For all parishioners who make an intentional, planned, and proportionate gift of their time, talent and treasure, that their offering will be in thanksgiving to the fruits God has provided to them, we pray to the Lord...
- For our parishioners in need, that the stewardship of fellow parishioners will help them during this uncertain time, we pray to the Lord...

APPENDIX D - Stewardship Bulletin Inserts

- 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 treasure 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, talent and treasure.
- 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 you might ordinarily avoid. Invite blessings into your life by giving blessings of your own.
- Those who practice stewardship recognize 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 to others the many blessings that God has given us.
- The faithful steward makes an offering as an 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 neighbor. The words are simple and the task is clear. We give to our neighbor the blessings we have received from God in appreciation for our bountiful gifts.

APPENDIX E - Stewardship Scripture Messages and Parables

Scripture Messages

- *“For everything is from you, and we only give you what we already have received from you.” (I Chronicles 29: 14-16)*
- *“Honor the Lord with your substance and with the First Fruits of all your labors.” (Proverbs 3:9)*
- *“They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.” (II Corinthians 8:3)*
- *“With each contribution, show a cheerful countenance, and give with a spirit of joy.” (Sirach 35:8)*
- *“None of you can be my disciple if he does not denounce all his possessions.” (Luke 14:33)*
- *“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life for many.” (Mark 10:45)*
- *“Recall the words of Jesus: “There is more happiness in giving than receiving.” (Acts 20:35)*
- *“We have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed in each of us.” (Romans 12:6)*
- *“Men should regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God... Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful to his gifts.” (I Corinthians 4: 1-2)*
- *“Charge them to do good, be rich in good works and generous, sharing what they have...” (I Timothy 6: 18)*
- *“As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received.” (I Peter 4:10)*

Parables

- *Matthew 25: 14-30* Parable of the Silver Pieces
- *Luke 10: 25-37* Parable of the Good Samaritan
- *Luke 11: 5-8* Parable of the Friend at Midnight

APPENDIX F – Commissioning Service

Celebrant:

Loving God, you gave us faith as a means to know you and your Son. We have joined together here today to demonstrate to you and our brothers and sisters in faith at (name of church) that we hear your call to serve each other.

There are no small tasks in your vineyard. Each and every effort we make as individuals is made “in communion” with our entire community. Each task receives value by your grace upon those who give and those who receive.

Inspire each of us to know that genuine faith in you and in your Son is best expressed by our love for and commitment to each other.

Deacon or Lector:

As leaders and members of councils, commissions, and organizations are identified, please stand and remain standing as you are joined by other groups in acknowledgement of your commitment and good works. Our response is: “Lord, bless your faithful people.”

(Each parish should adapt the following service to include the names of their own programs, organizations, and ministries.)

Will those who serve our parish as members of the staff, Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and Building Committee, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they may have the gifts of good judgment, openness to all, courage and fortitude to discern your will...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will those who serve on the Education Committee, our faith formation teachers, Catholic school teachers, Bible study leaders, and those who volunteer in any way in our Faith Formation Program, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they may have zeal to present the teaching of scripture and tradition to all and that they may live these teachings in their own lives...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will those who serve on the Liturgical Commission and those men, women, and children who help to bring the liturgies to life: announcers, lectors, the Eucharistic ministers who assist during Mass and who bring Communion to those who are homebound, altar servers, the Perpetual Adoration volunteers, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they will make our time of prayer and worship a time of growing closer to the Lord so that we may be nourished with God’s word and the Body and Blood of Jesus...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will those who serve at our liturgies as ushers and greeters, Sacristans, and Altar Society, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they will continue to offer us the spirit of friendship, hospitality and love and that they will provide us with the reverent physical atmosphere to worship...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

APPENDIX F – Commissioning Service (continued)

Will those who serve in Music Ministry: the cantors, the parish choir, contemporary ensemble, youth choir, the children's choir, and the instrumentalists, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray they will use their talents to lead us in song and prayer through the lifting up of our hearts and voices...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will those who serve on the Evangelization Committee and the RCIA program, stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that they will truly spread the Good News of Salvation and peace to all who search for union with God...Let us Pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will those who serve in the Family Life Ministries... Scouting, Young Singles, Marries Ministry, Christian Mothers, Women's Club, Men's Club, Handmaids of Mary, Round Robin Bridge, and the Athletic Association, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that through our organizations we may experience a stronger sense of family based upon our common faith...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will those who serve in our Community Life Ministries...Habitat for Humanity, Men's Shelter, Bereavement, COPING, Adult Tutoring, Blood Mobile, Crisis Assistance, Hospice, Respect Life, Saint Vincent de Paul Society, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray they will have the dedication to reach out to others in our city and county and that they will truly assist the many needs of those less fortunate than ourselves...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will those who are in service to our parish as church office volunteers, coffee and donut servers, drivers who provide rides, parish newsletter, registration Sunday hospitality greeters, stuffers and folders, reception servers, visitors to homebound, nursery workers, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that the tasks of communications, service, and fellowship within our parish will truly be an extension of the hospitality that Jesus, himself, provides to all who call upon him...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Will all those whose talents and service often go unrecognized in our parish, those who pray daily for the people of this parish, please stand and remain standing. (Pause) We pray that all of us recognize our calling to pray for the people of our parish, especially those who are serving the parish in active ministry, those who are sick and homebound, and those who lead us in ministry, prayer, and worship...Let us pray.

Response: Lord, bless your faithful people.

Celebrant:

Loving and Gracious God, we are blessed and we thank you for the richness you place in our lives. Fill our hearts with gratitude so that we may joyfully share our wondrous gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Help us to be ever mindful of the needs of our parish family. Teach us to be good and faithful stewards. Show us how to take good care of each other and the world that you have entrusted to us. We ask all of this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

APPENDIX G - Stewardship Prayers

God, I resolve to put You first in my life. I recognize that you have blessed me with all that I have and all that I am. Amen.

I commit to giving back to you the first portion of my blessings. Doing so may seem scary at times, but I hear Your reassurance in Scripture: “Do not worry anymore,” and know that I can depend on you. Amen.

I recognize that being a good steward is nothing more than being truly Christian. From my heart, I thank You Lord for blessing me and I trust in Your love. Amen.

Lord, You alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life. We praise You and we thank You for Your great power and your tender, faithful Love. Amen.

Dear Lord, teach me to be generous, teach me to serve as You deserve, to give and not count the cost, to toil and not seek for rest, to labor and not seek reward. For I am a steward of creation and I wish to live my baptismal promise to serve You and my brothers and sisters. Amen.

May the offerings of our time, our talent and our material resources be made in the same spirit of sacrifice that Jesus taught us by his life and death for us. Amen.

Dear Lord, remind us how much You cherish us, of how abundantly You have offered gifts to us, especially in the hours of our greatest need. May we always be grateful for our blessings and may we serve others in their time of need with Your blessings. Amen.

Lord Jesus, help us to realize it is not riches or fame or power that gives life meaning. Rather, it is generosity and service to You and others that brings fulfillment and makes life worthwhile. May all we do help us to build Your Kingdom. Amen.

Generous God, knowing that everything good comes from You, remind us to be constantly thankful for all You give us. Help us to use those gifts to build up Your Kingdom. Prompt us to share those gifts as generously as You want us to, so that You will call us home as good and faithful stewards. Amen.

Creator God, at Baptism, we accepted the call to follow Jesus. Be with us as we move along on our faith journey. Send us Your Holy Spirit that we might have wisdom for the journey. Help us to develop and share our gifts as good stewards, that we may use them in love and service in Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**If you are a pastor of a stewardship parish and would like to learn more,
please contact:**

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