

St. Martin Parish Stewardship Council Charter

Why Is Stewardship So Important?

Stewardship is primarily about discipleship. Stewardship is a Catholic's active response to Jesus' call: "Follow me!" We mature as intentional disciples of the Lord by recognizing the many gifts He has given us (our lives, our talents and abilities, our material income, etc.) and we realize the need to give back of ourselves – sacrificially – as He has done for us. We give out of our need to give because that's what a disciple and steward does!

To be truly effective, Stewardship must permeate the entire life of the parish. Stewardship leads to active participation by pledging to pray (attend Mass on weekends and Holy Days), participate (by giving of your time and talent to support the life and ministry of the parish), and sacrificially giving (returning to God what is God's in financial support of the work of His Church).

By the power of the Holy Spirit, stewardship parishes build communities of faith who live out the gospel in their daily lives.

Diocese of Jefferson City Stewardship Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,
My parish is composed of people like
me; I help make it what it is.
It will be friendly if I am.
Its pews will be filled if I help fill them.
It will do great work, if I work.
It will make generous gifts to many
causes if I am a generous giver.
It will bring other people into its worship and
fellowship if I invite and bring them.
It will be a parish of loyalty
and love, of fearlessness and
faith, and a parish with a
noble spirit,
if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.
Therefore, with Your help, O God,
I shall dedicate myself to growing our faith by being all things
that I want my parish to be.

The Four Pillars of Stewardship

HOSPITALITY

- It is imperative that a parish nurtures a sense of community among parishioners.
- Welcoming and community building activities are essential for any parish to thrive and for stewardship to succeed.
- A parish should regularly examine if they are welcoming by surveying their parishioners.
- Studies have shown that parishes that lack a sense of welcoming, will struggle with building a stewardship parish.
- The Pillar of Hospitality brings parishioners together through social activities, fostering fellowship and strengthening our union as a parish and with God.
- Through these activities, relationships are built, and the parish becomes engaged in the mission of the church.
- Catholics grow in their faith and begin to evangelize reaching outside their parish community.

PRAYER

- Through active participation in Mass, we learn to recognize, receive, and share God's grace and gifts in love of God and neighbor.
- Through prayer, Christian stewards grow closer to God – strengthening their relationship and growing in spirituality.
- Intentional prayer is a sacrificial giving of one's first fruits, attention, and time.

FORMATION

- Stewardship education for adults is extremely successful at eliciting greater levels of participation in stewardship activities.
- Formation is an ongoing education in the faith and the stewardship way of life.
- Formation helps to ignite the soul for a lifelong journey of conversion.
- Formation educates, engages, and empowers individual stewards to love as God loves us which in turn strengthens the parish community.
- Small groups who come in communion to prayerfully discuss faith topics are important to formation.

SERVICE

- Service is stewardship in action.
- Service is giving of one's time and talent to support the life and ministry of the parish and wider community.
- Jesus came to earth to teach us to serve through his greatest commandment which is to ***love one another.***

Stewardship Council Overview

A critical aspect of a parish's stewardship effort is to assist each parishioner in discovering the ministry where their individual gifts are most suited. In many ways, allowing parishioners to serve in the wrong ministry is worse than if they hadn't served at all. The Stewardship process encourages parishioners to identify their gifts, to be grateful for these gifts, to share them lovingly with others, and to return them back to God with increase. The Stewardship Council generates ideas and implements steps needed to help parishioners better understand stewardship and live it out in their lives.

The Stewardship Council is separate from the Pastoral Council, School Advisory Council and Finance Council. The Stewardship Council works directly with all councils under the direction and leadership of the pastor/administrator. It is encouraged that a member of the Stewardship Council serves as a liaison to the other councils to ensure consistent communication as it relates to stewardship.

Above all else, the council serves to advise the Pastor on integrating stewardship into the culture of the parish. It is important that the pastor has a personal and visible commitment to the stewardship process. He has initial responsibility for selecting and forming an active and committed Parish Stewardship Council. In addition, he provides spiritual leadership by preaching about spirituality of stewardship and fully supporting the annual renewal process. While the pastor provides spiritual leadership—the hands-on activities are shared amongst Stewardship Council members.

Council Description

The Stewardship Council works with the pastor, parish staff and ministry leaders to educate, engage and empower the parish community about the spirituality of stewardship. They oversee the annual stewardship renewal process which includes the planning, communication and development of materials, recruiting and training lay witnesses and leading the accountability of the stewardship way of life.

Membership

The composition of the parish Stewardship Council directly corresponds with the success of the parish stewardship effort. The Stewardship Council should be made up of individuals who are strong in faith and who represent the demographics of the parish. Ideally, members should not also be members of other parish councils, however a liaison from the Stewardship Council should attend the other council meetings for continuity and communication.

The Stewardship Council should have enough members to be representative of the diverse membership of the parish, while ensuring that it is small enough to effectively make and implement decisions. Typical groups range in size from 6-12 members but will vary based on the specific objectives and activities of the council and size of the parish. Msgr. McGread, who is often referred to as the "Father of Stewardship", began his first Stewardship Council with 6 people (3 couples) in his parish.

Commitment

Prayer Commitment – Reflect and pray about stewardship in your personal life and the life of the parish.

Time Commitment – One meeting a month plus participation in other key tasks, special projects and events.

Educate, Engage and Empower Commitment – Actively seek to learn more about the spirituality of stewardship to engage others and empower them to live the stewardship way of life.

Group Process Commitment – Willingness to work in a group process of prayer, consensus building, planning, and successful implementation of parish stewardship activities.

Duration of Commitment – Members will serve 2 to 3-year terms. The initial set up of the council will require staggered terms to allow for individuals to rotate off and new members to be added.

Stewardship Council Responsibilities

- Assist the pastor and parish leadership in the overall design, implementation, and evaluation of the parish stewardship renewal process
- Develop a parish Catholic Stewardship Renewal annual plan
- Utilize various forms of communication to build awareness of stewardship and parish activities, such as bulletins, parish website, newsletters, witnesses, ministry fairs, town hall meetings, homilies, etc.
- Prepare a time and talent list or catalog of parish activities and organization, and keep the list or catalog current; include opportunities for youth
- Host periodic stewardship presentations to parish leadership explaining stewardship in general, the parish renewal process and the importance of stewardship in the parish community
- Work with the parish finance council relative to their role in receiving, recording and monitoring annual parishioner treasure commitments, if applicable
- Assist in seeking, selecting, and training speakers for personal stewardship witness presentations
- Recruit volunteers to assist the Stewardship Council in the preparation, assembly, mailing, and/or other distribution of stewardship materials and commitment forms
- Develop and implement a timely thank you process to all parishioners who complete and remit commitment forms
- Compile and distribute lists of volunteers to all parish/school ministry leaders.
- **Work with the appropriate parish ministries and parish groups to ensure that those who volunteer are contacted and invited to become involved.** This is essential to the success of the spirituality of stewardship in your parish. If people are not contacted, they will never engage in in the life of the parish and fulfil their need to give.

- Establish and utilize an evaluation process to gauge stewardship and awareness efforts on an annual basis
- Pastor and Parish Stewardship Council members should try to participate in continuing education opportunities, including diocesan, regional, and national seminars and/or conferences about stewardship when/if possible and seek out resources to gain additional knowledge about stewardship.

Council Member Responsibilities

Key stewardship activities may be performed by members of the Stewardship Council or by drawing on the resources of other parish organizations and ministry leaders.

- **Stewardship Council Chair** – this person is responsible for working directly with the pastor to create a parish community who follows the stewardship way of life. They lead the Stewardship Council in developing a stewardship plan for the parish based on the four pillars of stewardship: hospitality, prayer, formation, and service. They lead the accountability process to ensure that each council member holds themselves and others accountable to their commitments of time, talent and treasure out of their need to give back to God for the gifts He has given to each of us.
- **Stewardship Council Secretary** – this person is responsible for documenting the minutes of each meeting and ensuring timely distribution of minutes to the council members and including them on the parish website and/or bulletin.
- **Pillar of Hospitality Leader** – This person will serve as the accountability liaison to the hospitality ministry leaders. This position is also responsible for ensuring that the parish is constantly evaluating the Pillar of Hospitality and looking for new ways to engage the parish community. The Pillar of Hospitality Leader will arrange for feedback from the hospitality ministry leaders as to the success in their follow-up with newly interested parishioners and will maintain communication with the leaders.
- **Pillar of Prayer Leader** – This person will serve as the accountability liaison to the prayer ministry leaders which include lectors, music leaders, Adoration, rosary, extraordinary Communion ministers and so forth. This position is also responsible for ensuring that the parish is constantly evaluating the Pillar of Prayer and helping to form active participants in Mass. The Pillar of Prayer Leader will arrange for feedback from the prayer ministry leaders as to the success in their follow-up with newly interested parishioners and will maintain communication with the leaders.
- **Pillar of Formation Leader** - This person will serve as the accountability liaison to the formation ministry leaders and is integral to the process of educating parishioners of all ages about the Stewardship way of life. Depending on the number of formation ministries a parish has, there may need to be 2 stewards working with formation

ministry leaders, potentially dividing parish and school formation ministries. This position is also responsible for ensuring that the parish is constantly evaluating the Pillar of Formation to provide Catholic education to help deepen one's faith and grow as a disciple of Christ. The Pillar of Formation Leader will arrange for feedback from the formation ministry leaders as to the success in their follow-up with newly interested parishioners and will maintain communication with the leaders.

- **Pillar of Service Leader** - This person will serve as the accountability liaison to the service ministry leaders who reach out to various groups both within the parish and in the community to provide prayer, support, and assistance. This position is also responsible for ensuring that the parish is constantly evaluating the Pillar of Service to allow for all parishioners to be actively involved in the life of the parish. The Pillar of Service Leader will arrange for feedback from the service ministry leaders as to the success in their follow-up with newly interested parishioners and will maintain communication with the leaders until all follow-up is completed.
- **Ad hoc members** – Additional parishioners may be invited to join the Stewardship Council on either a regular or as needed basis as non-voting ad hoc members to ensure representation from the entire demographic population and to advise the council on specific activities. Examples include recent new parishioners, persons just completing RCIA, school parents, high school representatives and so forth.

Additional roles

Council members may be asked to fulfill these additional roles and/or oversee volunteers to coordinate the following:

- **Catholic Stewardship Renewal Distribution of Materials** – Coordinating the assembly and distribution of all stewardship related materials by the date assigned prior to the annual CSR weekend. These materials will include the time and talent form, tithing commitment form/card, stewardship prayer card, catalog of ministries. The assembly will include labeling and stuffing envelopes and arranging for distribution either at church or mail.
- **Communications** – Designing, creating, and distributing educational material pertaining to stewardship. The creation of this material would need to be done so that the design would carry through on all materials including the ministry catalogue, bulletin inserts, bulletin blurbs, website, social media, etc. This person would work closely with whomever is responsible for communication for the parish and diocese. Communications would include stories about active ministries in the parish, specific individual stewards in action, and general formational material on the spirituality of stewardship.

- **Lay Witness Coordinator** – this position is responsible for ensuring the selection, coordination, and scheduling of a lay witness at each Mass prior to Commitment Weekend and/or throughout the year. Duties also include providing the training/guidelines to the lay witnesses.
- **Ministry Fair Coordinator** – this position is responsible for coordinating this annual event with the ministry leaders and all in the parish. Duties include determining a theme, coordinating refreshments, publicity, site preparation and ensuring ministry leaders have the information they need to allow for their maximum participation.
- **Commitment and Data Analysis Coordinator** – this position coordinates the entering of pledges of time & talent from all returned commitment forms into an appropriate data base as well as printing the appropriate reminder letters and thank you letters/postcards, which include the families’ pledges of time and talent.
- **Follow-Up Coordinator** – this position is responsible for creating lists of “parishioners interested in joining” for each parish ministry after the data has been entered by the Commitment Card Leader. The Follow- Up Coordinator will then distribute the respective lists to the 4 Pillar Leaders and ministry leaders at the Convocation Event where they will be communicated with an explanation for the leaders to invite the “newly interested” to their next ministry meetings, make contact via email, phone, letter.
- **Convocation Event**– this event is held annually after the CSR is complete, usually in January. The purpose of the event is to bring the Stewardship Council and ministry leaders together to celebrate the success of the CSR in the parish. This is meant to be both celebratory and informational. It is a time to recognize the leaders of the parish for their stewardship in their respective ministries with a reception of light hors d'oeuvres and drinks and providing information to the ministry leaders on following up with those individuals who are interested in serving.
- **Small Group Coordinator** – this position is responsible for recruiting small group facilitators for advent and lent small groups. This position initially will work with a consultant from RENEW International to institute two 6-week sessions (one during advent and one during lent) using the program Grateful Living: The Joy of Stewardship which was developed specifically for the Diocese of Jefferson City for stewardship formation in parishes.

**The principle of living stewardship is, at its core, very simple.
God calls and we answer.**

Forming a successful stewardship culture takes practical steps, solid planning, clear and constant communication with parishioners, and sound development strategies – ***all within the context of faith.***

Parishes that plan well and work hard to establish and nurture a stewardship culture, experience a remarkable up swell in the spiritual “attitude” of individuals, reflected throughout the entire parish community. This communal refocusing on the real meaning of good stewardship produces concrete, quantifiable benefits.

In a successful stewardship parish...

- Vitality and spirit are evident
- Parishioner involvement is overflowing
- Financial giving is proportionate; sufficient to support and increase ministries
- Outreach increases
- All parishioners, including newcomers, feel at home. Examining the financial and ministry needs of many parishes

To enjoy this success, we must start doing things differently. Successful stewardship parishes recognize that establishing a stewardship culture does not happen overnight. It takes prayer, planning, commitment, and effort. They continue the work of enhancing stewardship because it is the answer to reaching the ultimate goal – a spiritually vibrant, therefore financially secure parish.

“Stewardship flowing from a personal and communal relationship to Christ holds a particular attraction to people. It is, ultimately, the pull and power of the Gospel come alive in our times and circumstances.”