

BLESSED. CHOSEN. SENT.

**"I AM A MISSION ON THIS EARTH;
THAT IS THE REASON WHY I AM HERE IN THIS WORLD.
WE HAVE TO REGARD OURSELVES AS SEALED,
EVEN BRANDED, BY THIS MISSION OF BRINGING LIGHT, BLESSING,
ENLIVENING, RAISING UP, HEALING AND FREEING."**

-POPE FRANCIS, EG, 273



2016
Stewardship
RENEWAL GUIDEBOOK

PARISH STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

Within the context of the Church's teachings on Stewardship, each parish is encouraged conduct a yearly renewal of the stewardship of time, talent, and treasure to encourage parishioners to share their gifts as a faith response and as a way to support and build up the mission of the parish. Pastoral leaders should empower the laity to discern and contribute their variety of gifts in the service of parish ministries and church vocations. The desired outcome would be for parishioners to give in a planned, proportionate, sacrificial and thankful way of all the gifts God has given them.

This guidebook will give you background on the purpose for a Stewardship Renewal, complete instructions for conducting a renewal, timelines, leadership responsibilities, liturgical resources for the renewal and other helpful information.

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Basic Overview of Stewardship in the Parish

Seven Elements of Parish Stewardship

The spirituality of stewardship recognizes that:

- Everything we are and have comes from God
- We learn to respond in gratitude
- Such gratitude is nurtured within the community of believers

“The Christian vocation is essentially a call to be a disciple of Jesus...

Jesus’ call is urgent. He does not tell people to follow him at some time in the future but here and now – at this moment, in these circumstances. There can be no delay.”

1. Commitment of Leadership
 - Pastor - Living witness
 - Stewardship Commission/Committee
 - Fostering and sustaining stewardship
 - Annual plan
 - Renewal with annual commitment
 - Pastoral Council
 - Pastoral Planning Emphasizing Stewardship Throughout
2. Hospitality and Evangelization
 - Hospitality and Welcoming Essential
 - Community – The Importance of Belonging
3. Formation Toward a Spirituality of Stewardship
 - Living, lifelong relationship with Christ; people with grateful hearts and generous spirits; vision of faith community as place where disciples are formed
4. Outreach
 - Living the Gospel in ways large and small: discern the needs within the parish; discern the needs in the local community and the world; discern ways to address the needs through the ministry of parishioners
5. Ministry Development and Support
 - Ministry Leaders Support and Training (guidelines provided for consistency across ministries)
 - Listen to the ways in which parishioners hope to serve
 - Gifts Discernment Assistance
 - Ministry Guide and Fair
6. Annual Stewardship Renewal
 - Parishioners have a need to give
 - Planning and Evaluation
 - Annual Commitment of Time, Talent and Treasure
7. Gratitude and Accountability
 - Recognition of stewardship of parishioners
 - Recognize commitment
 - Expressed gratitude for giving
 - Annual Stewardship Report – includes time, talent and treasure. Tells the story of the life of the parish.

Purpose of a Stewardship Renewal

1. To provide a regular, annual process whereby parishioners pray, discern and make a commitment of their gifts of time, talent and treasure to support their parish and the wider community in the coming year
2. To encourage parishioners to share their gifts as a faith response
 - Through the sharing of gifts, to meet the ministry needs of the parish and local community
 - To encourage parishioners to respond to their need to give vs. giving to a need
 - To build the ministry life of the parish through engaged parishioners
 - To meet the temporal needs of building up the parish campus in service of a vibrant parish life
 - To build the parish financial base from year to year by asking people to “take a step”

Benefits of Stewardship Renewal vs. Offertory Program

- Conversion of heart vs. one-time ask
- Total Stewardship concept reinforced/not just about giving to the offertory
- Part of a total Stewardship Formation plan for the parish
- Giving of self as a faith response vs. pastor asking to give

What is a Stewardship Renewal?

A Stewardship Renewal is a designated span of time – usually three to five weeks – during which a parish focuses an exceptional amount of resources and energy on the stewardship conversion process and education about the Stewardship way of life. During the renewal period, every possible means of communication is used to instruct parishioners about their responsibilities as disciples of Jesus Christ, and to motivate them to accept a more intense commitment to a stewardship attitude in mind and heart. As the renewal period reaches its culmination, parishioners are invited to declare their prayerful, discerned commitment to stewardship by filling out a commitment form.

The annual Stewardship Renewal should be only one tool in the toolbox for a complete Stewardship process in the parish. The renewal should be a part of a year-long plan for emphasizing Stewardship as a way of life, including generous welcome and hospitality, Stewardship homilies and bulletin and other means of communications, lay leader formation, and all age level Stewardship education programming.

The Orange Catholic Foundation on behalf of the Diocese of Orange Stewardship Renewal timeline is recommending the use of the three weeks surrounding Stewardship Weekend, as an ideal time to conduct the renewal. ***It is up to the parish to decide the best time for their own stewardship renewal.*** The important thing to remember is that the parish should make a commitment to “clear its calendar” so that no other initiatives intrude on the activities of the renewal and it receives the priority it requires for success.

Maximum results require maximum follow-through of the steps. Thank you letters and follow-up letters and/or phone calls are KEY for maximizing results for your stewardship renewal. A mid-year follow-up letter thanking and updating on the progress of the commitment is essential.

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-POPE FRANCIS, EG, 273



Stewardship
WEEKEND
DIOCESE of ORANGE

Getting Started

Blessed. Chosen. Sent.

Stewardship Renewal 2016 Timeline

Date	Description	Action	RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS								
August 20 or 24	Attend Workshop	Attend Stewardship Renewal Workshop Create a timeline and assign responsibility for all aspects of the campaign		RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS							
August/September	Preparations	Put Renewal on Parish Calendar, give dates to Liturgy Committee, Music Director, all stakeholders, draft Pastor letter, plan for Stewardship Report mailing, implement plans, notify all ministry heads of upcoming Stewardship Renewal – get Parish Leadership Onboard!			RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS						
Month of October	Ministry Announcements	Include announcements in all religious education classes, adult ed events, ministry meetings, etc. to publicize and promote the upcoming renewal				RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS					
By September 20	Materials	Order Renewal brochures and commitment cards for delivery by October 7 Check material checklist for adequate supplies <u>Use pens in the pews for the commitment cards</u> as it makes the information much easier to read later.					RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS				
By Thurs., October 20	<i>Optional Mailing (Pg. 48)</i>	Mail pre-announcement Sunday postcard (...next Sunday we will be beginning...)						RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS			
Date in October or other time during the year	Ministry Fair <i>(optional)</i>	A Ministry Fair may be conducted prior to the Stewardship Renewal to familiarize the parishioners with all parish ministries to assist them before selecting a ministry to commit to during the renewal.							RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS		
Timing To Be Determined by Parish	Ministry Guidebook <i>(optional)</i>	A published booklet listing all the parish ministries, a short description and contact information. Use all year for new parishioners, general distribution and during ministry fair								RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS	
By October 8-9 (4 weeks prior to Commitment Weekend)	Publish Parish Stewardship Report (previously Annual Financial Report) <i>Optional Mailing (or distribute at Mass)</i> (Comprehensive Stewardship report of the parish including Time, Talent and Treasure) Annual Report Sample Letter - (Pg. 37)	Stewardship Team assist Finance Committee with stewardship-based format – Parish Stewardship Report Include Stewardship stories/pictures Ministry accountability/people served/sacraments, etc. Current and future budget Pastor presents at town hall meetings or at all Masses Bulletin Announcements (Pg. 36)									RECOMMENDED PREP STEPS FOR BEST RESULTS

Date	Description	Action	CORE PROGRAM – 3-WEEK PERIOD
Thurs/Fri, Oct 27-28 (for bulk mail or 10/31 for 1 st class – to be received Weds-Fri. of week prior to Commitment Weekend)	Mailing – Important! (Pg. 49) Announcement/Invitation Letter	Mail letter from Pastor Include Stewardship Renewal Brochure w/ Commitment Card (allows parishioners to review material and spend time praying over their response)	
Weekend #1 – October 29-30 31 st Sunday in Ordinary Time	Announcement Weekend (Pg. 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Banner • Stewardship Prayers of Faithful (Pg. 20) • Bulletin Insert (this week you will be receiving...Pg. 20) • Homily on Stewardship • Lay Witness Talk after Announcements • Pulpit announcement commitment following weekend – letter coming in mail this week • Stewardship Theme/bulletin • Stewardship Prayer (after announcements) 	
Weekend #2 - November 5-6 32 nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Commitment Weekend (Pg. 22) Time, Talent and Treasure Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin Announcements • Stewardship Prayers of the Faithful • Stewardship Renewal brochures in pews (switch out different languages for appropriate Masses) • Homily on Stewardship • Homily Helps – Page 24&25 • Pastor explains commitment cards • Ask by pastor for commitment cards (see liturgy highlights on Pg. 26 for ritual for collecting cards at altar) • <u>Prayer (on back of brochure)</u> read from Pews at close of Mass 	
Weekend #3 - November 12-13 33 rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Thank You Celebration Weekend (Pg. 24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank parishioners from the pulpit (Cards can be put into collection basket)/ challenge those who have not yet responded • Bulletin Announcements – thank you and reminder to turn in commitment cards • Prayers of the Faithful • Stewardship Prayer • Special Hospitality to celebrate renewal/thank you banner/balloons 	

Date	Description	Action	
November 14 until completed	IMPORTANT! Data Entry into Parish Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign duty of entering data from commitment cards into database for prompt follow-up 	STEPS FOR MAXIMUM RESULTS
Week of November 14	Follow-up Letters (or e-mails) for non-responders (Pgs. 53)	Mail Follow-up Letters w/brochure and commitment card and business reply envelope	
November 14 or soon thereafter	Telephone Follow-Up (Pg. 55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephone Follow-Up (continue as needed) 	
November 21 (or as soon as possible)	Mailing #4 (Pg. 52) Thank You Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail Thank You Letters Publish participants names alphabetically in bulletin or on banner posted in visible location Publish results of Renewal in bulletin, on parish website and other media used by the parish Continue to encourage late responders to make a commitment 	
Ongoing (as decided by pastor)	Follow-up Mailings throughout the year (Pg. 54)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly or biannual communication thanking parishioner for involvement and pledge (consider giving accounting of status of pledge), update report on parish Stewardship corner in bulletin Parish newsletter 	Moving Toward Increased Engagement

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY WORKSHEET 2016

Person(s) responsible/ phone #

1. **Volunteer Chairperson:** _____
(Assists the pastor)
2. **Staff Contact/Liaison/Coordinator:** _____
(Assists the pastor/calendar event/order materials)
3. **Ministry Guidebook:** _____
Prepare an annual updated directory describing parish activities
4. **Ministry Fair (if conducting):** _____
Coordinates the Ministry Fair by getting all ministries to display
5. **Bulletin Announcements:** _____
Place in parish bulletin for weeks of:
Oct 8-9, Oct 29-30, Nov 5-6, Nov 12-13
7. **Pulpit Announcements:** _____
For Masses on: Oct 8-9, Oct 29-30, Nov 5-6, Nov 12-13
8. **Prayer(s) of the Faithful:** _____
For weekends of Oct 29-30, Nov 5-6, Nov 12-13
9. **Mailings:** _____
 - Optional Mailing - Annual parish report & cover letter by Oct 8-9
 - Optional Mailing – Pre-announcement Sunday postcard by Oct 20
 - Mailing – Announcement of Renewal letter week of Oct 31 or before if bulk mail
 - Mailing - Follow-up to Non-Responders Mailing – week of Nov 14
 - Mailing - Thank You letters: November when Commitment Cards are received
10. **Person(s) to Supply Pews at all Masses:** _____
Scatter a generous supply of commitment cards, brochures and pens on the seats in the pews Nov 5-6, Nov 12-13
11. **Homily/Overview of Parish Stewardship:** _____
For Masses on Oct 29-30 (As a lead in to Witness Talk -pastor is preferred)
12. **Person to coordinate Witness Speakers:** _____
For Masses on Oct 29-30
13. **Homily on Stewardship/Pastor to ask for every family to complete and return commitment card:** _____
Nov 5-6 - Walk parishioners through filling out commitment cards/
invite parishioners to bring cards forward
14. **Organize Telephone Crew/Telephone Follow-up:** _____

- 15. **Set/Monitor Goal for Commitment Cards:** _____
 (Refer to Goal Setting Recommendations on Page 15.
 Follow-up with ministry coordinators to make sure they
 contact new sign-ups ASAP (weekly throughout Dec.)

- 16. **Organize Hospitality for Celebration Weekend:** _____
 Nov 12-13

- 17. **Plan Follow-Up Reporting in Bulletin and from**
Pulpit: Nov 12-13, Nov 19-20 _____

- 18. **Send thank you acknowledgement letters and**
letters to non-responders _____

The follow-up process for a Stewardship Renewal is just as important as the process for asking for the commitment cards. The parishioners must know that you are paying attention to and appreciate their commitment. It is critical to the success of the parish that you track, acknowledge and follow-up on the annual Stewardship Renewal pledges.

If parishioners don't see a strong follow-up, it may be perceived as a nice thing to do, but not taken seriously with outcomes expected.

Materials and Resources

The following resources are available at the following link on the Orange Catholic Foundation website at www.orangecatholicfoundation.org under Stewardship/Parish Resources

- Order Form for brochures will be available for order in English, Spanish and Vietnamese
- 2 different versions of commitment cards available (template made available for parish customization and printing)
- Children/youth brochure template available online for parish customization and printing
- Additional lay witness guidelines (also available in Spanish)
- Bulletin articles and reminders
- Logo
- Posters will be printed for Stewardship Weekend that will complement the *Blessed. Chosen. Sent.* theme and made available one month prior
-

Material Ordering

- Material orders are due by September 20
- The adult commitment card should be customized to your individual parish.
- Youth brochures could be used at youth meetings/event immediately preceding the commitment weekend with catechesis and instructions for youth to bring their commitment card to Mass on Nov 5-6.
- Children's brochures could be placed in the pews and made available at the Children's dismissal as a project for the children to complete their form and bring back with them for the commitment ask.

Setting a Goal for the Parish Renewal

While it is important to set a challenging goal for your parish, it is important to know realistically how many "active" parishioners you have attending liturgy. By using the following formula, you will have a better idea of your "target audience". For instance, a parish with 3400 registered families may have an average mass count of 2400 on an average weekend.

Therefore, it is recommended that you determine your goal based on mass count divided by 3 (avg family in OC). That will give you the average number of families attending Mass.

Example:

- Mass count: $2400 / 3 = 800$ (avg. number of families attending Mass on a weekend)
- $800 \times 50\% = 400$ families (50% is considered an extremely good turnout for participation)
- $400 + 100$ (estimate for expected returns for non-active families) = 500
- 500 is parish goal for stewardship renewal

Goal:

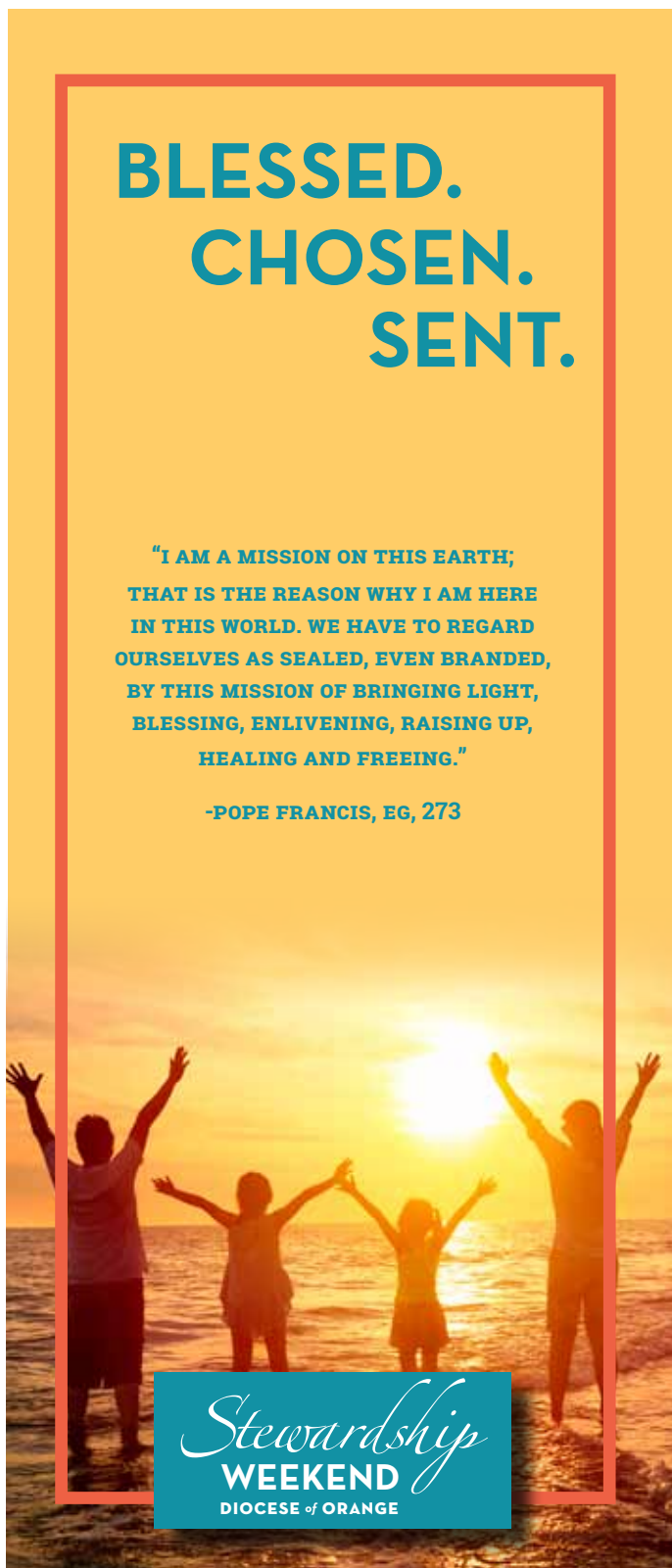
- Number of commitment cards to be returned _____
- Percent of mass count participation _____
- Set goal for increase in number of envelope users _____
(How many currently?) _____
- Set goal for financial pledges to increase 25% for envelope users _____
(Determine avg. gift for envelope users) _____
- Set goal for increase in number of electronic givers _____
(How many currently?) _____

When assessing whether you have reached your goal, look at the calendar year (January-December) as the time span for the Parish Stewardship commitment.

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Readings, Announcements, Prayers, Liturgy Highlights

Readings/Announcements/Prayers of the Faithful

Announcement Sunday #1

October 29-30

Use the homily to introduce the Stewardship message

Bulletin/Pulpit Announcement

This weekend at each Mass we will be hearing from _____ (name of parishioner or couple) who will share with us a 'Witness Presentation' – their story of how God has blessed them, their gratitude, and how they are sharing those blessings.

This week, you will be receiving a letter from (pastor name) , a brochure and commitment form in the mail. During this coming week, please reflect on God's generosity to you, prayerfully discern how you are giving back a portion of those blessings to the parish, and please fill out and bring the commitment form back with you next week to be brought forward during the liturgy.

Prayers of the Faithful

For all in our community: may we, like Zacchaeus, seek Christ with open hearts and respond to God's love by generously sharing our lives and resources, we pray to the Lord...

For the grace to share our many blessings, bringing to fulfillment God's purpose in our lives by living and growing as good stewards, we pray to the Lord...

Readings/Announcements/Prayers of the Faithful and Homily Helps Commitment Sunday #2

November 5-6

Cantor Pre-Liturgy Announcement

Today is Stewardship Commitment Sunday. As a member of our parish community, you will be invited to come forward with your Stewardship commitment form following the homily.

Bulletin/Pulpit Announcement

Today we are asking all parishioners to prayerfully discern your commitment to our parish family. Please listen and respond to God's call through our pastor, (name), who is asking you to state your intentions for supporting our parish and community through faith, time, talent and treasure in the coming year. The joy of giving back to God's community is great. We ask that all our parishioners return their commitment form when invited forward.

Prayers of the Faithful

For the grace and strength to re-commit ourselves as good stewards who are chosen by Christ, called to discipleship, and sent forth in mission, we pray to the Lord...

For generous hearts, as we respond to the many gifts we have been given, so that Christ's love may be known through our sharing as good and faithful stewards, we pray to the Lord...

Homily Helps for 2016 Stewardship Weekend

Blessed. Chosen. Sent.

November 5-6, 2016

The first reading from the Second Book of Maccabees gives us the striking example of seven brothers who put God before all things. They courageously declare their faith, knowing that doing so will result in their death at the hands of the Antiochus. What we do not hear this Sunday is the repeated declaration of faith in God made by the remaining brothers, who are all killed, and of their mother's encouragement of each of them to stay steadfast, trusting in the promise of eternal life rather than in the fleeting security of earthly wealth and power.

The second reading from Second Thessalonians reminds us to find strength in the Lord as we live our daily lives as Christian disciples.

The Gospel according to Luke tells of an interaction between a group of Sadducees and Jesus, in which the Sadducees try to trick Jesus through a question about the resurrection. Jesus is not trapped, however, and points to the difference between life here and in the life of the resurrection. Jesus refuses to be trapped into limited thinking, and rather asks us to stay focused on things that matter, and to recognize the radical nature of life with God, now and into eternity.

In celebrating Stewardship Sunday today, we also focus on the things that matter. We recognize that we are *blessed* — that everything we are and have truly comes from and belongs to God. It is given to us in trust, to steward well. Recognizing our blessings, even in the midst of difficulty, is a very spiritual way of life, a way of living faith in our daily lives. When we see life, time, relationships, talents, resources — everything — as blessings from God, we grow in gratitude, and respond by sharing these gifts, bringing them to yield with increase. This is the steward's way of life.

We are *chosen* by Christ to live as disciples, as members of Christ's Body in the world. As Christian disciples, we follow our Lord's way of giving love and mercy, willingly, selflessly, sacrificially. This way of life is deeply meaningful, as we share Christ's presence with others, especially those in need, through the ways in which we give of ourselves and our resources, particularly here in our parish, our faith community. Chosen by Christ, we are members of Christ's Body, the Church.

We are *sent* in mission, called to make a difference in the world, through the ways in which we live our daily lives. Every interaction, every decision, every moment in which we find the grace to generously share our faith, attention, presence, talents, and treasure is an opportunity to share God's love as Christian disciples.

Readings/Announcements Prayers of the Faithful for Thank You/Celebration Sunday #3

November 12-13

Use the homily to reinforce the Stewardship message for this Follow-up/Celebration Sunday

Bulletin/Pulpit Announcement

Thank You! To all who have responded to the call and returned a Stewardship Renewal commitment form; our sincerest thanks to you. Our Stewardship annual renewal is coming to a close; if you have not yet returned your commitment form, our parish needs you; we need every member to return a commitment form so together we can grow in Christ! Please bring your Parish Stewardship commitment form with you to Mass next weekend or mail it to the parish office so the telephone follow-up committee will not need to bother you with a follow-up phone call.

Prayers of the Faithful

For willing and ready hearts, as we re-commit ourselves as good stewards who share our faith, time, talent and treasure, we pray to the Lord...

For all in our community: may we grow as disciples and good stewards throughout the coming year, sharing all we are and have as members of Christ's Body who are blessed, chosen and sent, we pray to the Lord...

Liturgy Highlights/Outline for Collection of Commitment Forms on Commitment Sunday

It is recommended that the collection of the commitment forms be conducted during the liturgy as a sacred ritual. Following are step-by-step instructions that may be helpful:

- Cantor: Pre-Liturgy Announcement (see page 22)
"Today is Stewardship Commitment Sunday. As a member of our parish community, you will be invited to come forward with your Stewardship commitment form following the homily."
- Following the homily when the Pastor talks about the Spirituality of Stewardship and explains that everyone is being asked to prayerfully discern and complete a commitment form today, the parishioners are asked to pass down the cards and pens at the end of the pew (see notes on page 30).
 - Sample script: If you haven't already completed your commitment form, please take a couple minutes to look at the brochure in the pew and prayerfully decide what your stewardship commitment will be for the coming year. Complete the information on the separate commitment form and you will be asked to come forward to place your commitment in the basket at the foot of the altar.
 - Allow 2-3 minutes of silence for the completion of the forms (*Music Director provides reflective music.*)
 - Invite individuals and families to come forward and put cards in basket on altar (*Music Director continues reflective music*)
 - Everyone in the church, those who come forward and those who do not, will be impacted by this powerful act of the faithful bringing their commitments to the altar.
 - Pastor exit/presider takes over (if associate presiding)
- Creed
- Prayers of the Faithful
- Collection
- Regular Presentation of Gifts of bread, wine and treasure
- End of Mass: Invite all to stand and read Covenant Prayer (in Renewal brochure)

Checklist for Liturgy on Commitment Sunday

- Stewardship Renewal brochures, commitment forms and pens placed at the ends of all pews (include Children/Youth commitment forms)
- Basket to collect commitment forms will be placed in front of the altar (consider using offertory pre-labeled security bags (one for each Mass) to reflect confidentiality at the bottom of the basket and have all commitment forms picked up after each Mass and placed in the security bag for that Mass. Store in a secure place (sacristy or other secure place).
- A member of the Stewardship Committee picks up all the bags after the last Mass to prepare for data input.

Commitment Forms

SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. The commitment form is a tangible sign of our commitment to giving back to God for all our blessings. Even though everyone would ideally rejoice in expressing their commitment to Christ's church, the reality is that we need to be more intentional about asking parishioners and making it as easy as possible for people to participate in the renewal and to return their commitment forms to the parish. It is appropriate that we come together as a community and state our intentions as a member of the parish community in making our commitments on an annual basis.
2. Pre-mailing of the commitment form along with a renewal brochure from the pastor prior to Commitment Sunday provides time for the parishioner(s) to prayerfully discern their response. Many may forget to bring their commitment form with them to Mass, therefore, brochures in the pews will also be necessary.
3. Put renewal brochures and commitment forms in the pews throughout all of the Renewal to be made available for parishioners to review and participate.
4. Provide a brochure and commitment form in every follow-up mailing to those who have not returned them yet, along with a postage prepaid business return envelope, if desired.
5. Plan a special ritual for collecting the commitment cards to be brought forward prior to the offertory (see Liturgy Highlights on previous page). When members of the community bring the commitment cards forward, have sacred music playing and have the cards placed in a basket placed before (but not on) the altar. This serves to dramatize the spiritual dimension of Stewardship as a way of life.

Make sure the pastor walks the congregation through filling out the commitment cards during Mass. This should be done on Commitment Sunday.

Asking for the Commitment Form

(The script is on the next page)

Why We Must Ask for the Commitment Form:

We recommend that the pastor walk the congregation through filling out the commitment form and ask for the commitment form as the pastor has a special relationship with the people as the leader of the community.

The 'asking' is extremely critical to the entire process. *If it is not done, it will not have the same affect and your outcome will be much lower.*

We know that a very high percentage of those present at Mass will not have brought the brochure and/or commitment form they received in the mail. If you 'ask' in church and give the congregation ample time to fill out the commitment form, most of the cards returned will come from the pews (instead of from home or returned in the mail).

Questions That Might Be Asked

(Do not ask for questions, but in case they are asked):

1. What is the recommended % of income to be given to the parish?

If you use the standard tithe of 10%, it is recommended that 5% be given to the parish, 1% to the diocese (annual appeal) and 4% to other charities of choice

2. Should I give a percentage based on my net or gross income?

The teaching of tithing is based on gross income.

3. Why do we need to write down our commitment? Isn't it just between me and God? Why does the parish need to know?

When we put something in writing, it tends to have a much more significant impact on us. We are more likely to "stick to our commitment" if we write it down. As a member of the Church, we are all needed to return to the Lord with increase. The parish can also be more efficient with budgeting if they know what they can look forward to as income. As with all of life, the Church also has a temporal side that needs pledges and gifts to operate. As Christian stewards, we also have a need to give.

Sample Step-by-Step Request for Pastors for Commitment Forms

1. I would kindly ask everyone who has not yet completed and returned a Parish Stewardship Commitment Form(s), to please pick one up from the pews - along with a pen. (Hold up a commitment form).
2. Please hold up your hand if you do not have a pen or brochure and a hospitality minister will quickly bring you what you need. (Wait for hospitality ministers to provide brochures and pens needed.)
3. Now, on the stewardship commitment form, please take a moment to prayerfully discern and complete your name, address, phone and e-mail. Your e-mail will allow us to communicate with you more efficiently. Then complete your stewardship commitment of your spiritual life, family and community. Next, complete your gift of talent by indicating what ministry (inside or outside the parish) you are or will become involved in. Finally, please indicate what your annual pledge will be for financially supporting the parish.
(Scripture teaches the idea of the tithe – giving 10% of our income as a worthy benchmark to work towards in our giving. Our bishops have suggested that half of our giving be to the parish. So that giving 5% of our income to our parish is a goal we set before you for giving to the parish. I ask that in deciding on your pledge to the parish this year, you consider that 5% goal or to take a step of ½% or 1% increase toward that goal.
5. Each one of us has received many blessings from God. I ask you to consider whether the percentage you are giving actually reflects a sacrificial gift to your Church home.
6. Now, I ask you, if you haven't already, to fill out the Commitment Form with the specific amount you plan to give to the parish in your regular Sunday envelope or electronic gift.
7. When you are finished, you will be asked to come forward and place your card in the basket at the foot of the altar.
8. The pastor should also participate in this ritual by completing a form (or have a form ready to place in the basket – it is important for all to see the pastor participating as well.
9. We are aiming for 100% participation and hope as many people as possible will complete a form. (Please give everyone 2-3 minutes to complete the card).
10. Thank you for your sacrifice and commitment to God and our parish.

BLESSED. CHOSEN. SENT.

"I AM A MISSION ON THIS EARTH;
THAT IS THE REASON WHY I AM HERE
IN THIS WORLD. WE HAVE TO REGARD
OURSELVES AS SEALED, EVEN BRANDED,
BY THIS MISSION OF BRINGING LIGHT,
BLESSING, ENLIVENING, RAISING UP,
HEALING AND FREEING."

-POPE FRANCIS, EG, 273



Annual Reports, Ministry Fairs and Witness Talks

**Bulletin Announcement
for Annual Stewardship Report
(weekend of October 8-9)**

This weekend, our parish is publishing our annual Stewardship Report of all parish life for the fiscal year of 2015-16 in the parish bulletin. Father _____ will be reviewing our annual report for at all Masses this weekend. The annual Stewardship Report will also be posted online at the parish website www._____.

-or-

The parish Stewardship Report of all parish life for the fiscal year of 2015-16 was mailed to all parishioners last week and Father _____ will be reviewing the report at all Masses this weekend. The annual Stewardship Report will also be posted online at the parish website www._____.

Sample Annual Report Cover Letter

(Parish Name)
123 Anywhere Ln
Anytown, WA 99999

(Date)

«mailingname»
«address»
«citystate» «zip»

Dear «salutation»,

As a member of (name of parish) Catholic Faith Community and a good steward of the gifts God has blessed you with, it is important that we are accountable for all of the gifts that have been offered in support of our parish life and community. We have accomplished some wonderful things over the past year; all with God's abundant blessings that you have shared so generously.

Our parish has made great progress in the past year in educating our children and adults, enhancing our liturgical celebrations, reaching out to those in need, providing opportunities for parishioners with similar interests to fellowship and various parish capital projects (add highlights specific to your parish). Our very lives have been shaped and transformed by our parish family experience.

Enclosed you will find our annual parish report. It is a presentation of our total parish life including ministry, sacraments and financial gifts and the good that has flowed forth as a result of your good stewardship.

My hope is that you will be proud to read this report that so wonderfully reflects the generosity and engagement of our faithful parishioners. Your generous response to God's bountiful grace truly furthers the mission of Christ here in (city name).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor

Reporting to the Parish

Annual Stewardship Report

(Samples available through the Orange Catholic Foundation - Parish Stewardship Education)

Distribute the parish annual Stewardship report to all parishioners, including those not active in the parish.

1. The report should include an accounting of the previous fiscal year and projected income and expenses for the current fiscal year.
2. September or early October is the best time to distribute this report. It is a subtle way to make people aware of parish needs without emphasizing this during the Parish Stewardship Renewal.
3. **Do not make the financial report just a set of dry numbers.** Successful Stewardship parishes are depicting a much broader picture of parish life and activities. Be prepared to answer and welcome questions from parishioners.
4. Some parishes have included their annual report in a PowerPoint presentation and e-mailed it to parishioners. Still other parishes have created a video annual report and shown it at parish gatherings (coffee & donuts, etc.).
5. It is most desirable that every registered family receives a copy of the annual report via the mail, no matter their involvement in the parish. For some, it may be the only communication they receive from the parish. The investment in postage is worth the impact it will have for your parish and the resulting engagement by your parishioners. Since we know only some 30%-40% of all parishioners are at Mass on any given Sunday, this would ensure the report gets to all households on the parish roster.

Ministry Guidebook

Parishioners need to know what the parish is doing. Even the most 'connected' parishioner will probably not be aware of all the activities and good works the various ministries of the parish are engaged in. It is also exciting for parishioners to realize the many activities which are constantly going on in the parish.

A good way to communicate this is to create a ministries and services guide or brochure. It details all the various ministries of the parish, what activities each ministry is responsible for, a contact name and phone number. It might also include a yearly events calendar, and perhaps parish policies.

Some also include a tear-out card with a list of all ministries that parishioners can complete and return to show their interest and for follow-up.

The guides could be included in the new parishioner welcome packet, on your ministry cart or in brochure racks in your vestibule. They could also be made available at your ministry fair.

Sample guides are available for review at the Orange Catholic Foundation Office for Parish Stewardship Education, dleaverton@orangecatholicfoundation.org or (714) 282-3026.

Ministry Fair Guidelines

A Ministry Fair is a parish event in which all ministries, programs, services, and activities are showcased at one time, each having their own table, booth, or space. This is an **educational event** in which parishioners are able to meet people and gather information about the various ministries within the parish, enabling them to make a better decision as they choose where to serve. This event allows parishioners to ask questions, and also brings them to a greater awareness of all the opportunities the parish has to offer.

Basic Guidelines for a Ministry Fair:

All Ministry Fair:

- Needs to be in a location that can accommodate all ministries with displays, but also one that people will come to after Mass;
 - Or, can be set up in a highly visible courtyard area that will attract attention as parishioners are leaving Mass.

Quarterly/Segmented Ministry Fairs:

- You may decide to break up your ministries into categories, such as Hospitality, Community, Formation and Outreach and have 3-4 different ministry fairs to allow for more quality time and fewer ministries displaying at once. This allows for a more engaging experience for all parishioners and a less hectic atmosphere for them to learn more about the ministries.
- Volunteer(s) to head up the fair – organizing and following through on all aspects of the fair.

Putting together a ministry fair:

- Get the permission of the pastor and/or appropriate parish leadership.
- Reserve the appropriate space & get it on the parish calendar well in advance so there are no conflicts. Reserve date/time for set up as well.

2 months out:

- Communicate with the heads of all ministries, asking them to participate in the fair.

Month before:

- Remind each ministry a month out, two weeks out, one week out, and then mid-week. (Email is very beneficial in order to do this.) Ask them for names of staffers too.

Weekend of:

- Make sure you give ministries ample time to set up their display.

After Ministry Fair:

- Send thank you notes to each ministry. Maybe give an award for the best looking tables.

At the Ministry Fair

- Each ministry, program, service, or activity should be responsible for setting up its own table/booth/space. Parish may want to provide them or offer a small budget to cover the costs of display/materials.
- Tables should have:
 - display board about ministry (pictures would be good!)
 - a card or brochure that attendees can take with them.
 - some little give away (candy is always good, magnets, pens, --items that will

- encourage people to step forward and not just walk by)
- decorated so they look attractive
- needs to be staffed with a knowledgeable volunteer after each Mass.
- Even if a ministry doesn't technically 'recruit' new members (eg, finance council appointed by the pastor), it still would be beneficial for them to have a table to educate people about their ministry.
- Take pictures of the Ministry Fair and publicize in upcoming bulletins.
- Need volunteers for clean-up.

Witness Talk Guidelines

Also available in Spanish (www.orangecatholicfoundation.org
under Stewardship Resources)

Witnessing in the Liturgy

Witnessing should be an integral part of the liturgy. As part of the community, the witness is someone whose daily life reflects common joys and struggles; someone who listens to the Word proclaimed, and has a special role of 'breaking it open'. Finally, the witness' action is Eucharistic, giving of self through stewardship to Christ and to all members of the Church.

Witness Selection and Recruiting

Individual testimony is an important part of the Parish Stewardship presentation. This requires selective recruiting of individuals who will share with the parish family their personal life experiences of generously giving their time and financial resources as an important expression of their faith. Criteria for selecting a witness should be that the person is:

- a giver of time, talent and treasure;
- a communicator who articulates well before a group;
- a prayerful individual who knows the theology and benefits of Parish Stewardship.
- Representative of the culture of the Mass being celebrated

It is much easier for people to relate to a fellow parishioner who goes through the same daily trials and tribulations trying to make a living. People may relate less to the clergy or religious who aren't perceived as sharing a similar lifestyle.

Another suggestion for looking for a witness speaker is to look in your parish census database to find someone who has dramatically increased their monetary giving or has dramatically increased their involvement in parish ministry. There must be some story behind those changes!

When Should the Witness Speak

The best time for the witness presentation is immediately after the homily (check with pastor or liturgy coordinator). The priest or deacon introduces the witness speaker so the liturgical requirements for the homily are met. If you decide to have the witness speak at the end of Mass, you are missing those who leave early.

The combined presentation of the homily and witness testimony should not last more than the usual time allotted for the homily. People's attention spans are short and they will lose interest quickly.

Why Have a Witness Speak About Treasure?

Who likes to talk about money in church? For many it seems so unspiritual, so materialistic, however, there are many ways to weave the stewardship message into this section of the talk, as a response to God's blessings. In the Gospels, we see that Jesus was not reluctant to talk about money. Over half of His parables concern money or other possessions. Jesus knew that few things reveal more about our spiritual condition than what we do with our money. Jesus pointed out that we reveal our values by our actions just as a tree reveals what kind of tree it is by the kind of fruit it bears. A wise priest once said, "Show me a person's checkbook, and I'll tell you a good deal about the state of his/her soul." This is not much different from what Jesus Himself said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (LK 12:34).

Witness Talks about Stewardship: Guidelines for Speakers

The purpose of your talk is to share your personal faith story as an example and inspiration to others. Make a list of the main things you will say, using the summary brochure of the pastoral letter if available. Your talk should take about 2 to 3 minutes. Your pastor may want to see the outline of your talk before you speak. You will be introduced by the priest at the end of Mass and will use your outline as a guide when you give your talk. Telling stories and speaking from the heart is the most effective way to touch other people's hearts! Thank you for saying yes!

1. Mention something in the readings of the day that relates to being a good steward of God's gifts; a disciple or follower of Christ.
2. Tell who you are so people can relate to you, your family, parish involvement, work or other things you would like people to know about you.
3. Tell about your faith journey, are you a "cradle Catholic" or a convert? What events triggered your faith development over the years? (Catholic schools, a relative, particular priest or other person, a retreat, something you heard or read, or a significant event such as a birth or birthday, death or divorce, graduation or retirement, injury, illness or unemployment, etc.)
4. Tell how you first learned about the Stewardship way of life and what in particular made you decide to try to live that way. Did you experience a sudden "conversion of heart" or embrace the Stewardship way of life gradually?
5. Explain what you decided to do differently, how you made those decisions, and what exactly you do now to be a good steward. (For example, how much more prayer time, how you volunteer at church or school, and how you determine how much money you give to the church and to charity.) You might mention some of the gifts you have that you are endeavoring to develop and share to build up God's kingdom.
6. Tell how living the Stewardship way of life has made a difference in your life as an individual, as a couple, and as a family. Have you made any impact, however small, on people in your parish or the larger community?
7. Close by inviting everyone to think about their own faith journey, how they are using their unique gifts from God, and to consider how they might use their gifts to be better stewards.

Witness Talk Worksheet
Keep talk to 2-3 minutes
(Remember, brief, impactful points are best received by audience)

1. Begin with personal introduction and involvement in parish

Include personal faith journey – cradle catholic or convert – include importance of milestones, important role models (family member, priest, religious)

2. Personal witness of conversion (and struggle) and blessing

Speak from the heart using personal stories. Include changes in life since being introduced to stewardship (how has it affected prayer life, family)

3. Explain how you first became aware of stewardship, who or what inspired you and continues to inspire you – What does stewardship mean to you? In doing so, explain what a Christian steward is:

- One who receives God's gifts gratefully
- Cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner
- Shares them in justice and love with others
- Returns them with increase to the Lord

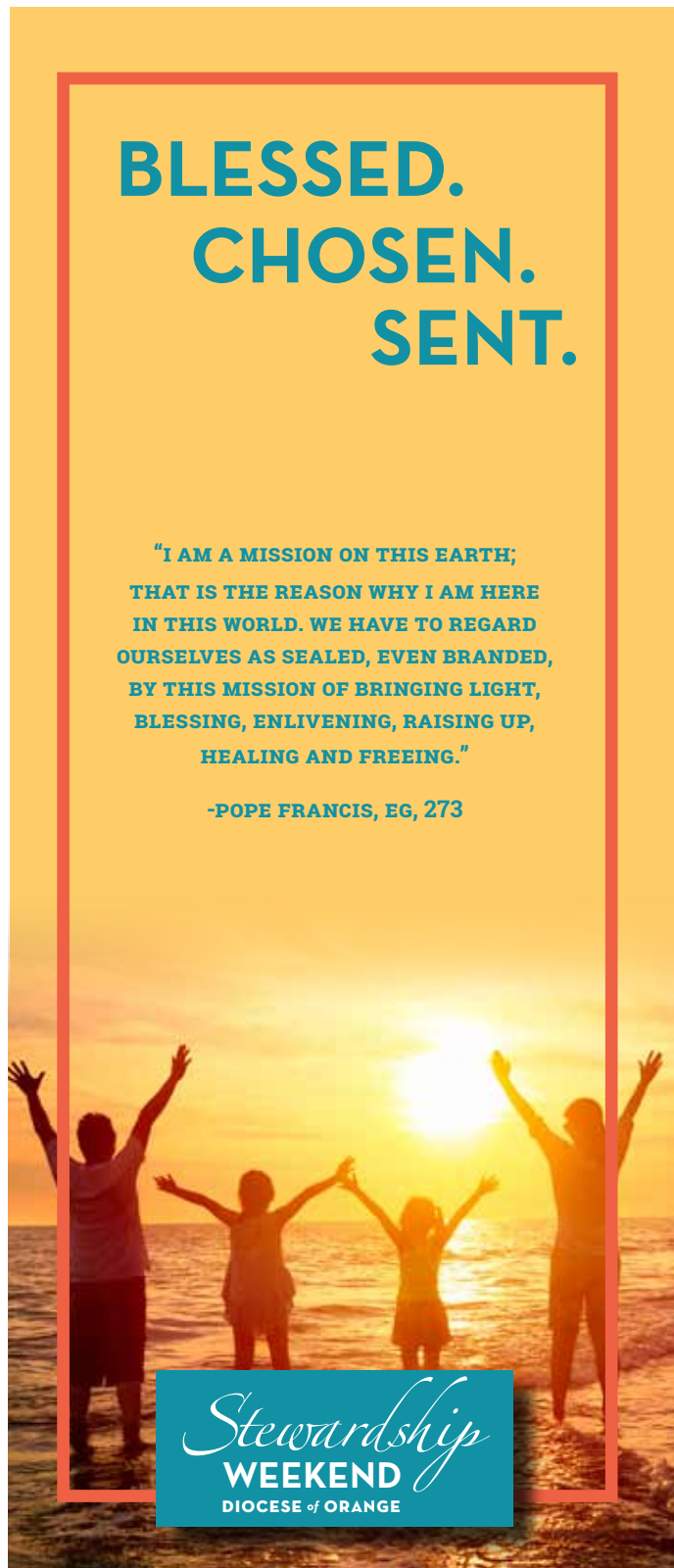
4. Explain your commitment to giving of time, talent and treasure (stress giving to parish, diocese and community – How do I practice stewardship?)

5. Personal invitation/challenge to the audience to consider stewardship as a way of life and/or to pray and use commitment forms mailed to them or in pews to complete and bring forward indicating their promise to God for time, talent and treasure

**BLESSED.
CHOSEN.
SENT.**

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HEALING AND FREEING."**

-POPE FRANCIS, EG, 273



Sample Letters Communications Bulletin Announcements

Pre-Announcement Sunday Postcard

(optional)

Dear (name of parish) Parishioner,

At this time of year, we as a parish focus on how everything we have been blessed with is a gift from God – the foundation of Stewardship as a way of life.

Our theme this year for our Stewardship Renewal is 'Blessed. Chosen. Sent.' and will be conducted on November 5-6. Do we live our faith in such a way that others see that Christ is truly at the center of our lives? Do we share our gifts with the belief that everything we have is a gift from our loving God and in honor of His covenant with us, that our Lord Jesus has called us to generously share those gifts?

Many of us are searching for greater joy, peace and happiness in our lives. During the coming weeks please take time to consider the greater joy and peace that many fellow parishioners have found from prayerfully discerning their response to God.

In thanksgiving for all God's many gifts to us,

Pastor

Commitment Renewal Invitation Letter

*To be mailed with brochure and commitment card
(keep to one page)*

November , 2016

Re: (Name of Parish) 2016 Stewardship Renewal – *Blessed. Chosen. Sent.*

Dear Fellow Stewards,

We learn to say “thank you” as children, but rarely as adults are we encouraged to grow to greater levels of thankfulness. Yet cultivating a grateful heart is a life-long challenge that can lead us to spiritual growth and happiness. Beyond this, gratitude can become a gateway to loving and serving like Jesus.

In a special way this year, we remind ourselves of the great benefactor of all we have been gifted with, our generous and loving God. No matter how far we may feel from God’s presence, or what we may do to create distance between ourselves and our Lord, we are never abandoned nor beyond God’s generous love. God’s love never fails!

Our hope is that this will be a valuable starting point for a deeper reflection on the abundant grace of God bestowed on us, the transforming power of gratitude, and our generous response as faithful stewards.

As a visible example of our individual and collective commitments to Stewardship, I will be inviting all of our parishioners to bring their commitment forms forward and place them in the basket at the front of the altar as a sacred offering, a covenant between you and God. Stewardship is not a passive act, but an active witness to what we say we believe.

Our covenant with God also calls us into covenant with one another. As members of the Body of Christ, each of us is needed to offer the gifts we have, a share of the many blessings we have received. The commitment you bring forward in the name of Jesus Christ on the weekend of November 5-6 will be a sign that you are growing as a steward and as a person made in the image of a giving God.

Children and youth brochures will also be available on this weekend or can be downloaded from the parish website.

With gratitude,

Rev. Pastor Name
Pastor

Effective Follow-Up Mailings Suggestions

PERSONALIZE LETTERS:

The follow-up letters are designed to be printed using mail merge on parish letterhead, to have personal salutations, and to be signed personally by the pastor or electronic signature.

MAILING LABELS:

- Use printed labels or envelopes addressed to Mr. and Mrs. First name/last name
- Avoid using window envelopes as this may signify junk mail to many people.

POSTAGE:

First class postage is recommended to emphasize the importance of Parish Stewardship. The other alternative is a bulk, non-profit stamp. None of the Parish Stewardship mailings are expected to exceed one ounce; therefore, a single first class stamp should be sufficient. Always check first, however!

Thank You Bulletin Announcement

THANK YOU!

We wish to thank all of those who have conscientiously returned a Stewardship Renewal commitment form. By returning a commitment form, you have demonstrated your commitment to a vibrant faith life at our parish and made it easier for the parish to plan for this coming year.

If you haven't returned a commitment form yet, please either drop it off at the parish office or put it in the Sunday collection. If you have misplaced your commitment form, there are additional forms in the church vestibule or please contact the parish office at (phone) and we'll gladly send another.

Parish Renewal Update

We are pleased to report that to date, we have received ____ commitment forms in response to our *Blessed. Chosen. Sent.* Stewardship Renewal. This signifies the vibrant spiritual life of our parish and the desire for so many of our parishioners to be fully engaged in parish life at (name of parish). There is still time to return your commitment form! There are additional forms in the church vestibule or the parish office.

(You may also consider printing names of families who have responded (no details, only names in alphabetical order) – this always encourages those who have not responded to want their name to be listed as well.

Thank You Letter

(to be mail merged with information from parish database.)

The more personalized the letter, the better response you will receive.)

Date

Household Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____ and _____,(first names)

Blessed. Chosen. Sent.

Thank you so much for returning your Stewardship Renewal commitment form. Please know that you are a valued member of this community. Your commitment of time, talent, and treasure is essential—and that of each member of our parish—to carry on the Lord's work in this place. Together we can do so much more than any of us could do alone.

I deeply appreciate your generous financial commitment to our parish for the coming year of \$_____.

I also acknowledge your gift(s) of talent and the commitment you (and other family names) are making (or have made) to the following ministry(ies):

Name _____ Ministry _____

Name _____ Ministry _____

Your commitment of your time that you make in prayer, spirituality, worship, and the time you give to your family and community is a testament to your dedication to your faith.

I trust you're already beginning to experience the peace of mind and closeness to God that comes from sharing with others what God has given us. I know God will continue to abundantly bless you and your family.

I will keep you in my prayers and I ask that you keep me in yours.

Thank you again for sharing with our parish the talents and treasures God has entrusted to you.

With gratitude,

Pastor

Follow-Up Letter

(non-responders)

Date

Household Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____ and _____ (first names),

Blessed. Chosen. Sent.

Over the last few weeks, our parish has been focusing on Christian Stewardship – including our understanding of and response to the many gifts and blessings that God has given to each one of us.

We know that all of us as Christians have a need to give back in thanksgiving to all God's blessings. As you decide how you will commit yourself to our parish, I ask you to prayerfully discern how God is calling you and what your response will be.

We are simply asking you to write down what you hope to commit to with your time, talent and treasure during the coming year in light of all the blessings God has given you. This is not a binding commitment. Returning your Stewardship Renewal Commitment Form enables us to better plan for the upcoming year. Taking a step in faith to support your parish will be spiritually rewarding to you.

In case you have misplaced your brochure, another one is enclosed. Please take a few minutes to prayerfully review and complete the commitment form and return it to the parish in the enclosed envelope.

In thanksgiving for all God's blessings to us,

Pastor

Follow-Up Letter

(Mid-Year Letter)

<mailingname>
<address>
<citystate> <zip>

Dear _____ and _____,

Blessed. Chosen. Sent.

As your pastor, I wish to thank you and acknowledge you for your faithfulness in making a commitment to our parish last fall through our Stewardship Renewal.

God has blessed each one of us with life and a unique package of gifts and talents and then trusts us to use them in ways that build up His kingdom. At this time, I wish to thank you for your commitment to our parish and its mission. What we give to the Church in the form of our time, talent and resources is our outward sign of living in covenant with our good and gracious God.

As part of our parish family, your individual response makes a significant difference in the life of our Church. I appreciate your commitment of stewardship of your time that you make in prayer, spirituality, worship, and the time you give to your family and community.

As a sign of my appreciation, I wish to acknowledge your individual commitment to (_____) ministry by (family member name(s) – repeat for each family member

I also appreciate your contribution of \$_____ toward your commitment of \$_____ to our parish this year that makes our ministries and outreach possible. Your continued faithfulness is a consolation to me as your pastor.

Please know that you are a valued member of this community. We need each and every member of our parish to carry on the Lord's work in this place. Together we do so much more than any of us could do alone.

Thank you again for sharing with our parish the many gifts God has entrusted to you. Together we make up the Body of Christ.

In Gratitude,

Pastor

Telephone Follow-up

A key objective of the Parish Stewardship Yearly Renewal is to receive decisions (yes or no) from 100% of all households. Although many parishioners return commitment forms during the initial phase of the Renewal, experience has shown that no parish will receive from 100% of their households without doing telephone follow-up.

Parishes not doing telephone follow-up should expect to receive commitments from 20-40% of their households. Parishes choosing to do telephone follow-up can obtain responses from almost all parishioners and realize a 60-85% 'yes' rate.

Telephone follow-up will encourage parishioners who have not yet turned in a commitment form and should result in an additional increase in regular offertory.

What is required to do telephone follow-up:

- Lists with names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parishioners who have not turned in a commitment form, and a supply of commitment forms for filling out over the phone. Be sure to highlight the Catholic(s) name and speak only to them.
- Let your parishioners know a week ahead of time that you will be doing telephone follow-up to those who have not responded. Put these notices in the bulletin and in the pulpit announcements.
- It is crucial that your list of non-pledgers be as current as possible. Anyone you have received a commitment form from, even a few hours before the telephoning, should not be on the telephone list.
- Organize a group of parish volunteers to make the necessary telephone calls.
- You should pick volunteers who like dealing with people, won't twist arms but will make the 'pitch,' and are committed to the parish.
- Be sure to go over the procedures with your volunteers first.
- Familiarize the volunteers with the Parish Stewardship materials.
- It usually works best if the calls are made together at one location. It helps to keep everybody on track, keep morale high (in the face of the inevitable 'no'), and you can maintain some 'quality control' over the telephone calls.
- Call early in the week. The earlier in the week the more likely people will be home.
- Check on callers periodically for any questions or concerns they may have.

Script: Parish Stewardship Telephone Follow-up

Relax, Smile While Talking, Speak Slowly, Speak Sincerely

"Hello. This is _____. May I speak with _____? Make sure you speak with an adult Catholic. They are highlighted on your sheet.) _____, (use their first name) this is _____, (use your first name) a volunteer at (church name). Father _____ asked me to follow-up with you regarding our Parish Stewardship Renewal. I'm calling to see if I can answer any questions or if I may fill out a pledge form for you tonight."

IF YES:

"Father _____ wants us to encourage everyone to complete a pledge form for your commitment of time, talent and treasure to the parish community. We are asking all parishioners to make a prayerful decision about their involvement at (parish name). In addition to your involvement in ministry, we would like to ask that you try to make an affordable and reasonable step towards planned, proportionate giving. The amount is entirely up to you. How much per week or month would you like to pledge to our parish for this coming year?"

IF THEY PLEDGE

"Thanks for your pledge. We really appreciate your commitment to our parish. Have a good evening."

IF NO:

"That's fine. I would just like to encourage you to fill out and mail the commitment form to Father _____ in the envelope provided or bring it with you to church this coming weekend. Do you need me to mail you another form?" (If another form is desired, verify the name and address and indicate that they will be sent information in the mail during the next few days.) "Thank you very much for your time and have a good evening."

IF THEY DON'T:

"We respect your decision. Thanks for your time and support. Have a good evening."

Telephone Follow-up Questions

Suggested Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

Why do I need to make a written pledge?

The brochure is designed to provide some “food for thought” on making your commitment of time, talent and treasure. It is also designed to help you discern and make a financial decision, based on faith, as to how you are going to use your God-given gifts for the building up of the kingdom in your own parish as well as the larger community. It is a sacred commitment between you and God. The treasure part of the commitment also helps the Pastor and Parish Finance Council to better plan for the coming year’s budget.

What is Stewardship?

Stewardship begins with the recognition that everything we have has been given to us by God. Stewardship promotes an understanding of giving time and treasure as an essential part of a Christian life-style. It is planning our giving. It is giving first to God. It is giving proportionately in relation to what we have received. We give to God first, rather than just what we have left over after taking care of all our other needs and wants.

If someone suggests they are having financial difficulty and are unable to pledge.

Express empathy: ‘I’m very sorry to hear that. I want you to know that we’re here to help. We don’t just ask for help, but we try to also be of assistance during tough times in people’s lives. May I have someone contact you to possibly help?’ If the answer is no, let them know that if they change their mind, please contact the parish office. If they express a desire for a call back or further help, please take their name and number and be sure to forward this information immediately to the parish office for follow-up.

Guidance about how much to pledge:

That’s entirely up to you. You know your situation best. This year we’re asking everyone to try to take an affordable, reasonable step in increasing their giving. When you are at peace about the size of your gift, and don’t find yourself making excuses to yourself for its size, and when you know in your heart that you’re been completely honest with God and yourself, then your gift is the proper size.

If the person is fearful of the unknown future (losing their job, ill health, etc.) or is uncomfortable with signing or making a ‘legal commitment’:

That is something you must decide for yourself. But, this is not a legal obligation and we do not ask for your signature. Your pledge is simply a covenant between you and God stating your intention to provide support for our parish ministries. The parish understands if your situation changes. But through pledging, our parish can better plan for its ministries and budget.

What about all the people in my parish who give nothing at all?

This used to bother me too until I realized that the real question isn’t about others. The real question is: what about me? I had to ask myself whether what I am giving is truly a gift to God’s community, or if I’m only giving what I have left over after I have satisfied all my own needs and wants. I decided that my giving shouldn’t be based on what others give, but on how grateful I am for all the blessings God has given to me. Giving for me involves a personal faith decision that I make for myself based on my income and ability to give.

NOTES



www.orangecatholicfoundation.org