

How the Stewardship Committee can Work with Other Committees in Your Parish



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This document will give you ideas and inspirations for how you can integrate stewardship more fully into the ongoing life of your parish or congregation. One of the easiest ways to do that is to facilitate ways for the stewardship program and the Stewardship Committee to become less isolated from the other daily activities in your parish. Stewardship is a ministry and a way of life, just like the many other ministries that your congregation may undertake. As members of the Stewardship Committee, you have something to contribute that will enrich the work that your brothers and sisters are doing in their own committees.

The suggestions listed here are just the beginning. Your input and discussions within your own committee will enable the Holy Spirit to reveal other ways that we can all work together to better equip our common mission.

First, let's talk about some of the barriers that keep us from working with other committees or that prevent other committees from approaching the Stewardship Committee for a partnership.

"Stewardship Committee Myths and Misconceptions"

- That's only a job for September, October and November; it's March, what could we possibly need to do?
- Those are the money people.
- I could never serve on that committee, they ask people for money!
- Doesn't the Stewardship Committee put the budget together?
- I thought the vestry did that.
- What could Adult Education have in common with Stewardship, they're two separate things!
- Oh no, the rector never meets with the Stewardship Committee.
- Others ????

For each of these, or other misconceptions that we come up with, we should have an answer that counters that myth and provides an opportunity for education. That conversation will lead to an opening through which we can build a partnership.

The key is engagement.

Michael Durall in his book Creating Congregations of Generous People:

"The Stewardship Committee will need to engage members of the congregation, rather than waiting for them to respond to pulpit announcements or newsletter blurbs."

"It is not the job of the Stewardship Committee alone to discuss charitable giving in the church. Rather, the committee serves as a liaison between the congregational leadership and the people in the pews."

GENERAL TACTICS

Time and Talent

Good stewardship means we are using all of the gifts we have been given. That includes Time and Talent. (Remember, those are the other T's in Time, Talent and Treasure. Another way to look at it is Wealth, Work and Wisdom.)

- Time and Talent (or Work and Wisdom) “Survey”
 - Good activity for the spring or summer
 - Can be mailed out, put on the web site
 - Can also be left on the “track rack” and given out to new members
 - Less effective if used at the same time as your annual campaign – mainly people check off volunteer opportunities and forget to pledge financially
- Coordinate with or participate in a Ministries Fair
 - Offer the sponsoring committee – Outreach, Mission, etc. – to “co-sponsor” the fair
 - Stewardship can have a “booth” too.
- What to do with the information
 - Parish “Yellow Pages”
 - Resource for committee chairs and/or the clergy
 - The importance of following through; if they volunteer, they should be called



Stewardship Statements

In stewardship training, we suggest that the vestry develop a bold, clear statement that supports their view of stewardship and the value they place on responding to the many gifts we have received from God. We simply call it a “Stewardship Statement.” Many parishes around the country have them and use them often.

The exercise of putting such a statement into place is an informative one that goes to the heart of what any group feels is important and reinforces what that group feels other should do in response to their work. It is not unlike a mini strategic planning process that focuses our attention on a central theme.

- Start with the vestry; the Stewardship Committee can have one too. (They should be separate activities, however, not combined.)
- Every committee can have one of these – it’s a great exercise
- The basic format is simple:
 - We Believe ...
 - We Commit ...
 - We Commend ...
- Should be published/circulated
- Look at it every year to see if it needs revising



Here is an actual sample of a vestry stewardship statement from St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Georgia. It was written a few years ago.

We believe that God is the source of all gifts, spiritual and material. Our natural response, in gratitude, is to be givers and creators ourselves. While stewardship involves our entire lives, we believe that the way we use our money reflects the state of our spiritual lives.

We commit to follow Christ in community. In prayerful witness to our faith, each of us is already tithing or is committed to increasing his or her personal giving to reach or exceed the tithe.

Our experience is that joyful giving results in spiritual growth. We urge the parish to join us in the commitment to deepening our faith.

Signed by the entire vestry and the clergy

Grouping Multiple Activities Under a “Stewardship” Banner

Stewardship becomes less isolated when we emphasize that everything we do after we say “We Believe” is stewardship.

Sometimes all this means is using the word “stewardship” in different contexts so that parishioners get used to seeing that term and equate it with the broader work of the Church.

“Stewardship Ministries”

All Saints Ft. Lauderdale, for example, uses this term to include everything from their gardening club to the building and grounds committee to the human resources committee to the endowed funds committee. In their words, Stewardship Ministries “embrace all of the administrative functions involving the management and oversight of financing and fundraising, buildings and grounds, and personnel.”

“St. Michaels is a complete Stewardship Parish!”

St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Michigan (Roman Catholic) uses this phrase right on its web site when describing its work in the community. “With your generosity, all parish entities exist through your tithe, including the school,” says their site. “We are all called to be a part of our community sharing of our time, our talent, and our treasures knowing that all of our gifts come from God.”

So now that we have reviewed some general tactics we can use, let’s review how we can work with specific committees or other groups at our parish.

WAYS TO WORK WITH VARIOUS COMMITTEES AND GROUPS WITHIN THE PARISH

Clergy and Vestry

The Vestry and clergy should both back the Stewardship Committee, their work and their process. They are essential partners in helping your parish to strengthen its stewardship program.

- Introduce the Stewardship Committee members to the parish in the context of the liturgy on Sunday; follow up with bios in the newsletter.
- Have the chair of the Stewardship Committee sit in as an “ex officio” member of the vestry. That means they get to attend the vestry retreat too!
- Offer to provide your clergy and staff with training on financial stewardship issues; help to build their comfort level and understanding.
- Ask a member of the clergy to attend meetings of the Stewardship Committee; ask him/her to lead you in prayer as you begin your meetings.
- Work with the vestry and formally develop a plan through which the parish can reach the tithe in its giving to the Diocese. The parish should model the behavior we expect of parishioners.

Include your own ideas here:

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Outreach or Mission Committee

The work that we undertake through the mission or outreach committee is perhaps one of the greatest manifestations of our call to be healers and reconcilers in a broken world. We have been given the gift of life from a loving God who through his Son calls us to love one another as we have been loved. The Stewardship Committee should be a central partner with these committees as they plan their work.

- As information is gathered through time and talent surveys, have a joint meeting with the outreach committee to talk about forming volunteer teams for your efforts.
- Offer to help identify local organizations that would benefit from financial support from your parish.

- Coordinate a Christmas gift drive for those in need.
- Work with your Outreach Committee and your Finance Committee to develop a plan that annually increases the percentage of parish income that is devoted to mission outside the parish.

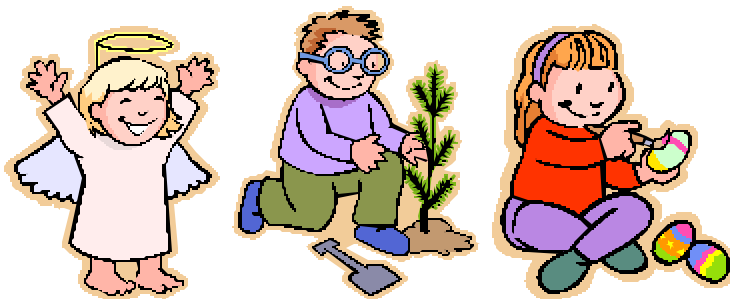
Include your own ideas here:

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Youth Education Committee; Sunday School; Christian Education

There are many ways to incorporate the ideas of stewardship into your Christian Education program. Children are often eager to learn about giving, sharing and thanking, and the lessons learned will last them a lifetime.

- Use Lent as a special time to encourage giving. Work with the teachers to facilitate the distribution of “mite boxes” or classroom piggy banks. Encourage children to bring their change in or to share part of their allowance.
- Work with the Sunday School Committee and the Mission Committee to identify a special project or project component that can be “sponsored” by the children’s offerings. Another way this can work is to make a gift to an organization of special interest to the children.
- Encourage parents and all adults in the parish to model good giving habits for the youth of your parish. They are watching, and the lessons they learn as children about how important it is to give will be lessons that will stay with them for a lifetime.



The following is an excerpt from a 2001 Stewardship Newsletter published by the Diocese of New York. It lists some great examples on how we can support young people in their exploration of giving.

“Teach the Children”

The Rev. Richard Sloan

How tough do you think it would be for us to learn arithmetic if the first time we were exposed to the subject was as adults? Unfortunately, this is exactly the standard practice in many churches when it comes to teaching stewardship. This confronted me when I recently talked to my youngest daughter about giving some of her babysitting money to our church. If you want to reach children, and their parents in the process, here are a few tips:

- Include a children's offering each week
- Give offering envelopes to every child
- Honor every gift by recording children's offerings and giving statements
- Teach parents how to teach their children
- Incorporate stewardship in the Church school (and confirmation class) instruction
- Make children feel important

Include your own ideas here:

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Worship Committee

Presenting gifts from the people is a central element of the Eucharist. And while most of us are familiar with the sight of ushers coming forward with the offering plates while the congregation sings “Praise God from whom all blessings flow,” there are other ways that stewardship can make its mark on the worship service.

- If your parish doesn’t have a “Stewardship Sunday” – create one! Use it as a time to celebrate giving, feature special sermons, and recognize the ingathering of pledges for your parish’s common life and ministry.
- Have members of the Stewardship Committee serve as the oblation bearers during the annual canvass.
- Develop simple, creative ways to make the Sunday liturgy slightly different during the annual canvass.
 - Witness statements during the Prayers of the People

- A special stewardship prayer said before the final blessing
- Have the pledge envelopes brought forward with the oblations

Include your own ideas here:

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Adult Education Committee

Whether it's sponsoring the adult forum on Sundays or promoting small group discussions, stewardship education can walk hand in hand with any adult education program. In fact, education is a crucial element in any successful stewardship program. As you consider ways to work with the Adult Education Committee, it might be helpful to determine which types of programs might be effective for various "adults" in your congregation. It could mean programs that speak to the needs of young adults, adults with or without children, older adults, etc.

- If you have a Sunday morning adult education hour, ask for time on that calendar to address the issue of stewardship in the church. You can talk about almost anything related to stewardship, so long as everyone knows that it was the Stewardship Committee sponsoring it.
- Offer a budgeting or financial management seminar for your parishioners. So many of us are overburdened by debt, a forum in which we can gather to talk about good money habits can make us all better stewards of our personal resources.
- Provide financial planning information or resources for new/young families.

Resource:
The Family Financial Workbook: A Practical Guide to Budgeting
 Family Budgets That Work (Pocket Guides Series)
 Larry Burkett
 Moody Publishers; (June 2002)
 ISBN: 0802414788

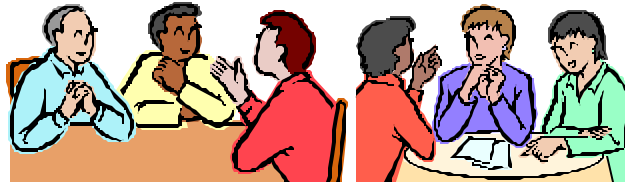
- Host a series of small group meetings that addresses the issue of financial stewardship and provides parishioners the chance to talk through their decisions about giving with their fellow Christians.

Resource:

[At Ease – Discussing money and values in small groups](#)

John and Sylvia Ronsvalle with U. Milo Kaufmann

Alban Institute – Faith Money and Lifestyle Series
ISBN 1-56699-202-8



Include your own ideas here:

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Finance Committee

Money is very important to the Church. It is important because it allows our congregations to do some very Christian things such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, housing the homeless, teaching the faith, worshipping, etc. But as important as it is for our parishes to have money, it is equally important for our parishioners to know and trust that our money is being spent wisely. That means the treasurer must ensure that parish is using the financial resources that have been entrusted to them are being expended to further the mission of the Church – not to see how many pennies can be “pinched.” That trust and understanding will only come from sharing clear and up-to-date information.

- Work with your Finance or Budget Committee to create regular reports for the congregation throughout the year. Items to report might include:

- List items in the Sunday bulletin, such as “Did you know that parishioner pledges enabled St. Swithin-By-The-Swamp to purchase new prayer books for the pews?”
- The newsletter can contain a quarterly summary of the expenses and income.
- Encourage the Finance Committee to hold an open meeting that enables parishioners to learn more about the financial work of the church.
- Ask if the Stewardship Committee and the Finance Committee can have one joint meeting per year to talk about the financial resources needed to fulfill your ministry.
- Does your parish have an “Investment” committee? If so, can the Stewardship Committee work with them to ensure that the church’s investment policy reflects the values of the congregation?

This is another example from the June 2002 Stewardship Letter produced by the Diocese of New York.

Is Your Church a Good Steward?
The Rev. Richard Sloan
 Members of a congregation should never be asked to do something the church doesn't do as well. If people are asked to be good stewards of their time, talent, and treasure, the church should do likewise by managing its money in an exemplary fashion.

If church finances are not managed in a business-like and open manner, or if the financial facts are not regularly reported to the congregation, people might assume the church has plenty of money or their money is being wasted, or they might simply use the lack of information as an excuse not to give more.

This means the finances of a congregation should be maintained and published to address these and other issues of trust. If the members are not given reasons to trust the leadership, perhaps it is right that the church is not entrusted with more.

Include your own ideas here:

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Building and Grounds Committee; Property Committee

We must always look at our parish's buildings, property and other physical resources as special gifts that we are holding in trust for our grandchildren. As with the environment, our generation will be held accountable to how we turn our buildings over to the next generation.

- Coordinate with the Property Committee and the Finance Committee to ensure that property maintenance and special projects are incorporated into the annual parish budget. Parishioners should know that their pledges should support the upkeep of your facilities. Educate your parishioners about what those projects are and how much the parish needs to invest in them.
- Sponsor an Arbor Day or an Earth Day celebration and use it as an opportunity to do some spring cleaning on your church's property.
- Work with your Building Committee to commission a history of your current building, complete with photographs. Use it as a brochure or on your web site.

Include your own ideas here:

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Include other ideas developed by your stewardship committee here:



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