



PARISH VITALITY
& STEWARDSHIP

Time & Talent Campaign Kit: Stewardship Committee Guide



Archdiocese
of Toronto

Office of Formation for Discipleship
www.archtoronto.org/stewardship

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Let us begin with a stewardship prayer:

*Loving God, I come to you in thanksgiving,
knowing that all I am and all that I have is a gift from you.
In faith and love, help me to do your will.
I am listening, Lord God.
Speak your words into the depth of my soul,
that I may hear you clearly.
I offer to you this day all the facets of my life,
Whether it be at home, at work, or at school—
to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy.
Give me the wisdom and insight
to understand your will for me
and the fervour to fulfill my good intentions.
I offer my gifts of time, talent and possessions to you
as a true act of faith,
to reflect my love for you and my neighbour.
Help me to reach out to others as you, my God,
have reached out to me.
Amen.*

***“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another
as good stewards of God’s varied grace”***

1 Peter 4:10

Dear Father and Parish Team,

Thank you for all your efforts to advance the spirituality of stewardship in your parish community! As Cardinal Thomas Collins wrote in his Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, “Stewardship is undeniably fruitful. Where, over time, more and more parishioners become engaged in committing their time, talent, and treasure to the work of the Gospel, the Church flourishes.”

One of the wonderful truths of stewardship is that we do not have to invest our time and energy going outside of our parishes to find the help we require. God has given us everything we need in the form of the gifts He has bestowed upon the lay faithful. Like the three servants who were entrusted with ‘talents’ by the master in the stewardship parable (Matthew 25: 14-30 and Luke 19: 11-27), God has given the faithful numerous gifts they can share to build up the kingdom of God.

God’s gifts are as varied as the people in our pews. Some people are very good communicators, others empathetic, some are very good at fixing things with their hands, others are great teachers, or are creative, while some are blessed with a beautiful singing voice. Based on a person’s talents and the interest that flows from them, people often pursue learned skills to match. Learned skills can include photography, accounting, landscaping, playing an instrument, website design, medical knowledge, etc. These gifts can be generously shared with your parish for the benefit of all. And the more engaged people become in parish life, the more vibrant the parish grows.

A faithful Catholic who was over 90 years of age and had experienced the highest levels of success in the business world after living through the immense trials of the Great Depression in his youth offered an interesting insight into human nature. When speaking on the motivation of people he would ask the listener, “How many times have you washed a rental car before returning it?”

“Never,” was always the universal reply. To this he would respond, “If people do not have a sense of ownership in things, they don’t care. That is why no one ever washes a rental car before returning it. It’s just something to use.”

Stewardship can help give a person a “sense of ownership” in their parish. Not in a material way, but in a spiritual and communal sense. Stewardship, accompanied with the proper formation, helps one to better understand their Christian call to service. Belonging to the mystical body of Christ, we are all called to serve in the Lord’s vineyard to the best degree of our ability based upon the gifts God has given us. As in the parable of the talents, no one is left out, either from the work in the vineyard or the judgement and joyous reward we hope to receive when the master returns to ask what we have done with our God-given gifts (Matthew 25: 14-30 and Luke 19: 11-27).

This guide will explore how a Stewardship Committee, under guidance from the parish pastor, can work to help deepen the spirituality of stewardship among the faithful to increase engagement and enhance parish vitality.

Stewardship and Parish Organizational Structure

A Stewardship Committee should assist the pastor in his efforts to help the lay faithful to share their God-given gifts with the parish community. In light of this, some parishes may choose to form a new Stewardship Committee, while others may select a different route. Perhaps you would rather repurpose an existing committee towards stewardship rather than forming a new one. Another option could be for you to add the mandate of stewardship to your Parish Pastoral Council. Whichever path you choose, this guide is meant to assist you in your efforts to become more intentional about stewardship. (Note: for simplicity's sake, we will be using the term "Stewardship Committee" in this guide.)

In the writing of this guide, and in an effort to consult widely, we have researched other diocesan stewardship guides and resources from both Canada and the US in an effort to present additional best practices for you to consider for your Stewardship Committee. To help fit this into our shared experience, all of this is presented through the lens of the Archdiocese of Toronto's Pastoral Plan (www.archtoronto.org/pastoral).

If you would like to see an example of a parish that has incorporated stewardship as a way of life into their organizational structure, we suggest you watch the webinar, "How to Build a Parishioner Re-Engagement Campaign...from Scratch!" We recorded this webinar with Fr. Jarrod Lies, Pastor at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in the Diocese of Wichita as a part of our Parish Vitality Webinar Series. As the Diocese of Wichita is widely considered a world leader in stewardship with St. Francis of Assisi being its flagship parish, we thought theirs an interesting example to share as they have been fruitfully engaged in the stewardship way of life for over 50 years.



To watch the video visit:
<https://bit.ly/2VJboXS>

While we suggest you watch the entire webinar as it is a treasure trove of information surrounding stewardship in a parish setting, you can skip ahead to 24:38 of the video if organizational structure is your main interest. A pdf of the org chart Fr. Jarrod Lies shares during the webinar can be found here: <https://bit.ly/44xl9Xz>

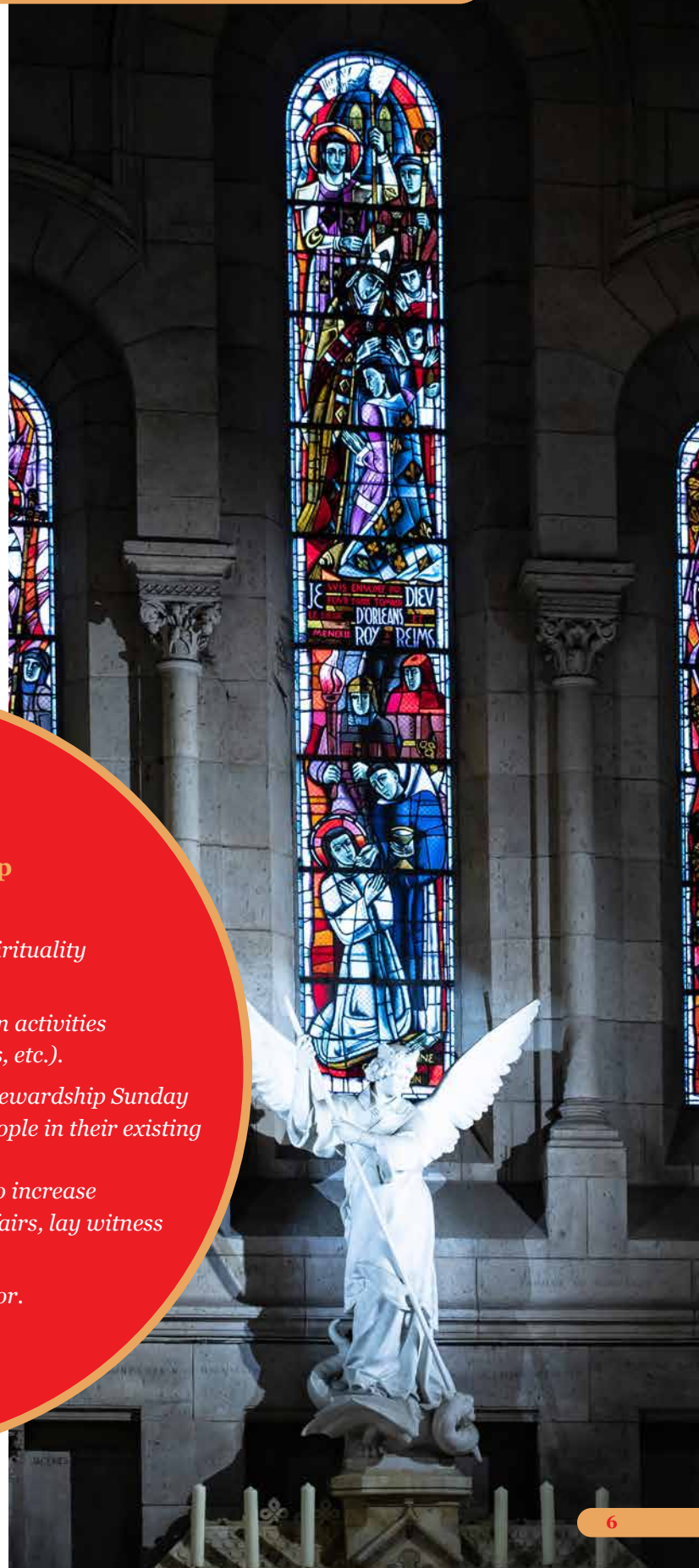
Stewardship and Parish Organizational Structure

We acknowledge that some of the organizational structures used by St. Francis of Assisi Parish are not applicable to our experience here and that the US is not Canada. An important distinction in the Archdiocese of Toronto to make is that stewardship is not to be used for fundraising purposes as this could reduce stewardship to a program rather than a spirituality.

If you have both a Parish Pastoral Council and a Parish Finance Council, it is important to keep stewardship connected with the Parish Pastoral Council rather than the Finance Council to keep the spiritual focus of stewardship properly aligned, rather than falling into the trap of seeing stewardship only as a means to fundraise more money for the parish.

Possible responsibilities and activities of your Stewardship Committee could include:

- *Assisting the Pastor to deepen the spirituality of stewardship in the parish.*
- *Assisting with stewardship formation activities and events (e.g. stewardship retreats, etc.).*
- *Organizing activities connected to Stewardship Sunday with the goal being to re-energize people in their existing ministries and inviting new people to get involved in parish life to increase parish vitality (e.g. parish ministry fairs, lay witness talks, a Commitment Sunday, etc.)*
- *Other duties as required by the Pastor.*



Stewardship Committee Responsibility & Actions

We suggest that the Stewardship Committee be an advisory committee to the pastor (and those he designates) rather than a decision-making body. An active Stewardship Committee can help the pastor to ensure that proper attention is given to “the stewardship way of life” by helping to get more parishioners actively engaged in parish life to increase parish vitality.

Ultimately, the stewardship committee should allow for the flow of ideas, seeking to serve while never imposing ideas. Its goal, under the leadership of the pastor, is to help ministries thrive by encouraging people to share their time and talent with the parish.

Core activities of the Stewardship Committee could include aligning stewardship activities in the parish with Stewardship Sunday (held on the 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time, which is normally the third week of September). As this is approximately three weeks before Thanksgiving, it is a time of the year when people feel generous. As such, it is a good time to make an invitation as people in a generous state of mind tend to be more inclined to help. Your Stewardship Committee could assist you to leverage the generosity of the season by holding stewardship related events which invite parishioners to get more involved in the life of the parish (or to thank existing volunteers).



Please refer to the time and talent campaign diagram near the back of this guide for ideas on how to create a customizable parish time and talent campaign. All guidebooks mentioned below can be found on our website at www.archtoronto.org/stewardship in the Parish Vitality section.

The following ideas are suggestions for Stewardship Committee activities. This list is by no means exhaustive, and each committee is encouraged to dream big and go beyond the scope of the following:

- **Parish Ministry Fair.** In order to be able to share their time and talent with the parish, parishioners should be informed of the opportunities available. A great way to do this, which the committee can organize, is a parish ministry fair. At the fair, all the ministries of the parish would share their information, speaking to those people who are looking for opportunities to get involved. (See the Archdiocese of Toronto’s Parish Ministry Fair Guide for assistance)
- **Volunteer outreach and follow up.** The Stewardship Committee can help your Volunteer Coordinators (where appropriate) to organize and facilitate the contacting of people who expressed an interest in getting more involved in the parish (during busy times of the year, following a Parish Ministry Fair, for example).
- **Lay Witness Talks.** One of the best ways to educate and motivate a congregation to live the life of stewardship is through personal testimonies. As such, lay witness talks can be a great way to do this. Lay witness talks make stewardship very practical, and can help people understand more concretely how to live out a life of service. (See the Archdiocese of Toronto’s Lay Witness Speaker’s Guide for assistance in training your speakers how to deliver an effective talk.)
- **Organizing a Commitment Sunday.** This is a Sunday selected by the parish to make a general call to the lay faithful to become more involved in the parish via sign up forms that are handed out or inserted into a parish bulletin and then collected the following Sunday. (See the Archdiocese of Toronto’s Commitment Sunday Guide.)
- **Integrating the spirituality of stewardship into the parish.** The Committee can think of creative ways to deepen the spirituality of stewardship in your parish among the lay faithful. This could include handing out the stewardship prayer card and the “Your Parish Needs You” brochure at a designated time of the year (these are available free of charge by contacting our office), using the Parish Vitality Video Shorts to promote your parish events, watching some of the Parish Vitality Webinars on our website in the Parish Vitality section, etc.



- **Effectively communicate the opportunities available for parishioners to share their God-given gifts.** Develop a catalog of ministries or opportunities available within a parish, and update this catalog as the need arises. Some ways this can be done is through a simple written brochure, or through running an event such as a parish ministry fair. Examples of short, catchy ministry descriptions can be found on our website in the Parish Vitality tab under the Templates and Forms section.
- **Appreciation.** A crucial aspect of stewardship is gratitude. The success of stewardship as a way of life in a parish can be greatly enhanced through a well-planned show of appreciation to all those involved - from volunteers to staff. This can be done through a formal event or dinner, or even with something as simple as handwritten thank you cards.
- **Hospitality.** One of the key pillars of stewardship is hospitality. The Committee can do a lot of work helping onboard new parishioners by assisting in the preparation of a welcome package, being greeters at weekend Masses, and in general helping make people feel welcome.
- **Organizing a stewardship retreat.** Some parishes found success in hosting a stewardship retreat, which was organized by the Stewardship Committee.
- **Other important duties of the Committee.** Could include writing a stewardship mission statement that is in line with the Pastor's vision, creating an annual calendar of parish activities related to stewardship, and envisioning and writing an annual stewardship plan with set goals and measurable objectives. They should also report back to the Pastor and Parish Pastoral Council on successes and challenges, re-evaluate stewardship efforts on a continual basis and adapt, check periodically with the Office of Formation for Discipleship for ongoing stewardship formation opportunities and resources, etc.



If you would like to see an example of a Stewardship Committee's responsibilities, the Diocese of Charleston has one here: <https://bit.ly/3oepqgi>.

(Please keep in mind that in the Archdiocese of Toronto, stewardship is not to be used for fundraising purposes.)

Formation of Stewardship Committee Members



Before Jesus had begun his ministry, he spent 30 years in Nazareth with the Holy Family. When Jesus began his public ministry, he spent 3 years with the disciples preparing them for their future ministry. Once you have selected your members for the Stewardship Committee, it is important they be formed in the spirituality of stewardship.

The first step should be to read Cardinal Thomas Collins' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship so the committee comes to a common understanding of what stewardship truly is. A way to study the letter is to go through a section of the pastoral letter each week and cover the letter together over a 4-week period. Time should be given for group discussion. We also suggest the committee also watch the videos: 1) A Message on Stewardship from Cardinal Collins or 2) Stewardship Formation Day, Part two: Deep Stewardship with Cardinal Collins. Both of these videos can be found on our website.

Learning more about the spirituality of stewardship is critical, especially in the early stages of forming a committee, as you cannot promote and apply stewardship in a parish if the members do not understand what that means, and what living the spirituality of stewardship is all about. **We encourage you to check with the Office of Formation for Discipleship for current formation opportunities.**

A good way to continue formation is to open each Stewardship Committee meeting with a stewardship prayer, reflect on the spirituality of stewardship at every meeting and discuss how it is being lived in the lives of every member.

If you would like a supply of stewardship prayer cards for use in your meetings, contact us. Additional formation tools and videos can be found at on our website at:
www.archtoronto.org/stewardship



Stewardship Committee Member Example Write-up

Position Overview

A good steward is someone who receives God's gifts gratefully, develops those gifts responsibly, shares those gifts lovingly in justice with others, and makes a return with interest to the Lord. A steward also encourages others to do the same. In order to continue the effort of making stewardship a way of life in the parish, the Stewardship Committee member will work together with the pastor and other members he designates to share with the parish faithful the spirituality of stewardship.

Activities/Responsibilities

- Committed to monthly meetings with the rest of the stewardship committee;
- To continuously educate themselves on the spirituality of stewardship, and to serve as an example to the parish community about what it means to live a life of stewardship;
- Plan and execute activities surrounding Stewardship Sunday (on the 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time, which is normally in the third week of September);
- Help plan events related to stewardship, such as lay witness talks, a parish ministry fair, Commitment Sunday, etc.

Skills, Experience and Qualifications

- Registered and in good standing with the Church, Pastor and community.
- Has a good understanding and be committed to the teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.
- Be an active member of the parish.
- Be skilled in collaboration, interpersonal communication and group process.
- Willing to participate in ongoing formation.

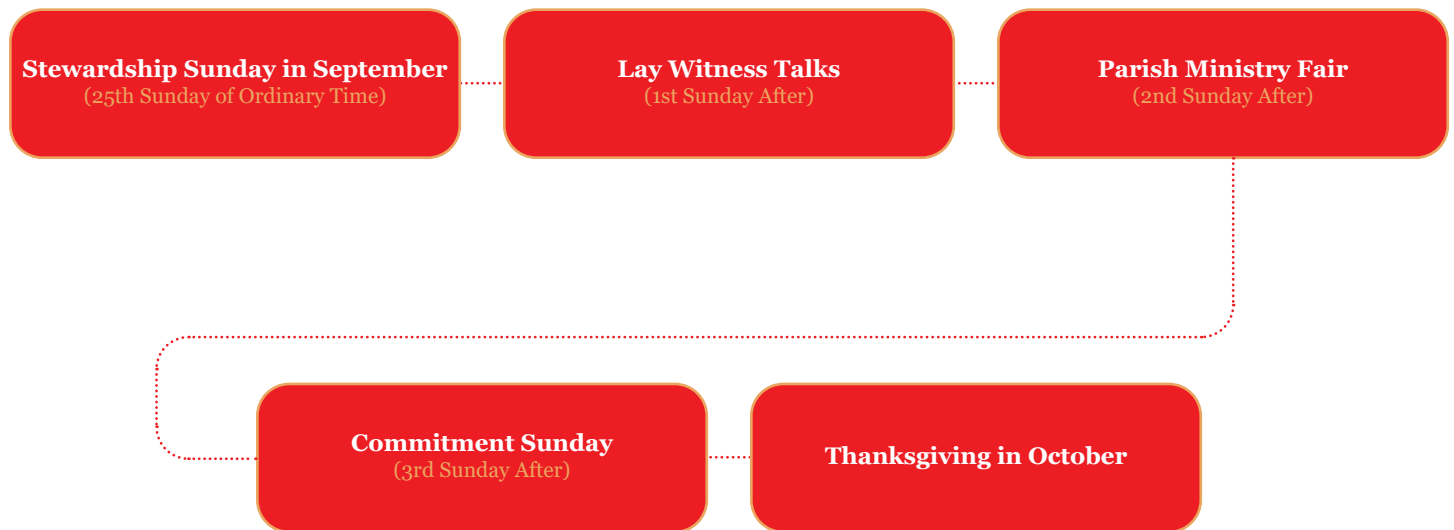
Personal Traits and Qualities

- Desires to serve the community and to commit time and talent to it.
- Honest and dependable, able to commit to what is being asked of them.
- Spiritually focused and motivated, a person of prayer and concerned with the parish communities' relationship with God.
- Optimistic, organized, patient, and creative.

How a Stewardship Committee Could Build a Parishioner Time & Talent Campaign for Stewardship Sunday

Because people feel generous in the lead up to Thanksgiving, Stewardship Sunday is a perfect time to ask them to get more involved in parish life. From the resources in the parishioner Time and Talent Campaign Kit, build your own customized “people raising” campaign by selecting the activities you think would work well in your parish following Stewardship Sunday. You may choose to do all of your stewardship related activities on Stewardship Sunday itself or space them out as illustrated below to leverage the generosity of the Thanksgiving season. You may even elect to create new activities based on the unique needs of your parish community or focus on stewardship formation. It is up to you!

Here is an example:



Leverage the homily on Stewardship Sunday to kick off your own customized parish time and talent campaign.

Don't forget gratitude!
Remember to thank everyone engaged in parish ministry (existing and new)

If you have any questions about stewardship, please contact:

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