

A Gifted Community, Living Responsibly (Stewardship)

Opening Prayer

It is suggested that a prayer space be arranged for the meeting. This could consist of a cloth of the appropriate liturgical season, a candle, a Bible as well as symbols of stewardship (ex. treasure box, clock, picture of open hands, etc.).

Leader: God is the source of all our gifts. Together let us praise our generous God for the bounty bestowed upon us.

Women: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; cry out to the rock of our salvation.

Men: Let us greet Him with a song of praise; joyfully sing out our psalms.

Women: For the Lord is the great God, the great king over all gods.

Men: Whose hand holds the depths of the earth; who owns the tops of the mountains.

Women: The sea and dry land belong to God, who made them, formed them by hand.

Men: Let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the Lord who made us.

Women: For this is our God, whose people we are, God's well-tended flock. (*Psalm 95*)

All: Glory be to the Father...

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:3-11

Faith-Sharing Question

All are asked to reflect on the following question with a partner. The leader then brings the group together and asks individuals to share with the entire group a thought which they were discussing.

In what ways do you use your gifts to serve God so that you yourself become a gift to others?

Closing Prayer

Leader: Loving Father, author of life and creator of all that is good, we praise you and thank you for all your gifts. Today we give special thanks for one another. Touch all our efforts with your grace so that we may truly become gifts to one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

This process is meant as a planning and brainstorming tool for Parish Pastoral Councils and parish members. If using this process to brainstorm objectives for a pastoral plan, it is suggested that you especially invite those members who are active leaders in the religious education life of the parish.. Also, it is important to record substantial points of the conversation and/or insights by using newsprint or other means.

Reflecting on Church Teaching

Several individuals are asked to read the following statements for the group. After reading the quotes, discuss the reflection question in terms of the parish as a whole, making reference to the Pastoral Goals if possible.

“In the various types and duties of life, one and the same holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father, worshiping God and Father in spirit and truth. These souls follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ, in order to be made worthy of being partakers in His glory. Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hope and works through charity.” (Lumen Gentium, 41)

“Essentially [stewardship] means helping the Church’s mission with time, money, and personal resources of all kinds. This sharing is not an option for Catholics who understand what membership in the Church involves. It is a serious duty...God wishes human beings to be his collaborators in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification; and such collaboration involves stewardship in its most profound sense...Stewardship in an ecclesial setting means cherishing and fostering the gifts of all, while using one’s own gifts to serve the community of faith.” (Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response 4, 25, 33)

Reflection Questions

What has our parish done that best conveys a positive and encouraging sense of stewardship among our parishioners? What ideas or images have most inspired you?

In what ways do we as a parish community share within our parish, within the local community and globally our material and spiritual gifts?

How is stewardship included in the curriculum for religious education and on-going faith formation?

Brainstorming Objectives

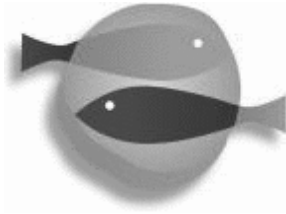
At this point, the facilitator reads the goal which has been established around Stewardship. The goal should also be clearly posted in the room somewhere so that all can reflect on it.

The focus now is for all members to brainstorm ideas to accomplish the stated goal.

This begins with all individuals stating ideas that they have to accomplish these goals. They can be very specific.

All of these ideas are recorded on newsprint as people say them.

To get the conversation going, you may wish to have individuals talk with a partner first for a few minutes and then come together as a large group.



Finding the Common Threads

Take a moment to read the following passages. Then based upon your conversation, answer the following focus questions and make a record of any consensus beginning to emerge among the group regarding future actions.

“Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint; if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.” (Habakkuk 2:2-3)

“It is not therefore a matter of inventing a ‘new program’. The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified – goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture. What awaits us therefore is an exciting work of pastoral revitalization – a work involving all of us.” (Novo Millennio)

“Christ has no body now on earth but yours; yours are the only hands with which we can do his work, yours are the only feet with which he can go around the world, yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world. Christ has no body on earth but yours.” (attributed to St. Teresa of Avila)

Focus Questions

Of all the ideas that have been mentioned here, choose three that would enable us to foster and nurture more vibrant stewardship among all parishioners and accomplish our goal for the future. (This question is asked of all participants)

Are there specific ideas that are emerging as a clear consensus among the group? Which of the ideas are emerging as a consensus?

Which part of these common ideas can be brought to life? What resources will the parish need to achieve these goals? Who are the individuals and groups within our parish, our cluster and/or within the Diocese that need to be involved in making these goals a reality?

