## STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL MONTH

How to Conduct the Weekends

The dates for the Christian Stewardship Renewal Month will always center around November. The exact starting date can change from year-to-year depending on when Thanksgiving falls during the month. The Renewal Month is made up of four Sundays, with the last Sunday ending as "Thanksgiving Sunday." "Thanksgiving Sunday" will take place on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving. The Renewal process should be coordinated by the Parish Stewardship Council in agreement with the Pastor.

The following is a schedule, suggestions and recommendations for each weekend:

**First Sunday: “What is Stewardship?”**

The focus of this first Sunday should be explaining what the Gospel meaning of stewardship is. The Diocese of Salt Lake City has adopted the Bishops' Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* as the definition for stewardship.

* Visual presence of Stewardship Renewal around the church, such as the vestibule or parish hall. Stewardship posters and brochures, along with information on bulletin boards can be effective. Parishioners need to have a feeling that this is something special.
* A member from the Parish Stewardship Council or Pastor speaks to parishioners at each Mass about the exciting Stewardship Journey, we, as members of the Diocese of Salt Lake City are embracing.
* Stewardship Brochures passed out after Mass or mailed to each family prior to this first Sunday. Brochure templates can be obtained through the Office of Stewardship and Development.
* A letter from the pastor can be included with the Stewardship Brochures.
* Stewardship Announcement placed in the Parish Bulletin.
* Hymns sung during this Mass have a stewardship theme.
* Prayers of the Faithful include at least one prayer regarding stewardship.

**Second Sunday: Ministries in our Parish**

Ministries offered through the parish may be highlighted. All parishioners need to know what is available for them to become engaged in the life and mission of the parish. If a ministry fair is conducted earlier in the year, then a ministry directory can be given to each family at this time.

* A representative ministry leader speaks at all Masses to explain the overall mission of the ministries in the parish and how parishioners can become involved.
* This would be a good Sunday to have Ministry Leaders represent their ministry by bringing up the Gifts during Mass.
* Stewardship Announcement in the Parish Bulletin.
* Hymns sung during this Mass have a stewardship theme.
* Prayers of the Faithful include at least one prayer regarding stewardship.

**Third Sunday: Commitment Sunday**

It is important that the Pastor makes the invitation to each parishioner to live a life of stewardship through the giving of time, talent, and treasure.

* Stewardship Commitment Forms are passed out after Mass or mailed to each family prior to this weekend. Commitment Form templates can be obtained through the Office of Stewardship and Development.
* A letter from the pastor can be included with the Stewardship Commitment Forms.
* Lay Witnesses speak at each Mass on how stewardship is a blessing in their life.
* Stewardship Announcement placed in the Parish Bulletin.
* Hymns sung during this Mass have a stewardship theme.
* Prayers of the Faithful include at least one prayer regarding stewardship.

**Fourth Sunday: Thanksgiving Sunday**

This is the day families will return their Commitment Forms to the pastor. Parishioners need to understand this is a special day as they are giving thanks to God for the many blessings they receive each and every day. The Commitment Forms are presented to the Pastor in a way that reflects this special day.

* Ideas for returning the Commitment Forms:
  + Invite a member of each family to come forward at the Offertory or other time during the Mass, as if they were going to receive Communion, and present their forms to the Pastor.
  + Ushers gather the forms during a special collection.
* Make available extra Commitment Forms to parishioners as they enter the Sanctuary if they did not bring theirs with them.
* Stewardship Announcement placed in the Parish Bulletin.
* Hymns sung during this Mass have a stewardship theme.
* Prayers of the Faithful include at least one prayer regarding stewardship.

Pulpit Announcements

A member of the Parish Stewardship Council and/or the Pastor should address the parishioners at each Mass during the Stewardship Renewal Month. The following are suggestions:

**First Sunday: "What is Stewardship?”**

The Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City is committed to a stewardship journey as one community of faith. Beginning this Sunday, we will spend the next four weekends reflecting on the Gospel meaning of stewardship. Stewardship is a way of thanking God through our prayers for all the blessings He has given us, and by returning to Him a portion of our many gifts through the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure with our parish community.

**Second Sunday: Ministries in our Parish**

This week, after all Masses, the Parish Stewardship Council is hosting a ministry fair. You are invited to join us in the {place} and learn about our various parish ministries and the many volunteer opportunities that we have available to you. Please reflect this week on what you can do for the parish to share your love for the Lord.

**Third Sunday: Commitment Sunday**

Christian stewardship is the outward expression of Christian discipleship that fundamentally involves prayer, nurturing our families, and sharing our time, talent, and treasure with others. This weekend we thank {Name of Lay Witness} for speaking with us about their personal experiences as a Christian steward and what it has meant in their lives.

**Fourth Sunday: Thanksgiving Sunday**

God has given us many gifts. Today we are asked to commit ourselves to being good stewards of those gifts God has entrusted to us; to share our time, talent and treasure as a sign of the love and gratitude we have for Him. To the many parishioners who returned their Commitment Forms today, a heartfelt thank you. If you did not bring your Commitment Forms to Mass today, it is not too late. There are forms available for you in the pews. The ushers will be collecting the Commitment Forms at this time, or you may drop them off in the gathering space as you leave today or mail them to the parish office this week. Again, thank you for your participation in this important event for our parish family. (Place Commitment Forms in each pew prior to Mass)

Bulletin Announcements

The following are suggested bulletin announcements for use during the Christian Stewardship Renewal month. You can adapt them to your parish circumstances:

**First Sunday: “What is Stewardship?”**

Starting this weekend, our parish will begin reflecting on Christian stewardship as our way of life. Christian stewardship is biblically based and is a way of thanking God for all the blessings He has given us by returning a portion of our many gifts through the sharing of time, talent, and treasure with our parish community. Christian stewardship can change the spiritual lives of individuals and our parish as a whole.

**Second Sunday: Ministries in our Parish**

Where Christian stewardship has been implemented, it has changed the lives of both givers and receivers. Our parish depends on the generosity of our people, especially when it comes to the sharing of both time and talent. One of the fundamental principles of Christian stewardship is sharing our God-given gifts of time and talent with our parish community. This week, after all Masses, the Parish Stewardship Council is hosting a ministry fair. Please join us in the {place} and learn about our various parish ministries and the many volunteer opportunities we have available to you. Then, please reflect this week on what you can do for the parish to share your love for the Lord.

**Third Sunday: Commitment Sunday**

God has given us many gifts. How do you use them? How do you put them at the service of our Lord at {Parish}? Today {Father} is asking each parishioner to commit to being good stewards of the gifts God has entrusted to us; to share our time, talent, and treasure as a sign of the love and gratitude we have for our Lord. Please take your Commitment Forms home and prayerfully decide what your gift to God will be through the sharing of your time, talent, and treasure at {Parish}.

**Fourth Sunday: Thanksgiving Sunday**

A sincere and heartfelt thank you to the many parishioners who returned their Commitment Forms today. If you did not bring your Commitment Forms to Mass today, it is not too late. Please drop your forms in the mail to the parish office this week or bring it to Mass next week. Thank you for your participation in this important event for our parish family.

A Guide for the Lay Witness

Stories - we are all captivated by stories. Media of all types, newspapers, magazines, internet, social media are always looking for good human-interest stories. Every good homilist or preacher includes a story. Jesus used stories to teach others, and the Gospel writers, through their own stories that witness to their lives with Jesus, still bring about life-changing conversion to millions of people. Everyone can identify with some moment when the life-story of another brought about a change for the better in their own life.

One of the most effective means of presenting the stewardship message is through the Lay Witness talk. This talk can be given either before Mass begins or at the completion of Communion. The lay witness talk has two purposes: to inspire people to accept the invitation to Christian stewardship, and to share real life examples of how stewardship is a way of life for them. People are motivated by hearing that Christian stewardship is a source of joy and peace. Hearing personal stories can lead to changes of heart and conversion.

Careful consideration should be given when selecting your lay witness. The talk may be given by an individual or a couple. Keep the following points in mind when selecting lay witnesses:

* The person(s) must already be practicing stewardship in their own life through time, talent, and treasure.
* They should be a person of prayer.
* They must be someone who shares his or her talents with the parish.
* The lay witness must support the church financially.
* The lay witness must be able to articulate about his or her faith and is comfortable speaking to a group.

*Sample Outline for Composing Lay Witness Talk*

* Introduce yourself: Give a brief description of your family, the number of years in the parish, etc.
* Define Christian Stewardship: It is our response we make in gratitude to God for what He has given to us.
* Discuss how you began practicing stewardship: When did you first become aware of the concept? Did you have reservations? Be honest about your first reactions. People will relate to any feelings of "discomfort."
* When did you begin experiencing the benefits? Speak of the effect living a life of stewardship has had on your faith life. Use anecdotes from your own family life.
* Urge your fellow parishioners to get involved: Invite parishioners to join you and your family in making your parish a stewardship parish and living your life as a steward.

*Dos and Don’ts of the Lay Witness Talks*

**Do:**

* Make sure the pastor sees a copy of the remarks and offers suggestions.
* Emphasize that Christian stewardship begins with gratitude to God for all His gifts.
* Explain that Christian stewardship means giving of the "first fruits," not what is left over.
* Talk about the personal need of each person to give of their time, talent, and treasure.
* Talk about the joy and fulfillment that comes to those who give God the first share of their time, talent, and treasure as a way of expressing gratitude and trust in God.
* Emphasize that it is time and talent and treasure, not just one or another.
* Explain that Christian stewardship involves not only your parish, but also the diocese and community.

**Don't:**

* Talk in bargaining terms: "I gave this much time or treasure, and God gave me this in return."
* Talk in dollar or time amounts: "If everyone could give $10 a week" ... "If everyone could give three hours a week."
* Use threats of possible consequences due to failure to give: "We won't be able to heat the church this winter."
* Suggest that Christian stewardship is an obligation.

*Lay Witness Sample Presentation*

The following is an actual presentation given by a lay witness. While this presentation is individualized and obviously cannot be used, it serves as a model for how lay witness presenters can express their thoughts.

*My first encounter with stewardship was in 1987. I sat in my parish church in Columbus, Georgia and listened to two people from Jacksonville, Florida tell us their story and ask us to consider giving a percentage of our income and more of our time to the church and community.*

*Until then, I thought I was doing pretty well. I had always given what I thought was generous to the church, especially in terms of money. I had been taught to “contribute to support the church,” both in the parochial school I attended in Philadelphia, and by my parents. When we were growing up, there was no Sunday Vigil Mass. Saturday night was the time to get ready for Sunday. Baths, polishing shoes, washing and curling hair and getting our church envelopes ready were all part of the ritual. My dad put $5.00 in his envelope in the 1950’s and each of us four kids put $.10 in ours. They were placed on the mantle behind my mom and dad’s wedding picture, ready to be picked up on our way to church on Sunday. When I grew up and got a job, I put $5.00 in my envelope. I figured that was what grownups did.*

*We never consciously thought about the giving of time. It was sort of expected that we would run errands for our neighbor who was in a wheelchair, or cut the grass of the elderly lady across the street. It was just part of what you did when you took food to a family who had a death or someone in the hospital. These were the things I continued to do as an adult without giving much thought as to how much time was involved or why I was doing it. It was only after listening to the people from Jacksonville that I began to realize I wasn’t even close to giving in proportion to what I had. My dad’s $5.00 in the 1950’s and mine in the 1980’s were entirely two different things. The little “good deeds” for other people were nice, but kind of sporadic.*

*My life has been richly blessed. I had a family who I loved deeply, parents who sacrificed to bring up four children and instilled in each of us a strong sense of church and morality. I was well educated, had a job, a home, friends and reasonably good health. God had given me many blessings, and I had to give serious thought as to how I was responding to His gifts. It took a while for me to do something, because I didn’t think I could raise my level of monetary giving, and I was pretty sure I didn’t have any “spare time” to volunteer. I eventually decided to “take the plunge,” but only on a trial basis of three months. I would give 10% to my church and other charities, and I would find two more hours each week to volunteer for something. I fully expected to be able to say at the end of three months, “Ok, Lord. I tried, but it doesn’t work.” That way, I figured I would be “off the hook.”*

*Well, at the end of three months, I found that all the bills had been paid, I wasn’t suffering from malnutrition, and I saved some money, bought clothes and went to the movies a few times. I also found out that I wasn’t worrying about money nearly as much as I had been. I had become a reading tutor in our county literacy program and loved it. I obviously wasn’t “off the hook,” but was hooked.*

*Since that summer in 1987 the one overwhelming change in life has been a deepening of my faith. I really trust that God loves me and will take care of me. He has done it even when I wasn’t sure it could be done. I guess my response to those who question the concepts of stewardship, or who are hesitant, is this: At least give it a try. Give God the opportunity to show you that He is a loving and generous God. He can only do that when we give up control and take that step in faith.*

Sample Pastor Letter to Accompany Brochure and Commitment Forms

{Date}

{Family Name}  
{Address}  
{City, State Zip}

Dear {Parishioner}:

Often times, when parishioners hear the word “stewardship,” they think, “Uh-oh, Father is talking about money again.” It’s a common misconception. In reality the most important part of stewardship is thankful prayer, along with the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure. We, as Catholics must remember that everything we have is a gift from God, and is for us to use wisely in His service. He asks us to share it with our family and friends, with our parish family, and with those less fortunate in our community.

I invite you to read the enclosed brochure reflecting on the fundamental principles of Christian stewardship. Each of us is blessed in different ways. This year I am asking each of the members of {Parish} to look at our blessings, our talents, and our financial resources to reflect on whether what we are returning to the Lord is appropriate in return for the great gifts He has given to us.

Also enclosed are the Parish Commitment Forms. Please reflect on them and indicate which current ministries you wish to continue and any new ones you would like to begin during the coming year. Also, please commit to put aside more time for prayer and spending more quality time with your family. Finally, I ask you to renew your financial commitment to the parish and encourage you to pray about what is an appropriate sacrificial gift in your family’s circumstances. This will allow us to better budget our parish finances and human resources this next year.

I am touched by the continued generosity of our parishioners at {Parish} and I am confident of your annual commitment to our stewardship journey as a way of life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend {Name}  
Pastor

Prayers of the Faithful

The following are Prayers of the Faithful which can be used during the Stewardship Renewal Month. At least one stewardship prayer should be used during each weekend. The following may be adapted to better fit your parish:

**First Sunday: "What is Stewardship?**

All that we have, and all that we are able to do are gifts from God. May Christians everywhere recognize the need to respond with gratitude to God's many gifts ... we pray to the Lord.

God created the world and everything in it. As stewards of this world, may we work toward a deep appreciation of all creation, respect for all human life, preservation of the environment, and development of this world through noble human effort ... we pray to the Lord.

**Second Sunday: Ministries in our Parish**

0, God, our loving Creator and Giver of all good gifts, bless our parish, strengthen our faith and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship so that we may give generously of our time, talent, and treasure to proclaim the good news here in our church and throughout the world ... we pray to the Lord.

That the Spirit of love and compassion breathe the life of God into every ministry in our parish and diocese ... we pray to the Lord.

**Third Sunday: Commitment Sunday**

That we have the openness to be good stewards of God's many blessings ... we pray to the Lord.

Lord, as our parish family begins its journey of making Christian stewardship a way of life, may we be open to share our time, talent, and treasure with one another, our parish and our diocese ... we pray to the Lord.

**Fourth Sunday: Thanksgiving Sunday**

Lord, God, Creator of the universe, we thank you for the gifts and talents You have given to each of us. These are represented by the treasure we are about to collect and offer at the altar, and by the personal commitments of time and talent that are being made. May these gifts enable us more effectively to carry out the mission of the parish and the mission of the church in the world ... we pray to the Lord.

In gratitude for all those who generously demonstrated their commitment to our parish by returning the parish stewardship commitment forms ... we pray to the Lord.

Music Liturgy

Sacred music and the dedicated musicians of our Church are vital to its worship and the Christian formation of its people. Music connects us to the prayers of the Liturgy while musicians guide the assembly to be united as the body of Christ in praying and singing the Mass.

In choosing music for the celebration of the Eucharist, priority should be given to music that is in accord with the scripture readings and the general season. However, topics of faith, discipleship, and the call to serve are strong in the readings of Ordinary Time. The following list of hymns may be considered during the Stewardship Renewal Month:

*English*

All Creatures of Our God and King

Be Thou My Vision

Christ Has No Body Now But Yours

City of God

For the Beauty of the Earth

Go Make a Difference (Angrisano)

Go, Be Justice

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

In The Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

Lord of all Hopefulness

Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace (Janco)

Lord, You Give the Great Commission

Make Us True Servants

See My Hands and Feet (Bringle)

Sent Forth by God's Blessing   
Servant Song (McMargill)

Take My Life and Let it Be

The Calling (Combong)

The Servant Song (Gillard)

The Spirit Sends Us Forth

The Summons

We are Many Parts

We Bring God's Holy Love

Whatsoever You Do

Whenever You Serve Me/Psalm 146 (Janco)

*Spanish*

Como Busca la Cierva (Gonzales Tescuano)

Creo en Jesus (Erdozain)

Cristo Está Conmigo (Espinosa)

Cristo No Tiene Pies en el Mundo (Lopez)

Entre Tus Manos

Es Mi Cuerpo

Oración de San Francisco

Que Alegría Cuando Me Dijeron (Manzano)

Somos Una Iglesia (Eleazar Cortes)

Vamos Cantando al Señor (Espinosa)

*Bilingual*

All Are Welcome/ Todos Bienvenidos Son

Blessed and Beloved/ Bienaventurados

Bring Forth the Kingdom/ Venga el Reino

Go Out to the World/ Vayan al Mundo

Grita Profeta (Montgomery)

Here I am Lord/ Aquí Estoy, Señor

Holy People, Chosen People/ Pueblo Santo y Elegido (Pedro Martins)

Jesus Needs You/ Cristo te Necesita Para Amar

Lord, Let My Prayer Arise/ Suba Mi Oración (Hurd)

Seek ye First/ Busca Primero

We are the Body of Christ/Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo: (J. Cortez)

Song of the Body of Christ/ Canción del Cuerpo de Cristo (Peña)

'Tis the Gift to Be Simple/ Es un Don Ser Sencillo

We Plow the Fields and Scatter/Aramos Nuestros Campos

Ministry Fair

*Hosting a Ministry Fair*

**Purpose of a Ministry Fair**

A Time and Talent Ministry Fair is a well-planned parish event in which your ministries, programs, and services are showcased at one time in a festive and social atmosphere.

**A Ministry Fair serves many purposes:**

* It is a celebration of all the work you do in your Church.
* It is an excellent opportunity to educate your parishioners on your ministries, programs, and services.
* It is a social time to gather together as a parish family to meet and invite newcomers to participate in parish ministries.

This annual celebration can be very effective during the Stewardship Renewal Month. It is during this renewal time that parishioners are invited to prayerfully and consciously discern how they are recognizing, receiving, and sharing their many gifts and talents within their parish community.

**Plan your Ministry Fair well in advance:**

* Present your plan to your Pastor. Discuss the date and place your Ministry Fair will be held. Discuss a budget.
* Meet with your Parish Stewardship Council. Discuss and develop plans by setting a general theme, table decorations, what refreshments will be served, and how to keep parishioners interested in visiting the ministry leaders.

**Prepare a timeline and delegate responsibilities:**

* It takes a lot of time and preparation to host a Ministry Fair: therefore, it is very important to set a timeline early in your preparation stage to coordinate projects such as: signage, flyers, posters, bulletin and church announcements.
* Plan to make a presentation to your Parish Council and ministry leaders asking for their help in presenting the Ministry Fair. For everyone to have the same understanding of your plan – a suggestion is to distribute a handout with information on your theme, table set-up time, follow-up phase, and other expectations.
* To ensure all ministries are progressing in a timely manner, another suggestion is to assign a member of your council to each ministry. The purpose is to offer assistance and encouragement in planning, preparing, set-up and dismantling of tables. Have members report back on the progress of their assigned ministry.

**Two or three weeks before the Ministry Fair:**

* Post announcements in your bulletins and/or on your website and social media.
* Hang posters in visible areas to advertise this upcoming, exciting event.

**One week before the Ministry Fair:**

* Have homilies or lay-witness talks reflecting on the blessings of time and talent opportunities.
* Place inserts in bulletins.
* Post on social media and website

**Day of the Ministry Fair:**

* Prepare a map of the area with assigned tables for each ministry.
* Make a list of representatives' names and phone numbers for all tables - at least two representatives at each table. Suggest one representative stands in front of table to easily invite and encourage conversation with attendees.
* Have name tags for all representatives.
* Prepare ministry sign-up sheets for all tables. They are easily identified if they all look the same.
* Make announcements at all Masses.
* Have your clean-up team available immediately after the Fair.

**Post fair follow-up phase:**

* Timeliness of the follow-up phase is very important to the success of your Ministry Fair.
* Parishioners need and should expect to receive prompt acknowledgement and thanks for their volunteer commitment of time and talent.
* Encourage ministry leaders to make every effort to reach new volunteers in a timely manner.
* If one ministry is filled with volunteers, please encourage that volunteer to consider another ministry and then notify that ministry with the new volunteer's name.
* It is a good idea to touch base with ministry leaders to assure all new volunteers have been notified.
* One cannot say "thank you" enough. Take the time to publicly thank all parishioners who have volunteered and also ministry leaders for generously giving of their time and service to their parish.

**Helpful hints**

* On your tables: colorful tablecloths, poster boards of photo collages, videos of activities, informational fliers and brochures, balloons, candy and baskets.
* Uniform signs for each ministry table look more professional and visible at a glance. A suggestion is table tents - small bi-fold 9"x12" poster boards work nicely.
* **Some creative ideas to consider are:**
  + A contest or prizes for the best table.
  + A drawing is always fun. *An idea – parishioners can pick up a ticket at each table they visit and place the ticket in a basket for the drawing.*
  + Hand out balloons or prizes to children.
  + Face painting.
  + Refreshments.
  + Food is a common language.
  + Keep it festive.