



# Saint Pius X Catholic Church

## Stewardship For Children's Faith Formation Programs and St. Pius X Catholic School

2009-2010



# Introduction of Stewardship at Saint Pius X

## What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of living each day in gratitude for all the blessings that God has given to us. The roots of stewardship can be found in the Bible, which tells us over and over that God is the Creator and Giver of all gifts. It is our responsibility to show our gratitude to God for these gifts, by giving back to Him the "first fruits."

We do not own the gifts God gives to us. We are only here on earth to use those gifts to do God's work.

In 1992 the U.S. Catholic Bishops released a pastoral letter on stewardship entitled: "[Stewardship: A Disciple's Response](#)." The Bishops described a Christian steward as one who:

- Receives God's gifts gratefully
- Cherishes and tends them responsibly
- Shares them in justice and love
- Returns them to God.

Sharing our gifts and returning them to God means giving generously of our time, talent and treasure. We give to God by sharing with our Church and with those in need. Time and talent can be shared by becoming involved in parish life, volunteering and offering a helping hand. Treasure can be shared by making a conscious effort to make a financial gift to God first, before we pay the bills and buy the things we want. When we give to God only after all of our personal spending we end up throwing Him the loose change or having nothing left at all to give. When we give to God first we are making a gift of faith, trusting that God will provide for our needs.

We are truly giving Him the "first fruits" just as God asked us to do in the Bible.

Stewardship is often a foreign concept in our consumer-oriented society. However, it was through stewardship that our ancestors built up the Church we have today.

# Six Common Misconceptions about Children and Stewardship

- Myth #1: Stewardship is mostly about money

Fact: Stewardship is about how we share all the gifts God gave us.

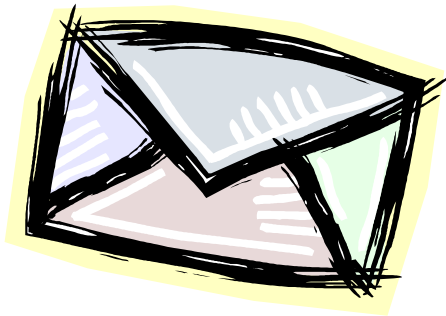


- Myth #2: An emphasis on stewardship will mean adding a lot to the religious education curriculum.

Fact: Themes related to stewardship are already present in children's catechetical curriculum, we just need to draw them out and highlight those themes.

- Myth #3: Families are not already involved in stewardship.

Fact: Stewardship is already part of families' lives, sometimes they just don't understand how.



- Myth #4: If I hand out children's stewardship envelopes with instructions, families will take it from there.

Fact: Families need ideas regarding children's practice of stewardship and reminders to use envelopes and other resources

- Myth #5: Stewardship commitment cards and ministry fairs should focus on adults.

Fact: Children are very much a part of the Church of today. Stewardship drives should focus on the whole parish.

- Myth #6: Children and youth must be coerced into service through mandate service hours for confirmation, etc.

Fact: Children love to share their gifts. It enhances their self-image and sense of autonomy.



# Understanding the Basic Stewardship Concepts for Children

Efforts to teach stewardship and giving to children are most successful if you concentrate on five basic concepts. These concepts can be discussed in the classroom, in children's liturgies, in Children's Church programs and at home. The five concepts are:

## 1. Help children see that God has given them many blessings.

*(This also teaches good self-esteem.)*

- Challenge children to make a list of all God's gifts to them. There is no wrong answer! Everything is a gift from God.
- Regularly complement children on their special gifts - simple things like nice handwriting, pretty smile, nice coat to keep you warm, etc. Remind them that this special gift is a blessing from God and offer an idea on how they can be grateful or share that gift with someone else.
- Encourage children to recognize their talents and the talents of other people in their lives. Every talent does not have to be star quality. Talents can be simple—such as strong to carry a box, smart to help someone with homework, a good listener for someone with a problem.



## 2. Teach children to be grateful to God for the blessings He has given us.

*(This also teaches an overall sense of gratitude and a positive outlook on life. It helps kids see that the cup is half full rather than half empty.)*



- Make it a practice to ask children on a daily basis to name something for which they are thankful.
  - Ask children to write a prayer of thanks to God.
  - Have children write a thank-you letter to God, telling Him why His gifts are so special to them and what the child will do with those gifts. This could be a good birthday or Christmas practice, when children might be writing other thank you notes, too.
  - Help children to see that God has given them blessings to share. Discuss the poor and needy. Talk about how God has trusted us to use our gifts to help those who have less.
- Read the Judgment of the Nations (Matthew 25:31-46) together. Discuss all the ways people are in need, and what children could do to help.
  - Encourage children to think about and pray for those in need.

## 3. Show children how stewardship has built our Church.

*(This also teaches appreciation and responsibility for our Church.)*

- Tell children the history of the parish and the role stewardship played in building up the parish as it is

today.

- Tour parish facilities looking for signs of stewardship.
- Talk with children about the building up of the Church throughout the world and the role stewardship played in the cathedrals, hospitals, schools and churches that we have today.
- Talk with children about the lives of saints and the ways they were good stewards. In most cases children will learn that it was how people used their time, talent or treasure for God that earned the person the title of "Saint."



**4. Help children to recognize that stewardship is something we do all the time. It is how we live our lives. Every decision we make about how we use our time or treasure is a stewardship decision.**

*(This also teaches good time management and budgeting.)*



- Encourage children to keep a record of their time - How much time do they give to God in prayer? How much time do they spend learning - developing knowledge and talents they can use later for God? How much time do they spend helping others? How much time do they spend taking care of themselves so they are strong and healthy for God's work? How much time do they waste?
- Talk about shopping decisions; about how we can waste money when others need it. Discuss the concept of the tithe - of giving 10% back to God. Discuss the difference between something we need and something we want. We may need soccer shoes to be part of the team - but having the most expensive or popular brand is only a "want" not a "need."

**5. Help children recognize the joy that comes from stewardship.**  
*(This also helps students realize that real happiness cannot be found in possessions.)*

- Have children discuss how they feel when they help someone else.
- Share your own good feelings about helping and giving.
- Invite a young volunteer to talk to your children about their volunteer experiences.



# Introduction to Step-by-Step Student Stewardship




The Step by Step Student Stewardship Program is designed to teach St. Pius X students as they grow how to be good stewards of all the gifts God has given them. This is done in an age appropriate way through a different category of service for each grade level. Coordinating with the Director of Stewardship and teachers, there are volunteer parents who set up the different projects for the year. These parents can also set up times for speakers from the organization we are helping to come out and give a presentation to the class so they further understand who they will be helping. At the end of the year, each class will present their stewardship project(s) to the rest of the parish through an Open House.

## How Step-by-Step Student Stewardship works:

- **Stewardship Focus:** Students learn about a different need in our community each year (current Saint Pius ministries are in parenthesis)
  - **Preschool:** Introduction to Stewardship
  - **Kindergarten:** Needy (Saint Vincent dePaul)
  - **1st Grade:** Environment (Church Gardening, "Green" efforts)
  - **2nd Grade:** Elderly (Fountainview Nursing Home, Waterford Retirement Community, Senior Group)
  - **3rd Grade:** Hunger (Hope Ministries, Saint Vincent dePaul)
  - **4th Grade:** Disabled (Homebound Ministry, Helping Hands)
  - **5th Grade:** Military/Veterans (Military Support Group of the Elizabeth Ministry)
  - **6th Grade:** Homelessness (Center for the Homeless Casserole Program)
  - **7th Grade:** Babies, Children, and Adolescents (Respect Life/Women's Care Center, Hannah's House)
  - **8th Grade:** Education & Literacy (Social Justice)
- **Stewardship of Prayer, Service, and Sacrificial Giving:** Students can focus their efforts in all aspects of stewardship.
  - **Prayer:** Students can pray for the people they are serving and the agencies they are working with. They can even develop their own class stewardship prayer that they pray during religion class and before serving others.
    - **Service:** Students do outreach and service projects that revolve around their Stewardship Focus. Stewardship parents help plan projects in the community involving hands-on activities with those that they are serving. Emphasis is on meaningful, age-appropriate projects that help students understand their stewardship focus. The goal is for students to learn about investing themselves in others.
    - **Sacrificial Giving:** Students can share their treasure with others by contributing a portion of their allowance or monetary gifts to help those they serve.
- **Stewardship Parents:** Parents will be assigned at each grade level to help the teachers and students plan and implement their Stewardship Projects and to understand their Stewardship Focus.



- **Stewardship Scrapbooks:** Parents, teachers, and students can put together a scrapbook to serve as a resource book that has newspaper articles and other useful information to help students understand their Stewardship Focus.
- **Research:** Students can use various resources from the parish library and the local library to gain more understanding about their Stewardship Focus.
- **Speakers:** Parents and teachers can arrange for people from the parish and the community to speak to the students to help them understand their Stewardship Focus and community resources.
- **Quality vs. Quantity:** The emphasis should be on planning meaningful projects that are age-appropriate and help the students fully understand their Focus. 
- **Reflections:** Students should fill out a Reflection Form (sample on page 8) after each project to help them reflect on their experiences from their Stewardship Projects.
- **Integration with other school subjects:** Teachers are encouraged to integrate stewardship throughout their curriculum.
- **Stewardship Résumé:** At the end of each year, students should build a complete document showing their experience with and commitment to their community.

### Benefits of Step-by-Step Student Stewardship

- Students gain a deeper understanding of stewardship.
- It is simple and straight forward.
- Can make a difference in a predictable, organized way
- It is implemented by parents and teachers, who also learn more about stewardship as a way of life.
- Students will receive nine years of exposure to community issues.
- Students learn about concepts such as dignity, commitment, and simplicity.
- Experiences are priceless.
- It is tangible—the students understand because they experience first-hand.
- Self-worth and self-esteem are natural side effects.
- Helps students discover their gifts.
- Fosters tolerance.
- Encourages creativity.
- Students are introduced to Social Justice.
- Helps build a student's Stewardship Résumé



## Stewardship Project Reflection (sample)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Our class just did something to help someone in need!**

This is WHO we helped: \_\_\_\_\_

This is HOW we helped: \_\_\_\_\_

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This is what I THOUGHT about the project: \_\_\_\_\_

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This is what I LEARNED about the project: \_\_\_\_\_

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This is why I thought it HELPED: \_\_\_\_\_

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Turn over the page to see the picture I drew to show how our project made a difference!

## Stewardship Résumé (sample)

### STEWARDSHIP/SERVICE ACTIVITIES (By Category)

- Education and Literacy
  - Babies, Children, and Adolescents
  - Disabled
  - Hungry
  - Needy
  - Elderly
  - Homeless
  - Sick
  - Veterans/Military
  - Environment
  - Animals
  - Other
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- Clubs and organizations involving outreach
  - Projects carried out as a leader
  - Leadership Experiences
  - Presentations involving stewardship and service
  - Awards and honors involving stewardship and service
  - References
  - Memorable experiences through stewardship
  - Causes in which I am most interested and would like to be involved with in the future
  - Gifts that I have to share with those that I serve
  - Literature that I have read about each Stewardship Focus

## Role of Director of Stewardship, Saint Pius X Catholic Church

- Establish a subcommittee of the Stewardship Core Team: Stewardship for Children and Youth.
- Educate teachers, catechists, Stewardship Parents, and students on the basic principals of Stewardship.
- Provide support to all teachers, catechists, Stewardship Parents, and students.
- Provide contact information for chairs of ministries that are currently part of Saint Pius X.
- Provide educational materials for parents of all students including 1. general stewardship educational materials, 2. information about the Step-by-Step Student Stewardship Program, and 3. information regarding the Sunday Children's Stewardship Envelope Program.
- Work with teachers, catechists, and Stewardship Parents in developing ways to share the stewardship efforts with their peers and the entire parish community.

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