Spring, 2005
Time and Talent Renewal Update

Stewards
of
God’s Gifts

For Parish Stewardship Leaders
Office of Parish Stewardship  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY

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And for Parish Stewardship Leaders:
A Special Leadership Section of our Web Page that is regularly  
updated with information and resources for you:
www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html

And a special section of the site that contains resources and materials  
for this Spring’s Time and Talent Renewal:
www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

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This Guide has been printed on Recycled Paper – Good Stewardship of our God-given resources of the Earth.
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ABOUT THIS SPRING’S UPDATE
For Time and Talent Renewal

Another renewal is upon us! This Spring, 2005 Time and Talent Renewal Update for Parish Stewardship Leaders has been prepared specifically for leaders in parishes that connect with the diocesan parish stewardship program. We are excited as we approach the threshold of our ten year anniversary as a diocese committed to stewardship as a way of life!

The Parish Stewardship Program of the Diocese of Rockville Centre has evolved in so many ways and the experience of our parishes across Long Island is now vast and rich. As we move forward, we are confident in God’s Spirit working in our church, especially as parish leaders working together in our diocese continue to embrace and foster this way of Christian living we call stewardship. This is about helping to invite people further into the call to discipleship. It is about Kingdom building.

In our continuing effort to increase online resources and use our limited funding wisely and responsibly, we have continued what we began in the Fall of 2003 regarding our bi-annual leadership Updates. Provided in this Update is the basic framework for your Time and Talent Renewal this Spring. You will find that this Update contains less samples than previous Spring leadership guides. We now rely very heavily on our website to make resources available to you. Many of the resources we have previously printed in manuals, as well as new ones, are available on our website at this special address:

www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

We encourage you to use the extensive materials available to you on the website, particularly those related to this Spring’s Time and Talent Renewal. Once on the site, you will find a web page that mimics the outside back cover of this Update and contains links to each of the items shown.

As always, we are available to assist you in any way we can. Feel free to contact us at 516-379-4055 x3 to explore more in-depth resources and ideas for your renewal this Spring.

Laurie, Georgan and Robert

What’s NEW in this Update:

♦ New Letters for your parishioners for this season’s Time and Talent Renewal reflecting this year’s theme, “Stewards of God’s Gifts.”

♦ New Bulletin and Pulpit Announcements reflecting this year’s theme.

♦ New General Intercessions for liturgy for the renewal period.

Additionally, each section of this Update has been revised to reflect the current wisdom for all topics presented. There is also a revised Calendar and Detailed Action Plan. And, now you will find that, for consistency, the layout for this leadership Update more closely resembles that found in our fall financial stewardship leadership updates.

The possibilities for the Time and Talent component of stewardship are endless because of the numerous applications throughout all ministries in the parish. Remember, when planning for your Time and Talent Renewal, do what you can with the gifts you and others have to work with at this time. Minimize the risk of becoming frustrated. Set out to make realistic and achievable goals (both short and long term). It takes a lifetime to help build God’s Kingdom! You are helping to plant seeds! Plant away!
TIME AND TALENT RENEWAL FOR SPRING, 2005

General Renewal Process - Rationale

Faith-filled stewardship is a way of life. You’ve heard that, seen it, read about it, and said it. Each year, more Catholics come to see stewardship as their response to God’s generosity in their lives. How do we as church leaders help foster stewardship as a way of life and empower people to make the cultural shift to living as Christian stewards? Well, there are many ways, but chief among them is through annual and regular stewardship renewals.

Regular stewardship renewals, when presented clearly and properly, engage people in a process of introspection and reflection that, hopefully and with God’s grace, will lead to a conscious, active response as individuals connected to our church community of faith.

In our diocese, for many years now, the renewal process takes place during a four week period. There are basic components to this process. (Our focus this Spring is on the Time and Talent components of stewardship renewal. There is a similar but not identical process for the renewal of financial resources that is articulated in our Fall Leadership Updates.) The annual theme (this year, “Stewards of God’s Gifts”) forms the framework for the entire process and reflection period. Here are integral pieces of the process for Time and Talent stewardship renewal:

Period of Awareness with Targeted Homilies

This is the first part of the renewal where parishioners are reminded that now is the time when we will all begin (once again) to think about the many gifts that God has given us, especially our gifts of time and talent, and the way we develop and share those gifts. Awareness Weekend (May 7/8) is designed to bring to consciousness that our annual stewardship renewal is upon us, and that this is what we, as individuals connected to this church community (and as a diocese), will be doing during the next couple of weeks.

The content of parish homilies is enhanced to explicitly refer to the regular scriptures (in the normal cycle) in light of our understanding of God’s generosity and our need to respond to that generosity responsibly and with gratitude. Normal seasonal and liturgical considerations are also woven into the homilies so that there is a cohesive message regarding the challenge to live as God’s people - steward disciples of Jesus Christ. The targeted homilies continue each week during the entire renewal process.

Immediately after Awareness Weekend, the original timeline calls for a letter to go out to all parishioners from the pastor and stewardship leader containing the new spiritual brochure (with reflection activity).

Personal and Communal Reflection (Baptismal Call, Discipleship, Stewardship, Responsibility, Accountability)

All materials designed by our Office for the benefit of parishioners (spiritual brochures, letters, bulletin inserts, bulletin/pulpit announcements, and general intercessions) are designed to progressively invite each person, each family, and the parish at large to enter into a reflection
for this renewal period. How is each responding to our baptismal call, to God’s generosity in our lives, and to the use and sharing of our God-given gifts in an accountable and responsible fashion? Aside from a personal and family reflection and inventory, there is a special celebration of God’s gifts. We call this next step in the renewal process Gifts Celebration Weekend (May 14/15).

This second part of Time and Talent Renewal is more celebratory than invitational (more of a celebration of gifts, than an invitation to join a parish ministry). It is the time when, at every gathering of the community at Mass on this weekend, we celebrate in thanksgiving and gratitude the many diverse and unique gifts God has given the individuals in the community, as well as the parish as a whole (communal gifts). God is the source of all we have! The celebration usually focuses on gifts that are shared in the parish (particularly through parish ministries and activities), but needs to consider a broad application of God’s gifts as they affect all aspects of each individual’s life: family, workplace, community, and the world. Because, as we are reminded by our church, the primary role of the laity is to transform the world to Christ.

In our diocese (and as a direct response to the suggestion of many parishes), the decision to make this weekend take place on Pentecost weekend was deliberate. This in no way is in conflict with the liturgical celebration of Pentecost. It is, in fact, a most appropriate way to celebrate Pentecost. The connections are so easy to make and they should be made.

Immediately after Gifts Celebration Weekend, the original timeline calls for a letter from the pastor to go out with the Commitment Cards (and possibly Ministry Directory) inviting people to make or renew commitments to sharing their gifts at home, in the workplace, in the community, and in the world. The letter also invites folks to plan how they will use their gifts of time and talent in the coming year. One great way is to use those gifts through parish ministries and activities.

Witness from Members of the Community (Stories of Faith)

Key to the renewal process are witness talks from members of the parish. These speakers are individuals who have struggled to respond to God’s call in their lives, accepted the challenge, and entered into the ongoing conversion process of living as Christians. Lay Witness Talks are stories of faith and conversion and are not requests for money or for volunteers. Witness talks that follow the simple and basic pattern are most effective. The use of Witness Talks best takes place before Commitments are completed (the second and/or third weekends of the renewal process). It is not uncommon that in some parishes here in our diocese, the Lay Witness Talks take place for more than one weekend during the renewal. Many parish leaders have told us of the effectiveness of the witnessing and of their belief in their essential value.

Invitation to Move Forward in the Journey of Faith (Invitation to Conversion) - Public Commitments

All members of the parish community are now invited to “take-a-step” - to consider a new action or an enhanced response to how each develops, uses and shares what God has given. For Time and Talent Renewal, this means a new or renewed commitment to the ways in which God’s gifts are developed, used and shared in the parish and elsewhere.
The Time and Talent Renewal process culminates in the individual person’s/family’s written response in a communal setting at the weekend liturgy. The response is public and presented/collected (in some parishes as part of local custom or ritual).

There are several reasons for this, first being that Christianity is not meant to be a private faith, but meant to be celebrated and lived out in community. Therefore, it is most appropriate that there be a public expression of what has gone on interiorly in each person/family.

The commitment is made purposely in writing. In our culture, if something is in writing, it has more weight or significance. In our faith, public expressions and actions permeate our Catholic identity. Our faith commitments are at least just as important as other commitments we make in our lives. The written commitment is a sign of that reality. We cannot escape it (nor should we want to) - ours is a public faith!

There is also the issue of accountability. Not only does the institution need to be accountable for the use of its shared gifts, but my parish, my family and I have to be accountable for everything God provides, including gifts of time, talent and treasure. The public commitments set the stage for good and responsible accountability, which starts with individuals.

Think of Commitment weekend as the time when, for instance, a married couple would renew their wedding vows. It is like a wedding anniversary. And, being that our faith tells us we are not just individuals, but individuals who are united in Christ and dynamically connected to the Christian community, we make and renew these commitments within the context of community. We do this at the place where the individuals in the community gather, celebrate, and find their fullest identity as Catholic Christians (individually and corporately) - the weekend Liturgy.

The invitation to make or renew Commitments to parish ministries at this time does not conflict with any other commitment or recommitment ritual that may need to take place (for instance, for liturgical ministers), as the Time and Talent Renewal period is for the coming year. It is not a recommitment to an entire term of a particular ministry (for instance, three years). Even though I may be involved in a ministry that has a three year term, I still should renew my commitment to that ministry and to my existing term each year during Time and Talent Renewal.

This part of the renewal process takes place on **Commitment Weekend** and usually has a **Follow-Up Weekend** component to it.
COMPONENTS OF THE RENEWAL PROCESS

Support Pieces Available from Our Office:

- **This Spring, 2005 Time and Talent Leadership Update**

- **Parishioner Materials available in MS Publisher and Adobe .PDF Files (for you to print):**
  - **Spiritual Brochure Template** (in English or in Spanish). Addresses the theme “Stewards of God’s Gifts” and invites initial reflection for the renewal process.
  - **Commitment Card Template** (in English). A tool for planning a response to the time and talent stewardship reflection. Includes the Commitment form for Commitment Weekend.
  - **Three Separate Bulletin Insert Templates** (in English or in Spanish, two sizes from which to choose). Each designed for the corresponding weekend of the renewal process. Offers a progressive opportunity for parishioners to journey through the renewal.
  - **“Thank You” Card Templates** (in English or in Spanish, two formats from which to choose). For those of you who do not wish to use the pre-printed “Thank You” cards or the personalized computer-generated “Thank You” Letters.

- **Parishioner Materials available from our Office in quantities you desire (printed by us):**
  - **Posters** (in English or in Spanish). Highlight the annual theme “Stewards of God’s Gifts.”
  - **Thank You Cards** (in English or in Spanish). For people/families who have completed a Commitment Card. (These standard, non-personalized cards may be used in lieu of computer generated personal “Thank You” letters or the “Thank You Card” templates shown above).
  - **Stewardship Prayer Cards** (in English; or in English one side, in Spanish the other). Three versions from which to choose. For use at weekend liturgies during the renewal and throughout the year.

- **Numerous Time and Talent Renewal Materials available on the Web, see:**
  - www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

**Why You May Need Previously Published Leadership Guides**

You may need to refer to previous Leadership Updates if you want a more detailed description of any aspect of Time and Talent Renewal other than what is presented in this Update. It is important to know the rationale behind the things that we do for the renewal.

Examples of why you would want to refer to previous Time and Talent manuals:
- If you are new to Time and Talent Renewal (it’s a must!).
- If you want to know what’s the least you can do; what more you can do; and what’s really advanced in terms of Time and Talent Renewal.
- If you want more resources (handouts) you can use for your presentations or Committee.
- If you want to know the best way to write Ministry Descriptions in your Ministry Directory.
- If you want to know more about Lay Witness Talks.
- If you want to know all the “Dos and Don’ts” of a Gifts Celebration (Ministry Fair or Time and Talent Festival).
- If you want a lot of ideas about communicating stewardship in your parish.
- If you want to know any other details about a particular aspect of Time and Talent Renewal.

Let us know if you need any past copies of our manuals or guides. Or better yet, speak to us to learn more of the history and rationale behind pieces of the renewal. Give us a call at (516) 379-4055 x3.
NOTES AND GUIDELINES

Making a Time and Talent Renewal Parish Plan

✓ First and foremost, YOU NEED A PLAN. Work with your stewardship committee, parish staff, and others to ensure that you have a clear, sensible plan for your Time and Talent stewardship renewal. Do what you can with what you have. Consult with our Office as a resource (516-379-4055 x3). Use the planning tools that we have designed specifically for you and that are available on our website (see the back outside cover of this Update).

✓ Make choices! There are multiple choices and options available to you. Know the options, make decisions!

✓ Make sure you collaborate with others and communicate your plan to all parish leadership who are involved in any part of the process (liturgy people, clergy, music directors, pastoral council, ministry leaders, and anyone else who may be affected or concerned).

✓ If you are amending any part of the plan that we have provided for you, it is vital that you amend all related components, aspects, and parts accordingly. Cohesiveness is a key component of the renewal process. The renewal needs to feel like what it is meant to be: a movement or journey.

✓ It’s best not to “pick and choose” when it comes to using proven pieces of the renewal plan. For instance, it is a mistake to decide not to have lay witness speakers. Written commitments should not be eliminated nor should formational pieces like bulletin inserts and the spiritual brochure.

Leadership Section of Our Website

✓ Among many tools, the special leadership section of our website contains the following items available for you to look at and download:
  ♦ All recommended letters (in English).
  ♦ Graphics, including special ones for this year’s theme (“Stewards of God’s Gifts”) and including the stewardship logo (in English and Spanish).
  ♦ Time and Talent Statistics report.
  ♦ This entire Spring, 2005, Time and Talent Update.
  ♦ Many additional resources shown on the back outer cover of this Update.

✓ You can access the special renewal section of our website at this address: www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

✓ Make sure to visit our website for MANY OTHER resources, materials, and ideas. www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html

Liturgical Music

✓ Work with the Music Minister and/or parish liturgy committee so that the people involved in music ministry are aware of the renewal and will select appropriate songs.

✓ Songs about discipleship, stewardship, commitment, renewal, ministry, conversion and gifts are most appropriate. Songs that reflect his year’s theme are also very appropriate.
In-Pew Commitments

- It has been proven that in-pew commitments generate the best response from people. We do not provide a script for this purpose for Time and Talent Renewal (as we do for Financial Renewal) because each parish’s Commitment Card is different. Call us if you need ideas.
- When commitments are discussed by the presider or other minister, it is important that those who are already involved in parish ministry are asked to participate in the renewal of their commitments by completing a Commitment Card.

Stewardship Prayer

- There are three popular versions (“A” or “B” or “C”).
- Many stewardship parishes have incorporated the stewardship prayer during Mass throughout the year. Some use the prayer only during the Renewal period. Work with your pastor to find the best time in the Liturgy to use the stewardship prayer during this renewal time and other times during the year.
- Make sure enough copies of the prayer are available to people (usually placed in one of the inside covers of the missals or songbooks).
- The prayer cards are available in English only, or in Spanish one side and English the other.
- Some parishes have made their own stewardship prayer. If you choose to do this, just make sure you have included key concepts such as God’s generosity, our gratitude, and key words like “stewards” and “gifts.” It is recommended that you use a stewardship prayer that conveys the message of stewardship during renewals (regardless of the version).
- Order enough cards from us to insert in all the music books or missals in Church, to have for all parish meetings, for any parish formational gathering (catechetical, adult faith formation, youth, committee meetings, etc.), and to distribute in your parish’s welcome kit.
- Great to use as a prayer to pray with the sick, homebound, or on special occasions.
- Use of the stewardship prayer throughout the parish is an integral part of the desire to have a comprehensive stewardship formation plan for your parishioners.
- There is no cost to the parish for the prayer cards from our office.

Homily Helps

- Encourage your pastor to recommend using the Homily Helps as a useful tool for all ordained preachers in the parish who will preach on any of the renewal weekends.
- The Homily Helps are designed to provide thoughts to the homilist that can be integrated into all homilies for the four weekends of renewal.
- Ideally, each and every homily all during the year should include some stewardship language as well.
- It is possible that one or more of the clergy in your parish are not listed in our database and as such will not receive the Homily Helps. Make sure that each clergy member has received his copy. If someone hasn’t, let us know, and we’ll get it to him (516-379-4055 x3).
- All clergy should receive their homily helps by the week of April 11, 2005.
- We do plan on posting the Homily Helps on our website right after they are mailed. Check for this at www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html
Gifts Celebrations (Ministry Fairs, Time and Talent Festivals, etc.)

✓ The celebration of the gifts of the community is an important part of the process of Time and Talent Renewal.
✓ You’ll notice the evolution here: Time and Talent Festivals (Ministry Fairs) to Ministry Celebrations to Gifts Celebrations. The change in language has moved us from the concept that we are just celebrating parish ministries and activities to the fact that we are celebrating ALL of God’s gifts in the lives of the people, including but not limited to gifts shared at the parish.
✓ We should celebrate the gifts of the community at EACH of the Masses on Pentecost Weekend, so that all those experience the celebration.
✓ Creativity is key. Brainstorm different ways your parish can celebrate the gifts of the community each year during Time and Talent Renewal. Avoid “same ole, same ole.”
✓ If your parish chooses to have a Ministry Fair as its Gifts Celebration, the fair should be available to people after EACH Mass that weekend.
✓ Gifts Celebrations are a time to CELEBRATE the gifts of the community. They are not a time to recruit people for parish ministries or activities.
✓ A “Thank You” Party for parish volunteers is separate from a Time and Talent Renewal Gifts Celebration and is often best celebrated outside of your Time and Talent Renewal process.

Letters for Parishioners (General Notes)

✓ If you choose to mail letters by bulk rate, adjust the scheduled mailings so parishioners will receive the mailing during the appropriate week of the renewal. (For instance, make sure the First Parish Mailing is mailed out so it is received during the week AFTER Awareness weekend.) Local post offices treat the delivery of bulk mail differently. Know what yours does as a general rule and plan accordingly.
✓ All letters should be in the name of the pastor. (Some letters, as indicated on the samples, should be in the name of the pastor and the stewardship leader).
✓ With parishes the size of those in our diocese, it is virtually impossible to hand sign all letters. However a letter can be mass produced in black ink. Then signatures may be mass-printed on the letters in blue ink. Check with your printing vendor about the possibilities.
✓ Some parishes in recent years have combined the first and second parish mailings for cost considerations. This requires an adaptation of the renewal plan and timeline we describe as well as care and attention so that the process and movement of the renewal is not diminished. Plan so that the renewal will still achieve the desired results that include at least these steps that will be clearly recognized by the people: Awareness, Gifts Celebration, Witness and Commitment. The process is important.
✓ The sample letters shown in this Update are formatted to fit on the respective page in this Update. When you actually create the letters, use standard letter formatting on your parish stationery. (If you obtain the sample letters in MS Word from us, they will be better formatted for parish stationery.)
MATERIALS FOR PARISHIONERS

Spiritual Brochure

Purpose:
To provide a renewed understanding of Christian stewardship in light of the current theme, *Stewards of God’s Gifts*. It is designed to help people reflect as they are invited to move further along the journey of faith.

Notes:
✓ The brochure is to be included in the first parish mailing (or the alternative combined mailing).
✓ It can be used as a tool that leads to faith-sharing in small Christian communities. It is also great to stimulate discussion and reflection in youth groups, adult faith formation sessions, catechist formation, and ministry leader gatherings.
✓ It can be given to the homebound, sick, and others for spiritual reading material.
✓ It is a welcome addition to the parish book rack or library.
✓ Make sure your parish prints enough of these for the first parish mailing and for other uses.
✓ It is an integral part of the desire to have a comprehensive parish stewardship formation plan.

Commitment Card

Purpose:
To provide a tool for action to help people design a plan of response to God’s generosity in their lives, especially as it relates to the sharing of time and talent. The Commitment Card is unique to each parish, primarily based upon the ministries that the parish provides. Many parishes find it helpful to solicit parishioner skills and talents on the Time and Talent Commitment Cards as well.

Notes:
✓ The Commitment Card is included in the second parish mailing (or alternatively, in the combined mailing) as well as any follow-up mailings.
✓ It is distributed at all Masses on Commitment Weekend and Follow-Up Weekend.
✓ The response is most successful when an “in-pew walk-through” takes place on Commitment Weekend and Follow-Up Weekend.
✓ Some parishes choose to ritualize how the Commitment Cards are collected/brought up during liturgy on Commitment Weekend. Consult with your pastor and parish liturgy committee for some ideas or call us (516-379-4055 x3).

Posters

Purpose:
These posters are designed to reflect our annual theme. They are colorful with lively pictures of people being church. They express the joy associated with good Christian stewardship.

Notes:
✓ Order enough posters to be displayed in all the rooms in your parish center, your church vestibule and entrances, gathering areas, and meeting rooms.
✓ Offer the posters to your parish Catholic school and faith formation program for display in all the classrooms.
✓ There is no cost to the parish for the posters ordered from our office.
**Bulletin Inserts**

*Purpose:*
To directly support the flow and movement of the renewal process. The three respective bulletin inserts should be utilized each weekend of the renewal.

*Notes:*

✓ Like last fall, you have choices this spring regarding the bulletin inserts in terms of size. Also, you need to decide how you will go about printing/distributing the inserts (transmitting them to your bulletin vendor, printing them yourself or by a printing vendor, or some other method). You may wish to check with your bulletin company to see what will work best for you in your parish given the two file types (MS Publisher and Adobe .PDF) that are available to you and any customization needs you might have.

✓ Customize your bulletin inserts before you print them, if you’d like. Use your own parish pictures, put your parish name and/or website address on them, etc.

✓ Certain of the bulletin inserts, as stand alone flyers, can be used in adult faith formation, catechesis, small Christian communities, and elsewhere in the parish. Make sure to print enough extras of those you particularly like and for which you see other uses.

✓ The bulletin inserts are an integral part of the desire to have a comprehensive stewardship formation plan in your parish.

**Stewardship Graphics**

*Purpose:*
To help communicate our annual theme and to provide visual recognition so that the language and the practice of stewardship becomes a recognizable part of Christian life.

*Notes:*

✓ These graphics should be included in all your parish communications.

✓ These and more graphics are available for download at
  
  [www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html](http://www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html)
Letter to Ministry Leaders Announcing the Gifts Celebration

Purpose:
The purpose of this letter is to announce this year’s plans for your parish’s Gifts Celebration to the ministry leaders. Many parishes choose to have a parish ministry leaders’ meeting where the plan is presented and everyone is clear about his/her responsibilities for a successful Gifts Celebration.

Notes:
✓ This letter should be from the pastor alone.
✓ The letter should go out early enough so that people can have ample time to do whatever they need to do for the Gifts Celebration.
✓ In this year’s timeline, the Gifts Celebration takes place on the weekend of May 14/15.
✓ Depending upon your parish plan, you may wish to send this letter out the week of March 21, 2005.
✓ Included with this letter should be the description for the particular ministries that are headed by this leader. The leader is then asked to revise the description so that proper updates can be made to the parish’s ministry directory.
✓ The letter is available online for download at www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

March 21, 2005
Dear ___________________, (personalized)

This Spring, our parish will embark upon our annual stewardship Time and Talent Renewal. God has blessed all of us with individual and unique gifts. When we grow as good stewards of God’s gifts as one faith community, God is glorified and we move closer to the realization of the Kingdom.

During this year’s Time and Talent Renewal, we will continue this parish’s tradition of inviting our people to reflect upon God’s generosity in their lives, particularly in the areas of Time and Talent. There are many in this parish who respond to the call of Christian Baptism to responsibly develop, use and share what God has given. This is how we as individuals, and as a community of those who follow Jesus, help to transform the world to Christ.

This year’s Gifts Celebration will help us celebrate the individual and shared gifts of this parish in general, as well as how they particularly relate to parish ministries and activities. Our Gifts Celebration will take place on Pentecost weekend (May 14/15, 2005). In order to help plan for this celebration of shared gifts, I need to meet with all ministry leaders (or their representatives). I’ve scheduled a meeting in the parish hall on Tuesday, April 5th at 7:30 p.m. OR Wednesday, April 6th at 10:00 a.m. Please make every effort to attend one of the meetings. If it is not possible for you to attend, please send a person from your ministry as an alternate. Kindly call Sue in the Rectory Office to let her know which date you or your representative will attend.

I am always in awe of God’s generosity as I have experienced it in my own life and as I experience it among our wonderful parishioners. Thank you for all you do to be “Stewards of God’s Gifts” in our parish. I look forward to meeting with you in April to discuss how our parish family will celebrate God’s gifts this coming Pentecost.

God bless you!

Fr. John Smith, Pastor

P.S. Enclosed is the ministry description(s) we have for your particular ministry. Please review it, make any changes or revisions, and return it to the Parish Office a.s.a.p., or if necessary, at the above meeting.
First Parish Mailing

Purpose:
To invite all registered parish families to (once again) become aware that our annual Time and Talent stewardship renewal is upon us. The included spiritual brochure provides a way to help form parishioners in the spiritual and theological principles of stewardship in a practical way.

Notes:
☑ This letter should be signed by the pastor and the stewardship leader.
☑ The mailing includes the new spiritual brochure that you have printed.
☑ The mailing is to be received by the people during the week of May 9, 2005.
☑ Feel free to modify the letter to better accommodate your/your pastor’s writing style. Be mindful to keep the important points that reference the renewal, theme, and spiritual brochure.
☑ The letter is available online for download at www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

PARISH LETTERHEAD
“Stewards of God’s Gifts” graphic

May 9, 2005

Dear…

We are happy that our parish is a stewardship parish! Many of our people have come to embrace the spiritual principles of stewardship that center around our belief in God as the Giver of all good gifts. As Christians, we know that everything we have is from God - and all that we have is “on loan” to us. Stewardship addresses what we who are faith-filled disciples of Jesus Christ do with what God has given us.

Our annual stewardship renewal for Time and Talent began this past weekend. This is the time of year when people in our parish and across our diocese are invited to reflect upon God’s generosity in the many facets of each of our lives. Our theme this year is “Stewards of God’s Gifts” and our Time and Talent renewal will help us explore how we develop, use and share God’s gifts in all facets of our lives (at home, in our workplaces and communities, and right here in our parish).

We ask that, as we move forward in this annual Time and Talent renewal, each family spend time in prayer contemplating God’s gifts and how those gifts are used and shared with others. The enclosed spiritual brochure is designed to help stimulate your reflection. Please take a few moments to read it in light of your own experience and faith.

This coming weekend, at all of our Masses, we will have our annual Gifts Celebration that helps our parish community celebrate God’s generosity in our lives. Yes, our God is most generous, and for this we give thanks and have reason to celebrate!

When we all act as good “Stewards of God’s Gifts,” we move closer to the realization of God’s kingdom. May God bless all of our efforts. All praise and honor be to our God!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor                                                                 Stewardship Leader
Second Parish Mailing

Purpose:
To invite people to enter more deeply into the spirit of this year’s annual Time and Talent stewardship renewal. To send all registered parish families a Commitment Card so that all may have a tool to help reflect upon the ways they will share their God-given gifts, particularly their time and talent, with the parish through parish ministries/activities in the coming year.

Notes:
✓ This letter should be signed by the pastor and the stewardship leader.
✓ This mailing includes the Commitment Card of your choice that you have printed and may include the parish’s revised Ministry Directory.
✓ This mailing is to be received by the people during the week of May 16, 2005.
✓ Feel free to modify the letter to better accommodate your/your pastor’s writing style. Be mindful to keep the important points that reference the renewal, theme, and the Commitment Card.
✓ Some parishes include this letter (with modifications) as the first page of the revised Ministry Directory.
✓ These same parishes often include the Time and Talent Commitment form as part of the Ministry Directory as well.
✓ The letter is available online for download at www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

PARISH LETTERHEAD

“Stewards of God’s Gifts” graphic

May 16, 2005

Dear…

Stewardship is a response to our baptismal call to live as disciples of Jesus. We are at the point in our parish’s annual Time and Talent renewal where we are asking each person to evaluate how they respond to God’s generosity this coming year in all aspects of life, and in particular in this parish community. How will you and your family share your gifts of Time and Talent this year in our parish?

Enclosed is a Ministry Directory and Time and Talent Commitment Card which is designed to help you explore opportunities that are available for you to share your gifts with the parish this year. If you are currently involved in a parish ministry or activity, we ask you to consider renewing your commitment. If you are not involved, perhaps you will consider what gifts you have to offer. Only you know what you can share as a response to God’s generosity in your life in terms of Time and Talent. Each family is different and circumstances vary.

The Commitment Cards will be presented at all Masses this coming weekend (May 21/22). Whatever your decision for the sharing of your gifts of Time and Talent, we ask that you bring your completed Commitment Card to Mass at that time.

Thank you for the many ways in which you, as good “Stewards of God’s Gifts,” share what you have been given with others. May our most generous God continue to bless you and your family as you go about helping to promote God’s kingdom.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor                                                                                              Stewardship Leader
“Thank You” Letters or Cards

Purpose:

To express gratitude to any person/family in a parish who has responded to this year’s invitation to make or renew commitments to sharing gifts of time and talent.

Notes:

✓ This letter/card should be signed by the pastor alone; hand-signed if at all possible.
✓ Some parishes choose to include the stewardship prayer card, a holy card, a bookmark, or another small gift with this mailing.
✓ This mailing is to be done in a timely fashion, within two weeks of receiving the Commitment Card from the person/family.
✓ Everyone who submitted a Commitment Card must receive a written “Thank You.”
✓ Feel free to modify the letter or the card templates to better accommodate your/your pastor’s writing style. Be mindful to reference the renewal and this year’s theme.
✓ There are options for saying, “Thank You” to those who completed Commitment Cards.
  1. You can send personalized letters produced in MS Word and mail merged (we provide the MS Word file to you).
  2. You can send cards you print using one of the two templates we have for you. (We’ve produced those templates in MS Publisher format and Adobe .PDF file. Both require sufficient cardstock, such as Avery 5315 note cards or even plain cardstock can be cut in half after they are printed.)
  3. You can send standard “Thank You” Cards we print for you (order them from us at no cost to the parish).
✓ The letter is available online for download at www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

PARISH LETTERHEAD
“Stewards of God’s Gifts” graphic

May 31, 2005

Dear…

God’s generosity never ceases to amaze me as it is reflected in our people! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your response to our parish’s annual Time and Talent renewal. People like you who are committed to the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ are wonderful signs of the possibilities of what can happen when God’s people come together to share what they have with each other and with those in need.

Because of people like you, our parish is better able to respond to the command of Jesus to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19) With each renewal of our commitment to the practice of Christian stewardship, we strengthen our ties to each other as a parish and demonstrate to the wider community that we are in fact, “Stewards of God’s Gifts.”

May you be blessed in the ways you practice Christian stewardship as a way of life in all facets of your life!

Faithfully yours,

Pastor
“Follow-Up” Letter

Purpose:
To follow-up with those in the parish who have not completed a Commitment Card this year (and may have in the past). Also, can be revised to follow-up with anyone who is currently involved in a parish ministry but has yet to complete a Commitment Card this year.

Notes:
✓ This letter should be from the pastor alone.
✓ It should include another Commitment Card.
✓ This letter should go out at the beginning of June, 2005.
✓ The letter is available online for download at www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

PARISH LETTERHEAD

“Stewards of God’s Gifts” graphic

June 6, 2005
Dear…

During this past month, I have invited people in our parish to participate in our annual stewardship reflection particularly as it relates to our gifts of Time and Talent. All have been invited to pray and think about being “Stewards of God’s Gifts” in all aspects of our lives, especially here in our parish community.

The spirituality of stewardship calls us to respond out of gratitude to our most generous God for all that God has given us. Each year, our parish community enters into the process of stewardship renewal where all are invited to consider this response.

Please take another look at the enclosed Time and Talent Commitment Card. Perhaps there are gifts, talents and skills that you have that you would like to share with our parish this year. If you’d like, place your completed Time and Talent Commitment Card in the collection basket this weekend at Mass.

Whatever you decide, I would like to thank you for being a part of this parish community, and for helping us participate in the mission and ministry of Jesus here in our parish, through the sacraments, our common prayer and worship experiences, and the many ministries of love and service.

May God bless you in all facets of your life, as you go about growing in faith and love, committed to develop, use and share what God has given you!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor
LAY WITNESS TALKS

General Information

Purpose:
Key to the renewal process are witness talks from members of the parish who have struggled to respond to God’s call in their lives, accepted the challenge, and entered into the ongoing conversion process of living as Christians.

Notes:
✓ Lay Witness talks are stories of conversion and are not requests for money or for volunteers. Those are different kinds of talks on different occasions and are inappropriate during stewardship renewals.
✓ Some parishes, because of the effectiveness of Witness Talks and the belief of parish leadership in their essential value, schedule the talks for more than one weekend during the renewal. Whatever your parish decides, make sure to include Lay Witness Talks before the in-pew Commitment process takes place (usually the second or third weekend of the renewal).
✓ Lay witness talks are to take place at Mass within established liturgical norms. The Diocesan guidelines appear in the Homily Helps the clergy will receive.
✓ Lay witness training and/or preparation is important. If you need ideas for this, call us.
✓ For more Lay Witness resource sheets and sample talks, visit our website: www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

✓ The following are important to note when utilizing Witness Talks in the parish for time and talent renewal periods:
  ❖ Inviting/Nominating Potential Speakers:
    ➢ People who have had some level of conversion regarding stewardship.
    ➢ People who give effective witness to their use of time and talent in the parish and elsewhere.
  ❖ Overview of Purpose and Nature of Talk:
    ➢ Includes reference to this year’s theme “Stewards of God’s Gifts.”
    ➢ To tell personal stories of how the witness speaker responds to Jesus’ call by returning gifts of time and talent to the Lord.
    ➢ To consider a tie-in to a major relevant theme of the readings that connects with stewardship for the particular Sunday the talk will be made.
  ❖ Follow the “Big Four” Questions:
    ➢ “I first heard about stewardship when…”
    ➢ “My reaction to Stewardship was…”
    ➢ “What changed my mind was…”
    ➢ “Stewardship has benefited my life by…”
  ❖ Training (preferably as a Group):
    ➢ Familiarity with principles of the U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral on Stewardship.
    ➢ Familiarity with the designated Sunday’s scripture.
    ➢ Use of Fr. Bill Hanson’s “Witness Training Guide” and Video (available from our Office).
  ❖ Reflection on:
    ➢ Baptismal Call.
    ➢ Stewardship as a way of life.
    ➢ Sharing gifts of time and talent.
  ❖ Practice Presentations (and friendly Group Critique):
    ➢ Preferably, in the space where the talk will be given.
    ➢ Using the actual audio equipment that will be available.
    ➢ Duration of talk should be no longer than five minutes.
Invitation to Potential Lay Witness Speakers

Purpose:
This letter is used as an invitation from the pastor to someone who is a potential lay witness speaker for this year’s annual renewal. Could be revised to become a “Letter of Nomination.”

Notes:

✓ Some parishes use a similar letter, not as an invitation from the pastor, but as a nomination from someone who is known well by the nominee.

✓ If the letter is an invitation, it should be from the pastor. If it is a nomination, it could be from someone the person knows who has nominated him/her.

✓ Sometimes, a parish has difficulty securing adult witness speakers. Some have found it to be quite exciting and refreshing to have young people (teenagers and young adults) give the witness talks during stewardship renewals.

✓ There is an accompanying sheet entitled, “So, you’ve been asked to present a lay witness talk at the Parish…” and another, “4 Steps to a Witness Talk” that many parishes have found helpful. They are available on pages 37 and 38 of this Update and on our website at www.stewardshipipli.org/lead/renew.html

April 4, 2005

Dear _________________, (personalized)

I believe you are someone who tries to live your life as a Christian steward. You join with other “Stewards of God’s Gifts” in our parish when you recognize, nurture, and share what God has given you with others. By doing this, you help bring us further along to the establishment of God’s kingdom.

Our parish will soon enter into our annual Time and Talent stewardship renewal process. Integral to this process is what we call a “Witness Talk.” I would like you to consider telling your story of responding to God’s generosity in your life. The witness talks will take place on the weekends of May 14/15 and May 21/22.

You may be saying, “Why would you want to pick me?” Well, I truly believe that you have a story of giftedness to share! You can be an example to help inspire others in our parish so that they too will reflect and pray about sharing their gifts of time and talent with the parish. (And you can even read your presentation from your notes—but we can talk more about that!) Think and pray about this invitation.

For your information, I am holding (or ____________, our eg. Pastoral Associate is holding) a 90 minute information and training session on Tuesday evening, April 19, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. or on Wednesday morning, April 20, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. There, all the details will be laid out and everyone’s mind will be put at ease!

I’ll be calling you (or ____________ will be calling you) shortly about this invitation. Whatever you decide to do, I wish to thank you for the gifts you share with our parish community. Your giftedness and expression of faith are an inspiration to me as pastor. Yes, you are “gifted by God” and one of the great “Stewards of God’s Gifts!”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor

P.S. Before you make your decision, take a few moments to read the enclosed flyer. Thank you!
RESOURCES FOR LITURGY

General Intercessions

*Purpose:*
To foster a complete and holistic approach to stewardship renewals that includes the necessary liturgical connections.

*Notes:*
- The special general intercessions we provide follow a format that may differ from that which is used in your parish. Simply adapt the content of each to your parish’s own standard.
- Find out how, in your parish system, one goes about placing general intercessions for each weekend liturgy (e.g. through the liturgy committee, the pastor, the rectory secretary, etc.). Then request these to be placed enough in advance for the respective weekends.
- There is one special general intercession before the four weekends of renewal and another for after the four weekends of renewal. This makes a total of six special intercessions.
- Some parishes choose to include, in addition to the special renewal general intercessions, the regular general intercession for stewardship that appears in each week’s fax from our Office.
- It is possible that your parish has adapted our model for time and talent stewardship renewal, which would make some of the verbiage in our general intercessions incorrect. Rework each intercession to reflect what is actually going on in your parish for the renewal.

Bulletin Announcements

*Purpose:*
To reinforce all that is going on in other printed materials, the liturgy, and the homilies during this Spring’s Time and Talent stewardship renewal.

*Notes:*
- Each of the special bulletin announcements should include the stewardship logo and/or one of this year’s theme graphics: “Stewards of God’s Gifts.” Check the back cover of this Update and download your selections at [www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html](http://www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html)
- Find out how, in your parish system, one goes about placing items for the bulletin. There are time constraints that differ from parish to parish. Typically, all matters for the bulletin are due into the parish office at least one week before the scheduled bulletin insertion date.
- It is possible that your parish has adapted our model for stewardship renewal, which would make some of the verbiage in our special bulletin announcements incorrect. Rework each announcement to reflect what is actually going on in your parish for the renewal.
- There is one special bulletin announcement before the four weekends of renewal and another to use after the four weekends of renewal. This makes a total of six bulletin announcements.
- These special bulletin announcements are not meant to replace the bulletin *reflections* that we send out in our weekly fax. (Those are special reflections on the Sunday readings.)
- Parishes distribute bulletins differently. For instance, if your parish distributes the bulletin at the end of Mass, you will need to change the verbiage for the announcements, so that the language and tenses match the experience of the people.
Pulpit Announcements

Purpose:
To reinforce all that is going on in other printed materials, the liturgy, and the homilies during this Spring’s Time and Talent stewardship renewal.

Notes:

✓ Find out how, in your parish system, one goes about placing pulpit announcements. There are time constraints that differ from parish to parish.

✓ It is possible that your parish has adapted our model for Time and Talent stewardship renewal, which would make some of the verbiage in our special pulpit announcements incorrect. Rework each announcement to reflect what is actually going on in your parish for the renewal.

✓ There is one special pulpit announcement before the four weekends of renewal and another to use after the four weekends of renewal. This makes a total of six pulpit announcements.

✓ The location of pulpit announcements in weekend liturgies varies from parish to parish, with most parishes doing the pulpit announcements after the “Prayer After Communion.” The announcements we provide are written with that placement in mind. You may need to change the verbiage in these pulpit announcements depending upon where your parish has placed the pulpit announcements, or other items included in the renewal, such as the completion of in-pew Commitments and Lay Witness Talks.

Interesting Note:
The repetition that exists in the bulletin/pulpit announcements and, to a lesser degree, in the general intercessions is by design. “They” used to say it takes people seven times to integrate a single message into their minds. Now, it is said it takes eleven or more times, because of the fast rate of information exchange in our society!

Samples for this Spring’s Time and Talent Renewal

Preliminary Weekend
April 30 / May 1

Although the actual four weekends of Renewal do not formally begin until next week, use the following preparatory materials for this weekend:

GENERAL INTERCESSION:
“That as stewards of God’s many gifts, we may prepare ourselves for our upcoming stewardship renewal with joy and thanksgiving, we pray to the Lord…”

BULLETIN AND PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT (Place in Bulletin AND Announce at Mass):

STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL IS ON ITS WAY!
Next weekend, we will celebrate God’s generosity in our lives. We’ll begin our annual stewardship renewal of Time and Talent. Let us pray for each other as we reflect together on the many gifts God has given us and how we are “Stewards of God’s Gifts.”
Awareness Weekend (Mother’s Day)  
May 7/8

GENERAL INTERCESSION:
“That everyone in our parish community may reflect upon what it means to be gifted by God as we begin this Spring’s stewardship renewal, we pray to the Lord…”

BULLETIN AND PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT (Place in Bulletin AND Announce at Mass):

TIME AND TALENT RENEWAL IS HERE!
God has given us so many gifts, and, yes, we are called to be “Stewards of God’s Gifts.” Please read the insert in today’s bulletin to help you prepare for our annual renewal of Time and Talent. And, look for a special mailing this week from our pastor designed to help you reflect on God’s generosity and what it means to be a steward of God’s gifts.

Next week (after all Masses) (during all Masses), we will (briefly describe your Gifts Celebration). As stewards of God's gifts, we share in the building God's Kingdom! Please join in praying for all in our parish as we enter this period of Time and Talent renewal.

Gifts Celebration Weekend (Pentecost)  
May 14/15

GENERAL INTERCESSION:
“That we celebrate all that God has given us with joy and in love and service, we pray to the Lord…”

BULLETIN AND PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT (Place in Bulletin AND Announce at Mass):

WE CELEBRATE OUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS!
How blessed are we to be gifted by God so that we may develop, use and share our gifts with others to help build God’s Kingdom! We are very grateful to all in our parish who respond to the call to good stewardship at home, in the workplace, in the community, and right here in our parish. How great it is to be “Stewards of God’s Gifts!”

This week you will receive a letter in the mail from our pastor along with a Commitment Card that will assist you as you reflect upon the ways you may wish to make or renew a commitment to sharing your gifts of Time and Talent with others, including our parish community. Please look for it in the mail, and bring it with you to Mass next weekend.

(And if applicable, briefly invite all to attend your Gifts Celebration after Mass.)
Commitment Weekend
May 21/22

GENERAL INTERCESSION:
“That as Christian stewards, we will respond to the challenge of making a commitment to sharing our God-given gifts, we pray to the Lord…”

BULLETIN AND PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT (Place in Bulletin AND Announce at Mass):

SHARING OUR GIFTS IN LOVE AND SERVICE
Stewardship is a way of life. It's a wonderful way that we who follow Jesus can share what God has given us. This week, everyone will be invited to consider making or renewing a commitment to sharing God's gifts right here in our parish. Thank you to all those who respond(ed) to this call to stewardship, and thank you to all who live in gratitude for what God provides.

If you didn’t get a chance to bring or complete a Commitment Card this weekend at Mass, there’s still time to do it next weekend. Yes, we are called to be “Stewards of God’s Gifts” as we strive to live as a community of faith centered on the mission of Jesus Christ.

Follow-Up Weekend (Memorial Day Weekend)
May 28/29

GENERAL INTERCESSION:
“That as stewards of God's gifts, we may have the perseverance to follow Jesus and his teachings in all aspects of our lives, we pray to the Lord…”

BULLETIN AND PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT (Place in Bulletin AND Announce at Mass):

STEWARDS OF GOD’S GIFTS
Stewardship is a way of life. God has gifted each and every one of us. Thank you to all of you who responded to God’s generosity in your life by sharing your gifts of Time and Talent with our parish family. And, thank you to everyone who is faithful to participating in the mission of Jesus in the many of facets of life—at home, in the workplace, in the community, and right here in our parish.

As stewards of God’s gifts we:
♦ Receive the gifts of God with gratitude;
♦ Cultivate them responsibly;
♦ Share them lovingly in justice with others, and;
♦ Stand before the Lord in a spirit of accountability.
Weekend After the Renewal
June 4/5

GENERAL INTERCESSION:
“That we Christian stewards may continue to grow in gratitude to God for all that we have received, we pray to the Lord…”

BULLETIN AND PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT (Place in Bulletin AND Announce at Mass):

THANKS BE TO GOD!
Thank you for entering into the spirit of stewardship renewal these past few weeks! You know, everything we have is gift from God. And, as disciples of Jesus, we are called to be stewards of all God’s gifts! And, thank you for making or renewing your commitment to share your gifts at home, in the workplace, in the community, and right here in our parish! If you haven’t yet made this year’s Commitment, please do so today.

You can always access our web pages through the Diocese of Rockville Centre’s website:
www.drvc.org

(Select “Diocesan Offices” and then click on “Parish Stewardship” then click on “Enter Parish Stewardship Website”)

Visit the Diocesan site for all other activities of the Diocese of Rockville Centre as well!
CAALENDAR and ACTION PLAN

“The Plan”

Time and Talent Renewal Process:

These pages contain the recommended Calendar and Detailed Action Plan for this Spring’s Time and Talent Stewardship Renewal. PLEASE READ THROUGH THE ENTIRE PLAN BEFORE YOU START THE RENEWAL PROCESS to get an overview of how each part fits.

Here is the diocesan timeline for the Spring, 2005 Time and Talent Renewal process:

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, MAY 7/8  Stewardship Awareness Weekend (Mother’s Day)
(Bulletin Insert 1)

MONDAY, MAY 9  First Parish Mailing
(Spiritual Brochure and Letter)

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, MAY 14/15  Gifts Celebration Weekend (Pentecost)
(Bulletin Insert 2, distribution of Ministry Directory, possible Lay Witness Talk)

MONDAY, MAY 16  Second Parish Mailing (or combined single mailing)
(Includes Letter, Commitment Card, and, if possible, Ministry Directory)

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, MAY 21/22  Commitment Weekend
(Bulletin Insert 3, Time and Talent Commitment Cards, Lay Witness Talk recommended)

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, MAY 28/29  Follow-Up Weekend (Memorial Day Weekend)
(Repeat, on a smaller scale, the prior Weekend. Includes Time & Talent Commitment Cards)

TUESDAY, MAY 31 & Afterwards  More Follow-Up
(Acknowledgements, gift discernment, interviewing, matching gifts, orientation and training, etc.)

The following pages contain the Detailed Action Plan based upon the above timeline.
"DETAILED ACTION PLAN"

The following is a detailed action plan for the Spring, 2005 process. It assumes that you are following the components of the plan laid out for parishes in the diocese, which includes a four weekend renewal process. Your parish may need to adjust this plan appropriately, based upon pastoral decisions that are made related to Time and Talent Renewal this Spring. Whatever your plan is, it is strongly recommended that it contain these five aspects, preferably over a four (or at least a three) weekend process:

1. Stewardship Homilies.
2. Lay Witness Talks.
3. A Gifts Celebration.
4. Ministry Directory
5. Time and Talent Commitments.

Note about Homily Helps: We will mail homily helps to all parish priests and deacons in our database during the week of April 11, 2005. They cover the four weekends of the renewal according to our plan. If your parish is deviating from this plan, work with clergy so that appropriate homilies are prepared during the weekends you have scheduled for Financial Stewardship Renewal. Regardless of whether our homily helps are used or not, it is important that homilies during each of the weekends of the renewal process connect with the renewal.

Planning/First Steps/Questions to Ask

Stewardship Committee:

◆ How often will the stewardship committee meet as you get closer to the Time and Talent Renewal? (e.g. Once a month? Twice a month?)
◆ How will you divide tasks among committee members? (e.g. Communications/Publicity? Gifts Celebration? Commitment Cards? Helpers for Commitment and Follow-Up weekend—to organize Commitment Cards in the Pews?)
◆ Which other groups in the parish will the committee need to connect with for this renewal? (e.g. Pastoral council? Liturgy committee? Finance committee? Activities committee? Hospitality committee?)

Gifts Celebration: Imagine what your parish’s Gifts Celebration will look like.

◆ When will it take place? (e.g. Pentecost weekend?)
◆ How will it be publicized to parishioners? (e.g. bulletin insert, flyer, e-mail, internet, mailing, etc.)
◆ When will you gather the ministry leaders together to discuss your plans for the Gifts Celebration and invite them into the process so that participation by all is optimized? Plan your meeting with them (e.g. The week of April 4, 2005).
◆ How will you invite your ministry leaders to come together? (e.g. Use the Letter to Ministry Leaders Announcing the Gifts Celebration in this Update.)
**Ministry Directory:**
- Do you need to update your parish’s ministry directory? (e.g. Is it outdated? Are there new ministries?)
- What languages do you need it to be in? (Spanish? Other?)
- How will you put together updated ministry descriptions? (e.g. Solicit updates through the ministry leaders? Parish staff?)
- How will the Ministry Directory be distributed during the renewal? (e.g. At each Mass? In the mail?)
- How will the Ministry Directory be distributed outside the renewal? (e.g. In the parish book rack? In the new parishioner welcome kit?)

**Lay Witness Talks:**
- How will you nominate/choose/invite this year’s Lay Witness Speakers? (e.g. “Letter of Invitation” found in this Update? Letter of Nomination? Phone Invitation by Pastor?)
- How and when will you train/orient your speakers? (e.g. Training evening?)

**Parishioner Materials:**
- Templates for materials we write (but do not print for you) will be available on the special leadership section of our website by the week of March 21 (www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html). (e.g. Spiritual Brochure, Bulletin Inserts, Time and Talent Commitment Form, Ministry Directory, and Sample Letters in this Update. Also available are graphics with this year’s theme and many other downloadable resources to help you plan for your renewal and for stewardship all year long.
- Do you need new prayer cards and posters? (Order them online at no cost to the parish from the Office of Parish stewardship.)
- Which parishioner materials will you need to have printed by an outside printing vendor? (e.g. Spiritual Brochure? Bulletin Inserts? Ministry Directories? Time and Talent Commitment Form? etc.)
- Which parishioner materials are you able to print in-house?
- Will you have the materials printed in one color (least expensive), two colors (more expensive), or four colors (most expensive)?
- What customization will you make to the materials you will have printed? (e.g. Your own parish’s pictures? Your parish’s name and contact information? Your parish logo/mission statement?)
- How will you distribute the bulletin inserts? (e.g. As part of your bulletin? As a separate insert?)
- What printing vendor will you use? (e.g. The one with the best pricing!)
- Will you secure sponsorship to help offset your printing costs? (e.g. Local funeral homes, Knights of Columbus? Columbiettes? Auxiliary? Some other group?)

**Commitment Forms:**
- How will the parishioners be invited to submit/present their Time and Talent Commitment Forms? (e.g. Ritual at mass? In procession? In the collection basket?)
- What will you do with the Commitment Forms you receive? (e.g. How will data be processed? Who will do it? When?)
- How will you get the information from the Commitment Cards out to the ministry leaders? (e.g. A meeting? Mailing a listing to each leader? Through the parish staff?)
- How will you thank the parishioners who submitted Commitment Forms? (e.g. “Thank You Card” you make from our templates? The “Thank You” card we print for parishes? The “Thank You” letter found in this Update?)
- How will you follow-up: With those involved in ministry who haven’t completed a Commitment Card? With those not involved in ministry who haven’t responded? With those who choose to “step down” from a given ministry? With those who express an interest in a particular ministry but are not yet ready to commit?)
Parish Ministers:
- How will you welcome and train new ministers? (e.g. At orientation sessions? At the regular meeting of each ministry? At special training sessions? By using “mentors”?)
- What ongoing support will you provide new ministers/all ministers? (e.g. Day of reflection? Practical workshops? Diocesan workshops?)

Before the Four Weekend Renewal Process Begins

MARCH 21, 2005 (the week of):
1) Confirm details of your Gifts Celebration.
2) Send letter to parish ministry leaders about the meeting you will have to discuss and solicit assistance for the parish’s Gifts Celebration.
3) Decide your deadlines for your plan (e.g. printing deadlines, updated ministry descriptions/directory deadline, commitment form deadline, etc.).
4) Decisions need to be finalized regarding how and which of the options for parishioner materials (brochure, bulletin inserts, commitment forms, thank you cards, etc.) will be used. Which will be printed in-house? Which will be printed professionally? Which will be ordered from us?
5) Check that you have a generous supply of stewardship prayer cards and that they are in good condition. Note how many you may need to order.
6) Parishes will be mailed Materials Order forms for things we can print at no cost for you may be ordered online, by fax, or in the mail).
7) Order any hard copies of this Update and, if you wish, a computer CD containing all the templates we made for you for this season’s renewal (Spiritual Brochure, Bulletin Inserts, Time and Talent Commitment Form, Ministry Directory, Sample Letters). You can order online, by fax, or by phone. (The templates for these materials will also be available online this week.)
8) Finalize the details of your plan for this Spring’s Time and Talent Renewal.

MARCH 28, 2005 (the week of):
1) Plan who will conduct your Lay Witness Training session(s) and what the session(s) will look like.
2) Download all templates available on our website for this Spring’s Time and Talent Renewal (Spiritual Brochure, Bulletin Inserts, Time and Talent Commitment Form, Ministry Directory, Sample Letters) OR obtain a computer CD of all these same files.
3) Order the printed materials you decided to get from us this week (either online, by fax, or by phone).

APRIL 4, 2005 (the week of):
1) Conduct meeting for parish ministry leaders to roll out the Gifts Celebration.
2) Gather data on parish ministries (Ministry Description Forms—new or revised from last time.
3) Assemble the contents (or revisions) of the Ministry Directory.
4) Send Lay Witness Letters of Invitation/Nomination or place personal calls to potential witness speakers.
5) Solicit bids/pricing on any outside printing from several vendors.
6) Prepare any customization you will do on any of the templates we make available to you.

APRIL 11, 2005 (the week of):
1) Determine which printing vendor can fulfill your needs in your given timeframe at a reasonable cost.
2) If you do not know, find out how to place special general intercessions and the bulletin and pulpit announcements in your parish.
3) Start preparing the content and timeline for the special general intercessions and the bulletin and pulpit announcements you will use. See our samples in this Update.

4) With your pastor’s input and approval, prepare cover letters for the parish mailing(s) during the renewal period.

5) Homily helps are mailed out this week to all clergy in our database from stewardship parishes. They will also be made available online.

**APRIL 18, 2005 (the week of):**
1) Check that all clergy in your parish have received their Homily Helps for the renewal. (They are also available for download on the leadership page on our site).
2) Complete Time and Talent Commitment Card and Ministry Directory so that the final copy is ready for the printing vendor.
3) Conduct Lay Witness Orientation session(s).
4) Send all materials that you will have professionally printed to your vendor (e.g. Ministry Directories, Time and Talent Commitment Form, Bulletin Inserts, Spiritual Brochures, Thank You Cards). Make sure you order enough of each item to cover yourself for how the items will be used in your particular plan.
5) Work with music minister/liturgy committee to influence songs that have stewardship themes that may be used at Sunday liturgies during the renewal period. (e.g. Songs about discipleship, ministry, gifts, God as source of all things and giver of all gifts, etc.)
6) This week, you will begin to receive two faxes from us, instead of the usual one. One is the “regular fax” the other is the “renewal” fax. Both will be available online. Check the special renewal faxes each week for last minute information, checklists, and updates.
7) Prepare (according to your parish’s guidelines) the placement of the special General Intercession, Bulletin and Pulpit Announcement for preliminary weekend (April 30/May 1).

**APRIL 25, 2005 (the week of):**
1) Any materials you ordered from us should come in this week (Prayer Cards, Posters, Thank You Cards). Verify for accuracy the contents of the boxes you receive.
2) Check with the vendor the status of the materials you are having professionally printed. Make sure all is going as planned.
3) Design and setup for printing/distribution the flyer (or other communication) for your Gifts Celebration.
4) Prepare (according to your parish’s guidelines) the placement of the special General Intercession, Bulletin and Pulpit Announcement for Awareness Weekend (May 7/8).

**MAY 2, 2005 (the week of):**
1) Prepare (according to your parish’s guidelines) the placement of the special General Intercession, Bulletin and Pulpit Announcement for Gifts Celebration weekend (May 14/15).
2) Replace or Add Stewardship Prayer in hymnals to be ready for Awareness Weekend.
3) Finalize/check in with all presenters for the four weekends of Time and Talent Renewal (homilies, witness talks, Commitment Card walk-through, etc.).
4) Finalize helpers needed for each weekend of the renewal (to supply pews with materials, to work on Commitment Cards, etc.).
5) Stuff Bulletin Insert #1 – if you chose to have the bulletins as a separate insert.
Four Weekend Renewal Process

MAY 7/8, 2005:
Awareness Weekend
If all steps are followed, at all Masses this weekend, parishioners will have a sense that we are now entering a period of stewardship renewal, particularly the renewal of our Time and Talent.
1) Clergy reference in homily to the fact that the stewardship renewal Process has begun (see Homily Helps).
2) Pray the Stewardship Prayer.

MAY 9, 2005:
First Parish Mailing: This mailing will introduce the fact that stewardship renewal is upon us. It will address the theme for this year’s Stewardship effort (“Stewards of God’s Gifts”). The First Parish Mailing includes:
1) Personalized letter from pastor and stewardship leader.
2) “Stewards of God’s Gifts” Spiritual Brochure.
3) Invitation to parish Gifts Celebration, if applicable.
(As mentioned earlier in this Update, some parishes choose to send one mailing, instead of two as shown in this plan. If this is your choice, you need to adjust this plan in all its related parts to accommodate one mailing.)

MAY 9, 2005 (the week of):
1) Prepare (according to your parish’s guidelines) the placement of the special General Intercession, Bulletin and Pulpit Announcement for Commitment Weekend (May 21/22).
2) Stuff Bulletin Insert #2 – if you chose to have the bulletins as a separate insert.

MAY 14/15, 2005:
Gifts Celebration Weekend
If all steps are followed, at all Masses this weekend, parishioners will have a sense that we are in a period of stewardship renewal, acknowledging and celebrating God’s gifts present within the community.
1) Clergy reference to God’s gifts in homily (see Homily Helps).
2) Pray the Stewardship Prayer.
3) Gifts Celebration at all masses.
4) Lay witness talk, if desired.
5) Distribution of Ministry Directory, if desired.

MAY 16, 2005:
Second Parish Mailing
This mailing will speak about our theme and it will ask people to reflect and pray about making or renewing a commitment to Time and Talent for this year out of gratitude for all that God has given them. The Second Parish Mailing includes:
1) Personalized letter from pastor and stewardship leader.
2) Time and Talent Commitment Card and a Ministry Directory, if desired.
(As mentioned earlier in this Update, some parishes choose to send one mailing, instead of two as shown in this plan. If this is your choice, you need to adjust this plan in all its related parts to accommodate one mailing.)
MAY 16 (week of):
1) Prepare (according to your parish’s guidelines) the placement of the special General Intercession, Bulletin and Pulpit Announcement for Follow-Up Weekend (May 28/29).
2) Check that you have a sufficient supply of pencils (and people) for the in-pew Time and Talent commitments on Commitment Weekend.
3) Stuff Bulletin Insert #3 – if you chose to have the bulletins as a separate insert.

MAY 21/22, 2005:
Commitment Weekend
If all steps are followed, parishioners will have entered into the spirit of stewardship renewal, acknowledged/affirmed their own giftedness by God, and realize that this is now an opportunity to revisit/renew commitments to sharing Time and Talent this year, particularly through parish ministries and activities.
1) Lay witness talk, strongly recommended prior to Commitments.
2) Homily reference to sharing God’s gifts in all aspects of life, including the parish (see Homily Helps)
3) Completion and Presentation of Time and Talent Commitments. At the regular offertory collection time, invite all parishioners to place their commitment cards and Sunday envelopes in the collection basket. Or, work with your Liturgy Committee to design a more creative way of presenting the Commitment Cards during Mass.
4) Pray the Stewardship Prayer.
5) People are needed to straighten/re-supply pews with Commitment Cards, pens/pencils (& envelopes, if desired). It is recommended that the Commitment Cards be placed face up on every seat rather than stacked at the end of the pew. Over half of the Commitment Cards turned in this weekend will come from the pews if generous supplies are available.

MAY 23, 2005 (week of):
1) Prepare (according to your parish’s guidelines) the placement of the special General Intercession, Bulletin and Pulpit Announcement for the weekend after the renewal (June 4/5).

MAY 28/29, 2005:
Follow-Up Weekend
This is a shortened version of the previous weekend with an opportunity to make/renew Time and Talent Commitments.
1) Lay witness talk, if desired.
2) Homily reference to sharing God’s gifts in all aspects of life, including the parish (see Homily Helps)
3) Completion and Presentation of Time and Talent Commitments. At the regular offertory collection time, invite all parishioners to place their commitment cards and Sunday envelopes in the collection basket. Or, work with your Liturgy Committee to design a more creative way of presenting the Commitment Cards during Mass.
4) Pray the Stewardship Prayer.
5) People are needed to straighten/re-supply pews with Commitment Cards, pens/pencils (& envelopes, if desired). It is recommended that the Commitment Cards be placed face up on every seat rather than stacked at the end of the pew. Over half of the Commitment Cards turned in this weekend will come from the pews if generous supplies are available.
Follow-Up

Follow up is absolutely essential to the renewal Process! It is absolutely critical that anyone who made a commitment is sent an acknowledgement. It is also important that those who have not yet made a commitment this year are contacted (especially those already involved in ministry).

MAY 31 (and the days following):
1) Enter all Time and Talent data in the computer.
2) Print personalized “Thank You” letter or send card.
3) Prepare a statistical report:
   a) Those who renewed commitment.
   b) Those who are new to ministry.
   c) Those who want more information.
   d) Those who wish to discontinue (step-down) in their commitment.
   e) Compare/contrast this with last year’s data for Time and Talent. A sample blank report of this kind can be obtained from our website. When completed, please fax a copy of this report to our Office.
4) Put your follow-up plan in action! Make certain your plan includes having appropriate people—Ministry Leaders, “Coordinator of Commitment Cards,” etc. follow-up with every person who completed a Commitment Card. This is absolutely essential!
5) Invite Ministry Leaders, appropriate parish staff and/or others to conduct Orientation workshops/training sessions for new ministers and to assist with interviewing, matching gifts, gift discernment, mentoring, etc.
6) Continue to communicate to parishioners through pulpit announcements and/or the parish bulletin the status of Time and Talent renewal so far.

JUNE 30 (and Quarterly):
Continue sending your quarterly letter to all parishioners thanking them for their regular Sunday offertory donations (year-to-date) and showing them how well they are doing toward their committed amount and sharing a ministry story. These reports are strongly recommended for use during the entire year and are one good way to demonstrate accountability on several levels. Call us for samples of this type of letter.
YOUR PARISH’S
TIME AND TALENT RENEWAL FOLLOW-UP

1) Who will handle the Commitment Cards after they are received?

__________________________________________________________________________

2) What will be done with them (for instance, who will coordinate the cards, data
entry/management, making and following up with lists, etc.)?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

3) What kind of follow-up will take place (contacting those who haven’t turned
cards in – renewals, sending acknowledgements, scheduling and conducting in-
terviews, ministry information sessions, gift discovery, matching gifts, etc.)?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

4) What happens in the parish in terms of orientation, training, mentoring, coaching?
What should happen!!??

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

35
A Parish Gifts Celebration

What it IS: ☺
✓ Shows gratitude for the many gifts God has given us.
✓ Publicly acknowledges those who share their gifts in the parish with others.
✓ Makes known to ALL parish churchgoers how God’s gifts are shared in the parish community.
✓ Makes connections between giftedness and the Sunday liturgy.
✓ Inspires others to recognize, use, and share their gifts with the parish community.
✓ Ideally suited for an Annual Renewal Process for Time and Talent that ultimately leads to Commitment Weekend.

What it IS NOT: 😞
✗ A “thank you” party exclusively for parish ministers.
✗ A recruitment vehicle for new ministers.
✗ A replacement for Annual Renewal of Time and Talent Commitment.
✗ Just limited to a Time and Talent Festival (Ministry Fair). Other ideas are possible!

Some Ways to Celebrate God’s Gifts Shared through Parish Ministry:
❖ At EVERY Mass on a given Weekend:
  ➢ Litany of Ministries,
  ➢ Processional Banners,
  ➢ Video/Slide Show,
  ➢ Collage Display,
  ➢ Groupings of Ministries with Presentations.
❖ A Ministry Fair (Time and Talent Festival):
  ➢ Showcase different parish ministries/activities,
  ➢ Have children’s activities,
  ➢ Offer good hospitality/refreshments.

Brainstorm, Be Creative, No “Same Ole, Same Ole”
So, You’ve Been Asked to Present A Lay Witness Talk at the Parish...

It’s because the Pastor recognizes something in you that is a tremendous gift - your willingness to try and live out the commitment you have to Jesus Christ and the Catholic Faith!

It’s also because you are someone whose life has been a witness to what Christian stewardship and discipleship are all about!

You express a gratitude to God for the great gifts you have received, and you are willing to share your gifts with others! You have made a decision to be a giver!

In a word, you are someone who tries to live the faith on a daily basis in concrete ways!

What is a Lay Witness Talk, Anyway?

It’s a story of commitment...a story of conversion shared with other people that helps them relate to the message of Jesus. It’s an ordinary story.

It’s very much like what the early Christians did to help evangelize others.

It’s a story BY real people living regular lives FOR real people living regular lives.

The Lay Witness Talks can take place during our Stewardship Renewal on Gifts Celebration Weekend and/or Commitment Weekend. Your talk would be at one of our weekend Masses at that time.

Well...What Would You Have To Do?

First and foremost, think and pray about how God may be calling you to this task.

Then, read and reflect upon the questions on the reverse side of this sheet.

The next step would be to attend the information meeting we have scheduled for this purpose as outlined in the invitation.

And Then...We’ll Take It From There!
4 Steps to a Witness Talk

1. I first heard about stewardship when…
   This recalls the background and situation of a person which leads them up to the next step of conversion.

2. My reaction was…
   By describing a negative reaction, the listeners can relate to their own weak spots, and focus on the place where a breakthrough is needed.

3. What changed my mind was…
   By describing the story details surrounding his or her own breakthrough, the listener can get as close as possible to feeling and being moved by the power of transformation in the speaker’s life story.

4. It has benefited my life by…
   Be describing the positive results, though mysteriously arrived at, the listener gets a glimpse of life on the other side of the breakthrough. This brings hope, as well as the thrill of a change.

A Witness Talk is NOT
- A plea for people to give more money.
- A plea for people to get more involved.

A Witness Talk IS
- A story of real life faith by real life people!
- An opportunity to evangelize.

Special thanks to Fr. Bill Hanson for the above outline explanation.
Calendar of Future Stewardship Renewals

(These are the dates we have scheduled for upcoming renewals. There is a possibility that there may be changes due to unforeseen circumstances. Any changes will be publicized well in advance in our newsletter and weekly fax.)

FALL, 2005 (Financial Stewardship Renewal):

- September (TBA): Fall Stewardship In-Service Training Days
- Sat./Sun., Oct 15/16: Stewardship Awareness Weekend (Mission Sunday)
- Mon., Oct. 17: First Parish Mailing
- Sat./Sun., Oct. 22/23: Accountability Weekend
- Mon., Oct. 24: Second Parish Mailing
- Sat./Sun., Oct. 29/30: Commitment Weekend
- Sat./Sun., Nov. 5/6: Follow-Up Weekend

SPRING, 2006 (Time and Talent Renewal):

- March (TBA): Stewardship "Mini-Retreats"
- Sat./Sun., May 27/28: Stewardship Awareness Weekend (Memorial Day)
- Tues., May 30: First Parish Mailing
- Sat./Sun., June 3/4: Gifts Celebration Weekend (Pentecost)
- Mon., June 5: Second Parish Mailing
- Sat./Sun., June 10/11: Commitment Weekend
- Sat./Sun., June 17/18: Follow-Up Weekend (Father’s Day Weekend)

FALL, 2006 (Financial Stewardship Renewal):

- September (TBA): Fall Stewardship In-Service Training Days
- Sat./Sun., Oct. 21/22: Stewardship Awareness Weekend (Mission Sunday)
- Mon., Oct. 23: First Parish Mailing
- Sat./Sun., Oct. 28/29: Accountability Weekend
- Mon., Oct. 30: Second Parish Mailing
- Sat./Sun., Nov. 4/5: Commitment Weekend
- Sat./Sun., Nov. 11/12: Follow-Up Weekend (Veteran’s Weekend)
RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE
Follow this link to find all the following resources for your
Spring, 2005 Time and Talent Stewardship Renewal:
www.stewardshipli.org/lead/renew.html

Letters for Parishioners
* First Parish Mailing
* Second Parish Mailing (may be modified to become Ministry Directory Letter)
* Thank You Letter
* Follow-Up Letter

Lay Witness Talks
* Letter of Invitation to Potential Speakers
* “So, You’ve Been Asked to Present a Lay Witness Talk at the Parish…” (What Do I Have to Do?)
* Four Steps to a Witness Talk
* A Parish Model for Lay Witness Talks for Annual Stewardship Renewals
* Samples of Time and Talent Witness Talks from Our Parishes

Time and Talent Renewal Parishioner Materials
* Templates for this Spring’s Spiritual Brochure, Bulletin Inserts, Thank You Cards, and Commitment Card
* Suggestions for Funding, Using and Customizing this Spring’s Materials
* Sample Time and Talent Commitment Cards from Parishes
* Ministry Position Description Form and Sample Completed Form
* Samples of Ministry Directories and Ministry Description Entries
* Samples of Litany of Ministries
* Time and Talent Renewal Pointers

For Liturgy and Bulletins During this Renewal
* General Intercessions, Bulletin and Pulpit Announcements
* Graphics with New Theme
* Homily Helps for Clergy

Gifts Celebrations
* Letter to Ministry Leaders Announcing the Gifts Celebration
* A Parish Gifts Celebration (Info Sheet)
* Ministry Fairs (Info Sheet)

Leadership Planning Tools
* Time and Talent Planning Sheet
* Time and Talent Statistics Report
* Leadership Responsibility Worksheet
* Tasks and People Associated with All Year Long Stewardship Implementation
* Stewardship Planning Sheets (Goals, Objectives, Tasks, Persons Responsible)

Presentation and Committee Aids
* Scriptural Text References for Stewardship
* Some Parables of Jesus that Deal with Money and Possessions
* Time and Talent Quotes from the U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral on Stewardship
* Beginning a Parish Stewardship Committee
* Effective Stewardship Committees
* Basic Weekly Bulletin Column
* Living Stewardship (“We Are Grateful This Week…”)
* Common Keys to Success (for Parish Stewardship)
* The Language of Stewardship—The Language of Discipleship
* Building the Reign of God
* What to Do with God’s Gifts?
* Some Ways to Say “Thank You”