

# What does a Stewardship Parish Look Like?

## Parish Stewardship Modeling

The following questions will help your Parish explore the pillars of stewardship and help to frame a discussion in areas that might have room for improvement. Most parishes will not be able to answer “yes” to every question and its examples, however as the parish moves into the stewardship model further all areas will be developed. Our long-term hope is that all parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago will be able to evaluate these questions and answer with a firm, “Yes!”

Key pillars of stewardship identified in this document include:

- Understanding of Scriptural Basis of Stewardship
- Ownership of Vision and Mission
- Strong Spirituality
- Engaged Leadership
- Invitation and Participation
- Appreciation

Are parishioners familiar with the *scriptural concept of stewardship*?

- Has your parish spent time discussing the Theology of Stewardship?
- Does your parish publish in the bulletin or digital communication pieces information about the Theology of Stewardship?
- Do the Pastor and other celebrants talk about stewardship whenever this concept is included in the Gospel readings?
- Do you distribute stewards-related scripture quotes used on parish bulletin boards, bulletin, or online materials?
- Does your religious education program and school programs discuss stewardship for children and young people?
- Are the gifts that parishioners give symbolically tied to the Eucharist through good offertory practices?

Do your parishioners feel a sense of *ownership in the vision and mission* of the Parish?

- Is there a Parish Vision that has been formulated through broad-based input?
- Has the parish conducted a needs assessment and included parishioner input in the process?
- Is there a Parish Strategic Plan making your parish proactive rather than reactive?
- Are there annual communications pieces, for example an Annual Stewardship Report, that provide accounting of parish activities and plans?
- Do parishioners feel invited to share their thoughts, comments and suggestions?
- Are the accomplishments of the Parish actively promoted thus encouraging a sense of pride in the parish?

Is your parish *spiritually strong*?

- Are you please with Mass attendance?
- Do a fair number of parishioners participate in spiritual enrichment activities- small faith communities, adult faith programs, etc.?

- Do parishioners show a willingness to spend time with God through Eucharistic Adoration, weekday Mass, parish missions, personal prayers, etc.?
- Is there a prayer ministry that offers and gathers prayers for the needy in the community?
- Do you provide programming that is exploratory of the Catholic faith and how to engage in their own spirituality more deeply?
- Do you provide programming that offers an overview of the Mass, or the other sacred Liturgies of our faith?

Are your Parish leaders engaged in the stewardship conversation?

- Does your Pastor have a strong level of comfort and knowledge regarding stewardship?
- Does your Parish Council, Finance Council, and Stewardship Councils collaborate?
- Does the School leadership team identify and participate in stewardship efforts within the parish?
- Do Parishioners consist of school and non-school families and each understands the stewardship message?
- Do leaders agree on a stewardship message for the Parish and are they able to articulate that message effectively?

Do you encourage *invitation and participation*?

- Is there a formal ministry for Welcome, which engages new Parishioners, guests, and encourages a sense of invitation among current Parishioners?
- Are there parish activities available for everyone including the elderly, the handicapped, the single, those without children, and young adults?
- Are the leaders of your organizations encourages to make all newcomers feel welcomed and do they encourage new input and ideas?
- Is there a welcome process in place for guests and for newly registered Parishioners?
- Are parish leaders willing to ask, invite and challenge different people to get involved rather than always relying on the same people all the time?
- Are attempts made to reach out to those who are not actively involved?

Do parishioners feel *appreciated*?

- Are people acknowledged, recognized, and shown appreciation for the gifts their share?
- Does your parish bulletin include regular notes of appreciation and recognition?
- Is there an annual appreciation event?
- Are parish leaders sensitive to the fact that sometimes the smaller financial gift may actually be the more generous gift?
- Do parishioners see that their gifts are really needed and used?