**Lay Witness Talks**

The lay witness talk can be used during the in-pew process or in a weekend leading to the in-pew process. This can also be used during an event or, if applicable, you can “carve” out a portion of the lay witness talk and post it to social media or using a smart phone, video the talk and send via an email blast. This is a valuable way to communicate with parishioners, choose someone who has been directly impacted or has an impactful story to share. The power of hearing a first-hand account of how parishioner’s money will be used can make a big difference in how people feel about supporting your parish.

Find a ministry that your parish conducts, versus a ministry your parish only supplies the workers for. Why? If you are only serving a meal, for instance, at a local shelter, a parishioner might think, why don’t I just support the shelter? It is not costing the parish anything to supply workers, it is costing the shelter for supplying the meal. You want to find impact, consider a ministry or program that has a direct impact because of their financial support.

**Here are a few examples of impactful ministries:**

Catholic Schools – have a student talk about their school

Pro-Life Ministries – find someone who either performed or received a service or support

OCIA – a person coming into the Catholic church or someone who recently was initiated

Hispanic Ministry – what does your parish do to support their Hispanic/Latino community

Other ministries or programs in your parish

**Here are a few talking points for your lay witness speaker to touch on:**

How the ministry or program has impacted their life

How they support this parish (financially, spiritually, and volunteer)

Why they are involved in the ministry or program

How others can support the ministry or program

**Sample Lay Witness Presentation**

How do we do it? Will we like it? Does it hurt? Will it work for us? Why should we do it? These are many of the questions that passed through my mind as we first considered stewardship as a way of life. As I look back at my own decision on stewardship and its maturation in the last five years, I notice that my ideals have changed some. There were lots of reasons that I felt we should begin stewardship in our family. God has been very good to us. We have two healthy and happy children.

We have finally passed through the first struggling years of marriage and now had time to think about other things. As I began to think about the Church and what it meant to me, I realized that if everyone was making the kind of limited volunteer and financial commitment that I was, then the Church would not be here for my children. There was no other way it could continue unless there was a higher level of support from me and other parishioners.

Besides, I had great expectations of the Church. It should be well equipped to teach my children all the wonders of God. It should be able to care for the sick, feed the needy and care for the elderly. If my expectations were right, then I had to do my part to make them a reality. I was already giving some time to the Church and with that time some of my talents. But there had to be a strong commitment of time and a commitment of treasure if the Church was going to be able to do all the things I wanted it to do.

Once I decided that perhaps stewardship was something our family needed to think about, I was rather hesitant to bring it up for family discussion. However, I found that there weren’t any problems, and everyone had ideas and thoughts. Since we made our decision on stewardship, I think our outlook on lots of things has changed. We have become more supportive of various worthwhile needs and organizations in the community. I think it opened an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

I came to embrace stewardship through the Church, but I have grown in stewardship to include the entire community. I feel that God expects us to minister to all people. My gifts that fulfill my stewardship may be given to anyone who needs it. It is the giving and the support of God’s children that is important. The spiritual rewards, the feeling of accomplishment that you are following God’s way are the most important things that you will reap from stewardship. You will know you are succeeding when the spirituality and feelings of stewardship far surpass the questions of how much you share and sacrifice.