

A FUTURE FULL of HOPE

“I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”

JEREMIAH 29:11



CATHOLIC
FOUNDATION
OF SOUTH LOUISIANA

THE STEWARDSHIP OF MINISTRY

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THE STEWARDSHIP OF MINISTRY

General Comments and Suggestions

In its three decades of Total Stewardship commitment, this curriculum has consistently affirmed the value of ministry to the entire parish family. Pointed toward A Future Full of Hope, we also honor the Synod's focus on "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment." A call to engage youth is a ministry calling we all share. "The entire Christian community should feel the responsibility of educating new generations. The efforts of those who bear testimony every day to the goodness of the Gospel life and the joy that flows from it should be equally admired" (Preparatory Document, p. 29).

Through faithful, ministering staff and laity, and the dozens of ministry programs they lead, your parish offers healing to the wounded, purpose to the lost, a Catholic home to the searching, and a meaningful life for the spiritually aimless. More than anything, you offer people the love of God. Ministering in the name of Jesus enhances the lives of the hurting and the needy—on your church property and throughout the community you serve. In this Total Stewardship effort, you will have the chance to promote even greater engagement, participation that will produce the fruit of hope and spiritual health, a Stewardship of Ministry.

You'll find resources designed specifically to encourage parishioners to make informed decisions. Those tools include brochures, pulpit announcements, bulletin articles, stories, lessons, homilies and letters inviting willing participation. Ministry commitment cards are additional tools you'll identify as essential to your program's success in recruiting committed volunteers. Distribute those cards and encourage parishioners to indicate a desired level of personal involvement. A special Sunday Mass honoring congregational commitment might also encourage members to respond timely, as they place their completed cards in a dedicated offertory collection.

May God bless your efforts, and may you and your parishioners know the greatest level of commitment possible. Be certain of the claims of Scripture and the legacy of our Catholic faith. As we minister on behalf of Jesus Christ, we look to the promise and blessing of a spiritually strong future, A Future Full of Hope.

Recommended Timeline and Ministry Phase Item List

A Program Phase, Beginning to End

The following illustrates how a parish might utilize the material provided, to assist in implementing the Ministry phase of the annual Total Stewardship curriculum through the course of the eight total weeks set aside.

Week One (Promotion and Prep)

- Bulletin Article 1
- Pulpit Announcement 1
- Use the Toolbox to aid in planning for weeks 3 through 6

Week Two (Promotion and Prep)

- Bulletin Article 2
- Pulpit Announcement 2
- Use the Toolbox to aid in planning for weeks 3 through 6

Week Three (Program Week 1)

- Bulletin Article 3
- Pulpit Announcement 3
- Distribute Informational “Why” Brochure

Week Four (Program Week 2)

- Bulletin Article 4
- Pulpit Announcement 4

Week Five (Program Week 3)

- Bulletin Article 5
- Pulpit Announcement 5
- Deliver Ministry Homily
- Send Direct Mail Letter
- Distribute Tri-Fold Brochure (w/cards, as appropriate)

Week Six (Program Week 4)

- Bulletin Article 6
- Pulpit Announcement 6
- Deliver Ministry Homily
- Distribute additional Brochures and Cards, as needed
- Collect Commitment Cards, in services, as appropriate

Week Seven (Follow Through)

- Continue collecting Commitment Cards, as needed
- Send Follow-Up and Thank You Letters, as appropriate

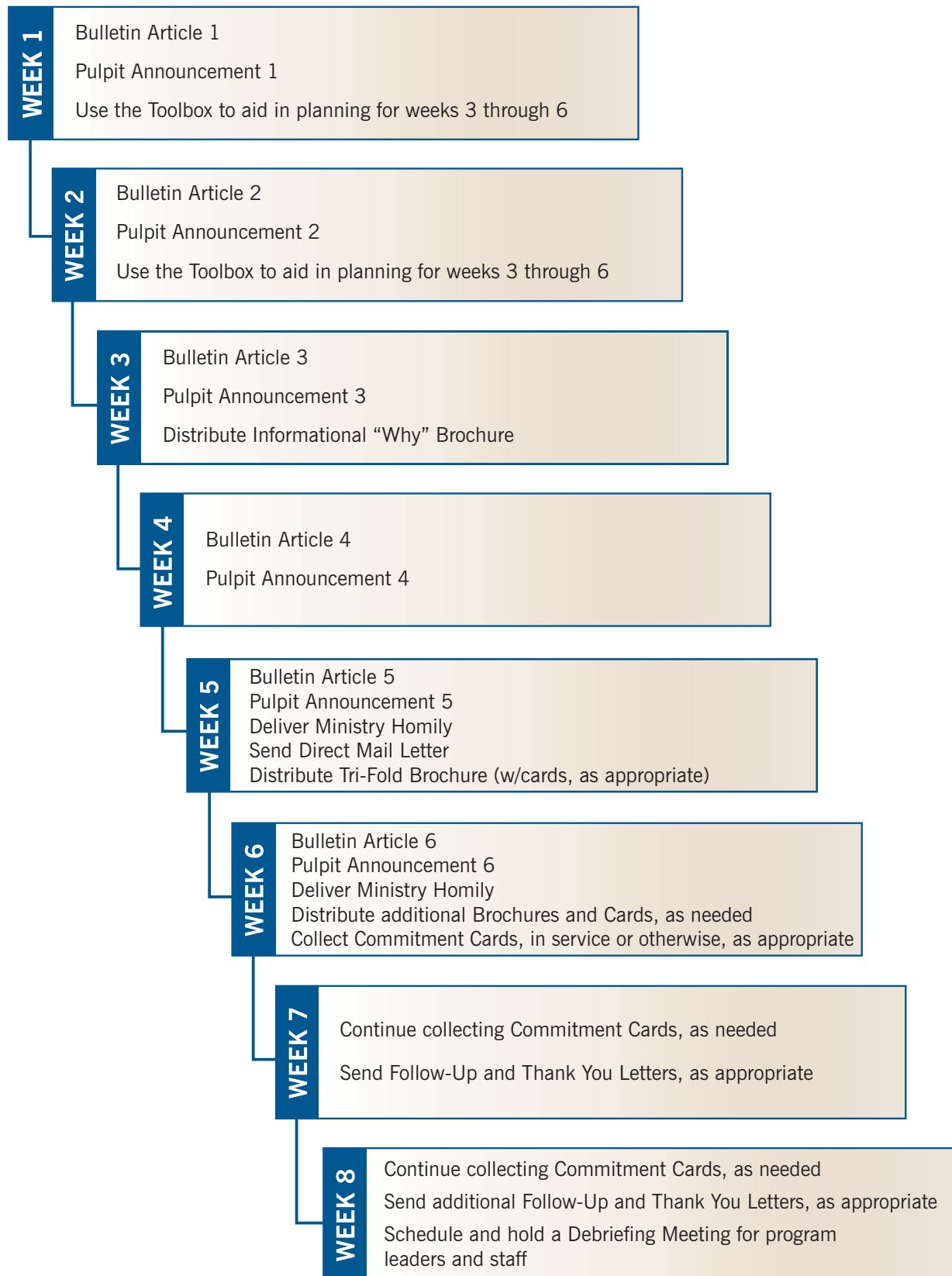
Week Eight (Follow Through and Close)

- Continue collecting Commitment Cards, as needed
- Send additional Follow-Up and Thank You Letters, as appropriate
- Schedule and hold a Debriefing Meeting for program leaders and staff

Stewardship of MINISTRY

Program Phase Item Checklist

- Bulletin Articles
- Pulpit Announcements
- Hymn Suggestions
- Teaching Quotes
- Homily Suggestions
- “Why” Brochures
- Tri-Fold Brochures
- Commitment Cards
- Parishioner Letters



Stewardship of Ministry Pulpit Announcements

Week One.

In the weeks to come, we will begin a new focus on our annual Stewardship of Ministry campaign, a reminder that our commitments mean a great deal today and ensure A Future Full of Hope. As you look to a new season of ministry and personal service, please pray about the areas of ministry you'd like to invest in most. Your parish needs you, and others in our community do too.

Week Two.

We invite you to become even more involved in our parish through your involvement in our Stewardship of Ministry effort. Program brochures will be mailed to you soon, plus you'll find additional information provided to you through our parish bulletin. Please join other faithful Catholic parishioners, as we invite the Lord to guide our commitments and discover the many ways we honor Christ by ministering to others and serving their needs.

Week Three.

This week, you'll receive information regarding our important Stewardship of Ministry effort. As we focus on serving others, we remember those who've served us faithfully through the years and make commitments to build A Future Full of Hope. You will discover many opportunities available to you. Like fellow parishioners, you've been called to model the love of Christ, sharing your time and your talents to the glory of God. Please pray about your involvement and consider making a life affirming commitment to serve Christ and others.

Week Four.

Next week, you will receive additional information concerning our Stewardship of Ministry campaign. An essential part of your personal packet is your ministry commitment card. With so many ministry opportunities available, you have the chance to serve in areas of personal interest, bless others in the process, and honor God through the abilities you've been granted in Christ. Please commit to minister to others. Help us ensure A Future Full of Hope.

Week Five.

This week, everyone will receive a packet containing key information regarding our Stewardship of Ministry effort, A Future Full of Hope. Please join your fellow parishioners and make a purposeful commitment to our parish's ministry programs. Indicate your ministry preferences by completing your commitment card, and then place your completed card in next week's offertory collection. A ministry coordinator will call you to discuss programs and your valued role in them. Please join us as we celebrate your involvement next week.

Week Six.

Welcome to our parish's celebratory Stewardship of Ministry Commitment Sunday. Today, you join with other members of our parish who have made similar commitments to extend the mercy of Jesus Christ to others. We invite you to return your completed commitment card with the offertory collection today and thank you for your gracious intentions. We serve Christ, as we build A Future Full of Hope.

Bulletin Articles, Stewardship of Ministry

Support Materials for the Six Bulletin Articles A Future Full of Hope

Inspirational Scripture Passage

“For by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned. For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

“Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.”

Romans 12:3-18

Bulletin Articles, Stewardship of Ministry

Stewardship of Ministry Bulletin Article #1 A Future Full of Hope

Abridged Version: We Build a Hopeful Future, Serving as Christ's Church

Later this season, we will begin the Total Stewardship effort focused on service, the Stewardship of Ministry. St. Paul celebrated the gifts God has granted every Catholic parishioner, talents and abilities we are called to "exercise" for the blessing of all. To the honor of Christ Jesus, we minister faithfully to ensure blessings in our communities today and to build A Future Full of Hope. During this campaign, every parishioner will have the chance to make commitments regarding service through our parish. Please begin thinking about your own individual commitment to the ministries of your parish.

Expanded Version: We Build a Hopeful Future, Serving as Christ's Church

Later this season, we will begin the Total Stewardship effort focused on service, the Stewardship of Ministry. St. Paul celebrated the gifts God has granted every Catholic parishioner, talents and abilities we are called to "exercise" for the blessing of all. To the honor of Christ Jesus, we minister faithfully to ensure blessings in our communities today and to build A Future Full of Hope. During this campaign, every parishioner will have the chance to make commitments regarding service through our parish. Please begin thinking about your own individual commitment to the ministries of your parish.

"We, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another," Paul wrote the Church in Rome. We offer our "bodies as a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1), "offer God a sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15), "do not forget to do good" (Hebrews 13:16), and give to support others' needs, making sure we "share with others" (Hebrews 13:16). Most significantly, each parishioner serves, in the power of the Spirit, as "a minister of Christ Jesus."

Bulletin Articles, Stewardship of Ministry

Stewardship of Ministry Bulletin Article #2 A Future Full of Hope

Abridged Version: To Build a Hopeful Future, We Serve Others

Our Stewardship of Ministry emphasis will begin soon. Please look for material concerning our desire for greater ministry involvement in the mail. Reading it, you'll learn more about this aspect of our Total Stewardship program and have the chance to indicate your planned level of participation, choosing the parish ministries in which you'd most like to serve. Everyone has received gifts and abilities from God, so each of us has the opportunity to minister to others. With a commitment to build A Future Full of Hope, we serve God by serving others.

Expanded Version: To Build a Hopeful Future, We Serve Others

Our Stewardship of Ministry emphasis will begin soon. Please look for material concerning our desire for greater ministry involvement in the mail. Reading it, you'll learn more about this aspect of our Total Stewardship program and have the chance to indicate your planned level of participation, choosing the parish ministries in which you'd most like to serve. Everyone has received gifts and abilities from God, so each of us has the opportunity to minister to others. With a commitment to build A Future Full of Hope, we serve God by serving others.

St. Peter wrote, "Offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5b). In his letter to the New Testament church at Rome, St. Paul noted our call extends to our fellow parishioners and to those outside the Church: "Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them" (Romans 12:13-14). When we offer ourselves—our very bodies—to serve others in our home, our parish, and in the greater community, we honor Christ. We give ourselves to ensure A Future Full of Hope.

Bulletin Articles, Stewardship of Ministry

Stewardship of Ministry Bulletin Article #3 A Future Full of Hope

Abridged Version: A Hopeful Future Is Ensured by God's Call to Serve

Next week, we will enter the Stewardship of Ministry phase of our Total Stewardship program and will send you an initial brochure that points to the importance of this vital aspect of spiritual stewardship. Significant ministry experiences are rooted in our gratitude for God's blessings and the Lord's call for us follow a plan to build A Future Full of Hope. This is an ideal time to begin thinking about ways you might invest your gifts, talents and interests in the lives of others. Please ask how you might serve, and begin to watch for needs in your parish community.

Expanded Version: A Hopeful Future Is Ensured by God's Call to Serve

Next week, we will enter the Stewardship of Ministry phase of our Total Stewardship program and will send you an initial brochure that points to the importance of this vital aspect of spiritual stewardship. Significant ministry experiences are rooted in our gratitude for God's blessings and the Lord's call for us follow a plan to build A Future Full of Hope. This is an ideal time to begin thinking about ways you might invest your gifts, talents and interests in the lives of others. Please ask how you might serve, and begin to watch for needs in your parish community.

We invest our gifts and talents in ministry and address the needs of others, mindful that affirming God's call to serve them honors him. "Your light must shine before others," Jesus taught, "that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:16). Do so in humility. "I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned" (Romans 12:3). Whether our service is public or private, overt or unnoticed, we serve to the glory of God, ministering in the name of Jesus, that we might affirm A Future Full of Hope.

Bulletin Articles, Stewardship of Ministry

Stewardship of Ministry Bulletin Article #4 A Future Full of Hope

Abridged Version: Shaping a Future Full of Hope, We Perform Good Works

Our Stewardship of Ministry campaign encourages us to consider the needs of other people—fellow parishioners in our Catholic parish, but also those who live in the surrounding community—each one worthy of our ministry focus. This may be your first opportunity to become more involved. When you offer your good works on Christ’s behalf, you honor the call of baptism that initiated your Catholic journey. Just as others have done for us, we reach out and we touch those in need. Together with the faithful from every corner of our Catholic culture, we reach communities looking for love and hope. Shaping A Future Full of Hope, we honor Christ as we minister.

Expanded Version: Shaping a Future Full of Hope, We Perform Good Works

Our Stewardship of Ministry campaign encourages us to consider the needs of other people—fellow parishioners in our Catholic parish, but also those who live in the surrounding community—each one worthy of our ministry focus. This may be your first opportunity to become more involved. When you offer your good works on Christ’s behalf, you honor the call of baptism that initiated your Catholic journey. Just as others have done for us, we reach out and we touch those in need. Together with the faithful from every corner of our Catholic culture, we reach communities looking for love and hope. Shaping A Future Full of Hope, we honor Christ as we minister.

St. Paul wrote of the good works we offer in the name of Jesus Christ, and he affirmed an attitude of service in our ministry efforts: “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:6-8). We build A Future Full of Hope when we serve God faithfully today.

Bulletin Articles, Stewardship of Ministry

Stewardship of Ministry Bulletin Article #5 A Future Full of Hope

Abridged Version: With Enthusiasm, We Build a Future Full of Hope

This week, we encourage you to give prayerful thought to your participation in our parish's Stewardship of Ministry effort. Each parishioner and every family will receive an instructive brochure and a ministry commitment card. You'll find an extended list of specific service and ministry opportunities—many of them ideally suited to your abilities, your talents and your interests. Take a few moments to complete your commitment card, and place it in the offertory next weekend. Your commitment invites a prayerful decision. Please consider, then, how to best invest God's generous blessings and his plan for us, to ensure A Future Full of Hope. Consider how you might lovingly serve with an enthusiastic spirit.

Expanded Version: With Enthusiasm, We Build a Future Full of Hope

This week, we encourage you to give prayerful thought to your participation in our parish's Stewardship of Ministry effort. Each parishioner and every family will receive an instructive brochure and a ministry commitment card. You'll find an extended list of specific service and ministry opportunities—many of them ideally suited to your abilities, your talents and your interests. Take a few moments to complete your commitment card, and place it in the offertory next weekend. Your commitment invites a prayerful decision. Please consider, then, how to best invest God's generous blessings and his plan for us, to ensure A Future Full of Hope. Consider how you might lovingly serve with an enthusiastic spirit.

"Let love be sincere," St. Paul taught. "Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer" (Romans 12:9-12). Honoring the Lord who gave his all, we rightly minister with a zealous spirit, fervent to exercise our call to minister on behalf of Christ, serving fellow parishioners and those in our communities who need the blessings of God, ensuring our efforts build A Future Full of Hope.

Bulletin Articles, Stewardship of Ministry

Stewardship of Ministry Bulletin Article #6 A Future Full of Hope

Abridged Version: As We Minister in the Hope of Glory, Others Take Note

This Sunday, we observe our celebratory Stewardship of Ministry service, inviting every parishioner to return completed Stewardship of Ministry commitment cards with the offertory collection. As we look to another season of affirming Catholic ministry, we honor your involvement and your desire to serve the Lord Jesus as we build A Future Full of Hope in his name. We follow the example of our spiritual leaders and take every opportunity to extend the spread of the Gospel to all those in need of Christ's love, believing in the hope of evangelization and mission.

Expanded Version: As We Minister in the Hope of Glory, Others Take Note

This Sunday, we observe our celebratory Stewardship of Ministry service, inviting every parishioner to return completed Stewardship of Ministry commitment cards with the offertory collection. As we look to another season of affirming Catholic ministry, we honor your involvement and your desire to serve the Lord Jesus as we build A Future Full of Hope in his name. We follow the example of our spiritual leaders and take every opportunity to extend the spread of the Gospel to all those in need of Christ's love, believing in the hope of evangelization and mission.

"The Church is meant to be a Church which evangelizes, goes out to encounter humanity, proclaims the liberating word of the Gospel, heals people's spiritual and physical wounds with the grace of God, and offers relief to the poor and the suffering," Pope Francis offered several years ago (March 29, 2015 Homily). "Be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all," St Paul taught us (Romans 12:17b). For generations, the Church has extended the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world in need. When we engage in mission efforts and evangelization programs, we offer the saving grace of Christ and invite others to help us build A Future Full of Hope. Please join us as we serve in the power of the Spirit.



Instructional Discussion Handouts for Youth: In the Stewardship of Ministry

Our young people are always learning. Teachers, catechists, youthworkers, spiritual directors, mentors, parents and grandparents, family friends and guardians are among the many God calls to provide guidance, instruction and leadership to our youth through the power of the Spirit. They also learn from each other.

To promote learning in the things of God, and to encourage teens to develop spiritual maturity and accountability together, this edition of the Total Stewardship Curriculum includes a series of handouts. Teachers can use them as classroom lessons, small groups might find them helpful as discussion guides, or spiritual mentors might simply distribute them to young people and invite them to read and study the material in times of private reflection. We pray you find them of use in a variety of instructional contexts.

You'll find four youth handouts in each section of the curriculum. We include a fifth activity idea below:

Make a Meme



Anyone engaged in digital culture is familiar with the term "meme." Formerly thought of as a cultural element one group passes along or communicates to another, a meme is much more commonly identified today as the combination of an image and saying that express a key idea, most often cryptic, witty or out-and-out funny.

- 1 Invite your young people to use their tablets or smartphones to create a meme illustrating a key theme related to the Stewardship of Ministry.
- 2 Call up a particular image, then ask your youth to add an applicable saying.
- 3 Offer a phrase that points to key elements of ministry and service, then ask teens to choose an appropriate image that illustrates the point.
- 4 Provide a verse or passage from the Scriptures, and ask students to illustrate the theme with their choice of image and key phrase.

As Pope Francis writes in his introductory letter to participants in the Synod celebrating "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment," we seek to shape "a future that will surely lead to fulfillment." To that end we invite God's blessing in your ministries.



A Big Hollywood Casting Call

PERSIAN STYLE

This morning, you're a big Hollywood producer, casting a movie based on the biblical story of Esther. Set in the Fifth Century BC, you get to choose the big time Hollywood superstars you'd like to see in each of the key roles described below. Money's not a problem. Simply select whoever you want, and be prepared to defend your choices. Esther was an ancient superhero, who came to her royal position "for a time like this" (Esther 4:14, NABRE).

King Xerxes, played by _____, is a powerful, incredibly wealthy Persian king, respected and feared by nobleman and military men all over the kingdom.

Queen Vashti, played by _____, is a beautiful but stubborn-willed and self-centered woman, as famous for her bad attitude as for her beauty.

Memucan, played by _____, is a respected nobleman, one of the king's seven primary advisers, wise in matters of law and justice.

Hegai, played by _____, the king's male eunuch, put in charge of the women of the king's harem.

Esther, played by _____, a Jewess, and one of the most beautiful women in all the kingdom, chosen by Xerxes to take the throne to replace Vashti.

Mordecai, played by _____, a Jew, taken into captivity, a wise man and loving uncle to Esther, having adopted her as his own child, a devoted follower of Jehovah.

Haman, played by _____, the most honored of all the king's noblemen, jealous of Mordecai, determined to remove him from the kingdom, by all means possible.

conflict resolution

Titus 3:1-11, *Contemporary English Version*

Remind your people to obey the rulers and authorities and not to be rebellious. They must always be ready to do something helpful and not say cruel things or argue. They should be gentle and kind to everyone. We used to be stupid, disobedient, and foolish, as well as slaves of all sorts of desires and pleasures. We were evil and jealous. Everyone hated us, and we hated everyone.

God our Savior showed us how good and kind he is. He saved us because of his mercy, and not because of any good things that we have done. God washed us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He gave us new birth and a fresh beginning. God sent Jesus Christ our Savior to give us his Spirit. Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life.

This message is certainly true. These teachings are useful and helpful for everyone. I want you to insist that the people follow them, so that all who have faith in God will be sure to do good deeds. But don't have anything to do with stupid arguments about ancestors. And stay away from disagreements and quarrels about the Law of Moses. Such arguments are useless and senseless. Warn troublemakers once or twice. Don't have anything else to do with them. You know that their minds are twisted, and their own sins show how guilty they are.

1 According to Paul, how should we treat other people? Why is this so difficult at times? What can be done about divisiveness and quarreling?

2 With the same words Paul uses above, describe the quarrelsome person. Describe the person who tries to get along. Which one are you?

3 The writer addresses the idea of major, spiritual change. He refers to a "new birth and fresh beginning." To what degree do typical parishioners reflect this change in the ways we deal with other people?

4 Why would the apostle need to address the idea of quarrels in the church? Why can't we get along? How could a good "washing" ever be ineffective?

5 Our need to take a stand suggests the need for action. What can we do?

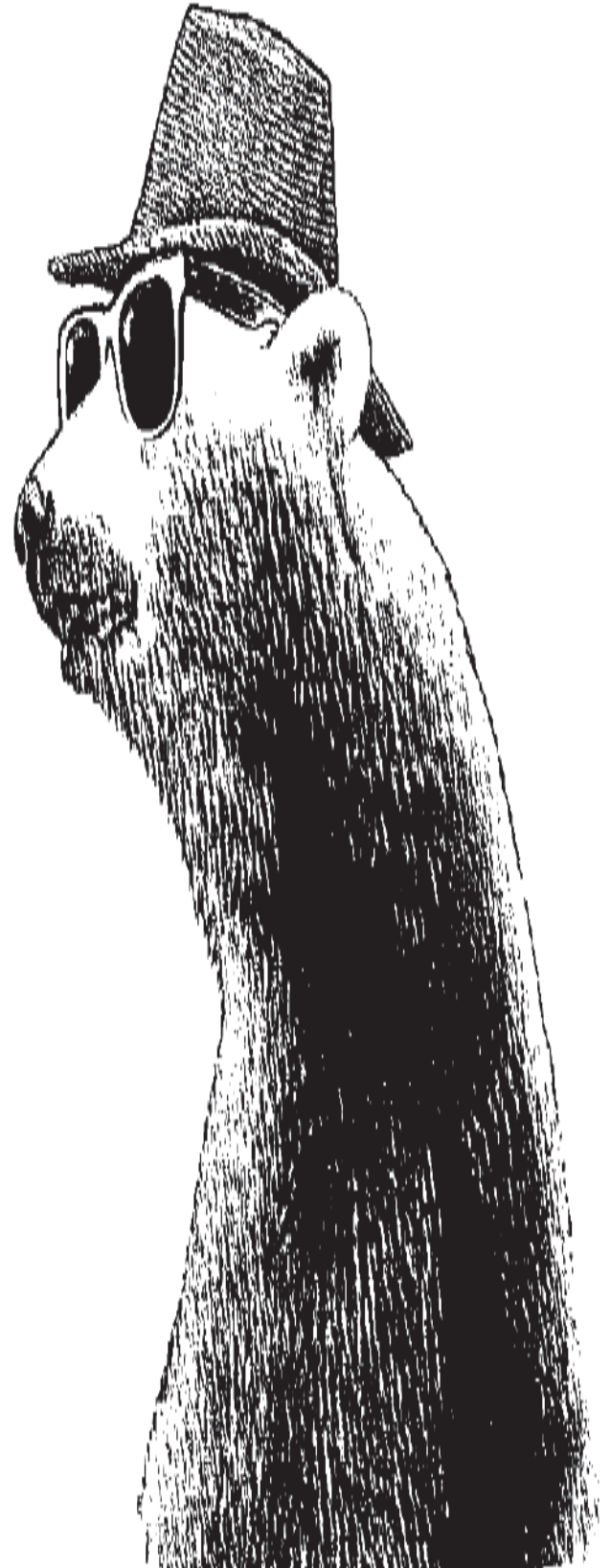
Personal Identity:

Who Am I?

The Gospel of St. Mark invites us to consider the many conversations that took place between Jesus and his disciples. For example, look at an extended reading from Chapter 9: 33-50.

Before we read and talk about the verses, answer the following questions:

- 1 Are you a leader, or are you a follower?
- 2 Do you spend more time serving others, or do you spend more time being served by someone else?
- 3 List five (5) things that you want.
- 4 How many friends do you have that are pretty much like you? How many are substantially different?
- 5 When you use the word “we” to describe the group you hang out with, who else do you include, aside from yourself?
- 6 What words would you use to describe the way you tend to respond to people you don’t know who are really not like you?
- 7 What (or who) are the resources you consider when you have to make decisions about your personal behavior—“can I do this or that?” Examples might include parents, the Bible, your experience, Church leaders, and so on. List as many as you can. You might want to use the back of the sheet.



PERSONAL SPEECH INVENTORY

Circle the response that you feel best describes yourself

R—rarely S—sometimes F—frequently

R—S—F When I am angry with someone, I tell him off. (Prov. 15:1)

R—S—F I help my friends to get back at others. (Prov. 17:9)

R—S—F I respond quickly when provoked. (Prov. 29:20)

R—S—F I talk about other people. (Prov. 11:13)

R—S—F I talk a lot. (Prov. 10:19)

R—S—F I talk in ways which dishonor God. (2 Tim. 2:16)

R—S—F I speak before I think. (Prov. 13:3)

R—S—F I say things that hurt others. (Eph. 4:29)

R—S—F I listen to or tell dirty jokes. (Eph. 4:29)

R—S—F I stir up trouble by the things I say. (James 3:5-10)

R—S—F I tell untrue things about other people. (Lev. 19:16)

R—S—F My speech is inconsistent with my faith. (James 1:26, Col. 3:8)





Homily Lesson for Presentation or Study, Number One

The Stewardship of Ministry

"From Three to Eleven"

A Simple Outline

Scriptural Text:	Matthew 28:16-20 (NABRE)
Key Idea:	Jesus called disciples, and we are to make them.
Key Verse:	"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

A Suggested Homily or Study Lesson

"The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.'"



"Two kinds of people in the world" phrases are numerous. Here are just a few: There are two kinds of people in the world: those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there's less competition there (Indira Gandhi). There are two kinds of people in the world: givers and takers. The takers may eat better, but the givers sleep better (Marlo Thomas). There are two kinds of people in the world: morning people, and people who want to shoot morning people. There are two kinds of people in the world: those with attention deficit disorder, and I like ice cream and cake. And, what about this bit of wonderful wisdom from the humorist Robert Benchley: There are two kinds of people in the world: those who believe there are two kinds of people in the world, and those who don't.

And then, there's a long list of "two kinds of people" proverbs using the word "make." Two kinds of people: those who watch things happen, and those who make things happen. Those who make life easier, and those who make it harder. Makers, and takers. We have a fondness for the word "make."

When you get up in the morning, make your bed, then make your breakfast. Don't make a mess. And, before you leave, pick out a new outfit. Make a statement, then be sure to make a lunch. Today, you're going to stay at your desk and make . . . it . . . happen. You've made some goals. You've got to make a good living. C'mon. Make it work, and don't make excuses. At least, make an effort. After all, they made you manager. Made no sense to your co-workers, but then they're always making things up, aren't they? Well, make them forget the other guy. You just want to make a buck, make your quota, make some noise.

Of course, there are times, when you don't know if you can make it. Sometimes, life makes you crazy. Make it all go away! Please! Oh, don't be so selfish. Make room for the other folks. Make me!!

For those who've read Matthew 28, who commit to follow the command of the Great Commission—



who accept the call to “make disciples”—we include the notion “to be salt and light,” “ambassadors for Christ,” and the Lord’s “witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.” In life, we “make” a lot of things, including excuses. Jesus invited us—with a fresh perspective—to make something with lasting value and importance, to “make disciples.” As we consider the essential nature of that calling, it is appropriate that we consider what it takes to “make” it happen.

So, how do we do that? We follow the leader. Jesus said “Go.” He’d walked throughout the region that was his home, and everywhere he walked, he ministered to those he encountered. He talked with them, he eased their hurts, he shared their pain and discomfort, he healed, he taught, he corrected, he trained, he modeled right behavior, and he instructed his audiences with more information for them to put into practice. He called them to himself—and we invite people to meet Jesus. He taught them—and we teach others “everything he commanded of us.”

“I don’t know what to say,” you think. Just say what Jesus said. “I don’t know what to teach.” Teach what he taught. “I don’t know what to do.” Do what he did. Where? In all the world: “make disciples of all nations.” Our commitments may vary, but the Lord’s commitment to us never does. Remember: We serve Jesus. He is the sovereign authority everywhere we go, and the source of everything we do and say on his behalf. That’s everywhere, and that’s everything we’re to do and say. Plus, as we follow those commands, he’s always with us and never leaves us. That’s his promise. Period.

Homily Lesson for Presentation or Study, Number Two

The Stewardship of Ministry

"Live a New Life"

A Simple Outline

Scriptural Text:	Romans 6:1-11 (NABRE)
Key Idea:	The old self died with Christ; the new lives for him.
Key Verse:	"Our old self was crucified with Christ."

A Suggested Homily or Study Lesson

Years ago, when millions of people watched the evening news, many chose the ABC Evening News program featuring Peter Jennings. He was fond of closing newscasts with a segment that reflected trends in popular culture. One evening, he shared the story of a particularly unusual art installation—a chair affixed to a loaded shotgun.

As is true for such an interactive display, visitors were asked to view the art piece by sitting in the chair, looking directly into the barrel. Again, the gun was loaded. It was set on a timer to fire at an undetermined moment at some point within the century to follow. A single fatal shot. A hundred years in which it might occur. In five minutes, or in ninety years and five minutes.

The truly amazing thing? People waited in long lines to sit in the chair and stare down the barrel of the gun. They all knew it could go off at point-blank range at any moment, but they were gambling that the fatal blast wouldn't happen during their minute in the chair. It was foolish, and we readily call it what it was. Yet, many of our neighbors—perhaps even some of us—people who wouldn't dream of gambling like that, thinking we could get away with such danger, still live on the edge, ignoring the risks of all kinds of harmful self-destructive behavior, acting as if there are no consequences for our sins.

So, as practicing Catholics, what do we find when we look down the barrel? How does God define sin? In today's passage, St. Paul wrote that—without Christ—we were enslaved to sin. Doesn't sound like fun. Not a party. It certainly isn't mere pleasure, though more than a few describe certain sins that way. No, the writer of First John, indicated that "all unrighteousness is sin." It is "lawlessness," he wrote: "deprived of the glory of God," Paul wrote in this very letter. And, as we read in the Letter of James, even "for one who knows the right thing to do and does not to do it, it is a sin."

So, if we know sin is a problem, yet gratefully acknowledge the grace and forgiveness of a loving God, then why not sin, that we might praise God all the more? That is precisely how Paul began this chapter. Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? He forcefully answered that rhetorical question. "Absolutely not! You have got to be kidding!" We know better because we know the consequences of sin. We can't sin more, just so God might forgive more. To do so denies Christ's loving Sacred Heart. What Paul writes next, though, sets a completely different theological tone. It is a critically important one to our understanding, and we will spend the rest of our time, talking about and thinking about it.



He asked another rhetorical question: How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Well, the old self was crucified with Christ. The body of sin was destroyed. We have died with Christ, so you also must consider yourselves dead to sin. And, just how significant is that? As one commentator has wisely written, "What does sin have to say to someone who is dead?" Put you in the ground, and sin has no more control over you. But, wait . . . Paul indicated clearly here that you died with Christ, you were crucified with Christ.

In God's grace, we don't merely die in Christ, we also live. Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too walk in new life, "dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus." If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The life he lives, he lives to God. Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

A Word about Stewardship Letters

Regular communication with parishioners is critically important at all times but certainly during a stewardship campaign. The letter samples that follow address various needs that typically arise. First of all, you'll find an initial request for involvement—a commitment in the areas of prayer and devotion, ministry and service, or generosity in giving. Since parishioners may overlook or misplace an initial packet of material, you'll find a follow-up letter too. And then, because gratitude and appreciation is so fundamental to sound stewardship practice, a thank you letter is provided, as well.

The sample letters offer simple phrases designed to help you frame personal letters suitable for use in your parish. Most stewardship coordinators consider them a helpful outline and ask what might be added. The following bullet points may help.

- Connect your commitment request to particular programs and specific needs within your parish
- Whenever appropriate, tell stories that illustrate your requests
- Be personal; use personal pronouns such as “I,” “we,” and “you”
- Note past involvement, and list particular ministry commitments or past financial gifts, when appropriate
- When writing to committed individuals, don't hesitate to ask for greater involvement—an additional percentage, or an additional amount
- Invite respected parishioners to add a request for ‘partnership’ in service
- Remind parishioners of the benefits of involvement and commitment
- Acknowledge those who have never fully participated and welcome them

Those who write commitment letters for a living suggest they are the most important element in any stewardship packet. If true, then every minute you invest in crafting a forthright, personal and engaging invitation will yield valuable fruit for years to come.

Sample Direct Mail Letter, Stewardship of Ministry

Dear _____,

Teach your children. Make time for your grandchildren. Coach a team. Support a mission effort. Pray for the hurting. Visit the infirmed and the homebound. These, and many other activities just like them, provide a framework for life. That's especially true for faithful Catholics, active in the life of this local parish. We count on it, just like we count on you. When you receive your invitation to serve, please make a commitment to become directly involved in the ministries of your church. We need you.

We celebrate St. Paul's guidance to his spiritual son, St. Timothy: "Train yourself for devotion. While physical training is of limited value, devotion is valuable in every respect, since it holds a promise of life both for the present and for the future. This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. For we toil and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God" (1 Timothy 4:7b-10a). Our hope is in the living God, and we know you affirm the value of shared involvement.

Maybe your gifts are demonstrative and public—you lead committees, you teach, you serve as a liturgist, or you direct the building of new facilities. Your gifts could also be demonstrated with few even knowing about it: you mentor a troubled teen, you visit the sick in the hospital, you send notes of encouragement, or you set up chairs long before others arrive. In our Catholic parish, ministry roles are almost too numerous to count. Thanks to dozens and dozens of faithful parishioners, the work is done and done well to the glory of the God we serve. There is certainly a role for you. Just like the apostles and other first century servants, God has gifted you to serve him, your fellow Catholics, and all those who look to our parish for direction, nurture and assistance. God has called you, and we need you.

The theme of this year's Stewardship of Ministry is a celebratory look ahead to A Future Full of Hope: "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). Please join with other parishioners and offer yourself in service. When you receive your commitment card, indicate your desire to serve. Continue valued ministry or volunteer for the first time. God has pointed the way forward.

Sincerely, in the love of Christ,



A Note to the Youth and Children of the Parish: In the Stewardship of Ministry

Among our young people are some of the most talented, selfless, able, and available servants in each Catholic parish. Whether sent as a letter, a set of email messages, texts or tweets, the following invitation is designed to serve as a message to youth and children during each phase of your annual Total Stewardship program, tweaked a bit for each of your three efforts.

“You need to wait.” You’ve heard that message your entire life, haven’t you? “You’re not old enough. You have no experience. You’re too small. You are just too young.”

Thank the Lord, that isn’t the message we read in the Scriptures. What was true for St. Paul’s young spiritual son St. Timothy is true for you. Timothy’s peers included many church leaders who were much older. That’s always been the case. That didn’t mean God left Timothy out. Quite the opposite. Consider this:

“Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).



In our parish-wide Stewardship of Ministry, please remember that your service to others, just like every aspect of your young devotional life, really matters. After all, Jesus counted on the involvement of a young lad to feed thousands of hungry people:

“When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, ‘Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?’ Philip answered him, ‘Two hundred days’ wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little bit.’ One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, ‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?’ Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, as much of the fish as they wanted” (John 6:5, 7-9, 11).

You feel like you’re old enough to contribute, to make a difference in the life of this Catholic parish, and you are. Please be willing to serve, to minister to others. The boy in the Gospel story, who isn’t even named, came prepared. Most importantly, he was willing for Jesus to use him to serve others. God has long blessed others in this parish—and so many beyond it—through Catholics just like you. You are able. Please be available.

Sample Follow Up Letter, Stewardship of Ministry

Dear _____,

A. J. was known by his initials. Few people—even his closest friends—knew what the letters stood for. Only a handful knew his story and the difficulties that separated him from those who gave him his name. By the time he could fend for himself, A. J. had lived in a half-dozen foster homes, most defined by inattention and negligence, a step up from the abuse he suffered as a child. He heard of love through his omnipresent headphones, but the lyrics didn't transfer to his day to day. Until he met Meg Turner.

Miss Meg now lives with her youngest daughter. When she met A. J., she served her parish and their teens as a spiritual mentor. She did so for years. One of her favorites often introduced her to his friends. A. J., whom he'd met at a local music store, was one of those. Meg became a surrogate Mom, provided nurture, offered wise counsel, and presented a picture of love and hope. Like most young people who've known the underside of society, A. J.'s life will continue to be a struggle, but he'll never wonder what love is about again.

In our Stewardship of Ministry, we have invited you to contribute to others in similar ways. Your investment of time and talents offers other people real hope. Though your service in our Catholic parish is vital, we've yet to receive a ministry commitment from you this year. You may be uncertain about your role, believe your skills are limited, think you aren't really needed, or simply feel you haven't the time. Please know there's a role for everyone, your abilities are God-given, and you are definitely needed. Whatever time you can offer will make a difference. You know that's true.

Please take a few moments, think about those who've influenced you, and say a prayer of thanks for their investment. Then, if you would, please remove the ministry commitment card from the packet and fill it in, checking off a ministry opportunity that stands out to you. Place it in the offering collection, and a volunteer coordinator will give you a call. Honoring Christ, we look toward A Future Full of Hope. Your participation in parish ministries will ensure others hear about Jesus. Please serve in his name.

Sincerely, in the love of Christ,

Sample Thank You Letter, Stewardship of Ministry

Dear _____,

"We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the holy ones because of the hope reserved for you in heaven" (Colossians 1:3-5a). True to the calling assured through your baptism, and made sure in your commitment to serve others through your commitment to minister in this parish, you honor the cause of Christ in all your work on the Lord's behalf.

Thank you. It really is a privilege to share our thanks for your willingness to serve in the ministry programs of the Catholic church. Generous and capable volunteers like you minister to people within our parish and throughout our community, and the significant influence we enjoy in Christ would be impossible without you. We are very grateful for you and your service. Thank you so much.

The theme of this year's campaign, A Future Full of Hope, is a celebratory look back at thirty years of Total Stewardship and a look ahead at the promise of ministry and service for generations to come. We respect you and value your contributions of time and talent, and we share the promise of a hopeful future God shared with his people through the prophet Jeremiah. "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Your service to the Body on behalf of Christ enriches the lives of many people in your community. Thank you for your availability and your desire to share your ability and interests with others. We are a family, and you are an essential part of this parish.

Sincerely, in the love of Christ,