

Is Your Parish a Stewardship Parish?
An Assessment Tool Provided by the Office of Stewardship, Archdiocese of Dubuque

A stewardship parish recognizes the living presence of Christ in its midst and sets out to steward this gift of God to all humanity. A stewardship parish receives and delights in this gift and offers to share the abundance of life and love that flows from God. This self-assessment tool is meant to help you evaluate your stewardship way of life.

Saint Cecilia Parish Stewardship Committee Nov 2014-Feb 2015 responses are highlighted in yellow; Committee consensus comments are in italics.

Spirituality

1. Our parish is a Christ-centered parish and provides the following opportunities for spiritual growth. Please check any of the following and add others.

YES Sunday Liturgies	YES Daily liturgies	YES Weekly Sacrament of Reconciliation
YES RCIA	YES Scripture Study	YES Small groups for faith sharing
Regular holy hour	YES Stations of the Cross	YES Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
YES Divine Mercy Chaplet	YES Life in the Spirit Prayer Group	YES Man-up
YES Alpha for Catholics	YES DateNight	

Prayer

2. The parish encourages prayer focused on asking for the grace to live as good stewards (prayer cards, prayer at meetings, Prayers of the Faithful, etc.).

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Father Jim consistently provides such encouragement in his homilies.

Bob Hauser often includes stewardship-focused prayer in the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.

Faith Formation

3. Stewardship is an integral part of the school, religious education and faith formation curriculum from preschool through young adult.

Strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Fr. Jim often emphasizes stewardship and care for the less fortunate (e. g., Black bag contributions, Haiti, Katrina, service)

Information from Tom Primmer: The word "stewardship" I am supposing is meant to be defined as time, talent and treasure. The Be My Disciples grades 1-8 curriculum is infused with these concepts throughout the material. For grades 1-5, the curriculum is the same for both the parish and school formation program. Anna uses a variety of curriculum in the 9-12 grades that also support stewardship education. As for young adults (18-36), other than offering Financial Peace University, I am not aware that we are integrating stewardship within a formal, systematic faith formation program at this time.

Adult Formation

4. Adult formation stresses that a steward's life is the Christian life lived to its fullness.

Strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The Sunday scriptures are all about "living the Christian life to its fullness." And liturgy is where most adults receive "adult formation." Every Sunday we read and hear Fr. Jim give a homily about these scriptures – "how to live a Christian life."

We include one brief item on stewardship in the bulletin each week. Other materials are included in bulletin flyers associated with Stewardship of Prayer, Time & Talent and Treasure campaigns.

The Called and Gifted workshop is being investigated as a possibility for future regional action.

The program/process "Discernment of Gifts" (developed by the Archdiocese) has also been mentioned as possible opportunity for education and discernment.

RCIA

5. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults teaches stewardship as a way of life.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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RCIA is all about living the Christian life to its fullness, the importance of being Christ to those around us. The whole process is built around a reflection on the Sunday scriptures. Yes, we do offer specific opportunities to become involved in the parish. And then we pray that the people respond to the work of the Spirit in their lives. Presently it stresses opportunities for stewardship vs "a way of life." Mentors/sponsors need to assist candidates/catechumens to get involved with service programs/activities like Habitat for Humanity and Appalachia warehouse. Need also to stress the everyday "lived life of stewardship." We have to see ourselves as "sowers" not necessarily as "reapers." We may not see the "harvest" for years, or decades.

Witness Talks

6. Witness talks about stewardship are given at Mass each year by parishioners.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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In 2014 we had witness talks about stewardship by Matt & Dawn Aitchison and John & Jill Sankovitch. Terry & Elin Herrman also agreed to talk about stewardship in 2014 but will probably not do so until 2015. We might wish to have more witness talks by parishioners about stewardship and other important topics but we need to remember that for most people the weekly homily is their only "faith formation" opportunity. To increase the lay witness and evangelization opportunities, we should also explore the use of non-Mass venues such as in small group and committee meetings, Bible study groups,

Homilies

7. Homilies regularly include stewardship themes.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Father Jim has done a good job of including stewardship teachings in his homilies.

Greeters

8. Greeters are present at every Mass.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Only for weekend Masses. Although the Greeters group managed by Janet Brimeyer does not serve the Hispanic Mass at 5 pm Sunday evening, greeters from the Hispanic Community make those entering the church feel warmly welcomed – even offering Anglos a translation in English so they can follow along.

Hospitality

9. Fellowship is provided regularly after Masses.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Mixing and fellowship in the narthex are encouraged. Coffee & doughnuts are also frequently available in the Social Hall after Sunday Masses; mixing is encouraged. In the past year, only 6 Sundays did not provide fellowship through the Coffee and Doughnut activity. On another 6 Sundays special breakfasts and luncheons provided opportunity for fellowship.

10. Registration for new parishioners is clear (e.g. welcome table, welcome info in the pews).

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Registration for new parishioners is not clearly visible or in the pews (does appear in the bulletin). The Welcome Committee staffs a welcome/registration table one weekend per month. Could that opportunity be offered more frequently? We provided "Welcome to St. Cecilia" envelopes in the pews in the past, but they have been replaced by Good Samaritan Fund envelopes. Perhaps the Social Justice Committee could devise a plan to place the Good Samaritan Fund envelopes in the pews on the weekend of the "Black Bag" but the "Welcome" envelopes would be there on the other weekends. The "Welcome" envelopes provide space for "I would like more information about membership at St. Cecilia, learning more about the Catholic faith and stewardship of prayer.

11. New Parishioners are offered some kind of orientation and official welcome.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The welcome committee has established a plan for doing this; they have been evaluating the merits of several approaches.

12. Extra effort is given to offer hospitality to newcomers.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The Welcome committee and the parish office send welcome letters to newcomers. They are offered tours of the facility. They are invited to "Welcome Events" such as Sundaes on Sunday and the committee is now planning a parish dinner to welcome them.

Official effort is made to welcome those who are considering becoming members through the RCIA process.

As presider, Fr. Jim consistently welcomes all who have come to join us at the table of the Lord.

Members of the parish are not so obviously welcoming to others joining them in the pews (don't speak to them; don't consistently make space for them). We need to work seriously to improve our hospitality to each other and to visitors.

Special Days

13. Important days in people's lives are celebrated by the parish (e.g., parish recognizes wedding and baptismal anniversaries, etc.).

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Each year, we've had a number of formal individual blessings for couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries. Also, when notified, we've recognized significant birthdays, i.e. 90th etc. for a couple of parishioners. Also, recognition is given to our young adults following their return from mission activities.

The Baptism program sends "Parent letters" every 6 months for 3 years to families with a newly baptized infant. Publication of information regarding "important dates" is limited by respect for the privacy of individuals.

Commitment Renewal

14. An annual commitment renewal of time, talent and treasure takes place.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The response rate for the Sept-Nov 2014 recommitment campaign was 18%. We're looking for ideas on how we might increase the participation/response rate.

We want to develop a plan to insure that "all - everyone" give something (even minimal) to the welfare of the parish. Nevertheless, we need to remember that we are to invite and encourage, not coerce or shame.

Ministry Fair

15. An annual Ministry Fair is hosted.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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This is a massive undertaking so we are currently on a biennial schedule. Past ministry fairs have been more "educational" than "recruiting." We need to learn more on how we can promote involvement of people and on better ways to collect and use the interaction information.

Ministry Guide

16. The parish has a Ministry Guide that is updated annually.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Parish has had a "ministry guide" in the past—the Time & Talent Opportunities booklet. It is available on the parish website and can be updated at will (although few updates have been made – the latest on Feb 20, 2014).

The Time & Talent areas of the parish registration form need to be updated.

Annual Report

17. The parish issues an Annual Report that includes various aspects of stewardship.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The annual Parish Stewardship Report includes dollars and cents; but also includes measures of involvement and service (time and talent).

Outside Charities

18. The sharing of time, talent and treasure with charities outside the parish is recognized by the parish as an important part of stewardship.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Contributions to Nicaragua, Haiti, Sudan, Appalachia, and other activities supported by the black bag collections are recognized.

The Committee would like to see more recognition of social justice activities in the annual Parish Stewardship Report. However, see next response.

19. The parish gives at least 5% of its ordinary parish income to charities outside of the parish (in addition to special collections).

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The Black Bag donations were over \$50,000 in the past year and the parish responds well to diocesan emergency appeals. Many people feel their giving to Black Bag, emergency appeals and food supplies are the parish's contribution to "Outside Charities."

It was noted that sometime in the past the annual parish budget plans had set aside a specific percentage of the ordinary parish income for distribution to specific outside charities. This budget line was later deleted.

In the past year, the Parish Pastoral Council adopted the goal of becoming a "tithing parish", i. e., increasing parish contributions to charity by increasing the fraction of income donated by 1% of parish income each year until 10% of parish income is given to charity each year.

We need dialog in this area. For example: What is parish income? Is it gross income as we tell our parish members? Does it include Black Bag contributions? School and Faith Formation tuition and fees? Free-will offerings at events? What are parish charitable donations? Do they include Archdiocesan tax? Money given to Archdiocesan mandated collections? School subsidy? Do they include contributions to "outside the parish charities" for which we never get a report on how much is given, for example, Cross International, Salesian Missions?

Contributions

20. All parishioners are sent offertory envelopes on a regular basis, unless they request otherwise.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Those who use electronic giving options do not ordinarily receive envelopes for special collections. Is there a remedy or workaround?

21. Commitment reminder letters are sent to those who have made a pledge.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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At present, we have no programs that require a pledge. The annual financial commitment to the parish is not a pledge.

A single reminder letter is sent to those who were sent a commitment request but who have not responded.

A thank you letter is sent to those who did respond – whether or not they increased their commitment.

Our policy is to encourage and invite, not shame or coerce.

22. Contributors to the parish are thanked on a regular basis.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Fr. Jim is diligent in verbally thanking the assembly for their Black Bag and special collection donations.

The annual mailed notices of the amount contributed to the parish do not currently include a "Thank You"?

However the Parish Office staff is currently considering adding a "Thank You" message to both the mailed and emailed notices.

Recognition

23. Volunteers in the parish are thanked, shown appreciation and recognized.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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But we could do better.

We appreciate catechists (reception/dinner – note cards) and have a specific Stewardship Appreciation event for all parish donors and volunteers in the spring.

We also have an annual Clergy Appreciation weekend– cards, notes, reception.

Individual groups such as RCIA, Ladies circles, Bereavement team, etc. also send Thank You notes to their volunteers.

Planned Giving

24. Planned giving to the parish is promoted regularly.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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We encouraged consideration of this in the Sept 2014 financial commitment effort but, so far, there is no other regular promotion of planned giving. A Planned Giving Committee headed by Frank Oppold has been working on this. They hope to present something to the Finance Council in the Spring of 2015.

We need to continue working with the Finance Council on this. Help provide education/information on the topic.

Bulletin

25. Weekly bulletin announcements include a stewardship column or note.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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International Catholic Stewardship Council and the Archdiocesan Stewardship Office provide us with new "blurbs" on stewardship to add/use in the bulletin.

We could also add information to the bulletin about what "time and talent" service actions are being done in the community already, e.g., teens helping serve food at "Food at First."

Newsletter

26. The parish newsletter regularly contains information about stewardship as a way of life.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Publication of the parish newsletter seems somewhat sporadic.

Other communication venues are available (e. g., bulletin inserts, kiosks & video in the narthex, Knights of Columbus newsletter, ...)

Website

27. The parish website includes various aspects of stewardship.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The Stewardship committee needs to update & augment the stewardship material in the website.

Stewardship Education

28. Parish leaders read materials about stewardship on a regular basis.

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We need to go beyond parish leaders. Many parish members don't understand what stewardship is. They only think we are talking about money. Start with "Attitude of Gratitude"; and consider distributing copies of the "Burgundy Book" – from Diocese of Saginaw (perhaps for Lent or Advent).

Stewardship Committee

29. The parish has a stewardship committee that meets regularly.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The committee meets once a month. Membership and attendance need attention.

Parish Planning

30. The parish is actively engaged in parish planning and includes fostering stewardship as a way of life as a vital part of the parish plan.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Such planning is conducted in the Parish Visioning effort. Stewardship is indeed a central and vital part of the parish plan. The "as a way of life" part needs more emphasis.

Mission Statement

31. The parish mission statement indicates an understanding of stewardship.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The present parish mission statement reads more like a technical description of the parish than a declaration of what the parish mission is.

A saving grace is that the present mission statement ends with: "to build up the Body of Christ through worship, life-long faith formation and evangelization" – thus expressing stewardship as "living the Christian life".

Stewardship Goals

32. Parish stewardship goals, objectives and evaluation for the parish are set by the stewardship committee in concert with the pastoral council and the pastor.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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The current Parish Stewardship Plan was devised by the committee and endorsed by the pastor and Parish Pastoral Council. The committee's next action (following this assessment) is to update the current Parish Stewardship Plan. The goals, objectives and evaluation criteria for the updated plan should be more clearly and specifically stated than in the current plan.

Stewardship Conference

33. Parish leaders regularly attend regional or diocesan stewardship conferences.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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Char VanKerckvoorde attended the International Catholic Stewardship Council meeting; she reported favorably on the benefits to the parish of such participation. The Stewardship Committee should plan to ask formally for people and funds for regular participation in such conferences.

Parish Leadership

34. Parish leaders demonstrate a public commitment to stewardship.

strongly agree	agree	neither	disagree	strongly disagree	OR	don't know
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This is evidenced by actions/example from lay witness presenters, Knights of Columbus, RCIA leaders, Faith Formation catechists and parent leaders, Food at First volunteers, etc. but we need broader participation. The question is: How can we encourage broader participation?

When people see Catholics helping their neighbors, choosing not to gossip, caring for their husbands/wives/children, involved in community and political action groups and faithfully participating at Mass, they see stewardship = "living the Christian life" in action.