

## STEWARDSHIP AND PARISH REVENUE ENHANCEMENT

Learning to live a life of stewardship is a process. To help parishes educate their parishioners about this *way of living*, the Archdiocese of Chicago Department of Stewardship and Development offers the ***Thanks Be to God Planned Offering Program*** as a tool to begin stewardship education and enhance parish revenue.

The purpose of the *Thanks Be to God* program is to form parish members in an understanding and practice of true scriptural self-giving, to develop them as great givers in the way that God has been generous with them, and to enable the mission of our parishes. Today, more than ever, there is a tremendous need to strengthen our parishes as they serve as a vital source of support to parishioners and communities. It is in the parish that people and families become part of a worshipping and serving communities. The parish is where they find faith and are encouraged to live their faith.

A comprehensive educational program, the *Thanks be to God* program invites parishioners to reflect upon their life's blessings. Parishioners are asked to consider how they use their gifts of *time, talent* and *treasure* in a responsible and appreciative manner to build God's kingdom.

Parishes pay only the cost of the materials and mailings for the program. The Vicariate Stewardship Coordinator arranges for all writing and printing of materials and training for the parish committee.

The *Thanks be to God* program includes:

- ⌘ four brochures
  - Everything in Life is a Gift*
  - The Gift of Time*
  - Everything You Are is a Gift*
  - TO: God FROM: You*
- ⌘ four personalized letters from the pastor
- ⌘ an intention card
- ⌘ ongoing support from the Office of Stewardship and Development

The Office of Stewardship and Development works with a mail house to arrange for the mailings to individual parishioners.

The *Thanks Be to God* planned offering program is recommended for :

- ⌘ Parishes who have never used a stewardship educational program
- ⌘ Parishes who have engaged in *Planned Offering Programs* that want to broaden the message of sharing of one's time, talent *and* treasure.
- ⌘ Parishes successfully completing the Sharing Christ's Gifts campaign that would like to continue the stewardship message.

### *Parishes Committed to Stewardship as a Way of Life:*

1. Study, reflect and pray about the theology, philosophy and spirituality of stewardship.
2. Create a Stewardship Committee to foster stewardship as a way of life.
3. Offer ongoing stewardship education through homilies, religious education programs, Catholic schools, youth and young adult ministry, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, sacramental preparation.
4. Hold an annual stewardship commitment weekend.

5. Hold an annual *Ministry Fair*, inviting parishioners to volunteer their time and talent. Create a Ministry Opportunities booklet to be given to new parishioners and also to be used at the Ministry Fair.
6. Make stewardship and the stewardship principles the forefront of parish communications (i.e. bulletin announcements with *stewardship reflections* and highlights of ministries, *prayers of the faithful*, stewardship-related *homilies*, *annual reports* that highlight the gifts of time, talent and treasure).
7. Share the gifts of your parish (time and resources) with other parishes and community agencies.

Parishes interested in a stewardship program can contact the Stewardship and Development Department to arrange for any or all of the following:

- A meeting with the pastor
- A meeting with the Finance Council or Parish Pastoral Council
- A formal presentation before parish leaders
- An educational and discernment retreat opportunity for those considering Stewardship Committee involvement
- Ongoing support for the implementation of stewardship as a way of life.

For more information regarding Stewardship, please contact:

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