CREATING A STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:
To continue the stewardship educational process by seeking opportunities to present the stewardship message in any and in all facets of parish life, and to work in conjunction with the Finance Committee of the Parish Council to continually elevate the management of parish resources of time, talent and treasure.

Committee Structure:
The Stewardship Committee functions as a committee under the Parish Council with the general responsibility for stewardship awareness and the annual stewardship "program." The stewardship committee functions best when it is not under the auspices of the Finance Council because that group emphasizes the needs of the church more than an individual's need to give thanks for all of God's gifts. It also tends to focus on treasure instead of giving equal emphasis to time, talent and treasure.

Committee Size:
The ideal size for a stewardship committee is between five and eight people.

Committee Longevity:
The committee should reflect parish commitment to stewardship by being a permanent committee with stable leadership, which can be attained by having set terms for committee members. Committee stability is important because the stewardship program is not an eight-week program or a one-year program—it is an ongoing program that needs continuous direction.

Qualities for Committee Members:
When recruiting parishioners to serve on a stewardship committee, look for people who are:

Spiritually Motivated-
It is important that members be people of prayer and be concerned about parishioners' relationship with God, not about the needs of the church. If their primary concern is raising more money for the church or getting more volunteers for the church, then they would not be appropriate to be on the Stewardship committee. Look for people who are eucharistic, who have a deep relationship with Jesus, who are grateful for that relationship and who act on that gratitude. Such persons spend time in studying Scripture and often are people who go to Mass daily.

Exemplify and Live Stewardship-
Look for members who are already committed to stewardship as a way of life. They may not call it stewardship, but they live it. Those committed to stewardship

volunteer their time in various parish and community activities and are also regular, generous givers to the offertory.

Envision Where Stewardship Can Take the Parish-
It is important that all members of a Stewardship Committee have the same understanding of stewardship in a general way before they join the committee and, more specifically, after they join the committee and are educated. Some may see stewardship only as tithing money; others may see stewardship as recycling paper products; others may see it as volunteering time to church organizations only. Developing a working definition of stewardship will help consolidate the diverse viewpoints of the committee members.

Have Personal Qualities That Contribute to Success-
Look for people who are accountable, persistent, optimistic, organized, patient, creative and willing to share their faith with others.

Sources:
Stewardship: Disciples Respond, A Practical Guide for Pastoral Leaders, National Catholic Stewardship Council, Inc., 1997. Stewardship, A Way of Life, Archdiocese of Louisville, 1993.