

# *The Disciple as Steward*

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*Sharon Hueckel*

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A six-week small group study of the Stewardship  
Pastoral, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*

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## Introduction

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This 6-week study of the United States Catholic bishops' pastoral on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, was written by Sharon Hueckel, Director of Stewardship, for use in the Diocese of Lafayette-in Indiana. Most parishes in the diocese had been participating in the RENEW process developed under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Newark, New Jersey, beginning in the fall of 1991. That process would have ended in Advent, 1993. This effort, "The Disciple as Steward," was written to introduce the bishops' pastoral in the spring of 1994, using the format and small groups established during the preceding five seasons of RENEW. It attempts to include as much as possible of the substance of *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, and direct quotations from that letter have been used liberally throughout.

"The Disciple as Steward" could also be used as an intensive 6-week introduction to stewardship by a parish stewardship committee before a parish embarks on a formal stewardship "program."

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### *Stewardship Prayer*

*Oh Lord, giver of life and source of our freedom,  
We are reminded by the Psalmist that Yours is  
"the earth and its fullness;  
the world and those who dwell in it."  
We know that it is from Your hand that we  
have received all we have and are and will be.  
Gracious and loving God, we understand that  
You call us to be the stewards of Your abundance,  
the caretakers of all You have entrusted to us.  
Help us always to use our gifts wisely  
and teach us to share them generously.  
May our faithful stewardship bear witness to  
the love of Christ in our lives.  
We pray with grateful hearts, in Jesus' name.  
Amen.*

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## Session 1

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# Stewardship: The Challenge and the Choice

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### Focus

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The pastoral defines stewardship as “a sharing, generous, accountable way of life rooted in Christian discipleship” (*Stewardship*, 5). It is not optional; it is a necessary outcome of the faith we profess.

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### Sharing Experience

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#### BACKGROUND

The word “stewardship” sometimes carries considerable baggage. Very often we equate stewardship with simply giving money. But the U.S. Catholic bishops had something much more broadly encompassing in mind when they wrote the stewardship pastoral, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. In the introduction to that pastoral letter, they spell out what they mean by stewardship and the understandings that are the basis of their definition:

“Three convictions in particular underlie what we say in this pastoral letter. 1. Mature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves. 2. Beginning in conversion, change of heart and mind, this commitment is expressed not in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life. It means committing one's very self to the Lord. 3. Stewardship is an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live our lives. Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be... They are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another” (*Stewardship*, 1).

Although the bishops have defined discipleship and stewardship in a single, short paragraph, the challenge to live that life of stewardship is by no means simple. In fact, it may be more difficult in our time and in our culture than ever before. The bishops talk of a number of destructive “isms”—materialism, relativism, hedonism, individualism, consumerism—which exert a powerful influence on our society and make it more difficult for us to grow as disciples and for the Church to live out its mission. They see themselves, and us, as Catholic citizens of a wealthy, powerful nation facing many questions about its identity and role in the waning years of a troubled century, members of a community of faith blessed with many human and material resources yet often uncertain about how to sustain and use them” (*Stewardship*, 5-6) And they invite us to accept the change and make the choice “to renew our commitment as the Lord's disciples and as stewards of his bountiful gifts.”

#### QUESTION

What do you see as the major obstacle(s) to practicing stewardship in the context of Christian discipleship?

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### Listening to the Word

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#### INVOCATION

Begin the reading of the Scriptures with this short prayer (or another of your own choosing) followed by a few moments of silence: **Enlighten us, oh Lord, with the light of Your truth. Help us to see and know what You would have us learn in the reading of Your Word. Amen.** Then read the passages aloud.

*Luke 12:35-48*

“Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in on the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants. Be sure of this: If the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You must also be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

Then Peter said, “Lord, is this parable meant for us or is it for everyone?” And the Lord replied, “Who, then, is the faithful and prudent servant whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute [the] food allowance at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom the master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, then that servant’s master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish him severely and assign him to a place with the unfaithful. That servant who knew his master’s will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; and the servant who was ignorant of his master’s will but acted in a way deserving of the severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

*1 Corinthians 4:1-2*

Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

## BACKGROUND

“An oikonomos or steward is one to whom the owner of a household turns over the responsibility for caring for the property, managing affairs, making resources yield as much as possible and sharing the resources with others. The position involves trust and accountability” (*Stewardship*, 20).

Both readings clearly imply that it is possible for a steward to be unworthy of his position. Jesus suggests that a servant might betray his master’s trust in any number of ways—from failure to be ready for the master’s coming to drunkenness and abuse of the other servants. And He says explicitly that such failure to exercise proper stewardship will be met with severe penalties. But it is also worth noting that poor stewardship which results from ignorance, from the failure to understand the master’s will, is also deserving of punishment. If we are to be good stewards, we must both *know* and *do* the will of God.

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## Sharing the Word

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### QUESTIONS

*(Read the Scripture again silently; then share your responses to these questions:)*

- What does stewardship mean to me?
- The Gospel reading equates stewardship with readiness—the good steward is found ready and waiting to serve when his master returns. In what ways does the Lord call me to stand ready? If I truly expected the Lord to return at any moment, what things might I have to change to be ready for His coming?
- The steward in the parable is the one in charge of distributing the food allowance at the appropriate time (LK 12:41). What gifts do I have the responsibility to distribute, and do I see clearly when, and to whom?

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## Prayer

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**Lord, we thank You for bringing us together in Your name. We have come to speak and to listen, to pray and to share, that we may better understand what it means to be Your disciples, to be the stewards of Your many gifts. We believe that You are present among us as You promised, Lord; and so with confidence, we bring our prayers before you:**

**That like the good steward in the Gospel, we may be ready when the Master comes, we pray to the Lord...**

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**That we may know and do what You ask of us, and so be found trustworthy, we pray to the Lord...**

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

*(Here give opportunity for other intercession... and then conclude with the bishops' petition from the stewardship pastoral and the Stewardship Prayer:)*

**"That the Holy Spirit, whose gracious action conforms us to Jesus Christ and to the Church, will enlighten us all and help us to renew our commitment as the Lord's disciples and as stewards of his bountiful gifts," we pray to the Lord...**

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Oh Lord, giver of life and source of our freedom, we are reminded by the Psalmist that Yours is "the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it." We know that it is from Your hand that we have received all we have and are and will be. Gracious and loving God, we understand that You call us to be the stewards of Your abundance, the caretakers of all You have entrusted to us. Help us always to use Your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to the love of Christ in our lives. We pray with grateful hearts, in Jesus' name. Amen.**

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## Follow Through

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Together, we have read and reflected on parts the bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship, we have heard and meditated on portions of Scripture in order to better understand the life of discipleship and stewardship to which our faith calls us, and we have shared our insights, our experience, and our prayers. But the Bible reminds us that "faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:26). Ideally, our sharing should lead each of us to constructive, concrete actions to reinforce what we have learned and encourage our growth in faith. The following are some examples to spur your thinking:

- Demonstrate readiness by reading and reflecting on the materials for the next meeting.
- Be conscious of—and record—the times this week when you make a commitment and follow through with it. The faithful steward is trustworthy!
- If, during the sharing, you thought of things in your life you would change if you believed the Lord's return was immanent, choose one and take the first steps toward changing it this week.
- Make a list of the gifts that are yours to share. Determine which you are most hesitant to share and reflect on the reasons for your reluctance.

Because those intentions we have defined most clearly are the ones we are most likely to act upon, write your "follow through" intentions here, and share it with the group if you are comfortable doing so.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Session 2

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# The Call

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### Focus

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We are called to be disciples. We must, therefore, first be good stewards of our own vocations—discerning, accepting, and fulfilling the roles and responsibilities to which the Lord has called us.

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### Sharing Experience

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#### BACKGROUND

The Second Vatican Council had this advice about our Christian vocation: “Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hope and works through charity” (*Lumen Gentium*, 41). In the stewardship pastoral, the American bishops took up this same theme of personal vocation, saying, “The Christian vocation is essentially a call to be a disciple of Jesus... Jesus’ call is urgent. He does not tell people to follow him at some time in the future but here and now—at this moment, in these circumstances. There can be no delay.

“Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities, discipleship and stewardship, then make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord... Refracted through the prisms of countless individual vocations, this way of life embodies and expresses the one mission of Christ: to do God’s will, to proclaim the good news of salvation, to heal the afflicted, to care for one’s sisters and brothers, to give life—life to the full—as Jesus did.

“Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step one is challenged to go further in accepting and living God’s will” (*Stewardship*, 12-14).

#### QUESTION

Do you believe that you are “called”? What experiences in your life have reinforced or validated your faith in that call?

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### Listening to the Word

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#### INVOCATION

Begin the reading of the Scriptures with this short prayer (or another of your own choosing) followed by a few moments of silence: **Lord, help us to hear Your voice and know Your will for us as we read these holy Scriptures. Amen.** Then read the passages aloud.

#### *Jeremiah 1:4-8*

The word of the LORD came to me thus:

Before I formed you in the womb

I knew you,

before you were born I dedicated you,  
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.

“Ah, Lord God!” I said,

“I know not how to speak; I am too young.”

But the LORD answered me,

Say not, “I am too young.”

To whomever I send you, you shall go;  
whatever I command you, you shall speak.

Have no fear before them,

because I am with you to deliver you,  
says the LORD.

#### *John 1:35-50*

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means

Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.

He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; You will be called Kephas” (which is translated Peter).

The next day he decided to go to Galilee and he found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law and also the prophets, Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth.” But Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him.” Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.” Nathanael said to him, “Rabbi you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.”

## BACKGROUND

The call of Jesus is always unique and personal. Indeed, God says to Jeremiah that he had appointed him a prophet before he was even conceived! And God will not accept Jeremiah’s protestations that he is too young to accept the call—there are people to whom Jeremiah must go, words that Jeremiah alone must speak for God’s will to be accomplished. The prophets of the Old Testament, the disciples of the New Testament, and even we ourselves are not summoned as a faceless crowd, but as unique and unrepeatable individuals. “How did you know me?” Nathanael asks Jesus, “Before Philip called you, I saw you

under the fig tree,” comes the answer! Jesus knows our personal histories, our strengths, our weaknesses; He has a particular purpose in mind for each one of us. “Only in the unfolding of the history of our lives and its events is the eternal plan of God revealed to each of us” (*Christifideles Laice*, 58).

Yet this unique call is not heard in isolation. John the Baptist showed his two disciples, one of whom was Andrew, the way to Jesus, the Lamb of God. Andrew followed Jesus and brought Simon Peter and Philip. Philip, in turn, brought Nathanael. In our time, too, others within the community of the faith help us discern, accept, and live out our vocations. We then, like those first disciples, help others to hear the voice of the Lord in their lives and respond.

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## Sharing to Word

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### QUESTIONS

*(Read the Scriptures again silently; then share your responses to these questions:)*

- Jeremiah protested that he was too young to answer God’s call what are some reasons why I might hesitate to respond to the Lord’s call?
- Who in my life has been an outstanding example of one who has heard the call of God and answered it? How has he or she exemplified good stewardship?
- Who has helped me—in my family, on the job, in the Church—to understand and to live out the call of God in my life? How?

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## Prayer

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God calls us, each one individually, and loves us unconditionally. He calls us first to love Him, healing and strengthening us to hear and answer His call in ever-widening circles—in our families, in our Church, in our neighborhoods, in our world...

**“Lord, we have gathered to hear Your Son’s voice in the Gospel. He has endowed us with the power of His Spirit and given us the opportunity to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no.’**

**Help us to accept Jesus’ invitation to follow Him, to take His Gospel as a guide and share with other believers. Fill us with the Holy Spirit which is the sign of His presence. Open our hearts to share the gifts You have first shared with us.**

*(Opportunity for shared prayer.)*

**“Father, help us to go forth in the peace that comes from Jesus, from the Word that tells us we are in His hands, we are loved, we are special, and we are blessed. Help us to go forth bearing the gift of eternal life like a flame that will never die, a flame that lights the way for our journey. Strengthen us to go forth filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit for You have invited us and share with us the life and peace of Jesus. For all the abundance of His goodness, we give You thanks and praise. Amen”**

(Excerpted from Small Group Sharing Option A for Season 5 [Evangelization] of the RENEW process, Copyright ©1981, 1984, 1988 by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Newark, New Jersey, and used by permission of Paulist Press.)

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## **Follow Through**

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Together, we have read and reflected on parts of the bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship, we have heard and meditated on portions of Scripture in order to better understand the life of discipleship and stewardship to which our faith calls us, and we have shared our insights, our experiences, and our prayers. But Jesus not only calls us to himself, He also sends us out in service—”He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two...: (Mk 6:7). Ideally, out sharing should lead each of us to constructive, concrete actions to reinforce what we have learned and encourage our growth in faith.

The following are some examples to spur your thinking:

- If, in the sharing, you recalled a person who was influential in the development of your faith, write a note to thank him or her.
- Pray daily for discernment. To what is the Lord calling you? To whom is He sending you? What would He have you say to them?
- Is there someone within your sphere of influence who might be helped by a timely word or a gentle suggestion? Make an effort to speak to that person this week.
- Sign up to help the Parish RCIA team in a way which best fits your talents and personality—to help welcome inquirers, to be a sponsor, to provide refreshments for the meeting...

Because those intentions we have defined most clearly are the ones we are most likely to act upon, write your “follow through” intentions here, and share it with the group if you are comfortable doing so.

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## Session 3

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# Jesus' Way

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### Focus

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The life of Jesus is the model for Christian stewardship. In His self-emptying, we see not self-denial for its own sake, but rather a setting aside of self in order to be filled with the will of God.

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### Sharing Experience

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#### BACKGROUND

“Jesus is the supreme teacher of Christian stewardship, as he is of every other aspect of human life; and in Jesus’ teaching and life self emptying is fundamental. Now it might seem that self-emptying has little to do with stewardship, but in Jesus’ case that is not so. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, he is filled with the Father’s will and he is fulfilled in just this way; ‘My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to do his work’ (Jn 4:34).

“Jesus’ mission is to restore to good order the created household of God which sin has disrupted. He not only perfectly accomplishes this task, but also, in calling disciples, empowers them to collaborate with him in the work of redemption for themselves and on behalf of others” (*Stewardship*, 19).

#### QUESTION

What qualities in the life of Jesus provide a standard by which we can measure our own lives and stewardship?

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### Listening to the Word

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#### INVOCATION

Begin the reading of the Scriptures with this short prayer (or another of our own choosing) followed by a few moments of silence: **Open our ears, Lord, that we may hear clearly the message of Your Word. Then open our ears, that we may generously share with one another and better understand what You are calling us to today. Amen.** Then read the passages aloud.

#### *Matthew 25:14-30*

“It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise the one who received two made another two. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money. After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them, the one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’ [Then] the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, my faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’ The one who had received the one talent

came forward and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.’ His master said to him in reply, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’

#### *Mark 10:17-30*

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments; “You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.”” He replied and said to him, “teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through [the] eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, “Then who can be saved?”

Jesus looked at them and said, “For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God.” Peter began to say to him, “We have given up everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age; houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come.

#### BACKGROUND

“The silver pieces of [the first] story stand for a great deal besides money. All temporal and spiritual goods are created by and come from God. That is true of everything human beings have: spiritual gifts like faith, hope and love, talents of body and brain, cherished relationships with family and friends, material goods, the achievements of human genius and skill, the world itself. One day God will require an accounting of the use each person had made of the particular portion of these goods entrusted to him or her.

“Each will be measured by the standard of his or her individual vocation. Each has received a different ‘sum’—a unique mix of talents, opportunities, challenges, weakness and strengths, potential modes of service and response—on which the Master expects a return. He will judge individuals according to what they have done with what they were given” (*Stewardship*, 20).

In the second story, a rich young man approaches Jesus to ask what it will cost him to inherit eternal life. Then, unwilling to pay the price, he goes sorrowfully away; and Jesus muses that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. Although unfamiliar to our ears, Jesus’ reference would have made sense to his hearers. The “needle” was a narrow gateway in a city wall through which a camel could be led, but only unloaded and on its knees; Jesus’ answer means really that although it is possible for a rich man to enter heaven, it is difficult and not without cost. Peter then further explores the cost of discipleship and asks about

the rewards of such sacrifice, saying to Jesus, 'We have given up everything and followed you' (Mk 10:28). "Christ's response is more than Peter or any other disciple could reasonably hope or bargain for... Giving up means receiving more, including more responsibility as a steward; among the consequences of living this way will be persecution; and even though discipleship and stewardship set the necessary terms of Christian life in this world, they have their ultimate reward in another life" (*Stewardship*, 21).

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## Sharing to Word

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### QUESTIONS

*(Read the Scriptures again silently; then share your responses to these questions:)*

- What talents have been entrusted to me? Which have I multiplied? Which have I "buried"?
- Jesus asked the rich young man to sell what he had and give to the poor in order to have treasure in heaven. What answer might Jesus have for me if I were to ask the same question?
- Who in my life seems to have given up much for the sake of the Gospel? What visible reward, if any, has there been for that sacrifice? What keeps me from doing the same?

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## Prayer

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The readings for this session call us to count our blessings and give thanks for them and to consider how responsible we have used those gifts for our good and the good of others. They also ask us to reflect prayerfully on what stands in the way of our whole-hearted commitment to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

One possible format is to begin with expressions of thanksgiving with the group responding, "**We give you thanks and praise, oh Lord.**" (Example: "For bringing us together tonight... We give you thanks and praise, oh Lord.")

When all who wish to have offered their prayers of thanksgiving and the group falls silent,

invite them to consider, silently, the times they have failed to share or misused these gifts, saying, "**Let us remember in silence the gifts we have not used wisely and the time we have failed to share your gifts with others.**"

After a period of quiet reflection, sum up by saying, "**Hear the prayers of our hearts, oh Lord...**" with the group responding, "**Forgive us, Lord, and teach us to share Your gifts.**"

Continue with this prayer attributed to St Catherine of Sienna: "**O tender Father, You gave us much more than we ever thought to ask for. Thank You, and again thank You, Father, for having granted our requests, and for having granted those things that we never realized we needed or sought.**"

Then conclude with Jesus' perfect prayer for the coming of the Kingdom: **Our Father...**

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## Follow Through

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Together, we have read and reflected on parts of the bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship, we have heard and meditated on portions of Scripture in order to better understand the life of discipleship and stewardship to which our faith calls us, and we have shared our insights, our experience, and our prayers. But we will be like the rich young man who went away sad and unchanged unless our sharing here leads us to constructive, concrete actions to reinforce what we have learned and encourage our growth in faith. The following are some examples to spur your thinking:

- If, during the sharing, you identified some "buried" talent, resolve this week to determine how you could use it and take the first step towards doing so.
- Give a gift of time or money to help the poor in your community—to a shelter for the homeless, a soup kitchen or food pantry, "Habitat for Humanity," or some other agency which serves the less fortunate.
- Reflect on how very rich you really are. Make a list of the material and spiritual blessings you enjoy and give thanks! Then

find a way to share those blessings with others.

Because those intentions we have defined most clearly are the ones we are most likely to act upon, write your “follow through” intentions here, and share it with the group if you are comfortable doing so.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Session 4

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# Living as a Steward

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### Focus

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Our Christian vocation call us to collaborate with God in the work of creation and to cooperate with God in the work of redemption. This collaboration and cooperation are hallmarks of stewardship at its deepest level.

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### Sharing Experience

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#### BACKGROUND

The stewardship of creation involves caring for and cultivating the world which God the Creator has entrusted to us. It includes the joyful appreciation of the wonders of nature, the protection and preservation of the environment, respect for and protection of all human life, and the development of this world through our work. “Everyone has some natural responsibility for a portion of the world and an obligation in caring for it to acknowledge God’s dominion. But there are also those who might be called stewards by grace. Baptism makes Christians stewards of this kind, able to act explicitly on God’s behalf in cultivating and serving the portion of the world entrusted to their care. We find the perfect model of such stewardship in the Lord. ‘For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross’ (Cor 1:19-20); and finally it will be he who ‘hands over the kingdom to his God and Father’ (1 Cor 15:24) (Stewardship, 28).

Baptism makes us a ‘a royal priesthood’ (1 Pt 2:9), called to offer up the world—and ourselves—to the Lord. Part of what this involves is good stewardship of our time by finding opportunities for such things as family prayer, Scripture reading, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and weekday Mass. It also extends to the transformation of suffering through voluntary penance.

“Though penance voluntarily accepted one gradually becomes liberated from those obstacles of Christian discipleship which a secularized culture exalting individual gratification places in one’s way. These obstacles include not just the quest for pleasure but avarice, a craving for the illusion of absolute dominion and control, valuing creatures without reference to their Creator, excessive individualism, and ultimately the fear of death unrelied by hope for eternal life” (*Stewardship*, 29)

#### QUESTION

In your lifetime, how have you experienced co-creation with God?

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### Listening to the Word

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#### INVOCATION

Begin the reading of the Scriptures with this short prayer (or another of your own choosing) followed by a few moments of silence: **Oh Holy Spirit, You hovered over the waters of creation. Overshadow us now as we read these words of Scripture and help us to know and name our gifts. Amen.**” Then read the passages aloud.

#### *Genesis 1:26-30*

Then God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”

God created man in his image;  
In the divine image he created him:  
Male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds

of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.” God also said: “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food.” And so it happened.

### *1 Corinthians 12:4-11*

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

### BACKGROUND

These readings remind us that all of creation—material things as well as the gifts of the Spirit—was given to us for our use and care. John Cardinal Newman once said, “Let us master this great and simple truth, that all rich materials and productions of this world, being God’s property, are intended for God’s service; and sin only, nothing but sin, turns them to a different purpose” (*Parochial and Plain Sermons* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987], 1368). The bishops go on to explain: “Sin causes people to turn in on themselves; to become grasping and exploitative toward possessions and other people; to grow accustomed to conducting relationships not by the standards of generous stewardship but by the calculus of self-interest: ‘What’s in it for me?’ Constantly, Christians must beg God for the grace of conversion: the grace to know who they are, to whom they belong, how they are to live—the grace to repent and change and grow, the grace to

become good disciples and stewards... The Spirit of wisdom and courage helps people seek pardon and be mindful, in the face of all their forgetting, that the most important work of their lives is to be Jesus’ disciples. Thus, the stewardship of disciples is not reducible only to one task or another. It involves embracing, cultivating, enjoying, sharing—and sometimes also giving up—the goods of human life” (*Stewardship*, 28-29)

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## Sharing to Word

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### QUESTIONS

*(Read the Scriptures again silently; then share your responses to these questions:)*

- What does it mean to me to think that I am created in God’s image? How does that idea affect my relationships with others or with God?
- Clearly, material goods—everything from natural resources to manufactured products—are distributed unevenly around the world. Am I “my brother’s keeper” with a responsibility to voluntarily curtail my consumption to assure that there is enough for others? How do I view our interconnectedness and interdependence?
- Which of the spiritual gifts listed have I been given? When and how have I used it “for the common good”?

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## Prayer

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Begin by praying this prayer of thanksgiving, responsively or in unison:

### A Litany of Thanksgiving

**Sing praise to the Lord for the gifts of creation**

**For God had done marvelous things!**

**Sing praise to the Lord for the day and the**

**night**

**For God had done marvelous things!**

**Sing praise for the sea and the sky and the land**

**For God has done marvelous things!**

**Give thanks for the sun and the moon and the stars**

**The Lord had done marvelous things!**

**For plants and for animals, for fish and for birds  
 The Lord had done marvelous things!  
 For all of creation, now ours to share,  
 Sing praise to the Giver of all!  
 Sing praise to the Spirit, giver of gifts,  
 Lord, help us discern them and share  
 The wisdom and knowledge and healing and faith,  
 Lord, help us to know them and share  
 The prophecy, languages, strong mighty deeds,  
 Lord, help us to name them and share!  
 Sing praise to Our God for these gifts to the Church  
 For He has done marvelous things!**

**We bring you thanks, oh Lord, for all of creation. Hear us as we come gratefully before you to remember Your goodness and ask Your continued blessing** (*Here give opportunity for shared prayer and response.*)

*(Suggested Response:)* **Lord, hear our prayer and help us to share your gifts.**

*(Conclude by praying together the Lord’s Prayer or the Stewardship Prayer:)*

**Oh Lord, giver of life and source of our freedom, we are reminded by the Psalmist that Yours is “the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it.” We know that it is from Your hand that we have received all we have and are and will be. Gracious and loving God, we understand that You call us to be the stewards of Your abundance, the caretakers of all You have entrusted to us. Help us always to use Your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to the love of Christ in our lives. We pray with grateful hearts, in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

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## **Follow Through**

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Together, we have read and reflected on parts the bishops’ pastoral letter on stewardship, we have heard and meditated on portions of Scripture in order to better understand the life of discipleship and stewardship to which our faith calls us, and we have shared our insights, our experience, and our prayers. But the title of this session is “*Living as a Steward*,” so, ideally, our sharing should lead

each of us to constructive, concrete actions to help us live what we have learned and encourage our growth in faith. The following are some examples to spur your thinking:

- St. Elizabeth Seton once said, “We must live more simply than others may simply live.” This week, voluntarily do without some good thing—a doughnut with your coffee or a soft drink at lunch, for example—and donate the money you would have spent to an agency devoted to the development of “third-world” nations or the alleviation of poverty.
- If, during the sharing, you identified a spiritual gift you are *not* using, reflect on how you might put it to use “for some benefit,” as St. Paul says. Call your parish and volunteer if appropriate.
- Go to a weekday Mass or celebrate the Sacrament of reconciliation this week.
- Spend time meditating on how your everyday work is a sign of your stewardship. In what ways do you “collaborate with God in the work of creation” or “cooperate with God in the work of redemption” in your day-to-day activities?

Because those intentions we have defined most clearly are the ones we are most likely to act upon, write your “follow through” intentions here, and share it with the group if you are comfortable doing so.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Session 5

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# Jesus' Way

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### Focus

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As baptized members of the Church we are called to be stewards of the Church, sharing in the responsibility for its mission. We are also invited to put ourselves at the service of the whole human family.

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### Sharing Experience

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#### BACKGROUND

Stewardship of the Church means cherishing and fostering the gifts of all while using our own gifts to participate in and support the Church's mission of proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying. "This participation takes different forms according to people's different gifts and offices, but there is a fundamental obligation arising from the sacrament of baptism (cf: Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laisi*, 15): that people place their gifts, their resources—themselves—at God's service in and through the church. Here also, Jesus is the model. Even though his self emptying is unique, it is within the power of disciples, and a duty, that they be generous stewards of the church, giving freely of their time, talent, and treasure" (*Stewardship*, 34).

The focus in stewardship is often on the giving, but the giving is not without reward. In the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "it is in giving that we receive." The poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning put it this way:

A poor man served by thee shall make  
thee rich;  
A sick man helped by thee shall make  
thee strong;  
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense  
Of service which thou renderest.

*(A Drama of Exile)*

Understanding this makes our stewardship not a burden to be shouldered wearily, but an opportunity to be embraced with joy.

#### QUESTION

When have you found yourself helped and healed by those you set out to help and heal?

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### Listening to the Word

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#### INVOCATION

Begin the reading of the Scriptures with this short prayer (or another of your own choosing) followed by a few moments of silence: **Come, Lord Jesus! You promised that when two or more are gathered in Your name, You would be there also. Help us to see You in the reading of Your Word. Amen.** Then read the passages aloud.

*Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16*

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift... And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge

of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in everyway into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.

#### *Mark 8:1-8*

In those days when there again was a great crowd without anything to eat, he summoned the disciples and said, "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a great distance." His disciples answered him, "Where can anyone get enough bread to satisfy them here in this deserted place?" Still he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven," they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also. They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over—seven baskets. There were about four thousand people.

#### BACKGROUND

"Those who enter into Jesus' new covenant find themselves growing in a union of minds and hearts with others who also have responded to God's call. They find their hearts and minds expanding to embrace all men and women, especially those in need, in a communion of mercy and love.

"The Eucharist is the great sign and agent of this expansive communion of charity "Because the

loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor 10:17). Here people enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in him, with one another. Here his love—indeed, his very self—flows into his disciples and, through them and their practice of stewardship, to the entire human race. Here Jesus renews his covenant-forming act of perfect fidelity to God, while also making it possible for us to cooperate. In the Eucharist, Christians reaffirm their participation in the new covenant, they give thanks to God for blessings received and they strengthen their bonds of commitment to one another as members of the covenant community Jesus forms.

And what do Christians bring to the Eucharistic celebration and join there with Jesus' offering? Their lives as Christian disciples: their personal vocation and the stewardship they have exercised regarding them, their individual contributions to the great work of restoring all things in Christ. Disciples give thanks to God for gifts received and strive to share them with others" (*Stewardship*, 37).

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## Sharing to Word

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### QUESTIONS

*(Read the Scripture again silently; then share your responses to these questions:)*

- St. Paul is really talking about stewardship when he urges the Ephesians "to live in a manner worthy of the call [they] have received" and to "live the truth in love." What does that mean to me as a twentieth century Catholic?
- Is there more to stewardship of the Church than donations of "time, talent, and treasure"?
- One interpretation of the Gospel story is that God's gifts, *shared*, will always be more than enough. What connections do I see between Eucharist and stewardship?
- If we have found this group to be an example of the "union of minds and hearts" that the bishops mention, what can we do to assure that this unity will not be lost when the six sessions have ended?

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## Prayer

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Begin the prayer for this session with this responsorial prayer, based on the song, “one Bread, One Body” by John Foley, S.J.:

**One bread, one Body, oh Lord of all,  
We, though many, would be one in You!**

**Gentile or Jew, neighbor or stranger,  
We who are many, Lord—make us one!**

**Servant or free, worker or owner,  
We who are many, Lord—make us one!  
Woman or man, grown-up or child,  
We who are many, Lord—make us one!**

**One bread, one Body, oh Lord of all,  
We who are many, would be one in you!**

**Many the gifts, many the works,  
One is their source, it’s You!  
Grain from the fields, scattered and grown  
Gathered and shared, it’s You!  
Grapes on the vine, ripened and crushed,  
Poured out and shared, it’s You!**

**One bread, one body, oh Lord of all,  
We who are many are one in You!**

*(Allow time for shared prayer, and conclude by praying together this stewardship prayer:)*

**“O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature. Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God forever and ever. Amen”**

Taken from *A Book of Family Prayers*, copyright ©1979 by Gabe Huck and used by permission of HarperCollins San Francisco.

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## Follow Through

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Together, we have read and reflected on parts of the bishop’s pastoral letter on stewardship, we have heard and meditated on portions of Scripture in order to better understand the life of discipleship and stewardship which our faith calls, us and we have shared our insights, our experiences, and our prayers. But St. Paul exhorts us to “build up

the body of Christ:—challenging us to commit ourselves to constructive, concrete actions to reinforce what we have learned and encourage our growth in faith.

The following are some examples to spur your thinking:

- Pray daily for each member of this group, individually and by name.
- Make plans to attend Mass together as a group, perhaps inviting roommates, spouses, or friends to join you.
- Write a thank you note to someone whose “stewardship of the Church” has made a difference in your life. It might be a baptismal or confirmation sponsor, a teacher, the director of the music group, or anyone else whose ministry has enhanced your practice or understanding of the faith.
- Read and reflect on the Scriptures appointed for daily mass this week. Attend a weekday Mass at your own parish or at a church near your workplace.

Because those intentions we have defined most clearly are the ones we are most likely to act upon, write your “follow through” intentions here, and share it with the group if you are comfortable doing so.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Session 6

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# The Christian Steward

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## Focus

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The Christian steward "...receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in an accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others and returns them with increase to the Lord" (*Stewardship*, 8).

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## Sharing Experience

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### BACKGROUND

"Good stewards understand that they are to share with others what they have received, that this must be done in a timely way and that God will hold them accountable for how well or badly they do it...

"In the lives of disciples, however, something else must come before the practice of stewardship. They need a flash of insight—a certain way of seeing—by which they view the world and their relationship to it in a fresh, new light" (*Stewardship*, 41). It is this insight, this grace of suddenly seeing God, present and active, in the works of creation and in the movements of the human heart, which sets the disciple on the path of Christian stewardship.

Christian stewards must be conscientious and faithful—remember St. Paul's insistence that "it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (1 Cor 4:2)? Christian stewards are also generous, but out of love as well as duty. After all the Scripture says: Serve one another through love... Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 5:13, 6:2).

"The life of the Christian steward, lived in imitation of Christ, is challenging, even difficult in many ways; but both here and hereafter it is charged with intense joy. [Christian stewards] look forward in hope to hearing the Master's

words addressed to those who have lived as disciples faithful in their practice of stewardship should: 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Mt 25:34)" (*Stewardship*, 42-43)

### QUESTION

Archbishop Thomas Murphy, one of the authors of the stewardship pastoral, recalls asking himself as he faced serious surgery, "What do I own, and what owns me?" Ask yourself that question. What does your answer say about stewardship?

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## Listening to the Word

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### INVOCATION

Begin the reading of the Scriptures with this short prayer (or another of your own choosing) followed by a few moments of silence: **"Come, Holy Spirit! In flame the hearts of Your faithful; enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Amen."** Then read the passages aloud.

### *Luke 1:26-56*

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most high, and the Lord God will

give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” And the angel said to her in reply, “The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.” Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

And Mary said:  
“My soul proclaims the greatness of  
the Lord;  
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.  
For he has looked upon his handmaid’s  
lowliness;  
behold, from now on all ages will call me  
blessed.  
The Mighty One has done great things for  
me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is from age to age  
to those who fear him.  
He has shown might with his arm,  
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.  
He has thrown down ruler from their  
thrones  
but lifted up the lowly.

The hungry he has filled with good things;  
the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has helped Israel his servant,  
remembering his mercy,  
According to his promise to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his descendents  
forever.”  
Mary remained with her about three  
months and then returned to her home.

#### *James 1:16-27*

Do not be deceived, my beloved brother: all good giving and every perfect gift is from a above, coming down from the Father of lights, with who there is no alteration of shadow caused by change, He willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Know this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of a man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. Therefore, put away all filth and evil excess and humbly welcome the work that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls.

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect laws of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does.

If any one thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, his religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstrained by the world.

#### BACKGROUND

“After Jesus, it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who by her example most perfectly teaches the meaning of discipleship and stewardship in their fullest sense. All of the essential elements are found in her life: She was called and gifted by God, she

responded generously creatively and prudently, she understood her divinely assigned role as 'handmaid' in terms of service and fidelity."

"In the light of all this, it only remains for all of us to ask ourselves this question: Do we also wish to be disciples of Jesus Christ? The Spirit is ready to show us the way—a way of which stewardship is a part" (*Stewardship*, 44).

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## Sharing the Word

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### QUESTIONS

*(Read the Scriptures again silently; then share your responses to these questions:)*

- Mary was a good steward in great and small ways. She said "Yes!" to the Incarnation—an example that can be a bit intimidating to us. But she also went in charity to assist her cousin, Elizabeth, in the last three months of Elizabeth's pregnancy—a homely example that can inspire us to service. Is Mary an example that inspires me or intimidates me? Why?
- "The Mighty One had done great things for me," says Mary in the Magnificat. "...[E]very perfect gift is from above," says James. Stewardship always begins with an acknowledgement of the source of our riches. What great things has God done for me? What perfect gifts has He given?
- What response have I made and/or will I make to the Lord for His gifts? Am I a "doer of the word and not a hearer only"?

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## Prayer

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Because this session focuses on Mary as the first and best example of the Christian steward, it would be appropriate to begin the prayer portion of this session with the Angelus:

**V. The Angel spoke God's message to Mary,  
R. and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.  
Hail, Mary...**  
**V. "I am the lowly servant of the Lord:  
R. let it be done to me according to your  
word." Hail, Mary...**

**V. And the Word became flesh  
R. and lived among us. Hail, Mary...  
V. Pray for us, holy Mother of God,  
R. that we may become worthy of the promises of Christ.**

**Let us pray.  
Lord, fill our hearts with your grace:  
Once, through the message of an angel  
You revealed to us the incarnation of your  
Son;  
now, through his suffering and death  
lead us to the glory of his resurrection.**

**We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

**R. Amen**

*(Allow time for shared prayer, then conclude the session by praying together the Stewardship Prayer or this prayer of commitment:)*

**Lord, we have come together for several weeks to speak and to listen, to pray and to share, in order to understand more clearly what it means to be Your disciples. Help us to hear and answer Your call in our lives. Help us to recognize and be grateful for Your many gifts to us, using them wisely and sharing them generously. Now, together and individually, we commit ourselves again to be faithful followers of Jesus. Help us to be thankful, trustworthy stewards of all You have given us, Lord, that our stewardship may bear witness to Your love and goodness in our lives. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.**

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## Follow Through

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Together, we have read and reflected on parts of the bishop's pastoral letter on stewardship, we have heard and meditated on portions of Scripture in order to better understand the life of discipleship and stewardship to which our faith calls us, and we have shared our insights, our experiences, and our prayers. But if we are to be "doers of the Word and not hearers only," our sharing should lead each of us to constructive, concrete actions to reinforce what we have learned and encourage our growth in faith. The following are some examples to spur your thinking:

- Pray the “Hail Mary” daily, slowly, reflecting on her willingness to do the will of God. How ready and willing am I?
- Assess your stewardship using the traditional categories of time, talent, and treasure. Make a list of the ways you give of your time and talent to the Church and the community. What share of income do you give to you parish? What Share to other worthy charities?
- St. James was contemptuous of those who looked at their own faces in a mirror, then went off and promptly forgot what they looked like! Tape a copy of the stewardship prayer to your bathroom mirror to remind yourself what a good steward “looks like” and pray the prayer each morning.

Because those intention we have defined most clearly are the ones we are most likely to act upon, write your “follow through” intention here, and share it with the group if you are comfortable doing so.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Suggested Music for “The Disciple as Steward”

These hymns have been selected to reflect the themes of the six weeks of “ The Disciple as Steward,” and one or more may be used at the beginning of a session as a sort of “gathering rite,” as an introduction to set the tone of the prayer segment, or not at all, depending on the tastes and talents of the group! They were chosen from *Glory and Praise* (G&P), *Gather*, and *Worship*, because these are the hymnals in common use in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana. Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list and other titles from other sources could be used equally effectively.

**Session 1** “Song of Thanksgiving” G&P #229  
 “All That We Have” G&P #10,  
 Gather #257

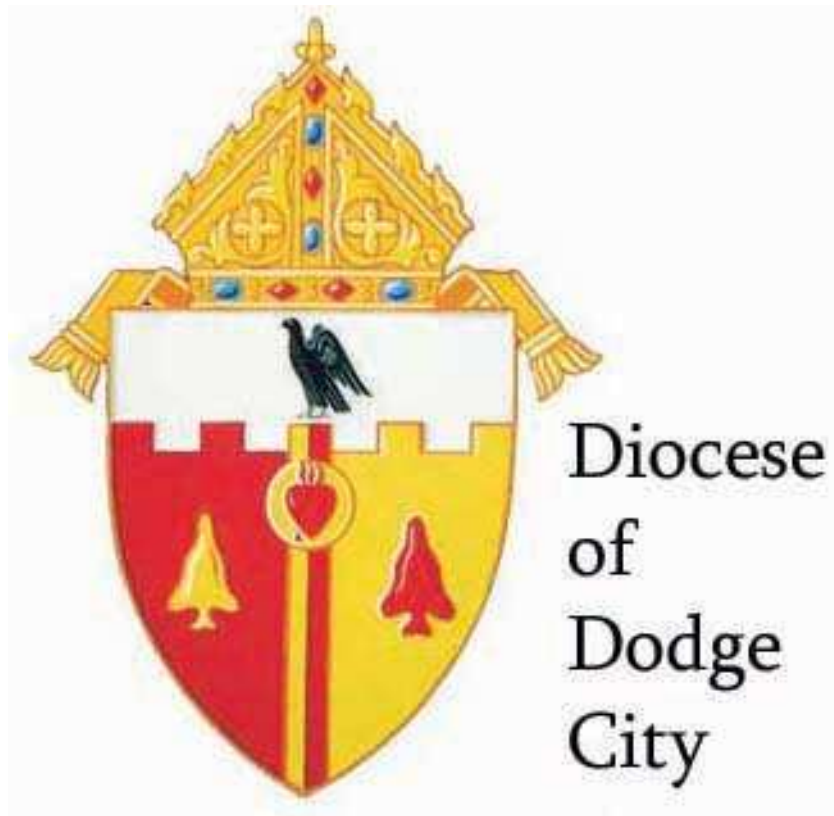
**Session 2** “We Are Called” Gather #301  
 “Anthem” G&P #19, Gather #298  
 “Before the Sun Burned Bright: G&P#28  
 “Here I Am, Lord” G&P #92, Gather #291  
 “Two Fisherman” Worship #633

**Session 3** “Song of the Lord’s Supper” Gather #161  
 “We Remember” G&P #255, Gather #249  
 “Lord, Whose Love In Humble Service”  
 Worship #630

**Session 4** “Send Us Your Spirit” Gather #189  
 “We Are many Parts” Gather #310  
 “God, Who Stretched the Spangled  
 Heavens” Worship #648

**Session 5** “Harvest of Justice” Gather #300  
 “In the Breaking of the Bread” Gather #340  
 “One Bread, One Body” G&P #180,  
 Gather #346  
 “Servant Song” Gather #285  
 “Sing Our His Goodness” G&P #223  
 “In Christ There Is No East or West”  
 Worship #359  
 “Said Judas to Mary” Worship #644

**Session 6** “Hail Mary: Gentle Woman” G&P #87  
 “I Sing a Maid” Gather #159  
 “Tell Out My Soul” Worship #659



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