This packet was originally created for the diocesan focus on stewardship as a way of life with an emphasis on prayer, service and sharing. These six sessions, intended for children and families, have been updated and re-printed as an invitation to continue to promote stewardship as a way of life for all ages.

The image of hospitality is carried through the six sessions: *Please Come! Response Required! Be Attentive! Say Thanks! You're Welcome! Pass It On!* Each session has four parts: Introduction, Prayer, Service and Sharing.

Here are several ways for schools, parish faith formation programs, and individual families to make use of these themes:

- ★ Choose six weeks to concentrate on stewardship and present these themes, perhaps coinciding with adult sessions.
- ★ Present a theme a month for six months.
- ★ Incorporate these themes into a parish wide plan of prayer, service and sharing.
- ★ With stewardship as the theme for the year, offer intergenerational programs based on the themes of hospitality noted above.

Contact Andrea Sabor, Faith Formation Coordinator at Nativity Parish and former Consultant for the Diocesan Education Department, for more information at 920-499-6012.

Introduction: Through the use of the theme of hospitality we are introducing stewardship as a way of life. The stories in this packet are original; you may your own examples or find other stories appropriate for this theme. The discussion questions are intended to help children understand what it means to be a good steward. Each session has a corresponding "scrapbook" page which extends the lesson.

Prayer: By sharing the words of scripture and the examples of Christ with our children, our hope is they will recognize the blessings they have received and their responsibility to be a blessing to others.

Service: For stewardship to be a way of life for children, it is important to teach children about the meaning of service: how they can respond as good stewards by using the gifts God has given them in resourceful ways to help at home, in the community, the parish and world.

Sharing: In addition to prayer and service, it is also important to teach children to be cheerful givers of not only their time and talent, but also their treasure. Throughout these six themes, it is suggested that the parish develop a Children's Sharing Program. This is the name we suggest for a giving program that features children's envelopes but you may come up with your own. The portion of the envelope where children can write in how they spent time and talent helping others will be called the "Caring and Sharing" section of the envelope.

We are God's guest, invited to make the most of divine hospitality and mediate it to one another and to the rest of creation.

Monika Hellwig
(Author of Guests of God: Stewards of Divine Creation)

Accepting the challenge of Jesus to be a good steward is a most laudable dream to share. Our beloved Catholic Church can indeed have a bright future. All we have to do is teach our children well."

C. Justin Clement
(Author of Stewardshp: A Parish Handbook and other publications)

PLEASE COME !

INTRODUCTION

The Steward household had an air of excitement about it one morning. The invitations to dad's surprise 40th birthday party were going to be sent out that day. Everyone had pitched in to address the invitations. Dad didn't know what was happening, but he sure was happy to see his wife and kids up and dressed so early; they even sat down together at the breakfast table. They couldn't wait for the day that relatives and friends would celebrate— a special day for a special person!

Once these invitations are taken to the Post Office and put in the mailbox, the Steward family trusted that the Post Office would deliver the invitations. When you mail invitations, does the Post Office decide which ones they will deliver and which ones they won't? No, of course not. It is their responsibility to deliver all of the invitations that are mailed. The Post Office can't say, "We are pretty busy today, if we don't deliver these invitations, maybe someone else will tell the people about the party." No, they must see that all of the invitations are delivered. What if it is raining? The Post Office can't say, "It is raining today and if we go out to deliver these invitations, we might get wet. We will wait until it stops raining." No, the invitation has been sent and it must be delivered, come rain or shine. If they wait until the weather is just right, the invitation might be too late. (Adapted from www.sermons4kids.com).

Did you know that Jesus has sent an invitation? His invitation says, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." Jesus has also decided who is to be invited. Everyone is invited! The invitation is addressed to "whoever wishes to come."

Do you know to whom Jesus has chosen to deliver the message of **Stewardship: A Way of Life?** You and me! In the verses of the Bible that we call "The Great Commission," He told us to go everywhere and tell everyone about His love for them! That is what stewardship is all about.

PRAYER

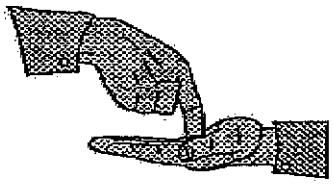
Read: 1 Peter 4: 8-11

What does this passage tell us about stewardship?
Name all the ways we can be good stewards listed in this passage.
Are you willing to accept this invitation?

Dear Jesus, we thank you that you loved us and invited us to come and follow you. We ask you to help us be faithful in delivering your invitation to others. Amen

SERVICE

Two **FINGER PLAYS** that teach about Service:



Don't wait. (Pointer finger)
Start today. (Middle finger)
Learn all about it. (Ring finger)
Set a good example. (Little finger)
Keep at it. (Thumb)

Oh, the wonders to be found. (Pointer finger)
How can I show I care.
Protect things everywhere. (Ring finger)
I'll recycle, I won't waste. (Little finger)
On God's face, a smile I'll place. (Thumb)

SHARING

- Send letters to parishioners with children inviting participation in a Children's Sharing Program.
- Send a personal invitation to children asking them to become good stewards of their money by giving some of their allowance, etc., to the church.
- Locate a family willing to give witness to their involvement in a giving program—how it has been beneficial to the family.
- Invite families to introductory meetings in which the children's giving program will be explained.
- Research companies that feature stewardship envelopes for children or design your own envelopes and find a reasonably priced printer.

RESPONSE REQUIRED!

INTRODUCTION

Suzie is the Youth Minister at a parish near Green Bay. She encouraged the youth of the parish to do something special for children ad parents during the busy Christmas season. The youth were excited as they talked about what activities they could offer. One young person related how parents are stretched during this season and would like to take time to go shopping without the children present. The rest of the group became animated as they made plans for a Parents' Day Out on a Saturday early in December. They would offer games, videos, movies and a hot dog lunch. The only "fee" would be an offering of mittens, hats and scarves that would be given to an agency or school for distribution to the needy. They got right to work making up invitations and getting them out to parish families.

The deadline for responding was nearing. Suzie and the youth members became quite concerned. They only had a few responses. What would happen to their plans? Would there be more youth than little children? How many games should they plan? How many hot dogs should they prepare for lunch? Fortunately, the parish families came through with last minute registrations and, despite a few walk-ins, the event was a huge success.

When you are invited to a party or any gathering, what preparations do you make for it?

What do the letters RSVP on a invitation stand for?

Do you respond to the sender with a note or phone call letting the host know you will be there?

Do plan for what you will bring, how you will get there, what other activities might you have to juggle to be there on time?

Do you go shopping for the food you might bring or the present you might give?

As a good steward, what is the best response?

PRAYER

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus.

Read about John the Baptist in Matthew 3:1-6 and Luke 3:1-5

How are the stories alike, how are they different?
How does John the Baptist invite us to follow Jesus?
What does John the Baptist show us about Stewardship?

Dear Jesus, help us to say "yes" to your invitation to be the best we can be. May we always respond in ways that are pleasing to you. Amen

SERVICE

Learn about the needs of others:

Direct everyone to put one shoe in the middle of the floor.

At the sound of a whistle, everyone should choose a shoe from the floor (be sure it's not their own).

Have everyone try to put on the shoe that was chosen.

Play some music and have everyone walk in the shoe they have "put on."

Stop the music after a minute.

Ask the children to talk about what it feels like to walk in another person's shoe.

Guide them in a discussion about reaching out to others ad understanding the other person.

SHARING

- Hold a Stewardship/Sharing Rally for all families; serve simple foods, display informational materials on the giving theme.
- Ask families with children to RSVP to the invitation to participate in the Children's Sharing Program by returning a promise card during Sunday Mass.
- Inform ushers of their part in the collection of children's envelopes at Mass.
- Before Mass introduce the Children's Sharing Program to the parish.

BE ATTENTIVE !

INTRODUCTION

It was Grandma's birthday! The whole family had planned a get together to celebrate her 75 years on this earth! What an occasion it was to be . . . Invitations were sent out, replies received and everyone was arriving at the hotel restaurant for the party. Billy noticed his cousin Jill coming in the door.

Jill ran ahead of her parents almost knocking over her mom who was carrying their big present and flowers for Grandma. Jill did not want to help set-up! She wanted to get the party going so she could change into her swimsuit and jump in the huge swimming pool. She ran past Grandma who was seated by the door and greeting everyone as they arrived. Jill did not bother to say hello to aunts and uncles who had not seen her in a long time, She just grabbed her place at the table and loudly asked when the food was going to be served; the sooner she finished eating, the sooner she could swim. She spilled her water as she reached for the basket of rolls.

Noticing that no one else had been seated, she began to run and play around the table, dropping bread crumbs all over the floor. Only when her parents insisted, did she greet her Grandma. She gave her a quick hug and ran off to join some other cousins stealing pickles off the buffet table.

Introduce the word ATTENTIVE: This word means to be helpful, caring, thoughtful, considerate, courteous, kind and paying special attention.

Was Jill ATTENTIVE or INATTENTIVE at the party? Use the words above to take a closer look at the story and give examples.

Share your own stories of kids who are ATTENTIVE and INATTENTIVE. What lesson will you take from this exercise?

PRAYER

Take a look at stories from Scripture that show Jesus attending to those around him at a festive meal:

Zaccheus the Tax Collector: Luke 19: 1-10
Jesus Prepares Breakfast for His Friends: John 21: 1-14
Jesus is Anointed at Bethany: Mark 14: 3-9

How did Jesus pay attention to those around him?

What words did he say?
What did others say?
What would you have said if you were there with Jesus?

Dear Jesus,
Sometime I do not show I care for others. I do not notice that they need my attention, my help or my smile. Help me to always remember that you cared for everyone you met and even noticed those who did not ask for your attention. Keep me in your constant care, watch out for me. Because in You I will have joy and peace. Amen.

SERVICE

- There are many "projects" that can be done by individual groups or classes or by the whole program or school.
- Service is reaching out to others in a variety of ways:
    - In the home
    - In the parish
    - In the community
    - In the world
- Invite children to list things they like to do, things they are good at. These questions might help them identify those things. For each "Yes" answer, you will find (if you think hard enough) that there is a corresponding service. Look for a need. Be attentive to the needs where your gifts would be helpful.

Do you like to read and study?	You might help younger children or classmates with reading assignments.
Do you like to play games?	You might plan a game party with the folks at a local residence for people with disabilities.
Do you like to cook?	You might bake and decorate cookies for the staff at your school.
Do you like to go shopping?	You might put together gift boxes for people in a refugee camp.
Do you like to work on the computer?	You might make cards for people in your parish who might not get birthday or holiday cards.
Do you like to fix things?	You might fix up toys for a homeless shelter.
Do you like to sing, dance or play an instrument?	You might hold a puppet show for the young children in your parish or neighborhood.

SHARING

- Choose several older children and youth to be on a Children's Sharing Program committee—to open envelopes, to count the money and to record the "Kids Caring and Sharing" responses from the envelopes.
- Make savings banks as a reminder to be a good steward of money. Some recyclable materials that can be used for making savings banks are:

  Plastic bottles
  Cans— coffee, potato chips, oatmeal
  Boxes of all shapes and sizes
  Jars—use lids as is or create decorative ones with fabric and jar rings
  Scoops from powdered laundry soap—make a cardboard cover
  Instant coffee containers
  —For more ideas go this site on the internet: www.craftsforkids.com

- Continue to send notices and reminders of the Children's Sharing Program through the school and catechetical programs.

SAY THANKS !

INTRODUCTION

CJ just loved Spiderman! He watched the cartoon and poured over the comic books his dad had collected when he was a boy. He went with his parents to see the movie. His bedroom was decorated in the Spiderman theme and CJ loved to spend time there playing with his Spiderman action figure. He and his friends invented all kinds of situations where Spiderman was the hero of the day.

When his mom was planning his birthday party, you can guess which theme he chose for a cake and party favors. What he didn't know was that his mom had a special surprise in mind. She had invited Spiderman to come and pay a special visit to the guests at the party!

CJ and his friends were playing a game in the backyard when their favorite cartoon figure appeared from behind the fence! They couldn't believe their eyes! He looked and acted just like Spiderman! He told them stories of his adventures and rescues. They listened in awe to what he had to say.

CJ and his friends would have been quite surprised to learn that "Spiderman" was really his cousin, Shaun. Shaun had mentioned that he had a Spiderman costume and would love to come to the birthday party and surprise his cousin. CJ said it was his best party ever! He told his mom "Thank You" over and over after the party was over and the guests had gone home.

Think about all the special surprises we receive from God every day! God does so much for us! Every day God provides everything we need: food, clothing, and a special place to live. Do we ever forget to say, "Thank You?" Let's stop right now and say "Thank You" and ask Him to help us remember to thank Him every day.

PRAYER

Read: Luke 17: 11-19

In groups, act out the story of the 10 Lepers.

Can you think of a situation today where someone has forgotten to thank Jesus for the gifts they have received? Role-play those situations in groups.

Discuss the words we say at Mass, "It is right to give God thanks and praise!"

Dear Lord, you give us everything we need, but we often forget to say "Thank You." We thank you now, and ask you to help us to remember to give thanks every day for all that you give us. Amen.

SERVICE

It is time to:

- To *review* prayerfully the importance of God in our lives and the many gifts and blessings He has given us.
- To *evaluate* how to live out our lives better as good and faithful stewards: using our time, talent and financial resource to cooperate with God.
- To make a *commitment* to respond to God's graciousness by making plans and going forward to see those plans through.

It is time to remember that we are all connected as part of God's creation. What can you do in any or all of these areas?

Respect all life
Protect the environment
Conserve energy
Save the species
Keep the earth green
Guard our treasures
Be tolerant
Make peace
Recycle, replenish and reuse
Say no to bad habits

SHARING

- Plan a time when children's envelopes can be distributed in a prayerful way during school or catechetical programs.
  - ✞ Open with the diocesan Stewardship Prayer.
  - ✞ Explain how the envelopes will be returned each week at Sunday Mass and any other announcements pertinent to the Children's Sharing Program.
  - ✞ Ask each child to come forward and to accept their envelopes.
  - ✞ Invite the children to share examples of how they will show their gratitude to God this week.
  - ✞ Close with a song chosen to be the parish stewardship song (or one that is familiar to the children).
- Encourage teachers and catechists to answer any questions the children might have when they return to class.
- Survey children to find out how they would like to see the money spent in the areas of parish community and world. Share these suggestions with parish team for their input and support.

YOU'RE WELCOME !

INTRODUCTION

Fr. Shafer liked to do nice things for others. One of the things he did was to share a cross with those who needed to feel the healing and comforting touch of God. Through the grace of God and some giving people, these crosses have been shared locally as well as far and wide—740 of them, beginning with Sr. Paulyn of Manitowoc, a friend of Fr. Shafer's. After she shared the crosses with the faculty and staff at St. Francis de Sales School, the Home and School Association became involved. They decided that they would always keep 25 crosses on hand for those who wished to buy one at a low cost. One of the parents wrote a prayer that is now packaged with the crosses.

The children said that they would like to do something for a school in New York with the name of St. Francis de Sales. Many people had suffered greatly as the result of the attacks September 11, 2001. Sr. Paulyn wrote to the principal and said they would like to help by giving each classroom a "Fr. Shafer" cross. Each classroom now has a "Fr. Shafer" cross along with the prayers of the Manitowoc children. Those who need the reminder that God is with them can now hold the cross and be in touch with God.

What does it mean to have a generous spirit?
Talk about the people in the story who show a generous spirit?
Talk about how Fr. Shafer possessed a generous spirit.
Name some people in your life who are generous.

PRAYER

Read together the following scripture passages:

The Good Samaritan: Luke 10: 25-37
James 2: 14-17
Matthew 5: 13-16

What do each of these passages say about being a good and generous steward?

Dear Jesus, may we be like the generous Samaritan who is more concerned about helping others than putting himself in danger. May we share our gifts generously across the street and across the world.

SERVICE

- Begin to discuss what your group(s) can do to help those in far away places. Brainstorm ideas with groups, with faculty or volunteer catechists, parent groups and local community groups. Also, consult The Compass, newspapers and magazines for further ideas.

- Here are some websites to spark ideas:

  http://www.mission-education.org (stories and links)

  http://www.heifer.org (a great way to help others)

  http://www.samaritanspurse.org

  http://www.holychildhoodusa.org

  http://teenink.com/Community/ (421 ideas and links)

  http:www.uscatholicmisson.org (links to many other sites)

  http://www.godschild.org

SHARING

- Find a parish contact to the Children's Sharing Program Committee who will see that the amount collected and the "Caring and Sharing" responses will be recorded in the parish bulletin each week (be sure to note the deadline for getting information into the bulletin).

- At each Mass with children, collect their envelopes and other gifts (such as canned goods, etc.)— including weekly school Masses. The children are invited to come forward with their gifts before the ushers collect the gifts of the congregation.

PASS IT ON !

INTRODUCTION

Sister Cleophas was a teacher that everyone loved. She was able to teach math to those who thought they would never pass the course. Some even learned to like math! She taught for over 50 years before she embraced a new ministry. She helped organize a group of people to collect day-old bread from a bakery and to distribute the bread to the poor in her home town. When that became too much for her, she continued to be cheerful as ever and took an interest in everything around her. Despite her frailty she met everyone who passed her by with a smile and a greeting. When she was praised for the greetings that meant so much to those who were recipients, she replied with humility and grace. Always a good steward she replied, "My smile is all I have left to give."

How did Sr. Cleophas pass on the message of Jesus throughout her life?

Share stories of people you know who have demonstrated what it means to be a good steward.

How have you learned to be a good steward?

PRAYER

Choose one of these scripture passages:

Luke 10: 1-9
Matthew 14: 13-21
1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Discuss ways you can pass on the message of Jesus by following the words of scripture?

In what way is the Mass the central prayer of a good steward?

Dear Jesus, help us to pass on the message of stewardship to all we meet. May the Mass be a source of strength for us as we go forth to love and serve you. May the Mass be never ended in our lives. Alleluia!

SERVICE

Here are some "star" examples of how schools and catechetical programs have chosen to be good stewards of their gifts. Perhaps these and other ideas on the resource list will help you plan projects in your school, program, or family:

- ★ Homemade cards to shut-ins delivered on the First Friday of each month.
- ★ Performances held at the local health and rehabilitation center — singing and plays.
- ★ Thanksgiving placemats made and decorated for a local homeless shelter.
- ★ Canned goods collected for each Mass and brought up at Offertory.
- ★ Saved pennies towards gift certificates for heating bills.

SERVICE (Contd.)

- ★ Special Lenten and Advent project—participation in Heifer Project and others—purchased rabbits, sheep and honeybees.
- ★ Clean out your desk day — good unused school supplies collected for children of Kosovo.
- ★ Collected hats, mittens and scarves for a local day care center.
- ★ Fixed-up toys for a resource center for families.
- ★ Collected good books and toys for a shelter.
- ★ Decorated the doors of a local nursing home with holiday themes.
- ★ Hosted a senior citizen party with games and snacks.
- ★ Partnered with a school in a disadvantaged area — write letters and send gifts.
- ★ Made quilts or fleece blankets for patients of hospitals and nursing homes.

SHARING

- Continue to remind children about the Children's Sharing Program throughout the year
- Recruit witnesses to come forward and talk about how the Children's Sharing Program has renewed the family's commitment to giving and brought about a new understanding of stewardship.
- At the end of the year, re-cap the year's giving program by sending each family a letter stating the total number of envelopes given out, the total number used, the total dollar amount collected and how the money was used throughout the year.
- Sponsor a competition for the design of the envelopes if they are not purchased through a company. Ask the Children's Sharing Program committee to award prizes for the best design (Scrip certificates make good prizes if you can get someone to donate them).
- Thank all those who helped make the Children's Sharing Program a success and encourage others to participate in the future.