The Gold Standard
Evidence-Based Best Practice (CSD)

The outcomes of stewardship efforts produce lessons learned, promising practices, good practices and best practices - but what is considered the Gold Standard is the Evidence Based Best Practice.

A Best Practice is a technique, process, or activity that is more effective than any other at delivering specific outcomes. With proper checks and testing, a desired outcome can be delivered with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. These Best Practices are based on replicable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people. The term Best Practice has a "gold standard" called an Evidence-Based Best Practice.

While there is broad agreement that replicating Best Practices is an effective way to advance development goals, there has been little systemization in extracting lessons from actual parish experiences. There is a need to define “Best Practice” and provide guidelines for systemization. This will improve the effectiveness of linking knowledge to practical action.

For the purposes of this parish guide, a best practice is:

- **Grassroots Oriented**: A sustainable, grassroots oriented, culturally appropriate development tool for use in a parish. A tool that doesn’t rely on continuous outside advice and expensive external inputs, but a tool that the pastor, pastoral leadership or parish members identified as a need and participated in the design. A tool they can finance, operate, sustain and maintain by themselves.

- **Evidence Based**: A Best Practice that has been developed in the field and has been shown through research and trials to produce a positive outcome.
  
  - Has a positive impact on stewardship without secondary negative impacts; is sustainable over time.
  
  - Is tested by actual parishes.
- Its methods of evaluation may include surveys that measure increased finances, increased number of ministries, number of new ministries, increases in communication about stewardship, increased financial support of others outside the parish, increased numbers of new members and other relevant statistics.

- Systematized: A framework that identifies the basics of good stewardship. Internal practices as well as other dioceses and parishes may become treasure houses of knowledge and Best Practices. Systemization will organize this knowledge into a set of sequential, step-by-step tools for use in parishes.

Our systematized approach concentrates on 4 cornerstones of Parish Stewardship:

1. Prayer and Spirituality
2. Engagement and Hospitality
3. Formation and Education
4. Service (Reaching out, evangelization, Social ministry and giving)

These pillars are based on the 7 steps to success with stewardship as outlined in “Stewardship, a Disciple’s Response.” The 7 steps are:

1. Personal Witness
2. Commitment of Leadership
3. Hospitality, Evangelism and Outreach
4. Communication and Education
5. Recruiting, training and recognizing gifts of time and talent
6. Stewardship of Treasure
7. Accountability

- Replicable: These are tools and materials that can be replicated and can serve as models for parishes. They may be approached in various ways according to the parish’s individual needs. These solutions bridge research and practical solutions. They are simple and understandable to all stakeholders and can be scaled to work at parish or diocese level.
Model #1
Traditional: Beginning Process

General description:

This model reflects an entry-level introduction started at the parish level to understand the spirituality concepts of stewardship, including grace, gratitude and prayer and sacrificially giving of time, talent and treasure. It utilizes educational retreats for pastoral staff and parish leadership, stewardship study groups and formation of a stewardship committee. This process utilizes the “Seven Steps to Stewardship Success” (USCCB)

Parishes using all or parts of this model (For contact information on this and other models, please see enclosed contact sheet)
St. Joseph-Pinole
Our Lady of Guadalupe-Fremont
St. Joachim-Hayward

Which gold standard criteria does this program meet?

- Grassroots
- Evidence Based
- Systematized
- Replicable

1. Process

- Stewardship retreat on grace-gratitude-prayer for the pastoral staff.
- Formed stewardship study group as the first step.
- Discerned individuals to form the stewardship committee.
- Stewardship lost momentum and so a new strategy was developed.
- Stewardship retreat for ALL ministry heads, Pastor and pastoral leadership.
  - Everyone understands stewardship as an expectation
  - Included education on the spirituality of stewardship
  - All leadership is able to effectively support the efforts of stewardship once it is “rolled-out” in the parish.

2. Obstacles/Road Blocks/Challenges

- Stewardship committee was too small to move stewardship forward and so some of the momentum was lost.
- Not enough education offered at the leadership at the start.
- Not enough communication in expectation of stewardship effort.
Model #1
Traditional: Beginning Process

3. Plan for Continuity and Future Strategies

- Keep working towards things that work and reevaluate, remove, or change things that are not working.
- Encourage commitment of leadership on an ongoing basis.
- Ongoing education for new ministry chairs, pastoral leadership, etc.
- Continue education on the spirituality of stewardship.
- Formalize stewardship committee and discern new members.

4. Measurement

Annual survey looking for:
- Increased statistics.
- Increased finances.
- Number of ministries, and new ones created.
- Number of volunteer hours that emphasize stewardship within the church and in the community.
- Amount of communication about stewardship.
- Sacrificial giving to others (outside the parish).
- Parish also gives sacrificially.

5. Costs involved:

- Costs to provide ongoing education to parish on Stewardship. May include materials, stipend and travel for speakers, and hospitality
- International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) Membership: Cost varies according to size of your parish:
  - Up to 250 families ........................................ $180.00
  - 251 to 500 families .................................... $240.00
  - 501 to 999 families .................................... $300.00
  - 1,000 to 1,999 families ............................... $360.00
  - 2,000 to 2,500 families ............................... $420.00
  - 2,501 to 3,000 families ............................... $480.00
  - Over 3,000 families ................................... $540.00
- Costs for leadership retreat days
  - venue
  - catering
  - materials
  - speakers
Model # 2-A
Traditional: Long Term Perspective A

General Description:

This model has its roots in initial diocesan stewardship efforts which begun in 1997. It follows the guidelines from *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response* (USCCB) and includes the formation of a stewardship committee.

Parishes using all or parts of this model (For contact information on this and other models, please see enclosed contact sheet).

- Corpus Christi-Fremont
- St Agnes-Concord

Which gold standard criteria does this program meet?

- Grassroots
- Evidence Based
- Systematized
- Replicable

1. Process

- Stewardship committee was started.
- Followed the International Catholic Stewardship Council recommendations for stewardship
- Utilizes all 7 steps of success in stewardship.

2. Obstacles/Road Blocks/Challenges

- Keeping the stewardship message fresh
- Maintaining the expectation of stewardship with pastor change

3. Plans for Continuity and Future Strategies

- Stewardship committee still active.
- Continually looks at new ways to utilize 7 steps.
- Utilizes current communication technology in the stewardship effort.
- Parish sends representatives to annual Stewardship conferences (International Catholic Stewardship Council).
- Plan to introduce stewardship into youth program (St. Agnes)
Model # 2-A
Traditional: Long Term Perspective A

4. Measurement

Annual survey looking for:
- Increased statistics.
- Increased finances.
- Number of ministries, and new ones created.
- Number of volunteer hours that emphasize stewardship within the church and in the community.
- Amount of Communication about stewardship.
- Sacrificial giving to others (outside the parish).
- Parish also gives sacrificially.

5. Costs Involved.
- Costs for new programs are determined as they are initiated.
- Costs to attend ongoing stewardship education and annual stewardship conference.
  - ICSC membership (ICSC)
    - Up to 250 families .............................................. $180.00
    - 251 to 500 families .......................................... $240.00
    - 501 to 999 families ........................................... $300.00
    - 1,000 to 1,999 families ...................................... $360.00
    - 2,000 to 2,500 families ....................................... $420.00
    - 2,501 to 3,000 families ....................................... $480.00
    - Over 3,000 families ........................................... $540.00
  - ICSC annual conference $539.00 for members, $1,150 for non-members (ICSC)
- Retreats/workshops on stewardship
  - venue
  - catering
  - materials
  - speakers
Model # 2-B
Traditional: Long Term Perspective B

General Description:

This model reflects a long-term commitment to stewardship introduced by a pastor before the 1992 *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response* (USCCB). It includes conversion, regular stewardship homilies, an ongoing, year-round culture of stewardship and grace, gratitude and prayer in all ministries, and expectations that parishioners will sacrificially give time, talent and treasure as a way of life.

**Parishes using all or parts of this model** (For contact information on this and other models, please see enclosed contact sheet).

- Catholic Community of Pleasanton

Which gold standard criteria does this program meet?

- Grassroots
- Evidence based-
- Replicable-Pieces are replicable.

1. Process

- Started by the Pastor-strong commitment of leadership who recognized his own conversion to stewardship and then shared the experience.
  - Regular Stewardship homilies
- Started a Stewardship Committee
- Communication using current technology and web site for ministries and stewardship.
- Followed the 7 steps to stewardship on an ongoing basis, year round
  - Strong expectation that all parishioners will live a life of gratitude.
  - Strong expectation that parishioners will sacrificially give time-talent-treasure.

2. Obstacles/Road Blocks/Challenges

- Stewardship is so much part of the culture that is was decided that a stewardship committee was no longer needed.
- No one is responsible for continual infusion of new ideas. Stewardship expectation could slide with changing personnel.
- Infrastructure to support new ideas-Accountability can be a challenge.
- Change of leadership could cause problems.
Model # 2-B
Traditional: Long Term Perspective B

3. Plans for Continuity and Future Strategies

- Leadership directed
- Stewardship is ingrained into the very fabric of this parish now. Stewardship committee is not needed.
- Parish gives sacrificially in addition to parishioners.
- Active social justice ministry.
- Use of lay witnesses on regular basis.
- Continued use of technology for communication
  - Newsletter emailed to parishioners about current activities and opportunities.
- Culture of Grace, gratitude and prayer and related expectations are emphasized and taught within all groups.
  - RCIA
  - Returning Catholics
  - Children
  - Youth
  - Bible studies
  - Small Christian communities
  - Liturgical ministries
  - Social Justice Ministries

4. Measurement

Annual survey looking for:
- Increased statistics.
- Increased finances.
- Number of ministries, and new ones created.
- Number of volunteer hours that emphasize stewardship within the church and in the community.
- Amount of Communication about stewardship.
- Sacrificial giving to others (outside the parish).
- Parish also gives sacrificially.

5. Costs Involved

- Costs for new programs are determined as they are initiated.
Model #3
Living Your Strengths Approach to Beginning Stewardship

General Description:
This model begins stewardship efforts focusing on Step 5, Recruiting, Training, and Recognizing Gifts of Time and Talent. The tool used is Gallup’s faith-based, Catholic edition “Living Your Strengths” assessment (Winseman). The assessment is taken by pastoral leadership, staff and ministry chairs. Gallup trained coaches and diocesan facilitators help individuals understand their talents in ways to better serve the parish and community. This can be started initially as a program and then begin to take steps to formalize a stewardship committee to explore all of the 7 steps of stewardship success.

Parishes using all or parts of this model (For contact information on this and other models, please see enclosed contact sheet)
- Most Holy Rosary-Antioch
- Queen of All Saints-Concord
- St. Raymond -Dublin
- St. Augustine-Oakland

Which gold standard criteria does this program meet?
- Grassroots
- Evidence Based
- Systematized
- Replicable

1. Process
- Living your Strengths assessment for Pastors, pastoral leadership, staff, and ministry leadership.
- Have on site Gallup certified “Living Your Strengths” (Gallup) coaches available for parishioners.
- Coaches provide coaching to individuals and groups to promote recognition of strengths that may be used in service to God.
  - Engaged couples groups (St. Augustine)
  - Various ministries
  - Youth
  - Bible Studies
- Stewardship committee started.
- Using PARR-Pastoral Council, Stewardship Committee, Faith Formation and Finance Council all rotate through.

2. Obstacles/Road blocks/Challenges
- Resource costs can be expensive.
Model #3
Living Your Strengths Approach to Beginning Stewardship

3. Plan for Continuity and Future Strategies

- Continue to utilize all 7 steps to stewardship success.
- Bilingual Living your Strengths summit (Queen of All Saints)
- Formalize stewardship study group or committee
  - Create survey to help parishioners use their talents
  - Help pastoral council and stewardship committee work together
  - Have annual Ministry fair
  - Create ministry booklet to go with welcoming packet
- Start pastoral council if not active
- Provide ongoing strengths encouragement to leadership and coaches.
- Complete strengths work in parish by taking it to parishioners at large.
- Consider ME 25 (Wineman)
- Send people to be trained as Diocesan Facilitators to help roll out stewardship. (Include bilingual parishioners)

4. Measurement

Annual survey looking for:
- Increased statistics.
- Increased finances.
- Number of ministries, and new ones created.
- Number of volunteer hours that emphasize stewardship within the church and in the community.
- Amount of Communication about stewardship.
- Sacrificial giving to others (outside the parish).
- Parish also gives sacrificially.
5. Costs Involved:

- ME 25-$3500.00 for 1st 500 surveys and 100.00 per additional 100 surveys (Winseman)
- ICSC membership (ICSC)
  - Up to 250 families ........................................... $180.00
  - 251 to 500 families ........................................... $240.00
  - 501 to 999 families .......................................... $300.00
  - 1,000 to 1,999 families ..................................... $360.00
  - 2,000 to 2,500 families ..................................... $420.00
  - 2,501 to 3,000 families ..................................... $480.00
  - Over 3,000 families .......................................... $540.00

- Coaches certification-$1500.00 per coach
- Living Your Strengths Books are available through the diocesan stewardship office.
- Strength-Based leadership training.
- Retreats/workshops on stewardship
  - venue
  - catering
  - materials
  - speakers
- Stipends for Diocesan Trained facilitators and other speakers for workshops.
Model #4
Growing an Engaged Church and Living Your Strengths Approach to Beginning Stewardship

General description:

This model begins stewardship efforts focusing on Step 5, Recruiting, Training, and Recognizing Gifts of Time and Talent. The tool used is Gallup’s faith-based, Catholic edition “Living Your Strengths” assessment (Winseman). The assessment is taken by pastoral leadership, staff and ministry chairs. Gallup trained coaches and diocesan facilitators help individuals understand their talents in ways to better serve the parish and community.

This model also included Gallup’s Member Engagement Survey or ME25 (Winseman). The survey is taken by parishioners 18 years old and older. The survey results help to measure the parish’s level of spiritual commitment based on four areas. The survey helps to measure the parish’s efforts in Step 3, Hospitality, Evangelization and Outreach, Step 4, Communication and Education.

Using these two tools are not considered stewardship by themselves. These are effective tools that can be used to support the parish’s overall strategy to bring the spirituality of stewardship as a way of life. An effective stewardship plan must include all 7 steps to stewardship.

Parishes using all or parts of this model (For contact information on this and other models, please see enclosed contact sheet).

- St. Anne Parish-Byron is starting their second ME-25
- St. Raymond – Dublin is starting the ME-25 process
- St. Augustine – Oakland is starting the ME-25 process
- St. Bonaventure – Concord is starting the ME-25 process

Which gold standard criteria does this program meet?

- Grassroots
- Evidence Based
- Systematized
- Replicable
Model #4  
Growing an Engaged Church and  
Living Your Strengths Approach to Beginning  
Stewardship

1. Process

- Rolled out program to all Ministry Chairs
  - introduced terminology, process and methodology
- ME 25 Survey (Winseman)
- Stewardship Committee started. Goals they worked on initially
  - Communication of infrastructure.
  - Ways to engage parishioners.
  - Getting coaches trained.
  - Reviewed welcome committee and broadened scope of welcoming committee.
  - Encouraged transparency in the life of the parish.
  - Increased ministries.
  - Encouraged full financial report on treasure.
  - Stewardship Commitment Sunday

2. Obstacles/Road Blocks/Challenges

- Identifying groups or stakeholders with no buy-in.
- Financial challenges

3. Plans for Continuity and Future Strategies:

- Continue to utilize all 7 steps to stewardship success.
- Continue to work plan.
- Big focus was originally on Engagement “Belonging leads to belief” (Winseman)
- Now the concentration will be on the “belief” part. Need to offer opportunities to deepen their faith of the parishioners
- Continue measuring effectiveness every 18 months.
- Using Strengths for discernment of leadership roles.
Model #4
Growing an Engaged Church and Living Your Strengths Approach to Beginning Stewardship

4. Measurement

Annual survey looking for:
- Increased statistics.
- Increased finances.
- Number of ministries, and new ones created.
- Number of volunteer hours that emphasize stewardship within the church and in the community.
- Amount of Communication about stewardship.
- Financial support to others (outside the parish).
- Number of new households.
- Participation at social events.
- Sacrificial giving to others (outside the parish).
- Does Parish give sacrificially?

5. Costs Involved

- ME 25 (Winseman) - $3,500 for 1st 500 surveys and $100 per additional 100 surveys.
- Coach’s certification (Gallup)-$1,500 per coach (This is a 2 day course facilitated by Gallup to provide coaches certification in addition to 10-14 hours of online training. The participant also receives 10 codes).
- Living Your Strengths (Winseman) – books.
- “Strength-Based Leadership” Training (Rath)
- ICSC membership (ISCS)
  Up to 250 families ................................................ $180.00
  251 to 500 families ........................................... $240.00
  501 to 999 families ........................................... $300.00
  1,000 to 1,999 families ...................................... $360.00
  2,000 to 2,500 families ..................................... $420.00
  2,501 to 3,000 families ..................................... $480.00
  Over 3,000 families .......................................... $540.00
- Retreats/workshops on stewardship
  o venue
  o catering
  o materials
  o speakers
Model #5
Outsourcing

General Description:

This model utilizes the services of a stewardship consulting firm hired by the parish. The consultant takes responsibility for all stewardship education and communication. Outcomes vary based on the consultant and the objectives identified by the parish.

Parishes using all or parts of this model (For contact information on this and other models, please see enclosed contact sheet).

- Immaculate Heart of Mary-Brentwood

Which gold standard criteria does this program meet?

- Evidence Based
- Replicable

1. Process

- This process may look different depending on the consulting firm selected.

2. Obstacles/Road Blocks/Challenges

- Private Consulting firms are expensive.
- Need to have a clear understanding of the expectations of services to be delivered and the outcomes described in detail.
- Need to realize how the parish’s existing stewardship committee is to be utilized.
- Does the consulting firm take the responsibility to train the parish how to take on stewardship on their own or is this contract forever?

3. Plans for Continuity and Future Strategies

- At some point in the future there will need to be a hand-off where the parish takes responsibility for on-going stewardship efforts. What will this look like?
Model #5
Outsourcing

4. Measurement

Annual survey looking for:

- Increased statistics.
- Increased finances.
- Number of ministries, and new ones created.
- Number of volunteer hours that emphasize stewardship within the church and in the community.
- Amount of Communication about stewardship.
- Sacrificial giving to others (outside the parish).
- Does Parish give sacrificially?

5. Costs Involved

- Will vary depending on the consulting firm selected and the services delivered.
References:


<http://www.csd-i.org/evidence-based-best-practices/>

*International Catholic Stewardship Council* (ICSC). 2010. 3 June 2010  


