

ACCOUNTABILITY

Success in the stewardship and development efforts of a parish or diocese requires a visible commitment to accountability. This commitment includes accountability for the full range of parish or diocesan activities—from the way decisions are made and carried out by diocesan or parish personnel to the way money is collected, managed, and used. Indeed, accountability is fundamental to good stewardship.

Parishes and dioceses are urged to prepare annual reports of their stewardship. These reports should be prepared in a manner that promotes understanding of the relationship between the ministries of the Church and the financial affairs of the parish or diocese. Church leaders should also use the annual report to render an account of their stewardship of human resources (personnel policies, just compensation, etc.), and their stewardship of church property and facilities.

A visible commitment to accountability will be reflected in the leadership styles and attitudes of the bishop, pastor, and all who have responsibilities for the human, physical, and financial resources of the diocese or parish. Like personal witness, a commitment to accountability is essential to building a solid foundation for a diocesan or parish stewardship program.

The seven steps suggested here are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all of the programs or activities that are required for success in promoting gifts of time, talent, and treasure. However, the experience of parishes and dioceses in many different regions of the country shows that if these seven principles are honored, the Catholic people will respond generously to the invitation to participate in the mission and ministries of their Church.