

Discussion Questions

If you are reading Cardinal Collins' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship in a parish group setting, below are some suggested questions and bullet points you can use to help facilitate a deeper conversation.

1. How does your parish reach out in justice and love?

- Physical need for shelter and food
- Foodbank, Out of the Cold and/or St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Refugee sponsorship
- Advocacy work that is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching
- Emotional need to be seen and heard
- The gift of presence – do we see Christ present in the other?
- The gift of listening – everyone has a story to share. Are we open to receiving their story?
- The gift of encouragement – do we find ways to encourage others to engage with sharing their own special talent? Have we been encouraged to share our own talents with the parish community?
- Can you see a wider path for inviting parishioners on the journey of reaching out to the needy?

2. How does your parish community experience the Gospel?

- Sacraments
- Sacramental Preparation
- Weddings
- Funerals
- RCIA
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Bible study
- Bible camp for children
- Lectio Divina

- Liturgy of the Word with Children
- Alpha and/or other small groups
- Men's and Women's groups
- Parish Missions, Ministry Retreats and/or Stewardship Retreats
- Dramatizations of Gospel stories with children and/or adults, Passion Plays – e.g. Oberammergau, Germany
- Pilgrimages to Holy Land, Rome, Santiago de Compostela, St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, St. Paul's Basilica, Martyrs Shrine, World Youth Day, Eucharistic Congress, etc.

3. How does your parish nurture beauty?

- Liturgical music and art
- Tour of your church's sacred spaces
- Decorations in the sanctuary – flowers, liturgical themes
- Well-kept grounds – places for contemplation
- Inviting gardeners to plant flowers

4. How does your parish support fun and joy as an extension of Stewardship?

- Tree lighting ceremony at Christmas, followed by hot chocolate
- Parish skating parties
- Concerts
- Volunteer appreciation gatherings
- Pasta nights, Foods of the World potlucks
- Parish picnics
- Sports activities
- Harvest bazaars
- Sunday coffee after Mass
- Pancake Breakfast

5. The Cardinal states, “We are stewards of our life and not masters.” How does your parish experience or are informed to understand this in terms of:

- Abortion
- Chronic illness and suffering
- Euthanasia
- Sacredness of marriage
- The gift of children
- The gift of grandparents and the elderly
- The gift of the mature adult who balances both the lives of the very young and the elderly
- The gift of creation

6. Who can your parishioners turn to for education and support when facing a crisis?

- A crisis of faith – opportunities for spiritual direction
- A crisis of health
- A crisis of life meaning – depression
- A crisis of finances – inability to provide for the basics of life

7. How do you welcome people into full, active engagement in your parish life?

- Those who are new to the faith – once the RCIA is completed
- Those preparing for the sacraments and their parents
- Parents with small children
- Persons with special needs
- New parishioners
- Those who are new to the neighborhood and parish community

8. How does your parish encourage and nurture vocations?

- To the priesthood
- To the Permanent Diaconate

- To religious and consecrated life
- To married life
- To lay ministry

9. How does your parish encourage faith practices?

- Prayer and Adoration
- Rosary
- Stations of the Cross
- Processions
- Family Faith Practices
- Celebrating milestones (e.g. graduations, anniversaries)
- Equipping parents and grandparents as faith formers
- Serving those in need

10. How does your parish form disciples for ministry and mission?

- Altar servers
- Lectors
- Liturgy of the Word with Children
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
- Liturgical Musicians
- Ministers of Hospitality
- Catechists
- RCIA
- Youth and Young Adults
- Families
- Maturing Adults
- Sacramental Preparation
- Visitors to the Sick

- Ministers of Bereavement

11. How do you encourage other people to share their time and talents?

- Stewardship Committee
- Ministry Fairs
- Witness talks
- Preaching
- Catechesis
- Annual renewals of time and talent
- Personalized invitations to join a ministry
- Recognizing and encouraging the potential of others (e.g. Spiritual Gifts Survey, Clifton Strengths Assessment)
- Gestures of appreciation to those who are engaged in ministry

12. How does your parish foster “an attitude of gratitude”?

- Towards God
- Towards parishioners
- Beyond the parish family