



# CALLED BY CHRIST GIFTED BY THE SPIRIT

## *To Share Christ in and through the Church*

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### FACILITATOR NOTES

#### BEFORE THE MEETING

**Plan Ahead.** Determine who will coordinate these meetings, and make sure that person is clear on what will need to be done before, during, and after each session. Identify and invite those parish members or Church leaders who will actively and willingly participate in this on-going process. Identify and arrange for a meeting space to be reserved and set up, and for recording materials, such as flip chart paper, markers, and tape to be made available. If this meeting will be held in conjunction with another, make sure the room arrangement is compatible with the discussion format of these sessions.

A copy of the Bishops' Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, should be included in the packet of information distributed to those who agree to participate. Ask each person to come to the meeting prepared with comments on the questions for Reflection and Discussion at the end of each section of the letter. Review these questions yourself, and bring comments of your own. Highlight key points that you think are most relevant, or that might facilitate the discussion.

**Set the Tone.** Make sure you have created an agenda, even if it is informal. You can use stated time frames to keep the discussion on track. You will need to stay focused to get through all of the material and have meaningful discussions. A sample agenda is attached, but feel free to adapt it before or during the meeting to meet your needs.

#### DURING THE MEETING

**Getting Started.** Identify a prayer leader to open the meeting, and give them the sample prayer notes enclosed in your packet. Have each person introduce themselves and say a few words about why they are participating in this session. Even if they already know each other, people are more comfortable once they have dispensed with a few formalities. Review the purpose of the meeting, the proposed time frame, and where you would like to end the meeting. Break up into smaller groups of 4 to 6 people if you have a large group. This will allow people to discuss the questions for Reflection and Discussion in depth without getting bogged down with the group process.

**Group Dynamics.** Have each group identify a recorder or leader who will take notes and report back to the larger group at the end of the session. If you have only one group, be prepared to fill this role yourself by taking notes on the flip chart paper. This will keep participants focused and on track. Spend time with each group, and watch for non-verbal cues of discomfort or fatigue; discussion will be more meaningful if participants are relaxed and stay enthusiastic about the process. Make sure everyone is involved and has an opportunity to contribute. You could miss out on valuable input if one or two people are allowed to dominate the conversation. Be available for questions or clarification, but encourage participants to come up with their own responses. Encourage the group to decide when to take a break, if any. You only have an hour and a half at most to review, discuss, and agree on the results of this session, so make sure you keep the conversation flowing.

**Bring Closure.** When the large group reconvenes, have the designated leader from each small group report on their discussion. Summarize and restate key points or anything which you think may be unclear. Solicit feedback from all groups, and ask for final thoughts before ending the session. Distribute any additional materials the group may need, and ask for suggestions from participants for the next session. Confirm the next meeting date and time, and try to determine who will be attending.

#### **AFTER THE MEETING**

**Follow up.** After your session has ended, jot down a few notes to yourself about what seemed to work and what didn't, and any suggestions you may have for future sessions. If someone else is facilitating the next meeting, meet with them to share any information you think may be helpful.

**Final Notes.** Remember, this is an on-going process which will serve to shape not only the practice of stewardship of those individuals involved in these meetings, but that of each parish and the Archdiocese as a whole. While this is a serious matter, it should also be an enjoyable one. We recognize that it is increasingly difficult to set aside additional time for more meetings, and to this end, we suggest using the "Infusion Method" (See below).

#### **SAMPLE MEETING FORMAT**

Please note that this is a SAMPLE meeting format. Your meetings should reflect your parish's style and be appropriate to those participating.

#### **Four 1.5 hour Sessions**

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| 10 Minutes | Welcome and Introductions   |
| 15 Minutes | Call to Prayer  |
| 10 Minutes | Overview of pages to be discussed   |
| 40 Minutes | Small group reflection (4-6 people)<br>- General reaction to materials, then move on to discussion questions. |
| 15 Minutes | - Reactions to discussion<br>- Reference to next meeting's materials<br>- Closing remarks                     |

## INFUSION OF STEWARDSHIP INTO PARISH LIFE

**As a Concept.** Stewardship describes a concept or set of values which must be incorporated or “infused” into every aspect of our parish lives. A quote from the Pastoral Letter sums it up best:

*“Who is a Christian steward? One who receives God’s gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord”* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, page 9).

Stewardship, then, is not just about money, but about becoming a better Christian, about becoming more generous in every aspect of our lives.

**As a Process.** To infuse something is to introduce a principle or quality into something which already exists, thereby giving it new life or significance. It is our hope that you will be able to incorporate the concepts of discipleship and Christian stewardship into appropriate segments of parish life through these discussions. Some parishes may choose to schedule this as a Lenten Series, while others may wish to provide a separate series of meetings. Or, perhaps this information can be circulated through the parish bulletin to the entire parish, or posted on the parish Web site, in conjunction with, or instead of, group discussion sessions. Care must be taken to incorporate all members of the parish, including shut-ins or others with less access to standard meetings. One suggestion is to identify times when parish members currently meet, and ask that they set aside time at the end of each meeting for this series. By incorporating these discussions into existing events, not only will more people be involved, but Christian stewardship will be more likely to become an important part of parishioners’ everyday lives. The following is a short list of some typical parish gatherings:

Religious Education Meetings	Prayer Groups
Parish Pastoral Council Meetings	Parish School Curriculum Meetings
Parent Meetings	Sacramental Preparation
Parish Staff Meetings	RCIA Sessions
Parish Festival Meetings	Christian Service Commission
Men’s Club Meetings	Worship Commission
Woman’s Club Meetings	Stewardship Commission
Parish Mission	Education / Faith Formation Commission

These meetings would touch the parish clergy, religious, and lay leaders, and help them examine the concept of Christian stewardship, and its meaning and place in parish life.

**As a Reality.** Stewardship is a challenge to each of us. As quoted in the Pastoral Letter, *“And parishioners must accept responsibility for their parishes and contribute generously — both money and personal service — to their programs and projects”* (page 32). If the Church is to survive in these swiftly changing times, each of its members must rise to this challenge and learn to live and love generously.

*“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.”*  
(1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**Adam Cardinal Maida**

**The late Reverend John West**

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