

# *Children's Guide to Stewardship*

What are some of the gifts God has given us? God has given us our lives, our senses, our talents, and our brains. God has given us our parents, families, friends, and teachers. God has given us food to eat, air to breathe, water to drink, and nature to enjoy. Above all, God has given us his Son, Jesus Christ, to love us and give his life for us. We have a lot to thank God for. We can show our thanks by caring for all the gifts God has given us and by using them in ways that make God happy. That's what Stewardship is about.

Stewardship says "Thank you, God," not "What about me?" When you give your toys to a poor child, you are saying, "Thank you, God, for giving me a family who gives me toys to play with. I want to share my toys with others." When you rake the yard for your neighbor, you are saying, "Thank you, God, for giving me a strong body and friendly neighbor." When you sing in the choir, you are saying, "Thank you, God, for the gift of my voice. I want to use it to praise You and to share Your message with others."

Christian Stewardship is usually divided into three areas: time, talent, and treasure. You may think you don't have any of these things to share, but you do! Here are a few examples of how you can share your time, talent, and treasure.

## **Children's Time**

One of the best ways you can use your time is to pray. Praying is spending time with God – a very good use of your time. You can pray alone, with your family, or at church. You can pray to thank God, to ask God's help with problems in your own life, or to ask for help for others. Other ways to give your time are:

- Taking part at Mass, in religious education and in parish events
- Taking care of your younger brother or sister
- Talking with a grandparent or older person
- Visiting a sick friend
- Helping a classmate with homework
- Doing what your parents ask you to do around the house

Time is a gift from God. The choices we make about how we spend our time can be an act of Stewardship. Ask yourself: am I filling my hours with activities that please God and help others?

## **Children's Talent**

Everyone has at least talent and gifts. Whatever you do well, whatever makes you happy when you do it, that's your gift. The best way you can thank God for your gifts is to use them and share them with others. That way, you serve God with the gifts God has given you.

*What are your talents?*

Are you a good reader? You can share that talent by reading to a younger sibling or to an elderly person in a nursing home. Are you a good cook? How about baking some cookies for holiday dinners for the needy? Do you like to draw? Make a poster for the school or parish, or make cards to send to soldiers overseas. Do you make friends easily? You can share your talent by welcoming a new kid at your school.

## **Children's Treasure**

You may not think you have much treasure, but whatever you have in money and material possession is your "treasure." Treasure is the resources we have. Remember the widow in the Gospel story who had only two small coins to put them in the collection box? Jesus said that her small offering was worth more than the larger ones because it was all she had, and she gave it from her heart. That was her treasure.

Now, God isn't asking you to give all of your money and things away. However, God does invite you to be generous with what you have and also to make wise use of what you keep. How can you do this? One way is by tithing, which means giving ten percent (10%) of what you have to the church or charity. Ten percent is really not a lot. If you get one dollar for allowance, 10% is only one dime; if you get five dollars, 10% is fifty cents – about the cost of a candy bar. You might want to set up a three-jar system for dividing up the money you get from allowance, chores, gifts, and so on. One jar can be for *sharing* (your tithe), one jar can be for *saving* up for something special, and one jar can be for *spending*.

Another treasure you and your family have is recyclable goods. When you recycle your newspapers, cans, plastics, and bottles, you help protect the earth (one of God's greatest gifts to us), and you help preserve natural resources.

You see, Stewardship doesn't have to be hard. You've probably realized by now that you are already practicing Stewardship. Now that you know what Stewardship is, you can begin to do even more. Thank God for His gifts and find ways to use them in God's service to help others. A good way to begin is by praying this Stewardship prayer.

### **Children's Stewardship Prayer**

Dear God,

I thank you for everything you have given me. My gifts of time and talents are precious; help me use them to do your will. Please help me realize that I need to share all of my gifts with the Church and others. Help me be generous, forgiving, and holy. I offer you this day all I think, and do, and say. With the help of Jesus, your Son, I will try to love everyone. Amen.