

# St. Polycarp Parish School of Religion

## Children's Offertory Envelope Program Guide for Parents

### Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

#### What is Stewardship?

Most likely, you are already doing stewardship: Giving to Good Will, giving to St. Vincent DePaul, helping at a soup kitchen, purchasing back-to-school supplies for needy schoolchildren or participating in the parish Christmas Giving Tree ministry. Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of living each day in gratitude for all the blessings that God has given to us. The roots of stewardship can be found in the Bible, which tells us repeatedly that God is the Creator and Giver of all gifts. It is our responsibility to show our gratitude to God for these gifts, by giving back to Him our time, talent and treasure.

#### What exactly does a Catholic Steward Do?

- Receives God's gifts gratefully
- Cherishes and tends his or her gifts in a responsible, accountable manner
- Shares them in justice and love with others
- Returns them with love to the Lord

#### Why should I encourage my child to participate in the Children's Offertory Program?

As stated above, stewardship is a way of life and a fulfilling and joyful lifestyle for adults. It is also a good lifestyle to teach children. Consider the benefits:

- 1) Stewardship can help build self-esteem.** The advertisements that children hear in the world often carry the underlying, subtle message that they are not good enough the way they are and therefore need to acquire a product to make them acceptable. In Church, kids need to have a different message. They need to hear that God has already blessed them with all the gifts and talents they need. In fact, God has given them an abundance of good things, and there is always something to share.
- 2) Stewardship can make children happier.** Unfortunately, in today's world, children are bombarded with materialistic messages that often lead to a sense of entitlement and to frustration and dissatisfaction with life. In contrast, stewardship encourages an *attitude of gratitude*. Experts tell us that children usually form their attitudes about sharing sometime between the ages of 6 and 10! They will either develop an entitlement attitude – “The world owes me.”, “I don't have enough.” or a stewardship attitude – “I have been blessed.” “I am happy to share.” It is impossible to be grateful and unhappy at the same time. As we count our blessings, we naturally find a sense of peace and contentment.
- 3) Stewardship helps children set priorities.** As children learn that they are called to give back something to God, they also learn that they must let go of some of their own wants. Stewardship teaches children the difference between needs and wants. Children learn to concentrate on their blessings rather than on what they want.

**4) Stewardship prepares children for their adult role in the Church.** Children need to learn that stewardship is not just a service project that they must do before they can receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Stewardship is a way of life. A good Christian lives this way every day of every year.

**As a parent, what can I do to help my children understand stewardship?**

Pray, participate in the sacraments and be involved in the parish.

**Can my child drop off their envelope at PSR each week?**

**No.** And here are some reasons and tips about talking about the Offertory Collection with your children:

- Could you imagine being invited to a party and not bringing a gift?
- We bring a gift as a sign that we love or care about the person being honored.
- The Mass is the greatest celebration of all and Jesus has invited us!
- The Offertory is a time when everyone should offer a gift to God.
- The Order of the Mass states, *“It is desirable that the faithful express their participation by making an offering, bringing forward bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist and perhaps other gifts to relieve the needs of the Church, parish and of the poor.”*
- Whether students are actively participating in a collection or not, they should always be encouraged to take this time in the Mass to think of something that they could offer to God – a good deed they will do, their schoolwork, etc. This sets the stage for a lifelong habit of giving through the Offertory Collection.

**How will my child receive their envelopes?**

Envelopes will be picked up on Opening Days, **Sunday, 9/10/17 and Tuesday, 9/12/17.**

The box contains envelopes for 52 weeks of the year and 7 Holy Days of Obligation.

**Where will the money go?**

Just like their parents’ Offertory gift, the money will go toward the parish operating budget.

**How can I show my children the importance of giving to the parish if I give through the Faith Direct e-giving program and am not putting in an envelope in the collection basket each week?**

It is important to recognize that over the centuries the Offertory envelope became a “tool for church giving.” Now modern technology is providing the parish with a new tool. Explain that technology gives parents the opportunity to send their contribution directly to the parish. E-giving provides parents with an opportunity to talk with their children about the charitable gifts the family makes to the parish.

*“Therefore, through Jesus, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which acknowledge His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”*

~Hebrews 13:15, 16