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# Understanding Stewardship at St. Margaret Mary School

Stewardship is a way of life at St. Margaret Mary. It is "what we do after we say we believe" in all aspects of our lives - at home, at work, and at church. Through stewardship, we express our gratitude to God for the many blessings we have been given, by giving back to our families, our community, and our parish. While stewardship is our responsibility as Christians, there are wonderful benefits that are bestowed on us as a result of our faithfulness! Being a part of a stewardship community is a wonderful blessing!

The "Stewardship School Model" is unique and sometimes confusing. Below are answers to some of the questions you may have about how a stewardship school operates.

## FAQ about a Stewardship School

### **1) What is a stewardship school?**

A stewardship school is supported by the parish community. The entire community works together to financially support the parish school, as well as the costs of the church and school/parish staff. As a benefit of being a member of the parish community, parishioners tithe to the church rather than being charged "tuition" to attend school.

### **2) What is expected of members of the parish?**

Members are expected to be actively engaged in the parish by regularly attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation; by sharing their talents in volunteer work in parish and school ministries; and by turning in a stewardship intention card annually reflecting their tithe to the church and their chosen volunteer choices. It is also expected that each family would fulfill the pledges they make on their stewardship card.

### **3) What are the benefits of belonging to a stewardship school?**

- Being a part of a community that encourages active participation in parish life fosters a close-knit family environment. By giving of your time, talent, and treasure, you will become an involved member of the parish, and, in doing so, gain lifelong friends and a supportive community.
- Donations made to the church are tax deductible. If you are a member, you will receive the tax benefits of making your donations to the church rather than paying tuition to the school.
- A stewardship community supports and cares for its parish family. If you encounter financial hardship, your parish family will support you until you are back on your feet and your children will continue their education at the parish school. Similarly, by doing your share, you will help support others in the parish family during their time of need.

### **4) What are the challenges of a belonging to a stewardship school?**

Tithing pledges are not as concrete as tuition payments. If everyone doesn't righteously tithe and honor their stewardship commitments, the school and parish are unable to meet the sizeable operational costs associated with the parish and school.

### **5) How much am I expected to pay?**

The church does not tell anyone how much they *must* give. However, St. Margaret Mary asks every family to use the biblical tithing guideline of 10% of your gross income as a donation. As you prayerfully consider your tithing commitment, please remember that it costs the parish approximately \$5,200 to educate one child. It takes all of us doing our share to be able to continue as a stewardship parish.

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**6) Why are parishioners asked to give 10% of their gross income?**

This guideline is taken from the bible. The Old Testament tithing is 10%.

**7) What happens if 10% of our gross income is less than the cost of educating our child(ren)?**

If you are an member of the parish, your child(ren) are eligible to enjoy the benefits of the parish school. Once again, all members should regularly participate in the liturgical life of the parish, that is, attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day; commit to stewardship of time, talent, and treasure as witnessed by completing the annual Stewardship Commitment Card; and honor their commitments.

**8) Does the parish review or monitor my time & talent efforts? How is this information used?**

Yes, the parish keeps record of every family's participation in parish life. Annually, we have our Stewardship drive. At that time you will receive a Stewardship Intention Card and be asked to determine what activities you would like to continue or add in the coming year. The parish initiates this process to help members get involved and stay involved with activities that they enjoy. This process also helps organize groups within the parish; allowing group chairpersons to contact members for the various parish groups as well as allow the parish to know which parishioners are leading activities in the church. The tithing information is used for budgetary purposes and for future planning. Members are also given priority in the school registration process using the date of membership and their stewardship activity i.e., their attendance at Mass, and their time, talent, and treasure commitment. Therefore, these records may be used to evaluate school admission priority.

**9) Why is it important to fill out a commitment card each year?**

The parish needs you to fill out a stewardship card each year to learn how a member wishes to be involved in the life of the parish. The Parish Staff plans and budgets based on the tithing information on these cards.

**10) What if I am unable to meet my pledge due to unforeseen circumstances (job loss, other financial hardship, etc)?**

It is important to communicate with the parish office if you will not be able to meet your pledge commitments. The parish uses your commitment card to set the budget and plan expenditures for the year. Therefore, we need to know if you are unable to honor these commitments so we can also plan accordingly and make budget cuts as necessary. Also, a wonderful benefit of being part of a stewardship family is that during those times of hardship that's when your faith community is there to support you. However, we can't help you if we don't know what you are experiencing. So please contact Susan White, SMM Business Manager @ 426-1588 if you are unable to honor your commitments.

**11) I still have some questions about stewardship. Who should I contact to discuss my questions?**

Mrs. Susan White - (502) 426-1588 or [swhite@stmm.org](mailto:swhite@stmm.org)