“If we want to nurture children in an understanding of stewardship, we need to find ways to help them experience stewardship and the joy of giving of oneself.”

**Stewardship Season**
For most congregations, October and November are the months in which there is an emphasis on stewardship and the annual pledge drive or covenant process. Tying generosity, charity, Thanksgiving and abundance are reinforced in many of the themes found in the gospel readings in November (The Parable to of the Talents and The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats). We are encouraged to think about how to use our gifts and how to be more generous.

During those stewardship talks and letters, remind parents to talk to their children (in age-appropriate terms) about the process by which they reach those pledge commitment amounts or covenant promises. Parents should show their children the materials they will fill out and explain how they are deciding how much to be faithful followers of Jesus when they decide how much to give to support their congregational ministries. By doing this, parents are explicitly passing on their values to their children.

**A Child’s Point of View**
One’s understanding of personal stewardship is a continuing journey that should begin in childhood. Most children already have a sense of wonder of how to respond with thanksgiving to God who created them and the world in which they live. Theirs is an “attitude of abundance”, according to John Westerhoff when discussing healthy stewardship with children in *Will Our Children Have Faith?* The question is not only, “How can we teach stewardship to children?” but “How can we encourage children to continually respond to God’s creation by caring and enjoying what God has given them, personally and in the world around them?”

The sense of belonging to a community is an important aspect of faith development for children (and all ages). This can be an asset in exploring how we use what God has given us to include creation, abilities & talents and resources (financial and relational). Children need approval of family, friends and teachers as they begin to develop their own “theology of stewardship.” They need hands-on exploration of concepts, being able to relate Bible stories to their lives and the issues of today. It is important that we encourage questioning...
and exploration, while sharing our own faith and understanding of stewardship in an honest, open way.

In teaching stewardship concepts with all God’s children, it is helpful to build upon different focal points:

- Stewardship of creation
- Stewardship of ourselves and our bodies
- Stewardship of talents and spiritual gifts
- Stewardship of time and priorities
- Stewardship of our relationship with others
- Stewardship of treasure and material possessions

**Stewardship Pledge Cards**
Just as adults are asked to make a commitment (promise) financially to the church each year, children should also be included. In its most simple form, stewardship is taking care of the world and the church on behalf of God. Questions such as the following help children discuss their roles as stewards:

- How do you think God wants us to take care of the church?
- How are we ministers to others for Jesus?
- What are some ways the church can help take care of the world?
- What are some things you can do to help the church in its ministry?
- What can you do to help take care of God’s world?

Children can be invited to return their Stewardship Cards on “Commitment Sunday” when adults also offer their pledge cards. They can be invited to come forward and place them on the altar, followed by a prayer of dedication and blessing. Just as “follow up” activities are important for adults in stewardship education, they are for children also. Thank you letters sent to children are important in recognizing and affirming each child’s individual commitment.

**Valuing all Gifts**
We must also use the gifts of ministry that they have offered. Adults are asked to help with various church activities and projects so they can utilize their gifts in service to the church and the world. Children can help with clean-up days, dinners, visits to homebound members, special mission projects and more.
If we want to nurture children in an understanding of stewardship, we need to find ways to help them experience stewardship and the joy of giving of oneself. We must take the gifts our children can give seriously and let them know how much such gifts are appreciated!

My Stewardship Card

Stewardship means helping to take care of the church and the world on behalf of God. Please check the ways you are able to help take care of the mission and ministry of our church on behalf of Jesus Christ for the coming year.

I promise to be a steward by:

____ Bringing an offering of money to church
____ Bringing items for the food pantry program
____ Helping to make food for the meals program
____ Helping with special mission projects (Heifer Project, Unicef, Save the Children, etc.)
____ Helping in the worship service
____ Other gifts I have to offer: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________

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