

*Stewardship:
Creating the Future*



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In memory of Sister Mary Augustinia Sliwinski, CSSF (1921–1997): I thank God for your quick smile, your twinkling eyes, your joyful ways, your unshakable faith in the young people you taught, and your challenge to us all to live a life of holiness. I thank God for the gift of your life.

To my siblings, Karen, Cindy, and Mark: In the life-long company of one another's souls, we have found very different ways to complete the universe. Thanks to you, to Mom, to Dad, and to God, who blesses us all as we continue to walk the path together.



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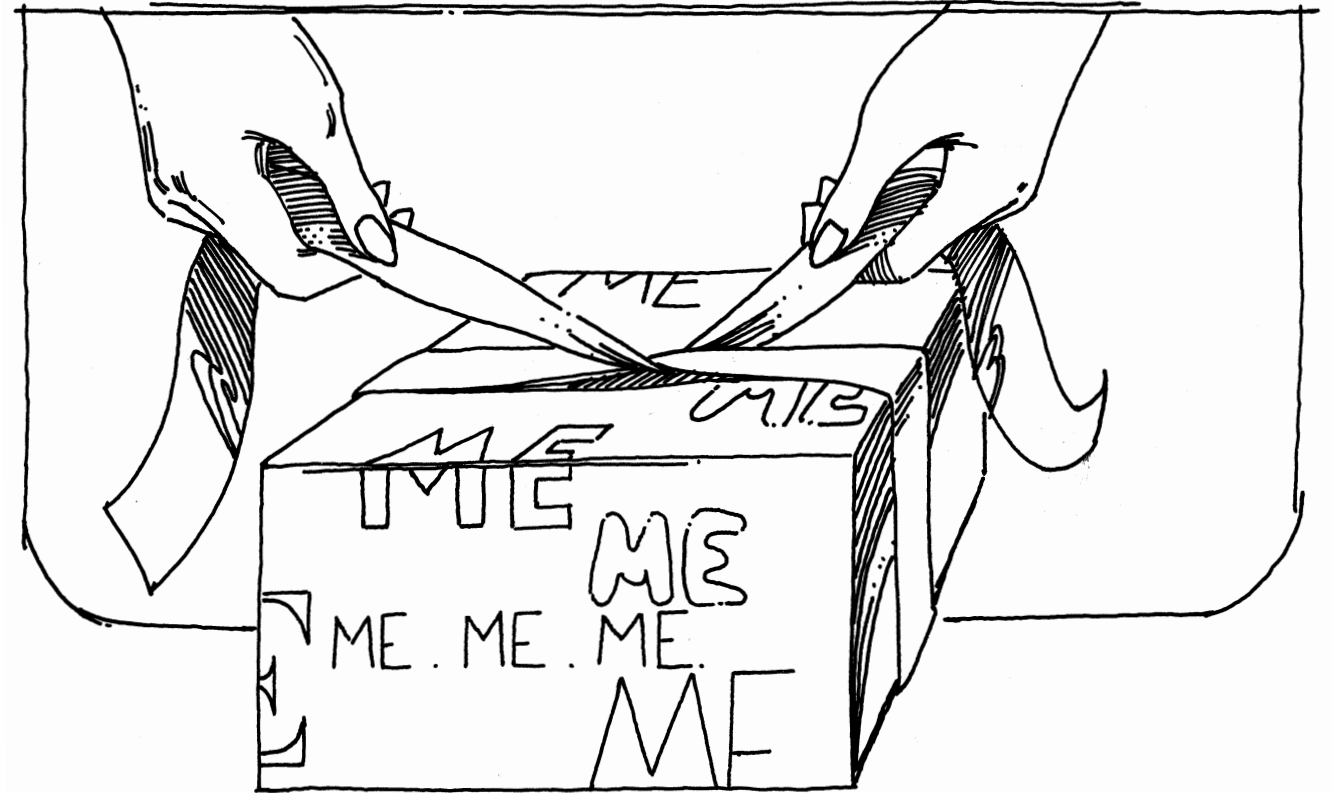
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Introduction



An Overview of This Course

What is our vocation? To complete God's universe!
In this profound answer to an equally profound question, the nineteenth-century theologian and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin summed up what must be the lifework of every human being. We are each given a limited amount of time, a variety of talents, and a certain allotment of treasure by the God who created us. We are stewards of these gifts, which do not belong to us. They are freely given to us by God, entrusted to us for our time on earth, so that we might do the work of completing the universe. "As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return

them with increase to the Lord" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops [NCCB], *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, p. 45).
In their pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, the bishops of the United States call authentic stewardship a challenge, a choice, and a vision. The challenge comes in making responsible use of our gifts in the context of a secular culture. The choice is between fully supporting the mission of the church as a disciple of Jesus Christ and ignoring the serious implications of one's baptism. The vision is toward the full realization of God's Reign (pp. 2–6). According to Teilhard, the person who accepts the challenge, chooses to follow Jesus, and has a clear vision of the Reign of God is one who plays a mighty role in creating the future and completing the universe.

Our task as religious educators and youth ministers is to be models and guides for young people in the discernment of their vocation. For us vocation is defined as the particular direction and purpose that every maturing believer is expected to find and follow in his or her personal quest to complete the universe. In a more conventional sense, it involves a person's lifework as well as relationships. The first step in our task is teaching young people to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to them by God, so that each of them might "discern, accept, and live out joyfully and generously the commitments, responsibilities, and roles to which God calls him or her" (NCCB, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, p. 11). Our task also involves teaching young people that "a vocation takes a lifetime. . . . It is a lifelong conversation with God" (Whitehead and Whitehead, *Seasons of Strength*, p. 21).

Stewardship: Creating the Future is a course in the fundamentals of Christian vocation. It is intended for adolescents who are on the brink of young adulthood, as questions of meaning and purpose are beginning to be fortified by increasing spiritual maturity. This course logically follows the Horizons curriculum's level 4 core course on young adulthood, *Moving On: Embracing the Future*. In the core course, the young people have the chance to deal with issues such as creating and living a mission, finding a community, facing change, and saying good-bye. In this minicourse they are given an opportunity to examine their use of the gifts God entrusts to them, the gifts that they will employ to live out their mission and to contribute to the life of the community.

Because of its broad nature, *Stewardship: Creating the Future* does not offer a detailed presentation on the four traditional lifestyles of married, single, ordained, and vowed religious. That discussion is beyond the scope of a 6-hour minicourse. Instead, the course encourages young people to consider all the options for living out the universal vocation to holiness and to be open to the grace of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit in their life, all of which may take them in surprising directions.

Stewardship: Creating the Future is intended to be taught as three 2-hour sessions presented one a week for three consecutive weeks. Extended breaks between sessions might interrupt the flow of the course. The activities are structured with a group of about eight to ten participants in mind. However, the course will work with as few as three young people. If you have considerably more than ten people

in your group, you may have to make minor adjustments in the session plans. If you need assistance with this task, consult your program coordinator.

The first session, "Gifted and Called," puts everything out on the table. It presents in a basic form all the concepts that will be unpacked in sessions 2 and 3. The session begins with an opportunity for the participants to brainstorm words that are associated with time, talent, and treasure. In the next exercise, they are asked to create personal gift bags in which they name specific gifts that God has given to them in each of these areas, the gifts for which they are called to be stewards. This exercise is followed by a comparison of cultural values and Gospel values. The young people are given common phrases that sum up the attitude of a secular culture toward the gifts of time, talent, and treasure. They are challenged with the task of finding Gospel messages to contradict the worldly ones. This exercise is followed by a period of reflection and the first encounter between sharing partners. The session closes with an explanation of the four traditional lifestyle choices, and the assignment of lifestyle roles for the LifeGame exercise in the final session.

Session 2, "Living Life to the Fullest," focuses on the theme presented in John 10:10. After an introduction and opening prayer, the young people are invited to look at their own stewardship of time, talent, and treasure in three separate exercises. First, in an exercise on time, they are asked to evaluate certain activities and assess whether they are a good use or a misuse of time. Then, in an exercise on talent, the use of talent is connected with a discussion of career choices. Again, cultural values are set against Gospel values to highlight the different emphases of the two. Finally, in an exercise on treasure, the young people are invited to expand their concept of treasure to include nonmonetary resources, such as relationships, power, technology, information, and so on. The session concludes with a blessing ritual on the fullness of life.

The first part of the final session, "Open to Grace," actively engages the participants in wrestling with a variety of life issues from the perspective of four different lifestyle choices. This exercise takes the form of a game where the young people create a certain character based on a vocational profile they were assigned in session 1. They take on that character's perspective throughout the LifeGame, offering responses to some of life's challenges, joys, and dilemmas. The second part of the session switches into a reflective mode. The participants are given

an opportunity to consider what they have learned about stewardship, vocation, and themselves and what they would bring to the four lifestyle options. Finally, they are invited to sign a covenant stating that they will try to be good stewards of their gifts and remain open to the grace of God in their search for a way to continue God's work and complete the universe.

In the First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that we are "servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries" (4:1). This is the fundamental message presented to the young people in *Stewardship: Creating the Future*. They are taught that being both servant and steward is the work of a lifetime. It is the call of discipleship. It is the universal vocation. It is the only way to complete the universe.

Background for This Course

The Adolescent and This Course

The primary challenge of young adulthood is to imagine and build a plausible future. This challenge includes a number of tasks, including the following:

- finding meaningful work and creating a life path
- redefining some lifelong relationships and creating new relationships that may become lifelong
- learning how and when to use power for the good of all
- defining what true happiness means and how to achieve it
- deciding how to keep on learning and growing after one's formal education has ended
- figuring out how faith fits into the picture
- finding a community to belong to

These tasks involve knowing how to use one's time, talent, and treasure in ways that are life-giving and creative. Such knowledge is the essence of stewardship, and it is something that young people instinctively hunger for. They are aware that the decisions they make in the next few years will have a significant effect on their future, and they want to be able to make solid and informed choices.

The young people's first extensive experience with independence is likely to coincide with their efforts to create a meaningful future. After high school they will likely leave some familiar relationships that have been a part of their life since the beginning. The foundations that have been built in

childhood and adolescence must continue to support them in the ongoing task of creating a future.

Stewardship: Creating the Future is specifically designed to build on the foundation young people have already received, by helping them anticipate imminent changes and guiding them as they navigate the transition into young adulthood. The course calls young people to recognize again and again that they have been entrusted with certain gifts, which are to be used to build the Reign of God. This is, after all, the ultimate and ongoing task of one who professes belief in Jesus Christ.

The Theology of This Course

We are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save our soul. All other things on the face of the earth are created for us to help us fulfill the end for which we are created. From this it follows that we are to use these things to the extent that they will help us to attain our end. (Adapted from Mottola, trans., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, p. 47)

These words begin the statement of principle and foundation upon which, according to Saint Ignatius, the life of a disciple is to be built. In other words, stewardship is the basis of discipleship. The Christian call to a life of holiness is, at its most basic level, a call to use responsibly the gifts entrusted to us. That is, we must use our gifts to help build the Reign of God.

Jesus is quite clear about the expectations of stewardship. In Matt. 25:14–30 he tells the parable of the man who went away and entrusted his money to his servants. Two of the servants used the money wisely and returned more than they were given. The third servant buried the money, in fear of losing it. Upon the master's return, the third servant was condemned to the "outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30). The money in the parable represents much more than silver and gold. It represents all that our Creator has given us—our spiritual gifts, intelligence, relationships, and material goods; the talents of our mind and body; and the world itself. The message of the parable is that in the end we will be judged by what we do with what we have been given.

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received . . . so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 4:10–11).

This is the task for which we are created, according to Saint Ignatius. It is also the task of the church: “All the activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, to . . . sanctification . . . in Christ and the glorification of God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 824).

Because God has entrusted us with certain gifts, we have a particular share in God’s creative, redemptive, and sanctifying work. Stewardship of these gifts can take countless forms, depending on our unique vocation and circumstances. However, the mandate is the same for all of us: “that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). This type of love is the dream of the Reign of God. It is the dream of the community. Our vocation—our share in God’s creative, redemptive, and sanctifying work—requires that we make it our personal dream as well.

This Course and Evangelization

In *The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization*, evangelization is described as “the initial effort by the faith community as a whole to proclaim through word and witness the Good News of the Gospel to those who have not yet heard or seen it, and then to invite those persons into a relationship with Jesus Christ and the community of believers” (National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, p. 3). Evangelization is also the ongoing witness of the community of believers and, as such, the basis and energizing core of all the ministries in the church.

The Horizons Program is grounded in a commitment to evangelize young people effectively. Each course reflects that commitment in both content and methodology. All the courses, even those on topics that do not appear overtly “religious,” explore the connection between the lived experience of the young person and Jesus’ proclamation of the Good News. All the courses employ strategies that actively engage the whole person, demonstrating that religious education can be not only informative but life-giving and even fun! In other words the Horizons Program tries to be “good news” not just proclaim the Good News.

Young adults hunger for a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ. They are eager to find their place in the world and to discover the active role they have to play in the building of God’s Reign. As stewards of the mysteries of God and stewards of the church, we have much to offer them. *Stewardship: Creating the Future* is designed to help young people search their mind and heart to discover the

gifts that lie within. We need to both cherish and foster these gifts.

Young people must hear that they share in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification. They are stewards of the mysteries of God. With this in mind, we must not only evangelize them, we must also challenge them to become evangelizers of others. “Every member of the Church is called to evangelize, and the practice of authentic Christian stewardship inevitably leads to evangelization” (NCCB, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, p. 35). This course teaches young people that creating the future means passing on the message of the Gospel.

Teaching This Course

A Video Resource for Teachers

The information presented in this section identifies the elements requiring special consideration when leading *Stewardship: Creating the Future*. The creators of Horizons developed an informative video to prepare teachers to lead any of the courses in the program. The video is accompanied by a guide that summarizes the content of the tape, offers additional tips for teaching adolescents, and invites the teacher to track her or his experience with the program.

Both the video for teachers and its companion guide are included in the resources developed for coordinators of the Horizons Program. Contact the program coordinator in your parish for further information.

Preparing the Learning Environment

The effectiveness of a course such as *Stewardship: Creating the Future* depends, in part, on the physical surroundings and community climate of the group. High school students are likely to respond more positively if the space is comfortable and different from a typical school setting and the atmosphere is conducive to sharing. Here are two suggestions for creating that type of environment:

Create a good physical atmosphere. You will need a physically comfortable space with sufficient room for the participants to move around. All three sessions require the participants to spend reflection time alone. It will be easier for them to resist the temptation to visit with other participants if they

have enough room to separate from one another. Comfortable furniture and living-room lighting will help create a homey feeling. A flip chart or an easel with a pad of newsprint will be helpful for many of the activities. The traditional classroom arrangement is the least desirable situation. If such a room is your only option, try using music, candles, icons, or other sensory devices to create a more inviting environment.

Clarify expectations. At the beginning of the course, establish among the participants an atmosphere of mutual respect. Older adolescents are likely to be familiar with the basic rules of group participation, but it may not hurt to stress once again the importance of listening to one another and of refraining from hurtful remarks or put-downs. When necessary remind the participants of these rules.

Preparing the Material

Before each session read through the session plan and try to picture the processes happening in your group. You may need to make some adjustments based on your knowledge of the participants and the physical setting. Some of the activities require preparation. This ranges from copying a simple list onto newsprint to creating a game area. Allow yourself adequate time to get ready.

All the sessions include brief periods of teacher input. Some of these are informational, but most are intended to bring closure to a part of the session so that the participants might understand the connections between life and faith, between themselves and God. The session plans offer guidelines for these brief talks. Spend time putting these presentations together so that they are clear and hold the attention of the participants. Where it is helpful and appropriate, do not be afraid to share parts of your own story with the young people.

Sharing Your Own Story

Every course in Horizons connects elements of the Christian faith with the life experiences of young people. As an adult you have much to share from your own life that will be of value to the young people. You have made some significant choices in your life, particularly the work you do and the lifestyle you lead. Your willingness to share your experiences will enrich this course. It will also send the message that telling one’s personal story in the group is okay.

When you share your experiences with the young people, you show that you trust them enough to speak from your heart. And without saying it you also invite them to do the same.

Some commonsense guidelines will help you share your story in a way that adds to the understanding of the participants but does not distract them from their own life story:

- Be brief and to the point. Remember, the young people are there to reflect on their own life story, not yours.
- Talk about your experiences as a teenager without preaching or moving into the fatal “When I was your age . . .” mode.
- Share only the things that adolescents are emotionally prepared to handle.
- Be realistic. Talk about your struggles, triumphs, and growth over the years. This will let the participants know that creating the future is indeed a process, and never complete. Do not mislead them into thinking that adults have all the answers. It is also unfair to suggest or imply that adolescents have no answers.
- Be honest and sincere. The young people will see through you if you are not, and your effectiveness as a teacher will be diminished.

Using the Sharing Partners Option

Many older adolescents enjoy the chance to discuss life issues in depth with their peers. You can provide them with an opportunity to do so by using the sharing partners option in *Stewardship: Creating the Future*. With this option partners are assigned in the first session. Each session then includes short periods of reflection that can be followed by a conversation with sharing partners. The relationship of the sharing partners culminates in the final session during a covenant ceremony. At that time each participant acts as a representative of the faith community and pledges the community’s ongoing support for her or his partner.

Preferably the pairs remain the same throughout the course; regular contact can enable the partners to build a deeper level of trust. However, keeping the same partners is possible only if everyone attends all three sessions. If the participants do not attend regularly, it can be valuable to put the young people with new partners for brief conversations in each session. The opportunity to verbalize plans, commitments, joys, and struggles makes them seem more real. It also generates personal support at a time in life when it is much needed.

Throughout the course, activities that offer the sharing partners option also offer other options. In some cases you may choose to direct the young people to work individually on the assigned tasks; in others, particularly if you have a small group, you may decide to have them all work together. After you read all the options, choose the best one for your group.

Using Journals

Keeping a journal, or simply writing an occasional journal exercise, is a good way for young people to internalize learning, record the events of their life, keep track of feelings, or explore a topic further. Like most of the courses in the Horizons Program, *Stewardship: Creating the Future* offers suggestions for including an optional journal component. In some cases journal activities are simple adaptations of reflection exercises in the session itself; in others they are intended for use by the participants between sessions.

Though we strongly encourage you to consider using at least some of the journal activities in *Stewardship: Creating the Future*, they are not an integral part of the course. In fact, some practical reasons can be given for not including the journal component. First, if every teacher of every course in the Horizons Program chose to include journal keeping, the young people would quickly tire of it. Second, some people simply do not like to keep a journal. It is better to encourage journal writing as a form of personal exploration for young people than to demand it of them.

Carefully assess whether the journal option is a good one in your particular situation. Consult the program coordinator and teachers of other courses. If you decide to incorporate journal activities into your course, you may want to gather all the related handouts into one folder for each participant and add some blank paper. Or you might copy the journal activities onto newsprint and invite the participants to use a journal they already own. Also, you will need to answer some nitty-gritty questions: What materials are required? Will you respond to journal entries, and if so, in what way? What will you do if a young person reveals in a journal concerns or issues that demand a response beyond your ability or your authority as a teacher? For helpful information on these and other issues related to journal keeping, consult your program coordinator.

Using Music

Some of the activities in *Stewardship: Creating the Future* suggest using music. No activities in this course require music or suggest specific pieces of music, because cultural preferences and individual tastes differ and specific tapes, CDs, or needed equipment may not be available. But music is a central part of the world of most adolescents, and you are thus encouraged to use it in the suggested places as well as in other activities where you think that it might be appropriate. Circumstances in which music can be used effectively include the following:

Popular music for prayer. Depending on the character of the group, the community environment, or even the area of the country, different types of music will be popular among young people. If you are not certain about what might work in activities for your group, ask a few young people for their advice; ask them well in advance of the session, so that they can listen for songs that will be useful. Besides helping you, this experience can be affirming for young people, who are generally thought of as learners and are not usually consulted for their expertise.

You might even consider forming a music advisory group of participants, whose job is to listen to popular music and point out some things that pertain to your topic. Each week this group of young people can suggest to the rest of the participants selections that can be used for prayer—and also for reflection or as a starting point for journal writing.

Background music for reflection. Some groups are easily distracted by the sounds around them. If your group has a hard time concentrating in silence, consider using background music to help the participants focus. Even for those who do not have trouble concentrating, music can alter the mood and contribute to a sense of peace and inner silence. For background music use slow, soothing instrumental selections, preferably something that is unrecognizable to the group. Labels such as Windham Hill and Narada, which are known for their alternative adult-contemporary recordings, are particularly useful for this purpose. Some classical music can also help to create the type of environment you need. Or use recordings of natural sounds, such as those produced by an ocean surf, rain forests, or running streams.

Contemporary Christian music for discussion starter or prayer. Contemporary Christian music is produced by Christian artists and comes in styles for all tastes: rock, hard rock, country, alternative, rap, and easy listening. By using contemporary Christian music, you expose the young people to an inspirational spiritual message in a form to which they may easily relate.

If you are familiar with contemporary Christian music, you probably can think of songs to introduce a discussion or to enhance a prayer service. If you are not familiar with contemporary Christian music, ask the young people in your group to help choose appropriate songs. Or visit a Christian bookstore. Many of them have an extensive music collection and a previewing area. Often their sales staff can point you in the right direction if you tell them what you are looking for.

Using This Course as a Retreat

Many of the courses in the Horizons Program can be recast as daylong or overnight programs. *Stewardship: Creating the Future* may be suitable for adaptation as an overnight or weekend retreat. It depends on the timing, the leaders, the purpose, and above all the young people themselves. If you want to consider using this course as a retreat, consult your program coordinator and together weigh the following advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

- The young people can immerse themselves in the topic of stewardship, and you can take advantage of more of the options and alternatives suggested in each session plan.
- The sharing partners activities can become an integral part of the retreat process.
- The LifeGame in the final session can evolve into a more extensive opportunity to look at life's opportunities and struggles.
- The more relaxed format will allow for more one-on-one time between adults and young people. This interaction can be important for a young person who is wrestling with some of life's biggest questions.
- You can arrange for a celebration of the Eucharist. It can be powerful for older adolescents to experience a liturgy where the connections between the Eucharist and stewardship are made clear.

Disadvantages

- Many older adolescents are extremely busy and find it difficult to clear their schedule for a weekend. Their inability to attend a retreat would deprive them of the opportunity to explore the topics of this course with their peers.
- The next section of this introduction offers the option of presenting basic vocational information by recruiting one or more representatives of the four traditional lifestyles to attend all three sessions of the course. You may have difficulty recruiting representatives to be available for an entire weekend.

Special Preparation Needs

Vocational Information

Though *Stewardship: Creating the Future* is not designed to include lengthy presentations on and discussions of the four traditional lifestyle options, it is necessary to present these options in the discussion of vocation in step F of session 1. Such information will also be helpful for the students' research on an assigned vocational profile following session 1 and for reference during the LifeGame in session 3. If you are not familiar with and able to present the basic facts about each of the four lifestyles—married, single, ordained, and vowed religious—you will need to make arrangements before the beginning of the course so that the participants have access to that information. You can accomplish this in a number of ways:

- Recruit a representative for some or all of the lifestyles. The young people are likely to be most unfamiliar with the lifestyles of ordained and vowed religious persons; it might be especially important to have at least someone present who represents one of those lifestyles. Ideally, at some point in the course, the young people will share some time with a married person or couple, a single person, an ordained priest, a married or single deacon, and a person who is a member of a religious congregation.

If possible, the representatives should be available for all three sessions. You might even consider team-teaching this course with them. They could present basic information on their lifestyle and answer participants' questions in session 1. They also could act as consultants to help the young people develop their vocational profile in

session 1 and could be available to answer any questions the young people have in session 2. If the representatives cannot attend all three sessions, their presence will be especially helpful during the LifeGame in session 3, to guide the participants' responses to the situations presented in the "Crunch!," "Awright!," and "Deal with It!" cards.

Minimally, you might ask one or more representatives from each lifestyle to be available to talk with the participants by phone. After session 1, in which the young people are assigned a particular character to develop, it would be helpful if they could call someone who leads the same lifestyle as that character, to discuss some of the details. Include representatives from the parish, the schools of your participants, or the local community. Share with them the types of questions the young people might ask. Make a list of names and phone numbers available to the young people and distribute the list during step G of session 1.

- Contact your diocesan vocation office and ask if it has printed resources on the lifestyle options for distribution to the young people in session 1. Also, if you cannot find lifestyle representatives for sessions 1 and 3, ask your diocesan office if it can recommend someone to present information at those sessions and to act as a consultant to the participants.
- *Catholic Update* and *Youth Update*, two monthly pamphlets published by Saint Anthony Messenger Press, sometimes deal with vocational issues. Some pertinent articles from these pamphlets are listed under the subhead Vocational Articles in the suggested resources at the end of this introduction.
- Ask the National Religious Vocation Conference to send you brochures and other information about lifestyle options. Its address and phone number appear under the subhead Other Vocational Materials in the suggested resources.
- Collect listings of religious volunteer programs and communities, and posters, prayer cards, and other resources that deal with vocational awareness. See Other Vocational Materials in the suggested resources for details on obtaining such items.

Contact vocation offices and other sources of vocational resources well before the start of the course, to allow enough time for representatives to schedule a visit and for staffs to process and mail materials.

The LifeGame

Session 3 includes a discussion exercise that is conducted in the form of a board game called the LifeGame. Some preliminary preparation is required to set up the playing area for the game. You may want to make this preparation well in advance so that you are not rushing at the last minute. This preparation will allow you to see some of the situations that will come up for discussion during the LifeGame. Completing it early will give you time to think about how to deal with those situations and to consult representatives from different lifestyles if you need to.

This Course and Total Youth Ministry

Additional Youth Ministry Program Suggestions

The Horizons Program includes a manual entitled *Youth Ministry Strategies: Creative Activities to Complement the Horizons Curriculum*. It contains a variety of activities and strategies organized into thematic categories and cross-referenced according to the courses in the curriculum. It includes suggestions for shortened and extended programs, off-site events, intergenerational gatherings, parish involvement, and prayer and liturgical celebrations.

This valuable resource can enhance the young people's experience of the Horizons Program and help your parish fulfill a commitment to total youth ministry. Contact your program coordinator about the availability of the manual.

Parish Program Connections

A religious education curriculum is, ideally, just one component of a total parish program in which all those responsible for the formation of young people work together with the entire parish to meet the holistic needs of its youth. *Stewardship: Creating the Future* can be a springboard for connections with other youth ministry experiences. You might develop these connections by doing the following:

- Put up a bulletin board in a place visible to all members of the parish. Use the board to highlight positive uses of time, talent, and treasure by parish youth.
- Expand the final covenant ceremony in session 3 into a communal blessing service for the young people. Invite family and friends to stand with each participant as he or she signs the covenant. Follow the service with a reception.
- Invite the young people to evaluate the way your parish's youth ministry program uses the time, talent, and treasure of those involved. You might also invite them to evaluate the same aspect of broader parish activities.
- Invite parish members who give much in the way of time, talent, and treasure to speak to the young people about their experience of stewardship.
- Use the "Crunch!," "Awright!," and "Deal with It!" cards from the LifeGame in session 3 as the basis of an evening discussion between a panel of lifestyle representatives and the young people.
- Invite members of the parish stewardship committee to meet with the young people and discuss the purpose and activities of their group and their strategies for encouraging stewardship in the parish.
- Arrange for representatives of different lifestyles to facilitate, for the participants and their parents, a full evening on vocational choices. Contact your diocesan vocation office to make the necessary arrangements.
- A number of religious orders and diocesan vocation offices have a collection of videotapes that deal with lifestyles in general or the life and work of particular congregations. Contact one or more of these sources and arrange for use of the videos.

Family Connections

Parents want to know what their child is learning. They are entitled to know what is going on in the parish's religious education program and how they can be involved if they choose to be. Each session in this course includes activities for families, in a section entitled Alternative Approaches. Also, the preceding Parish Program Connections section contains some suggestions that might involve parents. In addition, consider these options:

- Put together a flyer or a letter to send home to the participants' families that includes an outline of the course and its goals and objectives. Invite the parents to attend any session, as long as their son or daughter is aware of their visit and approves it.
- Suggest that the families keep a stewardship chart on the refrigerator or in another central place. On the chart they can keep track of positive uses of time, talent, and treasure by various family members.
- Encourage the families to use one day a month as a family stewardship day. On that day a family could contribute a mutually determined combination of time, talent, and treasure in service to the community.

Goals and Objectives in This Course

Why Use Goals and Objectives?

Curriculums take on greater clarity, direction, and purpose if they are described in terms of their goals and objectives. This observation is based on a commonsense principle: We have a difficult time getting somewhere if we do not know where we are going. Educators who design learning experiences must identify their destination as a first step in determining how to get there. The statement of goals and objectives is a practical way to identify the desired outcomes for a program.

In the Horizons Program, goals and objectives are used in the following ways:

Goals. Goals are broad statements of what we wish to accomplish—learning outcomes we hope to achieve. The coordinator's manual for the Horizons Program provides the goals for the entire curriculum. Each course within the total program also includes a statement of its goals. The goals often have an idealistic quality, inviting the teacher to reflect on how the course relates to the personal and faith development of the young people. At the same time, the course goals are realistic, measurable, and attainable. As a teacher, at the end of the course, you should be able to look back and determine if you have in fact achieved the course goals.

Objectives. Objectives are statements that define how to get to the goals. They name the specific tasks that must be accomplished if the goals are to be achieved. Each course supplies a clear statement of objectives for each session in the course.

The Goals and Objectives of Stewardship: Creating the Future

Goals

This course has four goals:

- That the young people learn the concept of stewardship and begin to reflect on their future in terms of it
- That they consider their personal resources—time, talent, and treasure—in terms of both the influences of culture and the call of the Gospel
- That they understand the traditional lifestyle alternatives as different but equally valid paths for living out the same universal vocation
- That they take practical steps to plan for their immediate future in order to ensure that they become good stewards of their resources while remaining open to the grace of God

Objectives

Each session has its own objectives, which help realize the four course goals:

Session 1: "Gifted and Called"

- To introduce the concept of stewardship as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care
- To explore time, talent, and treasure as key areas in which stewardship is lived out
- To identify cultural influences and Gospel messages as they affect the development of vocation
- To describe the four traditional lifestyle options of married, single, ordained, and vowed religious

Session 2: "Living Life to the Fullest"

- To explore further with the young people the responsible use of time, talent, and treasure
- To help them develop personal goals and principles for being a good steward of their gifts
- To highlight the temptations that can lead to imbalance

Session 3: "Open to Grace"

- To encourage the young people to remain open to the various lifestyle choices
- To help them reflect on what they have learned about stewardship, giftedness, and the gifts and challenges inherent in various lifestyle options
- To offer them the opportunity to commit to an authentic discernment of their future
- To bring the course to a prayerful close

Suggested Resources

Background for Teachers

- Block, Peter. Preface to *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1993.
- Koch, Carl. *Creating a Christian Lifestyle*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1996.
- Koch, Carl, and Virginia Pharr. *Creating a Christian Lifestyle* teaching manual. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1996.
- Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Trans. the United States Catholic Conference (USCC). Washington, DC: USCC, 1994.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. Washington, DC: USCC, 1993.
- Whitehead, Evelyn Eaton, and James D. Whitehead. *Seasons of Strength: New Visions of Adult Christian Maturing*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1995.

Vocational Articles

The following list identifies some of the articles from *Catholic Update* and *Youth Update* that cover vocational issues. Multiple copies of these and other pertinent articles can be purchased for a nominal fee. Contact Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1615 Republic Street, Cincinnati, OH 45210; phone 800-488-0488; web site <http://www.AmericanCatholic.org>.

- Auer, Jim. "Marriage: Supernatural and Sacramental." *Youth Update*, no. YU 0389, March 1989.
- Curran, Dolores. "Why Are We Afraid to Talk About Vocations?" *Catholic Update*, no. CU 1085, 1985.
- Feister, John Bookser. "Stewardship: Why the Parish Needs Your Time, Treasure, and Talent." *Catholic Update*, no. C0693, 1993.
- Friedman, Greg. "What Being a Priest Is All About." *Youth Update*, no. Y0493, April 1993.
- Hass, Becky Taylor. "Marriage Insurance: Never Too Soon to Invest." *Youth Update*, no. Y0295, February 1995.
- Klingaman, Patrick. "Careers You Could Love: Check Out the Possibilities." *Youth Update*, no. Y0492, April 1992.

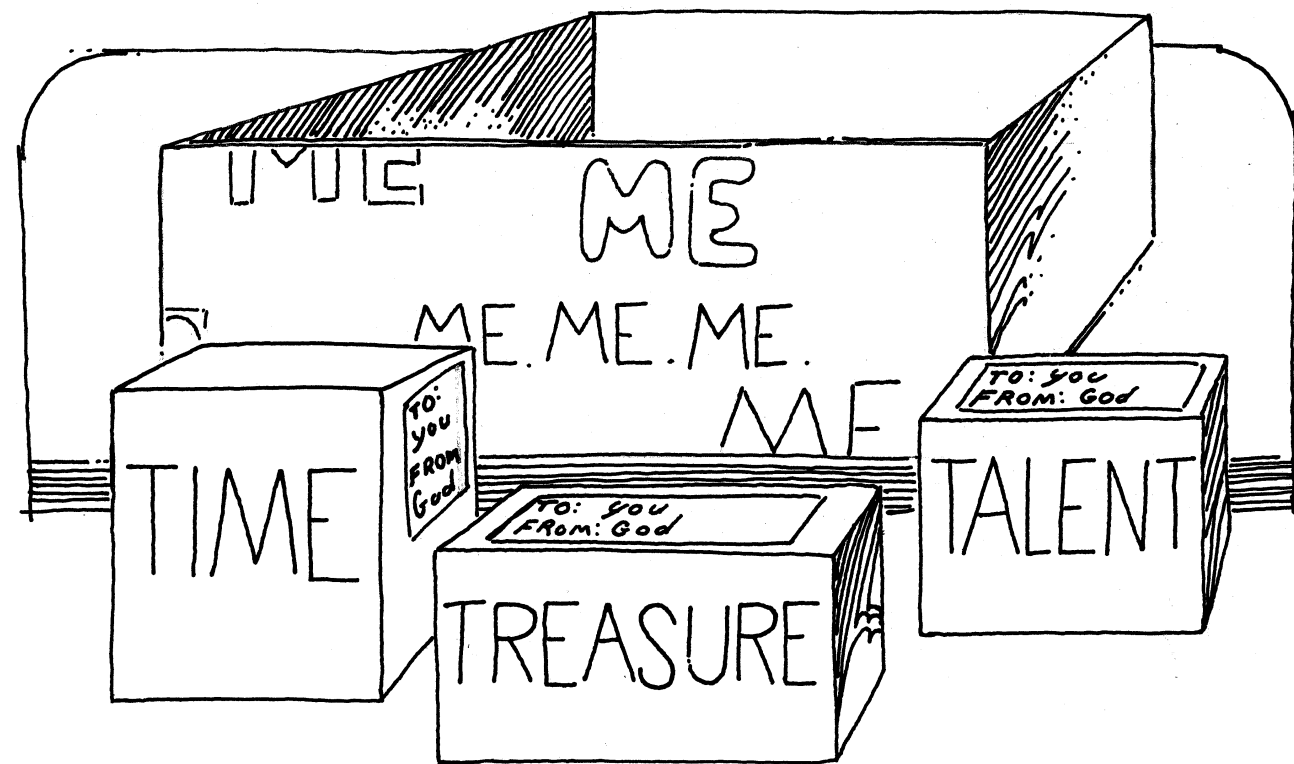
- Luebering, Carol. "The Spirituality of Marriage: Becoming Signs of God's Love." *Catholic Update*, no. C0597, May 1997.
- Paiva, Kathleen M. "Lifetime Decisions: How to Shape Your Future." *Youth Update*, no. YUP 054, 1984.
- Richstatter, Thomas. "Sacrament of Marriage: Sign of Faithful Love." *Catholic Update*, no. C0596, May 1996.

Other Vocational Materials

- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service. *RESPONSE: Volunteer Opportunities Directory*. An annual listing of all kinds of volunteer programs through which young people could get to know religious and lay groups in the United States and abroad. Available from Catholic Network of Volunteer Service, phone 800-543-5046; e-mail cnvs@ari.net; web site <http://www2.ari.net/home3/cnvs/cnvshome.html>.
- Catholic News Publishing Company. *A Guide to Religious Ministries for Catholic Men and Women*. An annual listing of hundreds of communities of sisters, brothers, and priests who are active in the United States, including the names of their vocation directors. Available from Catholic News Publishing Company, 210 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY 10801; phone 914-632-1220.
- National Coalition for Church Vocations. "One Stop" *Shopping for Vocational Awareness Resources*. A catalog with posters, prayer cards, supplemental vocational awareness and discernment materials, and so forth. Available from National Coalition for Church Vocations, 1603 South Michigan Avenue, #400, Chicago, IL 60616-1209; phone 800-671-6228; fax 312-663-5030.
- National Religious Vocation Conference. An organization for vocation directors of women's and men's congregations. 1603 South Michigan Avenue, #400, Chicago, IL 60616-1209; phone 312-663-5454; fax 312-663-5030.
- Saint Vincent Palotti Center for Apostolic Development. *CONNECTIONS: A Directory of Volunteer Opportunities*. A shorter version of *RESPONSE*. Available from Saint Vincent Palotti Center for Apostolic Development, P.O. Box 893—Cardinal Station, Washington, DC 20064; phone 202-529-3330; fax 202-529-0911.

SESSION 1

Gifted and Called



Objectives

- To introduce the concept of stewardship as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care
- To explore time, talent, and treasure as key areas in which stewardship is lived out
- To identify cultural influences and Gospel messages as they affect the development of vocation
- To describe the four traditional lifestyle options of married, single, ordained, and vowed religious

Session Steps

- an introduction and presentation on time, talent, and treasure (25 minutes)
- a reflection exercise and opening prayer on God's gifts to us (20 minutes)
- a discussion exercise and presentation on Gospel and cultural values (20 minutes)
- a break (10 minutes)
- a reflection exercise and partner sharing on becoming a steward (20 minutes)
- a presentation on vocation, career, and lifestyle (15 minutes)
- LifeGame assignments (5 minutes)
- a closing prayer (5 minutes)

Background for the Teacher

Deciding how to live and what kind of work to do is among the major tasks of young adulthood. People spend the years of their childhood and early adolescence imagining all their options, particularly career possibilities; by the time they reach their late teens or early twenties, they are ready to begin narrowing those options down. The first session of *Stewardship: Creating the Future* is intended to strengthen the foundation upon which they make those choices, by exploring the concepts of stewardship and vocation. The young people in your group have undoubtedly heard of these two concepts before. However, this may be the first time that they are confronted with the personal challenge implied by them.

The opening exercise focuses on time, talent, and treasure as special gifts entrusted to us by God. First the participants work in teams to come up with as many words and phrases as they can that are associated with their assigned category of gift. Then a presentation defines the concept of stewardship as the responsible use of something entrusted to one's care. The idea that what we possess does not really belong to us is probably foreign to most adults as well as young people. After all, we live in a capitalist society where time is measured in billable hours and success is measured in dollars. You may need to reiterate periodically throughout the course the message that our time, our talent, and the material and intangible things in our life are, at their root, gifts from the God who created us.

Next, the participants create a personal gift bag. During a short period of reflection, they focus on the specific gifts God has given them in the areas of time, talent, and treasure. Then they write each gift on a separate square of paper and put it in a brown paper lunch bag. In an opening prayer for the session, the participants' bags become part of the prayer space, symbolizing the totality of their giftedness as human beings.

The point of the next exercise is to compare messages of our culture with messages of the Gospel and to wrestle with the question, Why follow the Gospel? The idea that cultural messages often contradict the Gospel has surfaced in other Horizons courses. However, the participants may hear the message differently now than they did earlier when they were in the ninth or tenth grade. They may now take it to heart and apply it to their own situation.

After a break the young people reflect individually on what they heard in the first half of the session

and sort out their reactions to it. Then you introduce a strategy that can become an integral part of the rest of the course: sharing with partners. The participants in this course are likely to be familiar with one another and open to expressing thoughts that might have been too private to share in a less mature group.

As part of this session's extended introduction to stewardship, you present a final concept: vocation as the way in which a person cares for that which has been entrusted to him or her. A vocation is a call to do something important with one's life. It includes the work that a person is called to do as well as the relationships that make up that person's lifestyle. It is through one's vocation that a person expresses his or her relationship with God, the Christian community, the world, and other human beings.

The presentation on vocation is followed by a brief activity that sets the stage for the third and final session, which includes an exercise that challenges the participants to see a variety of life situations from the perspective of different vocational choices. This exercise, called the LifeGame, should be a fun and engaging way to stretch their thinking so that they might see all the possibilities that lie ahead of them.

The session concludes with a prayer that reviews the gifts God has given and the significance of stewardship.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- three stacks of 1-by-1-inch pieces of paper, each stack a different color
- pens or pencils
- a paper grocery bag
- newsprint
- markers
- masking tape or tacks
- a brown paper lunch bag for each participant
- a tape or CD player, and a recording of reflective instrumental music (optional)
- a candle and matches
- a Bible for the prayer space
- three items representing time, talent, and treasure
- one copy of handout 1-A, "As the Saying Goes . . .," for every two participants
- one Bible for every two participants

- one copy of resource 1–A, “Biblical Stewardship”
- one copy of handout 1–B, “Becoming a Steward,” for each participant
- one copy of resource 1–B, “LifeGame Vocational Profiles”
- a list of lifestyle representatives, with names and phone numbers (optional)
- vocational materials



Other Necessary Preparations

Prepare to lead this session by doing the following things and checking them off as you accomplish them:

- For step B. Collect symbols for time, talent, and treasure as described in step B.
- For step B. Recruit a Scripture reader as suggested in step B.
- For step E. Decide how the young people will be paired for the sharing partner activity, as described in step E.
- For step F. Prepare a talk on vocation, careers, and lifestyle, and perhaps recruit lifestyle representatives, as outlined in step F.
- For step G. Consider preparing a list of lifestyle representatives, and collect vocational materials, as described in step G.
- As additional preparation for this session, review the *Catechism*, numbers 1 to 3, 897 to 945, and 1536 to 1554.
- Determine if you wish to change this session by using one or more of the alternative approaches described at the end of this session plan.



Opening Teacher Prayer

Spend a few quiet moments in prayer before the session. Begin by centering yourself in a place of inner silence, a place where you can experience God’s presence.

Scripture. “People should think of us as Christ’s servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God. In such a matter, what is expected of stewards is that each one should be found trustworthy” (1 Cor. 4:1–2, NJB).

Reflection. Consider the following questions and bring them to the Lord in prayer:

- How has your own sense of stewardship affected the directions your life has taken?
- What is one thing that you want to tell the young people about being entrusted with the mysteries of God?

Prayer. Timeless and wondrous God, you have made me in your image and likeness and chosen me to be a steward of your mysteries. I thank you for entrusting me with the gifts of time, talent, and treasure. I thank you for entrusting me with the gift of the young people I will meet. I ask your blessings as I, along with them, try to discover and follow your will for my life. Amen.

Procedure

A Introduction and Presentation: Time, Talent, and Treasure (25 minutes)

1. Welcome the young people to the first session of *Stewardship: Creating the Future*. If some of the participants do not know you through previous contacts, offer a brief introduction of yourself. You may want to describe your family, your work, and why you chose to become involved in the Horizons Program.

If the participants do not know one another, invite them to introduce themselves to the rest of the group. They might share information about hobbies, cocurricular activities, part-time jobs, and so forth. You could also ask them to share their answers to the following question:

- Ten years from now, what do you think you will be doing?

2. Gather the participants into three teams. Give each team a stack of 1-by-1-inch pieces of paper, each stack a different color. Instruct the teams to distribute their papers among their members so that each person has approximately ten pieces to begin with. The remainder of their stack should be placed where all members of the team can have easy access to it.

3. When the papers have been distributed, assign each team one of the following categories:

- time
- talent
- treasure

Announce that the teams are to brainstorm as many words and phrases that apply to their category as they can come up with in 2 minutes. Each person who thinks of an item should call it out and then write it on one of the small pieces of paper and put it in a pile in the middle of the team. The items can be synonyms, representations, or simple word associations. You may want to give examples such as the following:

- *Time.* a clock, the present moment, a watch, the future, an opportunity, leisure activities, work
- *Talent.* gifts, strengths, skills, qualities, knowledge
- *Treasure.* money, material goods, resources, riches, wealth, something found

When you are sure that the participants understand the task, tell them to begin. Keep close track of the time, and stop the process after 2 minutes.

4. Ask one person from each team to read some of the team’s brainstormed words and phrases. When all the teams have had a chance to share some of their ideas, collect all the words and phrases in a paper grocery bag. Put all the extra blank paper squares aside for use in step B of this session. Also note which color of paper was used for each category in this exercise; the participants will use the same color key for step B.

5. Ask each team to appoint a recorder, and give that person a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Comment that most of the efforts of human beings fall into one of the three categories the young people just dealt with. That is, most of what people do is a result of conscious or unconscious decisions about the use of their time, talent, and treasure.

Tell the participants to discuss the following question with the other members of their team:

- What important questions about your assigned category will you face as an adult?

Explain that the teams have 5 minutes to come up with as many important questions as they can. The recorder for each team should write the questions on newsprint. Suggest that the young people be open to any question, because most issues they will deal with as adults will fall into one of the categories. If the participants seem confused about the task, you may want to give them examples such as these:

- How will I spend my money? (treasure)
- What job will I have? (talent, time)
- How will I spend my free time? (time)

After 5 minutes gather the teams into one large group and tell the recorders to post their list of questions on the wall. Review the lists with the participants. Note any repetition of questions and ask the young people to share any insights. Then move directly into the presentation that follows.

6. Shake the paper grocery bag that contains the paper squares with the brainstormed words and phrases. Empty the papers into a pile in the midst of the group. Make the following comments in your own words:

- Compare life to the pile of papers in the middle of the group, which represents occasions and opportunities to use our time, share our talent, and make responsible use of our treasure. One task of adulthood is to figure out how to organize all these occasions and opportunities. The way in which we organize these things is called our lifestyle.
- Note that a limited amount of time, talent, and treasure has been allotted to each person. These things do not belong to us. They are given to us by God. We all have the same number of hours in the day, days in the week, and weeks in the year. On the other hand, none of us know the number of years we have on earth. Each of us is gifted with certain talents and qualities that make us better at some things than another; these are limited and vary from person to person.

As people who live together on this planet, we share a limited treasure of resources. As individuals we have been entrusted with our own particular treasures, such as unique relationships, a certain body, and a limited amount of personal money and material goods. Though this wealth varies considerably from individual to individual, still each of us has a limited allotment.

- Emphasize that it is our duty to use our time, talent, and treasure responsibly and for the greater good. The way we use these gifts is called stewardship. The tenth edition of *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* defines stewardship as “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”

- Explain that in biblical times, a steward was a person responsible for managing the affairs of a ruler when the ruler was away. The steward did not own anything personally but had the complete trust and confidence of the owner. The ruler knew that the ruler's land and people would be well cared for in her or his absence.

A steward also was a person entrusted with running a monarchy if the ruler was a child. It was not unusual for a child to inherit a reign at a young age, well before the child could understand the workings of government. In this case, in addition to being responsible for the affairs of the land, the steward also trained the young ruler so that one day the ruler could take over the management of her or his own affairs and train another steward. In other words, the steward was not only responsible for managing the present situation but also played a major role in creating the future.

- Conclude by noting that our time, talent, and treasure do not belong to us. They—along with all of creation—have been entrusted to us by God, who only asks that we use them responsibly to help build God's Reign. In doing so we create a better future for ourselves and future generations. Decisions about how we use these things belong to us. This course on stewardship explores ways to use our time, talent, and treasure to help build the Reign of God.

Note: Leave the paper squares with the team responses in their pile until the closing prayer for this session.

B Reflection Exercise and Opening Prayer: Much Has Been Given (20 minutes)

Before the session. Find three items that represent time, talent, and treasure. Some examples:

- *Time.* a watch, a clock, a calendar
- *Talent.* a math book, a piece of student art, a trophy
- *Treasure.* a photograph of friends or family, a stub from a paycheck, a flower or plant

Recruit a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 4:1–2. You might want to show him or her the reading before the session.

1. Ask the young people to think about things they have been entrusted with in their life so far. Challenge them to consider both material items and items that are not concrete or measurable. If they have trouble coming up with ideas, you may want to offer a few of the following:

- the keys to a car and the safety of its passengers
- money at a job and the ethics of a company's business practices
- the reputation of a school and family
- the care of one's own body
- the training of young children to play a sport
- the operation of delicate equipment, such as computers and sound systems

2. Give each participant a brown paper lunch bag and about thirty of the blank paper squares left from the opening exercise, ten of each color. Tell the young people to write their name on the outside of their bag. Announce that they will have 5 minutes to think about the time, talent, and treasure that God has entrusted to them personally. Encourage the young people to be specific. You might offer the following examples:

- *Time.* the number of months left in high school, free time on weekends
- *Talent.* something they are particularly good at doing, a skill that they have developed
- *Treasure.* a good friend or a special family relationship, the money they earn from a part-time job

After this period of reflection, they will write each idea on a separate square of paper in the appropriate color and put it in their brown bag. Remind the participants which color represents each category of gifts.

Ask the young people to begin the period of reflection. When time is up, invite them to center themselves and focus their thoughts before they begin writing. They should work quietly and alone. You may want to play reflective instrumental music during this time, to enhance the prayerful atmosphere.

While the young people are working, set up a prayer space separate from your meeting space. Include a candle, a Bible, and three items representing time, talent, and treasure.

3. When the young people are done writing, invite them to bring their brown bag and gather in the prayer space. Encourage them to remain prayerful and quiet. Light the candle. When everyone is settled, read the following Scripture passage:

- “Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom the master will put in charge of the household and servants, to give them their allowance of goods at the proper time? Blessed is that steward whom the master will find at work when he returns; he will put that steward in charge of all his possessions. . . . From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be expected; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, more will be demanded.” (Adapted from Luke 12:41–48)

4. Ask the participants to think about all the things they wrote on the papers and put in their bag. These are the gifts that God has entrusted to them. Tell them to consider in silence the following question. Allow about 30 seconds for reflection.

- How do you now use the gifts of time, talent, and treasure to make the world a better place?

5. Invite one person at a time to place her or his bag near the Bible and candle. Call each person by name, and as that person brings her or his bag to the center, recall the words of the passage from Luke's Gospel:

- [Name of person], to you much has been given, and from you much will be required.

6. Ask the volunteer you recruited before the session to take the Bible from the prayer space and read 1 Cor. 4:1–2. After the reader has finished and returned the Bible to its original location, invite the participants to extend their right hand in a gesture of blessing over their bags and the other items in the prayer space. Read aloud the following blessing or create one of your own:

- Timeless and wondrous God, you have made us in your image and likeness and chosen us to be stewards of your mysteries. We thank you for entrusting us with the gifts of time, talent, and treasure. We ask your blessings as we try to discover and follow your will for our life. Amen.

Extinguish the candle as a sign that the prayer time has concluded.

C Discussion Exercise and Presentation: Gospel Values and Cultural Values (20 minutes)

1. Lead the group back to your meeting space. Then divide the group into pairs. (If you have an odd number of participants, form one team of three.) Give each pair one copy of handout 1–A, “As the Saying Goes . . .,” and a Bible. Introduce the activity by making the following comments in your own words:

- Note that many people try hard to base their decisions on biblical values. For example, an attorney might pass up a lucrative job with a West Coast firm to help immigrants navigate their way through the federal bureaucracy, or an athlete might donate to urban youth programs some of the money he makes on endorsements. Many groups and organizations are committed to high ethical standards and try hard to be good stewards of their time, talent, and treasure. Corporations recognize more and more the value of giving back to the community that supports them.
- Recognize that the young people have likely examined the relationship between culture and the Gospel before, particularly in other Horizons courses. Explain that as we get older and have to make decisions about using the gifts God has entrusted to us, the tension between culture and the Gospel becomes more apparent. Adult Christians sometimes have to make difficult choices. Those choices may well mean going against the prevailing cultural messages in order to live the Gospel message.

2. Tell the participants to review with their partner the list of common sayings on handout 1–A. Together the pairs should choose one saying and think about a Gospel story or passage that contradicts its cultural message. They do not need to find the passage in the Bible but simply need to recall the gist of it.

Allow no more than 2 minutes for the pairs to complete this task. After that time invite them to share the results of their discussion. Some pairs may not have been able to come up with a biblical passage to contradict the cultural message. Assure them that they will have another chance to do so in the next part of this exercise.

3. Divide the scriptural citations from resource 1–A, “Biblical Stewardship,” equally among the pairs. Tell the pairs to look up their citations and decide which cultural messages on handout 1–A are contradicted by each biblical passage. For example, the statement “The one who dies with the most toys wins” can be countered with Matt. 6:19–21: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Note that some of the scriptural citations apply to more than one saying, and some sayings can be countered by a number of the citations.

Allow about 5 minutes for the pairs to complete this task. Then call them to share their results with the rest of the group.

4. Invite the participants to consider the following question and share their thoughts. Feel free to contribute your own ideas to the discussion.

- If living the Gospel message means going against a comfortable and often attractive culture, why do it?

5. After a few minutes of discussion, present the following comments in your own words. Add your own thoughts and stories where they seem appropriate.

- Explain that to be a good steward, one must first be a Christian disciple. That is, one must have made a decision to actively follow Jesus Christ. This is one of the choices that are part of becoming an adult. It is a response to the knowledge that God has first chosen us and given us the gifts of life and faith. Once we make the choice to respond in this way, we must learn to be a steward of the life and the faith that have been entrusted to us.
- Further develop the connection between discipleship and stewardship by noting that as disciples we become listeners and learners. We listen to and learn from the Scriptures, the church, and spiritual guides. The values of Jesus become our values. The dream of Jesus becomes our dream. The Gospel shapes our ideas about love, commitment, success, power, and justice. As we grow into adulthood, we gradually begin to internalize responsibility and authority for making the world a better place. We may not be able to act fully on that authority until later in adulthood, but as young adults we must prepare ourselves to do so.

- Summarize these concepts by noting that responsible stewardship flows from an awareness of and gratitude for our identity as a person created, called, and gifted by God. Acting on this awareness and gratitude brings to our life a fullness that the world alone cannot deliver. The major reason a mature Christian lives by the Gospel even when doing so means going against cultural norms is simple yet profound: in order to live a fulfilling and happy life. Being happy does not mean avoiding struggle. It means knowing that God loves us and is with us always, whether things are going well or not.

D Break (10 minutes)

E Reflection Exercise and Partner Sharing: Becoming a Steward (20 minutes)

Before the session. You may want to read again from the course introduction the material that deals with sharing partners, which is included in the section entitled Teaching This Course. Then decide how you will arrange the group into sharing partners. You might let the participants choose their own partner, or assign partners yourself to avoid any potential discomfort for less popular or less confident young people. If you do not know the participants and do not feel that you can decide this before the session, plan to do so during the break. If you have an uneven number of participants in your group, create one team of three.

1. Introduce this exercise by reminding the young people that this course is about using God’s gifts of time, talent, and treasure in a way that is life-giving to the individual and to the world. Explain that part of the process for discerning one’s vocation is personal reflection and dreaming. Without serious thought about options and preferences, a person runs the risk of drifting for years. Also explain that another part of the process is sharing one’s thoughts and dreams with other people. This element creates a twofold system of support and accountability. Note that the participants will have a chance to do a little bit of both parts of the process throughout the course, beginning with this step.

2. Distribute a copy of handout 1–B, “Becoming a Steward,” to each participant. Suggest that the young people find a place where they can be alone with their thoughts and complete the handout. They will have about 10 minutes for this reflection. You may want to play reflective instrumental music during this time if you think it will help the participants focus their thoughts.

3. Assign sharing partners or direct the participants to select their own. Explain that each person will meet with the same partner periodically throughout the rest of the course. Announce that the first task for the partners is to share some of their thoughts about stewardship. Assure the young people that they do not need to discuss anything that seems too private or uncomfortable to share, but encourage them to stretch their boundaries a bit and be open with their partner.

Though the young people are likely to be aware of the rules of discussion, be sure to remind them that they should not disclose their partner’s thoughts to anyone during or after the session without their partner’s permission.

4. Allow about 10 minutes for one-on-one discussion between the partners. At the end of that time, move directly into the presentation in the next step.

E Presentation: Vocation, Career, and Lifestyle (15 minutes)

Before the session. Prepare a talk on vocation, careers, and the four traditional lifestyle choices, based on the material in this step. You may want to recruit a representative of each lifestyle to help with this presentation. Check the Vocational Information section under the heading Special Preparation Needs in the course introduction for a further discussion of this issue.

1. Present the following material in your own words, adding your own comments and stories as they seem appropriate:

- How a person chooses to live should permit the person to be a good steward of the time, talent, and treasure that God has entrusted to him or her. A person should have a sense of *vocation*, that is, being called to work that seems important to do in the context of personal, communal, and

spiritual relationships. The work that a person does becomes that person’s *career*. How a person lives out his or her relationship to God, the community, and other people is his or her *lifestyle*.

- The ultimate focus of a Christian’s vocation—that is, the career and lifestyle to which that person is called—is on the promise of the Reign of God. This is our universal call to holiness. We were created to seek God, to know God, and to love God with all our strength. By virtue of our baptism, God has entrusted each of us with the task of proclaiming God’s message of salvation. Our vocational choices are our response to God’s call. [See *Catechism*, nos. 1 and 899–901.]
- In addition to careful preparation and planning, the gift of grace from a benevolent and loving God enables a person to pursue her or his vocation. As much as human beings would like to control what happens in their life, they should be open to moments of grace, often manifest as surprises and opportunities.
- The choice of a vocation—both career and lifestyle—involves issues of intimacy, community, competence, meaning, freedom, and faith. It should be based on a person’s knowledge of himself or herself, be freely chosen in faith, and be open to the grace of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit. It should take into account the person’s own dream, the community’s dream, and the dream of the Reign of God. In the ideal all three of these dreams converge into one.

2. To avoid confusion with life contexts and situations that are presented in popular culture, note that the media speak of many different lifestyles. Ask the participants if they can name some of the situations that they hear about in the news and see in popular television programs and movies. They are likely to name lifestyles such as unmarried but living together, homosexual partnership, unmarried but choosing to have children, and so forth.

Remark that the church has traditionally presented four lifestyle options: married, single, ordained, and vowed religious. Review briefly the main characteristics of these lifestyles, or ask one or more vocational representatives to do so if you have recruited such help. Note that in the next two sessions, the participants will get a chance to consider more carefully how each lifestyle allows a person to live out the universal call to holiness and express her or his relationship to God, the world, and other people.

G LifeGame Assignments (5 minutes)

Before the session. Consider preparing a list with the names and phone numbers of lifestyle representatives the participants can chat with. Also collect vocational materials for the participants to use in researching an assigned vocational profile. See the Vocational Information section under the heading Special Preparation Needs in the course introduction for details on these resources.

1. Distribute to each person one vocational profile from resource 1–B, “LifeGame Vocational Profiles.” Explain that session 3 offers an exercise that allows the participants to explore the ways that people who live different lifestyles might respond to various life situations. That exercise is called the LifeGame. The profile they just received describes the basic facts about a person they are to represent in the LifeGame. Their tasks before session 3 include the following:

- Fill in details such as ethnicity, job, income, education, name, location, significant relationships, and so on, to make the person in their profile come alive. They will be asked to introduce the person fully at the beginning of session 3.
- Reflect on the material just presented on lifestyle options, so that they can faithfully represent the person’s lifestyle as they respond to various situations during the LifeGame in session 3. These situations might include changes in a job or financial status, an illness or death of someone close, personal difficulties, a decision to pursue further education, changes in the family, and so forth.

2. You might want to suggest that before session 3 the participants contact people who are living the lifestyle described in their profile and chat about what life is like for those people. If you choose to do this, distribute a list of the names and phone numbers of such people. Also mention that the conversation could include questions like the following:

- How do you spend your day?
- What are your most significant relationships?
- How do you go about making major decisions?
- What are the struggles you experience in your lifestyle?
- What do you like best about your lifestyle?
- How does your lifestyle allow you to be a good steward of your time, talent, and treasure?

3. Distribute any vocational materials you have collected and note that the young people may use these materials to research their character.

4. Make sure that the young people understand their task and the point of the LifeGame exercise in session 3. Invite and respond to their questions before moving on to the closing prayer for this session.

H Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. Direct the participants to move to the prayer space. As they do so, they are to take from the pile in the middle of the meeting space a handful of the small paper squares on which they named items of time, talent, and treasure at the beginning of the session. Make sure that every person has at least a few pieces of paper. Ask the young people to hold on to the papers until they are told what to do with them. Put the grocery bag that originally held the papers in the prayer space.

2. Comment that the papers the participants have in their hand represent only a small number of the ways in which God touches the world through us. Summarize the main ideas of this session by briefly stating the following points in your own words:

- God has given each of us the gifts of time, talent, and treasure. We are called by God to use these gifts in a way that is life-giving for ourselves and for the world. That is, by our baptism we are called to help build the Reign of God. This is our vocation.
- We apply these gifts of time, talent, and treasure to the vocation of helping to build God’s Reign through our career (what we do for a living) and our lifestyle (how we live out our relationship to God, the community, and other people).

3. Ask the person who read 1 Cor. 4:1–2 in the opening prayer to do so again. Then direct the young people to put the papers they are holding into the grocery bag. Conclude the session by saying a brief prayer like the one that follows and then inviting the participants to join you in making the sign of the cross:

- May we have the courage to live our life as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries.

Note: Collect the participants’ personal gift bags from the prayer table and keep them for use in session 2.

Alternative Approaches

After reading the session plan, you may choose to do some things differently or to make additions to an activity. Consider your time limitations first and then these alternative approaches:

For step A. If you have a group numbering more than twelve participants, adjust step A as follows: In part 2 direct the young people to pair up instead of forming teams. (If you have an odd number of participants, direct the group to form one team of three.) Give each pair a stack of paper squares in one of three colors, distributing the colors approximately equally among the pairs. Instruct the pairs to divide their stack of papers equally between the partners. Read aloud the three topics listed in part 3 of step A, and assign to each topic one of the three colors of paper you have distributed. (You may want to post these color assignments for the participants’ reference now and in step B.) Follow the rest of the process outlined in the procedure step, beginning by instructing each pair to brainstorm words and phrases for the topic that corresponds to the color of its paper squares.

For step B. To save some time, prepare the brown paper lunch bags before the session: write each participant’s name on a bag and put about ten of each color of paper squares inside the bag.

For step B. If the participants already know one another and would likely feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, invite each person to state his or her answer to the reflection question when coming forward in part 5 of step B. In each case follow this sharing with the acclamation, “[Name of person], to you much has been given, and from you much will be required.”

For step C. Consider pairing the young people with their sharing partner for the discussion exercise in step C. In working together on this exercise, the partners can get to know each other a little before being asked to share their thoughts with each other in step E.

For step E. If the participants know one another well and prefer to discuss rather than write, eliminate the individual reflection period in part 2 of step E. Instead, ask the sharing partners to pair up immediately and discuss their answers to the sentence starters on handout 1–B. You could also eliminate the handout. To do so create a set of question cards for each pair by writing or typing each question from the handout on a separate card or small piece of paper.

For step E. If your group is small, do not assign sharing partners. After the individual reflection period in part 2 of step E, gather the young people and facilitate a discussion among the full group.

Family Connections

- Suggest that the young people ask various adults in their family how they chose their career or job and their lifestyle.
- Send home to the participants’ parents a simple explanation of the concept of stewardship as the responsible use of time, talent, and treasure. Encourage them to discuss with their other family members how these gifts are used in the family and how they might be used more responsibly. For example, the family members could get involved in a parish or community project together or could help one another find a way to contribute time, talent, or treasure individually.

Journal Options

Within the Session

Do part 2 of step E as a journal-writing exercise. Instead of distributing handout 1–B, write the sentence starters from the handout on a sheet of newsprint and post them where all can see them.

Between Sessions

Suggest that the participants periodically write in their journal their answers to these ongoing questions for reflection:

- What did I do this week to make good use of my time? talent? treasure?
- How could I improve my use of my time? talent? treasure?



Closing Prayer and Evaluation

Before doing the closing teacher prayer, you may want to complete the evaluation at the end of this session.



Closing Teacher Prayer

After the session spend a few minutes in quiet reflection. Begin by taking some deep breaths. Then recall your answer to the following question from the opening teacher prayer for this session:

What is one thing that you want to tell the young people about being entrusted with the mysteries of God?

Did you tell the young people the one thing that you wanted to share? If so, how did they respond?

Close with the following prayer or one of your own:

Timeless God, I thank you for trusting me with your gift of time.

Dreamer God, I thank you for trusting me with many talents.

Provident God, I thank you for trusting me with wondrous treasures.

Bless me as I continue to be a witness to your mysteries with the young people you have placed in my care.

Amen.



Evaluation

After the session take a few moments to evaluate how it went. Think about the following questions and, for future reference, write your thoughts in the spaces provided:

1. What worked best in this session?

2. What would you change about this session?

3. On the following scale, circle the number that reflects how well the session met the objective of introducing the concept of stewardship:

It was a failure! ←→ It was a rousing success!
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

4. On the following scale, circle the number that reflects how well the session met the objective of exploring time, talent, and treasure as key elements of stewardship:

It was a failure! ←→ It was a rousing success!
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

5. On the following scale, circle the number that reflects how well the session met the objective of identifying cultural influences and Gospel messages that affect the development of vocation:

It was a failure! ←→ It was a rousing success!
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

6. Did you recognize any particular needs of the young people that you would like to bring to God? If so, what are they?

AS THE SAYING GOES . . .

Time is money.

Second place is the first loser.

The one who dies with the most toys wins.

Life is what happens to you while you're making other plans.

You can never be too rich or too thin.

Money talks.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

No pain, no gain.

What goes around comes around.

Don't get mad, get even.

Just do it.

Life stinks, and then you die.

The only sure things in life are death and taxes.

Success is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration.

Money is the root of all evil.

Blow away the competition.

Winning is everything.

It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game.

The early bird gets the worm.

The one who laughs last laughs loudest.

You get what you pay for.

The grass is always greener on the other side of the street.

The rich get richer.

Make hay while the sun shines.

Two's company, three's a crowd.

Biblical Stewardship

Make one copy of this resource and cut apart the copy along the broken lines.

M atthew 6:19-21	M atthew 11:28-30	M atthew 19:21-22
J ohn 10:11-14	L uke 12:16-21	J ohn 20:22-23
M atthew 5:13-16	M atthew 16:24-25	M atthew 19:30
J ohn 15:5-7	L uke 10:27	M atthew 23:1-6
M atthew 6:25-34	M atthew 18:21-22	M atthew 23:27-28
L uke 18:14	J ohn 6:53-54	M atthew 25:44-45

Becoming a STEWARD

Spend a few minutes completing the following sentence starters. Be prepared to discuss your responses afterward.

■ To me being successful means . . .

■ To me work is . . .

■ I've already used my time, talent, or treasure to make a difference by . . .

-
-
-

■ I need to improve my use of time, talent, or treasure by . . .

-
-
-

■ In ten years I see myself

- living in . . .
- living with . . .
- earning a living by . . .

■ The things that scare me most about the future are . . .

■ I am most looking forward to . . .

LifeGame Vocational Profiles

Make one copy of this resource and cut apart the copy along the broken lines. Give one profile to each young person in your group. Assign the profiles so that they provide variety and the best learning opportunities for the young people.

Married ↘

Single ↘

You are a woman who has been married for eight years. You have two young children. You and your husband are both educated professionals, and each of you has a full-time job. Your combined income is in the medium range. You live in a suburb.

You are a single woman, thirty-seven years old. You have a full-time professional job in the medical field. You live alone in a townhouse in a city. Your income is in the middle range.

You are a man who has been married for twenty years. You have three teenage children. You have a full-time job as a laborer. Your spouse has a part-time job. Your combined income is in the low range. You live in a city.

You are a single woman, age forty-eight. You have one child who is a senior in high school. You have a full-time clerical job, and your income falls in the low to middle range. You and your child live in a poor rural area.

You are a woman who has been married for ten years. You have no children. You and your husband are both educated professionals, and each of you has a full-time job. Your combined income is in the high range. You live in a suburb.

You are a single man, age twenty-nine. You live at home with your parents and teach full-time at an elementary school. Your income falls in the low to middle range.

You are a man who has been married for about three years. You have one infant child. You have a part-time job that you do out of your home. Your wife has a full-time job. Your combined income is in the middle range. You live in a small town in a rural area.

You are a single man, age fifty-two. You have a full-time job in the field of law enforcement. Your income is in the middle range. You live in an apartment in a city.