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## YOUTH AND CHILDREN AS LAY WITNESSES

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Helpful suggestions for using children to present the Stewardship message to other children in the form of a Lay Witness Talk or dialogue. Just as the adult Lay Witness Testimony is one of the most effective means of presenting the stewardship message to the adults of the parish, a well-done children's Lay Witness Talk can be an effective tool in presenting the stewardship message to the children and youth of the parish. Such a talk should be given by a young person who is already practicing stewardship on a child's level in his or her own life. The talk should be directed to the other children in the parish as a means of inspiring them to become cheerful givers (2 Cor 9:7) of their time, talent, and treasure, and to share real life examples of how stewardship is lived. This talk should be done in addition to the adult Lay Witness talk, on a separate weekend.

### *Tips in choosing a child as Lay Witness*

- ◆ Invite a child who is already actively practicing stewardship in the parish. Children who are altar servers, youth ushers, youth lectors, nursery aids, etc. often show an understanding of stewardship in their lives.
- ◆ The child should be someone who attends Mass every weekend with his or her family. Often the entire family is involved in stewardship on both a parish and community level.
- ◆ Invite a child who is mature, articulate, and somewhat at ease in front of large groups.
- ◆ The child should be willing to work with the pastor (or his designate) in preparing the stewardship talk.
- ◆ The child should be willing to speak at all of the weekend Masses on the specified Sunday. Consider a dialogue or an interview rather than a talk. Even the most articulate and mature child can sometimes freeze in front of a large congregation at a weekend Mass. To help put the child at ease and make their testimony more effective, consider the following suggestions.

### *Lay Witness Interview*

- ◆ Use a dialogue format, "interview" the lay witness with regard to his or her practice of stewardship. Ask the child to explain what stewardship means to him or her, and to share with the group real life experiences that relate to stewardship. The interview should cover all three aspects of stewardship--time, talent, and treasure. The child should be given a copy of the interview questions and ample time to prepare answers from his or her own experiences well ahead of time. Then a time should be scheduled with the pastor or catechist to actually rehearse the program.
- ◆ Invite the children of the parish to come forward and gather around the pastor and the child lay witness. The child who is doing the lay witness talk is now speaking to a much smaller "congregation" of peers, and the adults are privileged to listen without putting undo pressure on the child.
- ◆ In parishes that do a children's Liturgy of the Word (separate from the adult Liturgy of the Word), the child's lay witness presentation could take place at that time.
- ◆ Introduce the Lay Witness to the group and include a little information on the child's family. Many of the children may already know the lay witness, but some may not.