



# Parish Annual Report Suggestions

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*“I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now.”  
Philippians 1:5*

## An Annual Pastor’s Report

One of the most effective stewardship communications is an annual pastoral report. This report can be produced as a companion to a parish financial report, or as a stand-alone communications tool.

A pastoral report details ministry statistics (the number of baptisms, weddings, first communion, etc.), yet it communicates more than just numbers. Presented as what they truly are – *ministry in action* - the facts and figures come alive. This report is a very effective tool successful stewardship parishes use to accomplish an important goal – connecting parishioners with the mission, and ministries, of the parish.

It is also a communication that allows the pastor some space to share a sincere message of gratitude. A heartfelt note, that includes a personal story or two from the pastor’s perspective over the past year, is a very meaningful way to engage parishioners in the life of the parish community and to help them better understand not only the impact of their giving but also how much it is appreciated.

Through a pastoral report, we can inspire as well as inform. This is an educational piece in which the pastor has the opportunity to teach about the true meaning of stewardship. Here are some examples of items worth sharing:

## Sharing the Good News of How We Engage in Ministry at <insert parish name>:

- *Celebrating with 12 families as we welcome newborn Catholics into our midst.*
- *Uniting 8 couples with each other, and with the Lord, in the sacrament of Matrimony.*
- *Praying with and comforting 15 grieving families as they commend their loved one into God’s care.*
- *Forming 52 children and 67 teens as they prepare to receive sacraments.*

A pastoral report draws a straight line from parishioners' financial contributions to faith in action. It is a joyful communication focusing on the real business of the parish; building the Kingdom through our service to God and to others.

The annual report should include photos of church ministries in action, infographics to offer a visual that draws the eye to a numerical statistic, testimonials from parishioners who actively volunteer at the parish and can share their stories of faith, as well as plenty of opportunities to say thank you.

The pastor's report can also inspire new or renewed action. The report can include a "Call to Action" section, which invites the parishioner to consider how they might go deeper into a life of discipleship. Highlight the ways that parishioners can become more involved: whether that is through prayer, through participation in-person as a parish volunteer, and/or through their financial gifts.

This is also a great way to share news and encourage participation in online giving. Share with parishioners not only how they can sign up but also why they should sign up. Tell them how regular weekly or monthly gifts made online help provide consistent, ongoing support for the ministries of the parish.

### An Annual Financial Report

*Note: Even though money should not be the main or the only focus for a parish stewardship initiative, an annual financial report is an important component of any successful stewardship effort. Parishioners want to be assured that the gifts they are being asked to share are being managed by the parish in a responsible and accountable manner. It is also important to demonstrate how the parish shares the financial gifts received through outreach to the broader community.*

Annual financial reports in successful stewardship parishes take many forms, however they do share some common characteristics:

- Reporting is transparent. Parishioners appreciate getting an accurate picture of the parish financial situation.
- Reports are comprehensive but produced with the average parishioner in mind. Spreadsheets that make perfect sense to the Finance Council may well confuse many others.
- Include some explanatory detail to demonstrate how the dollars received equate with ministry in action.
  - Parishioners' financial gifts are given with the goal of impacting lives and ministries. The detail you provide can help parishioners see the impact of their collective generosity.