



Best practices are guidelines. They allow us to assess our successes and our shortcomings. In stewardship, we use statistics from our annual statistical returns each year to evaluate overall trends in the diocese and to forecast outcomes years into the future. When giving patterns in Dioceses have been carefully analyzed, the result has been the identification of fourteen specific variables that give us the tools to evaluate parish outcomes.

These variables give a clear snapshot of financial, congregational, ministry and leadership health. Viewed as a whole they provide an opportunity for parish and Diocesan leaders to discuss the steps that might be taken to strengthen parish health through the growth of stewardship education and revenue development.

### **The fourteen best practices are:**

1. The parish has an active stewardship committee
2. The parish clergy committed to stewardship education
3. The parish conducts an annual sacrificial giving pledge campaign
4. A long range planning and gifts discernment program is held annually
5. There are at least 4 sermons per year on stewardship themes
6. The parish develops an annual narrative budget
7. The parish distributes a proportionate giving work-sheet to all identifiable givers
8. Individual giving to parish is at diocesan average of \$1,100.
9. Parish offertory equals at least 2% of gross family income
10. One-third of identifiable givers are on pre-authorized giving
11. Seventy percent of operating revenue comes from free-will offerings
12. Parish directs 10% of revenue to outreach
13. Parish has a new-member ministry / orientation program
14. Planned giving is promoted in the parish