

**FIVE STEWARDSHIP  
SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS  
FOR YOUTH**

Writer:  
Kevin Boles  
Youth Ministry Strategist  
Louisiana Baptist Convention

## LESSON 1

### **Defining Stewardship**

–Kevin Boles–

Focal Passage: I Corinthians 4:1-2, Matthew 22:15-22

Knowledge Aim: To know how the Bible defines and describes a steward.

Application Aim: To establish a personal plan to act as a godly steward.

According to the dictionary, *stewardship* is the act of being a steward. One of the definitions of a steward is “a caretaker of possessions of another”. The Bible is very clear in telling us God made everything and owns everything. What we have is not ours; it’s God’s. If we are to fulfill the definition of a steward we must take care of what God has provided us that He owns. In doing so we will engage in stewardship – the act of caring for the possessions of another – God’s possessions.

The Point: Youth will understand the biblical meaning of stewardship and will evaluate their accountability and trustworthiness in the area of personal possessions.

Before the Session Checklist:

1. Arrange chairs in a semi-circle facing a focal wall.
2. Secure the following supplies: white marker board, paper, pencils, and two straws (one shorter than the other).

*Me... A Steward?*

### **1. WHAT IS A STEWARD?**

As youth arrive, ask them to find a partner and consider the following case studies. Encourage them to come up with an answer to the question asked.

Alan is the equipment manager for his high school football team. He is responsible for all the equipment used by the players: pads, helmets, uniforms, footballs, kicking tees, tape, and towels. Alan is responsible for keeping the equipment in good condition, distributing to each player what he needs, and is accountable to the coaches for all the items.

Suzanne’s family has a family game night every Tuesday evening. Monopoly is her family’s favorite game. But Suzanne is not just a player. She also enjoys keeping the bank. She manages the money and gives the proper amount to the other players. When someone buys property, houses, or hotels, she takes care of the sale. When each player passes “Go,” she gives him or her \$200. As a banker, Suzanne is responsible for all business transactions.

Kim works part-time as an assistant to the school band director. She has the responsibility of caring for the sheet music and supplies used by each band member. She sets up the music stands before practice, distributes the music, and collects it when it is no longer needed. She makes sure the music is filed properly when it is not being used.

Alan, Suzanne, and Kim are all involved in different activities with different responsibilities. But what one thing do they all have in common?

Call attention to the word STEWARD that you have written down the left side of the board. Ask your youth to think of words that are related to the meaning of the word STEWARD, as they understand it.

Call attention to the case studies. Ask for a response to the question, “What one thing do Alan, Suzanne, and Kim have in common?”

Explain that an equipment manager, a Monopoly banker, and a band assistant are engaged in totally different activities. However, the one thing they have in common is that they are all involved in managing possessions for someone else. Explain that in the New Testament, the word *steward* means “the manager of something that belongs to someone else.” Call for responses to each letter of the *steward* acrostic.

## **2. HELP WANTED!**

**Say:** *Pretend that you are the owner of a very large and profitable business. It has become so large that it's time to hire someone to help manage it and take over the financial affairs.*

*What criteria are you going to use to determine whom to hire for this major responsibility?*

*What personal characteristics are needed in this person?*

Have a volunteer read aloud I Corinthians 4:1-2. Ask other youth to listen for God's most important requirement of a steward. Point out that the best word to characterize a steward might very well be *trustworthy*.

**Ask:** *What does the word trustworthy mean to you?*

**Say:** *Think back to the characteristics of your “new employee” you need to hire. These are important characteristics of another person who was going to serve as the steward or caretaker of your finances. How would you rate yourself in these same areas of being a good steward?*

*Rate yourself in the following areas of your life: (1) I am responsible and trustworthy in taking care of the things I have been blessed with. (2) As a steward, I am faithful in tithing my income.*

## **3. ONCE A STEWARD, ALWAYS A STEWARD**

Explain that in biblical times, a steward was one who managed the possessions or affairs of another as a faithful servant. In fact, a steward was the highest-ranking servant. We are all stewards for God. We are not given a choice of whether or not we want to be. So, whether we are doing a good job in this area or not, we are still stewards, and are accountable to God for trustworthiness. Each of us should also be deeply indebted to God for all that we have and are. God will one day bring each of us to an accounting of our stewardship.

We often equate stewardship only with the responsibility of tithing on our income. That is important, and is the primary focus of this study, but it is only one aspect among many in the area of stewardship. Our basic stewardship responsibility is to pass on the gospel of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 4:1-2, I Pet. 4:10). God will also hold us accountable for our time, talent, our abilities, and our opportunities and our influences because we are stewards of what He has given us in these areas.

#### 4. YOUR MONEY OR GOD'S?

**Ask:** *Why is stewardship of money so important to God?*

After responses, explain that in creation, God gave humanity the task of managing His world. Money is part of that. Next to our life and our influence, the money we earn likely will be the most valuable material thing we will use in carrying out God's purposes. The money management skills you learn, as a youth will go a long way in affecting how you will manage material possessions in the future and how you serve God with the rest of your life. Managing money wisely is a vital part of the mature Christian's lifestyle.

Call for two volunteers to be the first players of a game. Show them the straws you have brought. Ask the youth to select a straw. Whoever has the short straw must answer a question. The other youth may sit down.

After answering the question, the youth selects two other youth from the group to come and choose one of the concealed straws. Repeat the process until the following five questions have been answered.

How can a Christian's responsibility of stewardship affect how he or she:

1. Uses their books at school?
2. Cares for their family car?
3. Uses their allowance money?
4. Buys things with money they earn from a job?
5. Cares for the clothes their parents buy for them?

#### 5. DISCUSSION WITH GOD

In closing, encourage youth to have a quiet time with God with the following questions. Allow time to work, and then close in prayer.

*God, when I think about being a steward, I...*

*God, to me, money means...*

*God, it's hard for me to be a good steward of money in the area of...*

*God, help me to realize that money is...*

*God's response...*