



Make It Simple

A Resource for Stewardship Education and Annual Response

Stewardship Stew An At-Home Activity

As a loving parent, you want “the best” for your child(ren). “The best” is not just about the best schools, the safest housing or the most nutritious foods, although these are all desirable. The “best” you want for your children is the best part of them—the God part of them. You want your kids to be who God created them to be; people who care and live their life showing it.

God, your loving parent, wants “the best” for you, too—no matter how old you are. The best God wants for you is that place in you where your generous heart still beats, your soul trusts in God’s economy and your spirit feels compelled to pass on this most essential news to the next generation: “We are richly blessed by God. We feel the most joyful and free when we share God’s blessings.”

You can nurture that best place of caring and generosity in your children and in yourself by learning about being good stewards. Here’s a delicious activity, “Stewardship Stew,” (allow two hours for cooking time) that will get your whole family cooking, thinking, and learning together.

Announce to your kids, “We’re making Stewardship Stew for dinner tonight.” Get excited about it. Nothing wakes up hearts like a creative chance to focus on what really matters. Kids will be curious. How do you make it? What will it taste like? What do I get to do?

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Ingredients from the store (serves 4 and many more)

2 lbs. lean beef (or another protein source)
1 qt. water or broth
2 cups sliced potatoes
1 cup sliced turnips
1 cup sliced carrots
1-2 onions, chopped
3 T flour
Salt and pepper
Garlic, parsley or a few other favorite herbs

Ingredients from home

Love
Baptismal Water
Bible

Blessings
Secret Ingredients

Start the Stew

Before the Stewardship Stew night, make sure you have the items in the left column in the refrigerator. If cooking time is an issue, cook the meat/protein source the night before and store in the refrigerator. Add vegetables the next night as a family.

1. Sauté the meat, stirring constantly. When all surfaces are well-browned, put it into the soup pot.
2. Cover with water and bring to a boil; skim fat off the surface. Simmer for one hour.
3. Add carrot, turnip, onion, and potatoes; simmer for one more hour.
4. Thicken with 3 tablespoons of flour diluted with enough cold water to pour easily.
5. Let the stew come to a boil again and cook ten minutes.

Adding the home ingredients

Now consider: where will you find items in the right-hand column of the recipe? Where do you keep love? Give each other hugs. Stretch out your arms and pretend to hug God's world. Stretch out your arms as wide as a large soup pot. Love surrounds you and your Stewardship Stew.

1. Where are the blessings? Look around at home and name some blessings you see inside and outside. They're everywhere! Scoop some up for pretend and throw them in the stew pot.

2. How about the Bible, your stewardship how-to book? Find it, open it, and read John 21:15: Jesus asked his disciple Peter, “Do you love me?” Peter answered, “Yes, Jesus I love you.” “Great!” said Jesus. “Then feed my lambs.” Of course you’re not going to put the Bible in the stew! And no, we’re not feeding actual lambs. But you can pretend to shake some words in there. For example, “Jesus wants us to take care of each other.”
3. If you can, find a picture or remember out loud the story of your child(ren)’s baptism(s). Before the stew is cooking, let your child(ren) help you pour cold water or broth over the meat in the pot. When you are baptized, God pours water over you and God gives you some jobs. Ask children and adults: What are some jobs God gives us? (Possible answers: making stew, sharing what we have, and telling someone else the story of Jesus). Your baptism goes into Stewardship Stew because when you’re baptized God says, “Care, give, share.”

A secret ingredient or two

Don’t hold back on adding more to your Stewardship Stew: fresh tomatoes, herbs from your garden, a Bible verse that taught you about giving, a song that really makes you feel God down to your toes. Kids can say something they love to do or sing a favorite song about God and combine that with the other stew ingredients.

Kids can use their bodies as you season the soup. They can be salt shakers who jump up and down, herbs that pop up in the garden, pepper that makes big sneezes. They can twirl around, like the stew going around in the pot. They can lean over and get poured out, like God helps all of us pour out love.

Taste and see

Now it’s time to eat! Here’s a Stew Grace to bless your meal:

Thanks to you who gave us stew.
As we chew, help us think what to do,
For you love this world, too.
Amen

After the stew cools a little, surprise someone by bringing them a container of the stew or invite someone to share the stew at your home. There’s nothing like excited expectations and the look on a recipient’s face to teach children the joy of giving.

Clean-up and review

The best organized person in your family is not always its most tidy! It can get messy making Stewardship Stew and figuring out how to care for the world and people! Kids can find it fun to help clean up, if you make it an adventure! So let children help you do the dishes and put away the pot.

While you clean, review some of what your family has learned:

1. That we can make Stewardship Stew—so just think what else our family could do.
2. That Jesus wants us to feed one another and Jesus feeds us.
3. That we have lots of ingredients in our home for Stewardship Stew.
4. That we can talk, plan, and have fun learning about God.
5. That it feels so amazing to share, and people absolutely love it.

Stewardship happens over a long time. God teaches your family to care and share over your whole lives. Day by day, God cooks up new ways for you to find “the best” in yourselves. God gives and forgives—providing you with a sustainable model of a faithful life. May you be blessed by “the best” that God created in each of you for good.

Extra cooking credit

Do these activities while waiting for the soup to cook or on another day:

- Read, talk, or go outside.
- Read more about being a good steward.
- Learn about other people who shared and cared.
- Say a prayer that God will help you to be generous.
- Hoe a garden, look at books, write a letter, or talk about how your family could help in your community and at church.
- Take a walk and see how God takes care of you in creation.

Make a giving plan for your family

While the stew is cooking, you can fill out a family giving chart that outlines what you will do to share your time, resources, and special family traits. You can think of your family as a team and ask your kids, “What can our team do together?”

Three banks

Use three banks to introduce a system for money management with your children. When your kids receive some money, they can place part of it in the “Share” bank, part of it in the “Save” bank and part of it in the “Spend” bank. From an early age, children can learn that they can share and that money doesn’t all go to one place. While the stew cooks, you can practice putting coins in the banks. You can talk about how much to share, save, and spend.