

parish

Fulfilling God's Purpose!
A three- or four-week stewardship program



“And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.”

Colossians 1:10

Overview and Instructions

Fulfilling God's Purpose! is a three- or four-week stewardship program. The fourth week is optional, depending on the amount of time you allot to it, but all of the materials are included. We believe that the program will be equally successful using either three or four weeks to run it, so deciding to use it as a three- or four-week program simply depends on what you determine will work best for your congregation. The program emphasizes the four themes of: ***Building Relationships, Witnessing for Jesus, Living as Servants*** and, optionally, ***Giving Joyfully and Generously***.

Note: Throughout these instructions, we refer to ***Fulfilling God's Purpose!*** as a four-week program, although the fourth week is optional. Also, throughout the program resources, there are references to three (or four) weeks (**highlighted in red**) that you will want to edit depending on the program length you decide upon.

Program Goal

Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we understand both our identity and purposes as stewards, and, as a result, we are transformed into people who **fulfill God's purpose**. When God's Word and love fill our hearts and minds, our stewardship is not limited to specific acts but, instead, becomes a lifestyle. With transformed hearts, we express our faith in the way we live our lives. Through faith, God provides motivation and power to live the Christian life in a growing awareness of redeeming grace.

In a lifestyle of stewardship, we commit our lives, gifts, and resources to serving the Lord and fulfilling his will for our lives. *"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is"* (Ephesians 5:17). Being a Christian steward involves the way we view life, our whole human vocation, and the deployment of all of God's blessings. Jesus said, *"Here I am . . . I have come to do your will, O God"* (Hebrews 10:7). Just as Jesus came to do his Father's will, we are also called to do God's will. *"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."* (James 1:22).

Because our sinful nature no longer controls us, our lifestyles reflect the presence of the Holy Spirit. Our minds are set on doing what the Spirit desires. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we are taught to put off the *"old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires . . . and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"* (Ephesians 4:22-23).

Bible Study Participation

To grow as stewards, we need to be reading and studying God's Word. Every effort should be made to increase Bible study attendance. Personal invitations will be helpful. To show the importance of Bible study, council members and other church leaders should be encouraged to attend. There are four studies to be taught during the four-week program. You may choose to start the studies prior to the start of the program or go beyond the program. Either plan is acceptable, although we like the idea of the study continuing after the four-week program.

Commitment Sunday

Members are encouraged to make financial commitments to the Lord through their church. Commitment forms are to be mailed out just prior to the start of the program along with a commitment letter and the theme essay "Fulfilling God's Purpose!" Commitment forms should also be distributed with the bulletins/worship folders on Commitment Sunday.

Every effort should be made to make Commitment Sunday a special and meaningful day. To show the joy and importance of making a commitment to the Lord, you may want to have balloons and/or other decorations. You could provide some special snacks. Some churches have found that inviting a special guest preacher is helpful. You may want to celebrate Commitment Sunday with a special catered luncheon or have a potluck luncheon.

Program Resources

Downloadable at the *Parish Resource Center*

Resources – General

- ✠ Program Instructions and Timeline
- ✠ Program images (5, high-resolution)
- ✠ 38-page Daily Devotions book to be printed or emailed
- ✠ Letters from the pastor to follow up after the program

Resources to Launch Program

- ✠ Theme Essay *Fulfilling God's Purpose!* (Kick-off with commitment form)
- ✠ Commitment form
- ✠ Newsletter article
- ✠ Bulletin cover
- ✠ Bulletin message
- ✠ Kick-off Letter

Resources for EACH of the Four Weeks of the Program

- ✠ Theme essay (in both letter and tri-fold formats):
 - Building Relationships (Week 1)*
 - Witnessing for Jesus (Week 2)*
 - Living as Servants (Week 3)*
 - Giving Joyfully and Generously (Week 4)*
- ✠ Bulletin cover
- ✠ Bulletin message
- ✠ Email message
- ✠ Children's lesson
- ✠ Lay reader presentation
- ✠ Sermon and accompanying PowerPoint slides
- ✠ Bible studies, including answer book and accompanying PowerPoint slides
- ✠ Worship suggestions

Fulfilling God's Purpose!

Program Time Line

Launching the Program

Bible Studies & Devotional Book	Schedule Bible studies, as appropriate. Either print or prepare to e-mail the Bible studies and devotional book.
Newsletter Article	Publish “ <i>Fulfilling God’s Purpose!</i> ” one month prior to program.
Lay Readers	Identify and prep three (four) Lay Readers.
Letter from Pastor, Commitment Form, and Theme Essay “<i>Fulfilling God’s Purpose!</i>”	Mail to members so they receive them immediately before the beginning of the program.
Email Message	Send “Coming Soon!” email message a few days prior to the start of the program.
Bulletin Message	Publish “Coming Soon! <i>Fulfilling God’s Purpose!</i> ” in bulletins a week prior to program. There is a bulletin message for the week prior to the program, plus one for each week of the program to be placed in the bulletin.

The Four Weeks of the Program

First Week	Distribute Devotional booklets (one per household) Publish bulletin message (and cover) Send email message a few days before first Sunday Distribute theme essay “Building Relationships” Lay reader presentation: “ <i>Fulfilling God’s Purpose!</i> ” Teach youth lesson Review and use worship suggestions Preach sermon: “Love Builds Relationships” Teach Bible study
Second Week	Publish bulletin message (and cover) Send email message a few days before second Sunday Distribute theme essay: “ <i>Witnessing for Jesus</i> ” Lay reader presentation: “ <i>Witnessing for Jesus</i> ” Teach youth lesson Review and use worship suggestions Preach sermon: “ <i>Witnessing for Jesus</i> ” Teach Bible study
Third Week <i>Commitment Sunday, if three week program</i>	Publish bulletin message (and cover) Send email message a few days before first Sunday Distribute theme essay: “ <i>Living as Servants</i> ” Lay reader presentation: “ <i>A Life of Servanthood</i> ” Teach youth lesson Review and use worship suggestions Preach sermon: “ <i>Living as Servants</i> ” Teach Bible study Collect Commitment forms (if three week)

Fulfilling God’s Purpose!

Fourth Week (optional)

Commitment Sunday, if fourth week is used

Publish bulletin message (and cover)
Send email message a few days before first Sunday
Distribute theme essay: “*Giving Joyfully and Generously*”
Lay reader presentation: “*Abel Gave His Best*”
Teach youth lesson
Review and use worship suggestions
Preach sermon: “*Giving Joyfully and Generously*”
Teach Bible study
Collect Commitment forms (if fourth week is used)

After the Program

Letter to those not returning a commitment

Send reminder letters to members who failed to return their commitment forms.

Letter to those who turned in a commitment

Send thank-you letters to members who returned commitment forms.

Parish Publishing, LLC

PO Box 1561

New Canaan, CT 06840 • 888-320-5576

www.parishpublishing.org

Special thanks and acknowledgment to R. Chewning

Copyright © All rights reserved.

Churches purchasing this program material have permission to use, edit, and copy for internal use only.

Fulfilling God's Purpose!