

***Bearing Fruit for Jesus!***  
*A Three-Week Stewardship Program*



*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*

John 15:5

***Overview and Instructions***

***Bearing Fruit for Jesus!*** is a three-week stewardship program emphasizing the three themes of: Fruitful Use of Time, Fruitful Use of Talents and Fruitful Use of Money.

### **Program Goal**

The goal of this three-week stewardship program is to address whole life Christian stewardship: time, talents, and treasure. There is a focus one week on time, another on talents, and another on money. Through this program, the members of your church will grow in their understanding of Christian stewardship and grow as stewards.

### **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 three studies to be taught during the three-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 I like the idea of the study continuing after the three-week program.

### **Apple Day:**

You may want to consider having an Apple Day (first Sunday of program is suggested) when you either distribute apples to people as they leave worship or decorate the church with apples. Another option would be to place apples in bushel baskets and on counters, etc., instead of handing out an apple to each person. An Apple Day flyer should be given to each person.

This activity will serve as a reminder to members to go and bear spiritual fruit. An Apple Day flyer can be found at the *Parish Resource Center*.

### **Time and Talent Survey**

With the focus of the first two weeks on time and talent, you may want to have your members fill out a time and talent survey. Include a time and talent survey in each worship bulletin or folder. During the worship service give members a few minutes to complete the survey. Those who are unable to finish may bring them to church the following weekend. There is a time and talent survey at the *Parish Resource Center*.

### **Harvest 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 "Bearing Fruit for Jesus!" Commitment forms should also be distributed with the bulletins/worship folders on Harvest Sunday.

Every effort should be made to make Harvest 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 Harvest Sunday with a special catered luncheon or have a potluck luncheon.



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# Program Resources

Downloadable at the *Parish Resource Center*

## Resources – General

- ✠ Program Instructions and Timeline
- ✠ Program images (3, high-resolution)
- ✠ Follow-up letters

## Resources to Launch Program

- ✠ Theme Essay *Bearing Fruit for Jesus!* (Kick-off with commitment form)
- ✠ Commitment form (2)
- ✠ “Fruit” Stickers (To be printed on 2 x 4 inch label sheets)
- ✠ Newsletter articles (2)
- ✠ Bulletin cover
- ✠ Bulletin message
- ✠ Kick-off Letter

## Resources for EACH of the Three Weeks of the Program

- ✠ Theme essay:
  - Fruitful Use of Time (Week 1)*
  - Fruitful Use of Talents (Week 2)*
  - Fruitful Use of Money (Week 3)*
- ✠ Bulletin cover
- ✠ Bulletin messages
- ✠ Children’s handout
- ✠ Children’s message
- ✠ Lay reader presentation
- ✠ Sermon
- ✠ Worship suggestions

## Additional Resources

- ✠ Apple Day Resources for first Sunday
  - Apple Day flyer
  - Apple Day bulletin/email messages
- ✠ Time and Talent survey for second Sunday
- ✠ Bible studies (3)
  - Includes answer book
- ✠ 33-page Daily devotions book to be printed or emailed



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# Program Time Line

## *Launching the Program*

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### **Bible Studies & Devotional Book**

Either print or prepare to e-mail the Bible studies and devotional book.

### **Newsletter Articles**

Publish “Bearing Fruit for Jesus” one month prior to program.

Publish “Coming Soon ... Bearing Fruit for Jesus” in the newsletter just prior to the start of program.

### **Lay Readers**

Identify and prep three Lay Readers.

### **Letter from Pastor, Commitment Form, and Theme Essay “Bearing Fruit for Jesus”**

Mail to members so they receive them immediately before the beginning of the program.

### **Bulletin Messages**

Place clipart “Coming Soon! Bearing Fruit for Jesus” in bulletins two to three weeks 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.

### **“Bearing Fruit” stickers**

Print on 2 x 4 label stock (Any Avery 10 per page sheets)

## *The Three-Weeks of the Program*

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### **First Week**

*Apple Day recommended*

Distribute Devotional booklets (one per household)

Publish bulletin message (and cover)

Distribute theme essay “Fruitful Use of Time”

Create Apple Day theme and distribute flyers

Distribute “*Bearing Fruit*” stickers

Lay reader presentation: “Fruitful Use of Time”

Teach children’s message

Use Sunday school handout

Worship suggestions

Preach sermon: “Living with the End in Mind”

Teach Bible study

### **Second Week**

*Time and Talent survey recommended*

Publish bulletin message (and cover)

Include Time & Talent Survey in bulletin

Distribute theme essay: “Fruitful Use of Talents”

Lay reader presentation: “Fruitful Use of Talents”

Teach children’s message

Use Sunday school handout

Worship suggestions

Preach sermon: “Using What You’ve Got”

Teach Bible study



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### **Third Week**

*Commitment / Harvest Sunday*

Publish bulletin message (and cover)  
Distribute theme essay: "Fruitful Use of Money"  
Lay reader presentation: "Fruitful Use of Money"  
Teach children's message  
Use Sunday school handout  
Worship suggestions  
Preach sermon: "First Things First"  
Collect Commitment forms

### **After the Program**

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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.

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