

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

Thank you for downloading the *Fulfilling God's Purpose!* sample packet. This packet includes:

- † **Samples of several of the resources provided so the reader can evaluate writing style, tone, etc.**
- † **The program instructions and timeline appear at the end of this packet, which provide a detailed description of the program, included program resources, and a timeline of program implementation.**

**If you would like additional information,  
please visit our website or call us toll-free at 888-320-5576.**



## ***Fulfilling God's Purpose!***

### *Lay Reader Presentation – Third Week of Program*

#### **“A Life of Servanthood”**

Our focus for the third week in our stewardship program “Fulfilling God’s Purpose!” is “Living as Servants.” Jesus said that he came “*not to be served but to serve*” (Matthew 20:28). As a servant to others, Christ showed God’s goodness. Jesus did not take on merely the outward form of a servant; Jesus’ whole being was a servant. His purpose in coming to earth was to serve, the ultimate act of service being his work on the cross.

In contrast, we by nature are self-focused and not inclined to see, much less seek, opportunities to serve others. Through the indwelling and transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we can become servants who are enabled to live a life of servanthood.

Jesus calls us into servanthood not just because others need our service but because of what happens to us when we serve. Jesus said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). We receive through our giving. In serving others we often gain more than those receiving our service.

Richard Foster wrote, “Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.” As God’s stewards, we are to serve all people, not just those who can bring us status or clout or return the favor. Helping others minimizes the problem of self-absorption or pride that interferes with a life of servanthood. When we do mundane, unnoticed acts of service for others, we receive the reward of knowing that it is really Christ we are serving (Matthew 25:40).

Being a servant means, first of all, being available. It also means being willing. We may at times need to have our agendas interrupted for service opportunities. A true servant serves without thinking because it happens naturally.

Mutual servanthood and submission characterize God’s kingdom. Jesus said, “*Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave*” (Matthew 20:26). As we become servants who seek to serve the Lord through others we are conforming to God’s ways and not the world’s.

## ***Fulfilling God's Purpose!***

*Letter from Pastor to those who have not turned in a commitment form. To be sent two weeks after program ends.*

Dear Member,

*"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because . . . of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints" (Colossians 1:3-4). Through the faithful stewardship of the Body of Christ here at \_\_\_\_\_ (church name) \_\_\_\_\_, we are able to proclaim the Gospel here and in the mission field, both in word and in deed.*

During our recent stewardship program, "Fulfilling God's Purpose," we have focused on God's generosity to us and our need, as God's people, to show love and gratitude to him. He is the Creator and Provider of all we are and have; he is the source of all love and mercy. Through the gift of his Son, who suffered, died, and won the victory over sin, death, and the devil, he has provided for us the sure hope of eternity with him. Through his Holy Spirit, he calls us and gathers us into his church and daily does his work of sanctification in us.

How can we respond to this great love of our Father and use all his gifts to us for his glory? God is totally committed to us. Are you willing to make a commitment to him? Your commitment card has not yet been received. Perhaps you're still praying about it; maybe you've forgotten it; maybe it's been lost. We are enclosing another card and ask that you complete it and return it to the church office at your earliest convenience. In order to carry on the ministry that Christ has commissioned to us (Matthew 28:19-20), \_\_\_\_\_ (church name) \_\_\_\_\_ needs your support.

Thank you and may God continue to pour out his blessings on you as you fulfill God's purpose!

In Christ,

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Fulfilling God's Purpose!***

*Sermon - Fourth Sunday*

### **"Giving Joyfully and Generously"**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

**The text is from 2 Corinthians 8:1-3**

The text of our fourth and final message in our stewardship program "Fulfilling God's Purpose!" is 2 Corinthians 8:1-3. Because this may resemble a Bible study more than a sermon, please open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 8. In Chapters 8 and 9, Paul talks about a model for Christian giving. The Apostle Paul lays out before the Corinthian church and all of us how we are to give our money and our resources to the Lord.

Albert Einstein once pointed out that there are only three ways to teach a child. The first is example, the second is example, and the third is example. That is exactly what Paul is doing in teaching the people in Corinth about giving. He teaches them by way of example and the example is the churches of Macedonia mentioned in verse 1. *"And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches"* The churches at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea, were the three cities where the churches in Macedonia were located who were models of Christian giving. They had learned what Martin Luther knew when he said, "I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all, but whatever I have placed into God's hands that I will always possess."

The Macedonians had learned what Jim Elliot, the great missionary martyr in Ecuador said, "He is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." The Macedonians were examples of giving. They gladly exchanged earthly treasure for heavenly wealth.

The way in which they gave serves as a model for all of us as Christians and sets off the whole section on Christian giving which encompasses chapters 8 and 9. In the first eight verses of chapter 8 we learn a very great principle from the Macedonians, and that principle is that giving is the behavior of devout Christians. It all starts with Christian commitment, Christian devotion, love for God, love for Christ—love that rises out of hearts that are first given to the Lord. This love for Jesus is the very heart of the whole issue. This was the attitude of the Macedonians who provide for us this model for Christian giving. They gave first themselves to the Lord, and everything flowed from that commitment.

As we look at the Macedonians' devotion to the Lord and the character of their giving, several elements are manifest in this text. First of all, their giving was initiated by God's grace. That is, it

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we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In faith, we want to give generously and cheerfully.

### **Lifestyle of Serving**

As our Chief Steward, Jesus gave us a perfect model of service to emulate. He faithfully served his heavenly Father and all people. Jesus did not come to be served but to serve (Matthew 20:28). Jesus calls us into servanthood not just because others need our service but because of what he wants to do in and for us through our serving. In serving others, God blesses those who serve as well as



those who are served.

### **Lifestyle of Witnessing**

As stewards of God's grace, we have been chosen and called to be his mouths, feet, and hands to help seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Paul tells us, *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us"* (2

Corinthians 5:20). Knowing that God *"wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4), we have a great privilege and responsibility as Christ's ambassadors. *"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful"* (1 Corinthians 4:2). With the Holy Spirit working in and through us, we can faithfully and boldly proclaim the Gospel to those around us. Paul tells us that we should share our faith so that we *"will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ"* (Philemon 6).

### **Lifestyle of Walking Humbly with God**

Micah 6:8 states, *"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* God's unconditional love for us which *"sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins"* (1 John 4:10) becomes our best encouragement to walk humbly with God in obedience born of love and our motivation to fulfill God's purpose!

## *Fulfilling God's Purpose!*



*"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



# *Fulfilling God's Purpose!*

*"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

Our stewardship is the expression of our faith as we manage our lives and resources for God's purposes. It is the wise management of who we are and all that we have. God has chosen us as his stewards and grants us the wonderful privilege to serve the Kingdom. God also equips and empowers us for service. As God molds and transforms us into his stewards, we acknowledge that everything in this life is a sacred trust from him. God is the source and owner of all things. He allows us to use his creation and intends it for our good.

Our stewardship is seen in our deeds and actions. Our acts of stewardship become more Christ-like as our relationship with Jesus grows. Out of love and gratitude for our Savior who has redeemed us, we are eager to perform our stewardship activities.

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we become faithful stewards who respond willingly and joyfully to God's love, goodness, and mercy. Through faith, we are empowered to do as God directs us in 1 Peter 4:10: *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*



## **Lifestyle of Stewardship**

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

**Just live it...**

vocation, the ordering of our lives, 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).

## Devotion to God

Our careers, hobbies, and money are important but not worthy of our devotion. God alone deserves our whole-hearted devotion. David exhorted his son Solomon to “*serve [the Lord] with wholehearted devotion*” (1 Chronicles 28:9); we are to have that same devotion. Our devotion to God is illustrated by the lifestyles that we lead as we steward our days in faithful service to him.

Devotion can be expressed at every level and in every activity of life. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31). As God’s stewards, we can rejoice that even our most mundane tasks can be dedicated to God.

## Lifestyle of Giving

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church of Corinth: “. . . *see that you also excel in the grace of giving*” (2 Corinthians 8:7). God’s will for us is not only that we should be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), but also that we should be sanctified . . . live a faithful Christian life (Ephesians 4:1). In Christ, we can stop putting our self-interests first and seek to be giving and sharing people. We give because we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In faith, we want to give generously and cheerfully.

## Lifestyle of Serving

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## Lifestyle of Walking Humbly with God

Micah 6:8 states, “*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*” God’s unconditional love for us which “*sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*” (1 John 4:10) becomes our best encouragement to walk humbly with God in obedience born of love and our motivation to fulfill God’s purpose!

## ***Fulfilling God's Purpose!***

*“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*

| <b>Percentage Giving (Proportionate)</b><br>(Expressed in \$ commitment per week) |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                  |            |            |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Annual Income</b>  | <b>1%</b> | <b>2%</b> | <b>3%</b> | <b>4%</b> | <b>5%</b> | <b>6%</b> | <b>7%</b> | <b>8%</b> | <b>9%</b> | <b>10% Tithe</b> | <b>11%</b> | <b>12%</b> |
| <b>\$ 15,000</b>  | 2.88      | 5.77      | 8.65      | 11.54     | 14.42     | 17.31     | 20.19     | 23.08     | 25.96     | <b>28.85</b>     | 31.73      | 34.62      |
| <b>\$ 20,000</b>  | 3.85      | 7.69      | 11.54     | 15.38     | 19.23     | 23.08     | 26.92     | 30.77     | 34.62     | <b>38.46</b>     | 42.31      | 46.15      |
| <b>\$ 25,000</b>  | 4.81      | 9.62      | 14.42     | 19.23     | 24.04     | 28.85     | 33.65     | 38.46     | 43.27     | <b>48.08</b>     | 52.88      | 57.69      |
| <b>\$ 30,000</b>  | 5.77      | 11.52     | 17.31     | 23.08     | 28.85     | 34.62     | 40.38     | 46.15     | 51.92     | <b>57.69</b>     | 63.46      | 69.23      |
| <b>\$ 35,000</b>  | 6.73      | 13.46     | 20.19     | 26.92     | 33.65     | 40.38     | 47.12     | 53.85     | 60.58     | <b>67.31</b>     | 74.04      | 80.77      |
| <b>\$ 40,000</b>  | 7.69      | 15.38     | 23.08     | 30.77     | 38.46     | 46.15     | 53.85     | 61.54     | 69.23     | <b>76.92</b>     | 84.62      | 92.31      |
| <b>\$ 45,000</b>  | 8.65      | 17.31     | 25.96     | 34.62     | 43.27     | 51.92     | 60.58     | 69.23     | 77.88     | <b>86.54</b>     | 95.19      | 103.85     |
| <b>\$ 50,000</b>  | 9.62      | 19.23     | 28.85     | 38.46     | 48.08     | 57.69     | 67.31     | 76.92     | 86.54     | <b>96.15</b>     | 105.77     | 115.38     |
| <b>\$ 55,000</b>  | 10.58     | 21.15     | 31.73     | 42.31     | 52.88     | 63.46     | 74.04     | 84.62     | 95.19     | <b>105.77</b>    | 116.35     | 126.92     |
| <b>\$ 60,000</b>  | 11.54     | 23.08     | 34.62     | 46.15     | 57.69     | 69.23     | 80.77     | 92.31     | 103.85    | <b>115.38</b>    | 126.92     | 138.46     |
| <b>\$ 70,000</b>  | 13.46     | 26.92     | 40.38     | 53.85     | 67.31     | 80.77     | 94.23     | 107.69    | 121.15    | <b>134.62</b>    | 148.08     | 161.54     |
| <b>\$ 80,000</b>  | 15.38     | 30.77     | 46.15     | 61.54     | 76.92     | 92.31     | 107.69    | 123.08    | 138.46    | <b>153.85</b>    | 169.23     | 184.62     |
| <b>\$ 90,000</b>  | 17.31     | 34.62     | 51.92     | 69.23     | 86.54     | 103.85    | 121.15    | 138.46    | 155.77    | <b>173.08</b>    | 190.38     | 207.69     |
| <b>\$100,000</b>  | 19.23     | 38.46     | 57.69     | 76.92     | 96.15     | 115.38    | 134.62    | 153.85    | 173.08    | <b>192.30</b>    | 211.54     | 230.77     |



## *Fulfilling God's Purpose!* Bible Study

### *Giving Joyfully and Generously*

**Prayer:** Lord, help us to acknowledge that you are the source of everything good in our lives. Thank you for your generosity toward us, demonstrated especially by the gift of your Son, Jesus. Grant us loving and thankful hearts so we might give freely to you through our church. Bless this study as we learn what it means to give joyfully and generously. In your precious name we pray. Amen.

**Theme verse:** *"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Corinthians 9:7).

#### **Introduction**

When individuals or families encounter difficult financial times, changes are necessary in order to pay the bills and provide food and shelter. Unfortunately, many times the first area people cut back on their expenditures is in their giving to the Lord. It's ironic that the same thing can happen when people are doing very well financially. Sadly, it seems that the more we have, the more we need, or think we need. In both situations we deprive ourselves of the blessings of "giving joyfully and generously." Instead of **fulfilling God's purpose**, we are faithless, depending on ourselves instead of putting our trust in the Lord to provide for our needs. We forget Paul's words to the Romans: "[God] who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all ... how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). Will God, who gave us the most indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15), be stingy with temporary blessings? No indeed!



Since we don't need to worry about temporary blessings, then ... in fact, since we are commanded not to worry about them (Matthew 6:25-34) ... we are freed to respond to our Lord by "giving joyfully and generously" to others, just as he has given to us. Jesus gave us the greatest and most perfect gift by offering himself on the Cross. With hearts full of gratitude for God's gift of his own Son, our desire to give not just our monetary gifts, but our time, efforts, and abilities as well, grows until we are no longer giving just the minimum; we are "giving joyfully and generously."

Certainly, if we live with a worldly spirit, giving generously seems foolish. Without faith and trust in the Lord, there is a much greater focus on taking and hoarding than giving. However, mature Christians who are under the control of the Holy Spirit understand the importance of giving and do so joyfully and generously. We live lives in thanksgiving and gratitude because of who Jesus is

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## *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 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.

***Fulfilling God's Purpose!***

# **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

# Program Time Line

## *Launching the Program*

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

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

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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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