

parish

Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!

A Three-week Stewardship Program



*“We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by **faith**, your labor prompted by **love**, and your endurance inspired by **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Program Instructions

Program Description

Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope! is a 3-week stewardship program designed to be an integral part of your stewardship plan. It will create a positive atmosphere in which to focus on the commitment of your members. We recommend that it be accompanied by monthly communication and inspiration about stewardship throughout the year, such as a bulletin or newsletter insert. This will provide a consistent, meaningful backdrop to conveying the stewardship theme.

Program Material Files

The program material files contain the core materials required to undertake a successful program: newsletter articles, bulletin messages and inserts, email messages, lay reader presentations, sermons, children's messages, letters from the pastor, giving charts and a commitment form. These materials are available at the *Parish Resource Center* (<http://www.parishpublishing.org/resourcecenter>), placed in separate files making them easy to find and use. Simply download the material to your computer and you can edit or change any material, if desired.

Keep your log on information handy: Username _____ Password _____

All materials are downloadable and included:

Materials for preparation and kick-off of the program:

- † Program Instructions
- † Background photo
- † Newsletter or Email article
- † Bulletin messages
- † Program brochure (In both tri-fold and letter formats.)
- † Letter from pastor to accompany Commitment Form
- † Letter from pastor to those not returning a Commitment Form
- † Letter from pastor to thank members who turned in a Commitment Form
- † 28-page Devotional booklet (In both booklet and full-size formats.)
- † Giving Chart
- † Commitment Form

Materials for each week of the program:

- † Bulletin insert
- † Children's message
- † Lay reader message
- † Worship suggestions
- † Bible study (Including Bible study answer guide.)
- † Sermon

Devotional Meditations Booklet

Separated into three sections: Faith, Love and Hope, these eighteen carefully written devotions illustrate and fortify the fundamental foundations of stewardship. Each of the *Grow as a Steward through Faith, Love and Hope!* devotions includes a thematic scriptural reference and a closing prayer. During the program, they will provide encouragement and motivation for God's people to grow in their faith, love and hope and therefore their natural commitment as a steward.

Program Brochure

The program brochure is integral to kicking off the program. It is included in two formats: tri-fold and letter. It should be sent to each family, placed in the bulletins or handed out. The program brochure provides a meaningful message, while remaining brief enough to be read quickly by busy people.

Bible Studies

In order to grow as a steward, it is essential to be in God's Word. There are three downloadable Bible studies included for each week of this program. The Bible studies are filled with many excellent discussion questions and will deepen the spiritual basis for giving. Simply print them out or email them to the participants.

Provide Year-round Inspiration

It is important to maintain a consistent communication and inspiration about stewardship throughout the year. We recommend using a monthly bulletin insert on stewardship, available separately from Parish Publishing.

Program Suggestions

- ✠ The devotional booklet and program brochure are important elements of the program. Prepare to print or email them in plenty of time for the program launch.
- ✠ To help launch the program, send a program brochure along with the pastor's letter and the commitment form. Include either the devotional booklet, or hand the program brochure out separately as the program begins.
- ✠ Use the program background photo when publishing bulletin or newsletter messages, either behind the text or as cover art.
- ✠ We encourage you to ask some people to share their personal testimonies regarding their lives as stewards to augment or replace the included lay reader presentations. If there are no volunteers, use the lay reader presentations that are available for each Sunday.
- ✠ Emphasize the importance of attending the Bible studies. In order for people to grow and excel in the grace of giving, they need to be reading and studying God's Word.
- ✠ This program can be offered any time during the year.
- ✠ Make Commitment Sunday a special day. Offer refreshments. Have balloons. Make it a day of celebration as people offer their commitments to the Lord. Make it an exciting and memorable day.

Program Time Line

Preceding the three stewardship Sundays

Bible studies	Schedule Bible study groups, or church-wide sessions. Email the Bible studies to those people attending.
Lay reader presentation	Identify and schedule lay readers.
Newsletter article:	Publish one month preceding the program.
Schedule Bible study meetings.	
Mailing to launch program: Letter from the Pastor Program Brochure Commitment Form	Mail to households so they are received just before the beginning of the program.
Devotional Meditations Booklet	Either included in launch mailing or handed/emailed out.
Bulletin Messages	Publish one message in the bulletin prior to the three Sunday program. Then, one for each Sunday.
Email Message	Send newsletter article in email preceding program.

During the three stewardship Sundays

First Sunday	Publish bulletin insert. Lay reader presentation: “Motivated by Faith“ Teach children’s message: “The Prize” Use worship suggestions. Preach sermon: “Consistently Running the Race of Faith” Host Bible study session during week.
Second Sunday	Publish bulletin insert. Lay reader presentation: “Love Compels Us to Give” <i>Distribute “Giving Chart” (optional).</i> Teach children’s message: “Loving Others” Use worship suggestions. Preach sermon: “Love Prompts Action” Host Bible study session during week.
Third Sunday	Publish bulletin insert. Lay reader presentation: “Where Is Your Hope?” Teach children’s message: “Our Sure Hope” Use worship suggestions. Preach sermon: “Inspired by Hope”

Host Bible study session during week.

Invite your members to place their commitment forms on the altar. Have extra forms available.

After the three stewardship Sundays

Letter to those

not returning a commitment form:

Send reminder letters to those who failed to return their commitment form.

Letter to those

who turned in a commitment form:

Send thank-you letters to those who turned in commitment forms.

Email message and bulletin message:

Thank-you to people for their generosity.

We recommend providing monthly stewardship bulletin or newsletter inserts after the program in order to maintain consistent inspiration and communication throughout the entire year. This will help reinforce the concept of stewardship and prepare your members for next year's program!

Helpful Hints for Printing

1. *Please edit and copy/paste any resources to fit your stationary, bulletin or newsletter, as desired. Suggested or required changes are **[In Red]**.*
2. *Devotionals booklet printing:*
 - a. In the Adobe Acrobat Print Dialogue box (not your printer's settings), "Page Scaling" must be set to "Booklet Printing."
 - b. If you have a two sided "duplex" printer, in the printer properties, make sure that "Booklet Subset" is set to "Both Sides."
3. *Commitment Card printing: We suggest using card stock instead of normal printer paper.*
4. *Tri-fold brochures: If you have a two sided "duplex" printer, in the printer properties, make sure that "duplex" is selected.*

Parish Publishing, LLC

PO Box 1561

New Canaan, CT 06840 • 888-320-5576

www.parishpublishing.org

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Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!

Bulletin Message - First Sunday: “Faith”

Bulletin message:

“Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!”

Today is the first Sunday of our three-week sermon and Bible study stewardship education program focusing on the virtues of faith, love and hope. Today our focus is on faith, which God graciously gives to us. Through faith, we acknowledge God as our Creator and Redeemer, and we are made right with him. In our sermon message and in our Bible study for this day, we will see that our stewardship is the evidence of faith. Faith leads us to action. Our faith empowers us to be God-pleasing stewards.

Bulletin message:

STEWARDSHIP IS THE EXPRESSION OF OUR FAITH

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

Hebrews 11:6

Faith

Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!

Lay Reader Presentation - Third Sunday: “Hope”

Where Is Your Hope?

As part of our stewardship theme “Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!” we are focusing today on the virtue of hope. Webster’s Dictionary states that hope is “a person or thing on which one may base some hope.” Our world tells us that hope for a happy and successful life can be found in the accumulation of things. We are told that more is better. We hope that, with wealth and status, we will not only enjoy life now, we will also have a secure future.

In contrast, Jesus called the wealthy farmer whose only hope lay in his earthly possessions a “fool.” With equally strong words, Paul wrote that all things were “rubbish” unless they helped him gain Christ (Philippians 3:8). Paul also wrote, “*For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that*” (1 Timothy 6:7-8). The writer of Hebrews wrote, “*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’*” (Hebrews 13:5).

Where is our hope? Is our hope in the world and what the world offers, or is our hope in Jesus? In order to answer that question, let’s consider Jesus’ words from Matthew 6:21, “*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*” Our treasure is where we commit our time, money, energy, and thoughts. Our treasure becomes our life and the hope for our future. If God is our treasure, we will be faithful in our church attendance, in our prayer life, in our Bible reading, and in our giving. God wants all of us to understand that our earthly treasures cannot compare to “*the hope that is stored up for [us] in Heaven*” (Colossians 1:5). Through faith, we will see that things of this world don’t last. Things will get lost, rust, or become obsolete. God enables us to make him our treasure and to place our hope and security in him. God’s blessings on your worship today as we look at the virtue of hope.

Faith Empowers God's Stewards

Theme verse: *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."* John 14:12

The writer of Hebrews defines faith: *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"* (Hebrews 11:1). Faith enables us to be God-pleasing stewards. *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"* (Hebrews 11:6). The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is known as the "Faith Chapter." From Abel down through the ages, the writer names the heroes of faith, listing their accomplishments, preceding each one with "by faith."

Through faith, we understand that our stewardship is God working in and through us. It is not what we do, not what we give, not how we serve – but what God does, what God gives, how God serves, and our response to his love and gifts to us. God has shown us his plan for our lives. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:10). This is the definition of stewardship: doing the good works which God has prepared for us to do. God empowers and equips us to be faithful stewards. God has chosen us to carry out his work on earth. *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit ... fruit that will last"* (John 15:16).

It is through faith that our pastor confidently enters the pulpit to speak forth the Word of the Lord. It is God's message, God's gift, and he is only the channel through which it flows. Through faith, the servant humbly steps forward to serve. His only motive is that God may receive the glory as he offers his hands, feet, lips, his whole body, soul, and mind in service. Through faith, the teacher diligently prepares her lessons, seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit, studying the Word of God, and looking into the hearts of her students. God creates the learning; his Spirit creates the faith. As stewards, we are the faithful vessels that God uses. Through faith, God can make us into his faithful stewards.

Not For Reprint



Prayer: *Lord, you are the creator and source of all good things. We thank you for the privilege and opportunity that you give us to be the stewards of your creation. We thank you for the faith that you give us which enables us to carry out your will. We thank you for your love and grace. Help us to be faithful stewards in telling others of Jesus' love. We pray that you will continue to work in us so we can be the stewards that you created us to be. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.*

Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!

Letter from Pastor to accompany commitment form
(Also include the Program Brochure.)

*“We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by **faith**, your labor prompted by **love**, and your endurance inspired by **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Dear Friends in Christ,

I greet you in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

With excitement, I write this letter to tell you about the stewardship program we will begin on Sunday, **[Program Start Date]**, called “Grow as Stewards through Faith, Love and Hope!” During this three-week program, both our worship services and our Bible study classes will focus on the work of the Holy Spirit as he matures us for faithful stewardship through faith, love, and hope.

God has called us to be his stewards. In his sovereignty, God has chosen to accomplish his plan on earth through us. He continually calls us to offer ourselves to him and his work. By ourselves, we are helpless, but he has also graciously equipped us to respond to his call and to be his God-pleasing stewards. Through faith, love, and hope, God enables us to carry out his purposes for our lives.

Each Sunday, we will focus on one of the virtues of faith, love, and hope. I pray that each of you will avail yourself of the opportunity to worship Christ, our Chief Steward, and to learn how God uses faith, love, and hope to develop a closer relationship with us as well as to prompt us to action with our time, talents, and treasures.

Please bring the enclosed Commitment Form with you to church on Commitment Sunday, **[Commitment Sunday Date]**, or drop it off in the church office at your convenience.

God’s blessings on your continued faithful stewardship of the many blessings he has entrusted to your care.

Your fellow steward,

Pastor _____