

Lesson 6: “**The Purpose I Pursue**”
A Facilitator’s Guide for Mid-Elementary to Adult Bible Classes

I. Welcome & Prayer (5 mins)

II. Ice-Breaker (2-3 mins)

- Does anyone have a hidden talent or special skill that we don’t know about?

III. Finding Your Purpose Activity (setup & explanation 2 mins)

- Everyone should have a piece of paper & pen/pencil. Write your name at the top of your paper. Pass your paper to the person to your left. Everyone should have someone else’s paper now. On the paper you have received, think about 1 word/phrase that best describes that person. Think specifically about words/phrases that describe their spiritual gifts, talents, abilities, & personality that will help them find or affirm their purpose in life (e.g. encourager, friendly, good speaker, generous). Keep passing the papers until everyone has written on them and received their own back.

III. Discussion & Application (30-35 mins) – write comments on the board to build momentum & reflection. - You may only get to 3 of the 4 questions. No problem. Choose the ones that are most important for your class or adjust on the fly. Focus on prompts that are provoking stories. Once the stories dry up or have produced an environment where everyone feels their own story, move on to the next question. The goal is inspiration and transformation, which come when one person has learned from another and is ready to share their own story.

1. Based on your unique skills, passions, experiences, spiritual giftedness, personality, and goals what would you say is your life’s purpose? That is—what do you enjoy doing and may be good at, and how does that meet a need in the world (e.g. helping people, teaching students, caring for animals)? **(7-10 mins)**
2. How and when did you discover your life purpose (i.e. major influences, role models, resources, experiences, trial-and-error) OR how are you trying to discover your life purpose? **(7-10 mins)**
3. How have you received confirmation of your purpose, and how can we help others find confirmation or guidance in their purpose now and throughout life (in various ages and life circumstances)? **(7-10 mins)**
4. What else could you be spending your life doing and also find meaningful purpose in it? **(3 mins)**

For Next Week: Let’s discuss as a class, based on our collective skills, passions, and perceived needs in the world, what could be our class’s purpose? We will make a list on the board of 2 columns—what are our collective gifts/passions and what are some needs in the world. Then, we will discuss which 1 need in the world we think we can help meet this year given our class’s gifts/passions.

IV. Application (2-3 mins to explain and make sure everyone understands):

Believe: Look at your sheet of paper from the activity and share 1 item you expected to see on the sheet (because it is a talent/passion you are aware of) and 1 you are surprised to see on the paper (because it is one you were unaware of or didn’t think you had), and how both can help you in your pursuit of purpose.

Act: Apply what you learned about yourself today to try to meet a particular need at school, work, home, or elsewhere that you are uniquely prepared to meet.

Teach: Do the 4 pages to purpose activity with someone this week to help them discover their unique gifts/passions and purpose. Complete the Ministry Fair Questionnaire & Directory Update to help the church discover how it can meet the needs in our community given our collective gifts. Share your stories with friends, family, social media, & us at College Church.

Lesson Outline for Bible Class (Birth to Mid-Elementary)

Believe: Choose a character from the Bible who lived out God's purposes (Abraham/Sarah, Moses/Zipporah, Hannah/Samuel, Esther/Mordecai, the Apostles, Paul/Timothy). Tell the story in such a way that the phases of discovering the purpose, living it out, and feeling confirmed in that purpose are evident—for example, Esther sees a need to save her people, Mordecai helps Esther discover and confirms her purpose, Esther has challenges but fulfills her purpose. Use pictures, songs, videos, or act this out to bring it to life.

Act: Tell each child 1 personality trait, skill, passion, or spiritual gift that you see in them & what you think this might mean for their lives, career, family, ministry. Have them bless each another & you with a similar declaration about calling and purpose.

Teach: See if they each child can remember the purpose you spoke over them and the others. Have them share this purpose with their family & come back next week telling you how they used their purpose for God.

Lesson Outline for Small Groups & Families

Believe: Have everyone (all ages) share their individual spiritual gifts, passions, abilities, and talents with the group. Write them on a board. Then, have everyone list some needs in the world in a second column. As a small group or family, decide 1 need that your group can help meet based on your collective gifts, abilities, and passions.

Act: Make a plan for meeting that need over the next month. What is your goal? What role will everyone play given each of your unique gifts and abilities? What is the first step? Have everyone make their own commitment toward advancing the mission. Do this each week and mark your progress as you go. Change the need you are meeting or the depth of your involvement in that need as necessary throughout the month.

Teach: Talk to other families/small groups to see what gifts they have and what need(s) they are meeting. See if you can work together to meet a need or share resources. Share these stories with others in person or online to encourage. Be sure to have everyone complete the Ministry Fair Questionnaire & Directory Update so that we can meet bigger needs as a church community.

Lesson Outline for Individual Study

Believe: Spend some time in deeper reflection on your spiritual gifts, passions, talents, and abilities. Use the resources in the Ministry Fair Questionnaire (emailed to you) to explore your personality traits, spiritual gifts, and ministry passion. Add in the words/phrases your classmates wrote on your Purpose Paper activity

in class to see what that might reveal about your purpose and the need(s) you should meet—where does your deep gladness meet the world’s deep hunger?

Act: Take 1 step toward advancing your calling and purpose each day this week to meet a need in the world.

Teach: Share your calling/purpose with others and how you are or plan to meet a need in the world. Ask others about their purpose and the need they are meeting. Complete the Ministry Fair Questionnaire and Directory Update to help the rest of the church see how your gifts and ministry fits with theirs to advance the kingdom.

Additional Scriptures & Discussion Questions for Weeks 2-4 (Bible Class, Small Groups, Families, or Individual Study)

General Prompts

1. What is the world teaching us to believe or not believe about our purpose? How is the world teaching us this? What difference does it make if we believe or don't believe the world?
2. What makes the message of purpose in the Bible different from the message of purpose elsewhere—whether in movies, tv, books, social media, or told by other religious groups?
3. What *resources & people* have helped you come to better know, live, & share the purpose you pursue in God? What *strategies* have you used to help others come to know, live, and share their purpose in God?

Week 2: Calling & Purpose—Read and Compare 2 of These Call Stories: Abraham (Gen 12:1-9), Moses (Ex. 3:1-4:17), Samuel (1 Sam 3:1-21), Jeremiah (Jer 1:1-19; 20:9); Esther (Est 4:1-17); the 12 Apostles (Mark 3:13-19; Lk 9:1-9); Timothy (2 Tim. 1:1-14; 3:10-16).

What are the similarities and differences in these 2 call stories—were their callings immediately recognized, a slow-drip revelation, or something in between. What has been your experience with you calling to your purpose? How has your calling morphed over time (and what factors have contributed to that)? If necessary, go back to Genesis 1 and the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30) to remind everyone that they were made with a “good” [useful, productive, talent-filled] purpose by God. Spend some time exploring how that purpose might be fulfilled through your family/small group. If you haven't already, complete the 4 page exercise together—page 1: what was the purpose of these 2 Bible Characters above, page 2: what are some of your gifts, talents, passions, affirmations/confirmations of your purpose, fire in your bones, or resistance to your calling; and page 3: what are some of the needs in the world you are passionate about (feel a burden for); and page 4: what is 1 need in the world that your gifts, passions, abilities can meet? What is your (and our) next step?

Week 3: Spiritual Gifts & Purpose—Read 1 Cor 12; Rom 12; and Eph 4.

Discuss which spiritual gifts you believe you possess individually and as a family/small group. Help others in the group discover their spiritual gifts or the path toward discovering them. Use resources like [The Spiritual Gifts Inventory](#) or look at the list of spiritual gifts in the online directory at College Church (e.g. generosity, encouragement, language, helping). Discuss how your spiritual gifts have already been used or could be used to serve the purposes of God in your life and in the life of your family, school/work, and world. How can your small group's or family's collective spiritual gifts minister to those within your circle of influence and world? How can you be equipped as saints for ministry and equip other saints for ministry (Eph 4:11-13)? If you were to choose a physical part of the body to explain your role at College Church, which part of the body would you be and why? Help others identify what is their part they are. As a smaller body within the body of Christ, what can our family/small group do to help meet a need in this world? How does our family/small group fit with other families/small groups at College Church to do more together than we can do alone? What is our next step?

Week 4: Personality and Purpose. Choose 2-3 characters in the Bible (e.g. Mary & Martha, Peter, Joshua, Jonah, etc.) and examine their personality traits based on these common 9 categories—*Extraverted/Introverted, Organized/Spontaneous, Detailed/Big Picture, Solo-worker/Team-worker, Fast-Paced/Slower-Paced, Thinker/Feeler, Leader/Helper, People-Oriented/Task-Oriented, Planner/Flexible.*

How do the personality traits of these Bible characters uniquely prepare them to fulfill their purpose? How did it help them and where did it hinder them? What are your personality traits? How do they uniquely prepare you to achieve your purpose? How have they helped you and when have they hindered you? If our family/small group had a personality type, what would it be (type 'A', Enneagram 2, Myers Briggs ESFJ)? How can we use our unique group personality traits to reach other groups and other needs in the world?