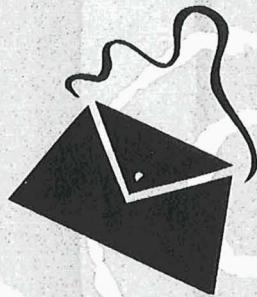
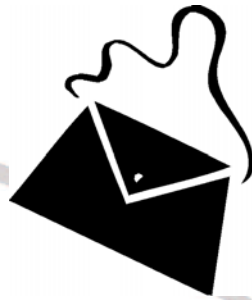


You've Got...
PURSE-
ONALITY!



A Spring Banquet
For Women Purse-uing
The Purse Driven Life!

You've Got...
PURSE-ONALITY!



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PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE

You've Got...

PURSE-ONALITY!

Celebrating Mother's Day? Honoring women of all ages? It can be done with a minimum of "hair pulling". With planning and prayer this banquet theme can be a memory maker!

Ready to try? We'll help! Use our handy-dandy little planner that arrives complete with Banquet Planner Details and specific program parts and ideas.

Organize this hilarious yet meaningful PURSE-ONALITY Banquet beginning to end using our easy workbook tips and program ideas. Change details as desired before communicating with your team to avoid confusion. When the banquet is well planned, your guests enjoy the evening and the planners experience a successful ministry effort!

This Time
It's Purse-ona!!!



Put Everything In...

PURSE-PECTINE!

Follow these tips and add your own creative flair to make your spring event "one of a kind" PURSE-FECTION! Handle basic arrangements and then have fun developing the theme.



Let's Have A Banquet!

A banquet is a party with food as the main attraction. Add a short program, a speaker or entertainment. The occasion is enjoyable, comfortable and social. The most popular traditional spring banquet is the Mother and Daughter Banquet. There are other occasions when banquets are enjoyable. Ladies Evenings, Women's Group programs, Holiday gatherings, Annual Retreat, summer picnics and even father and child banquets.

Let's Have A Party!

A party is a fun and games event where people mix for sparkling conversation, good food and laughter. Parties tend to be informal and hosts do not go to extra trouble to decorate. While party games were once wildly popular, there are groups who do not enjoy a lot of organized activity. It should be a highly enjoyable experience. The activities should fit the needs of the guests present.

Sometimes parties do not have to be planned at all. A larger party requires good planning to handle the program, publicity, decorating, welcoming, refreshments and clean up. Delicious refreshments are offered and you know you have had a great party if you had a chance to create your own fun and remember the event fondly.

Pay Attention To Small Details

Often it is the small detail that makes the biggest impression. Wild flowers on a table, small table gifts for each guest, background music, greeters at the door and other thoughtful gestures make individuals feel welcome and special.

Practice Christian Hospitality

In the middle of a fun activity, people should be growing in their understanding of the Lord. Everyone should be giving affection and receiving love from other Christians in the family of God. Begin friendly conversations, avoid gossip or mean spirits comments.

Set Party Goals

What do you want to see happen during the two hours your guests are with you? Be specific! Plans in this workbook are complete. However, you may have more fun if you change our details to fit your needs. Add creative ideas and change any activities as desired.

Work With A Team

Choose a small leadership team to complete all advance arrangements. The team may be as few as three or as large as ten or more. Divide tasks between the members and trust them to finish their tasks. While the leadership may be divided, one person should be in charge to keep the whole affair moving smoothly.

Organize!

Follow our suggestions adding your own creativity at the beginning of the planning process. Write down exactly what will happen and when the jobs must be completed. Do not leave organization to the last minute.

Purchase Supplies As Needed

Decide what the banquet budget is and stay within the limit. Keep expense records. Use the church tax exemption number.

Practice A Positive Approach

Maintain a light and happy atmosphere during the planning process. If your attitude is right, the rest of your team will catch the spirit. After all, this is a party!

Pray!

Pray for the event, the team and the guests. Pray as a team. Take each detail before the Lord and then—Relax!

Set Up

Provide adequate time to set up tables, decorations, props, food and other items necessary for the event. Reserve the church for the entire day and there may be situations when room arrangements must take place a day before the party.

Say Thank You

The behind-the-scenes team is the core of this event. Take time to write thank you notes, call and give small thank you gifts. Recognize your team publically at the banquet.

Clean Up

When the event is over, clean up begins. The party is not complete until the church is in order. Encourage the team to remove their props immediately. Stay to help with kitchen clean up.

Speaking Of...

THE PERFECT PURSE-ON!

Invite A Speaker

By all means invite a special person to share inspirational thoughts. When using a speaker, consider reducing program segments we provide that are best performed by the guests themselves. The speaker should conclude the evening festivities.

The Perfect Purse-On

A good speaker makes a faith connection with the specific group. Choose the speaker from a list of possibilities suggested by friends, relatives, pastor, other churches, community groups or national organizations.



Consider The Cost

Speaking fees are part of the banquet budget. Ask the speaker if they have a set fee. If not, give a generous monetary gift including traveling costs. Think about the time they invest in preparation, travel and presentation.

Give Specific Instructions

Send a letter, make a telephone call and stay in contact through the Internet. Include information like highway directions, arrival time and place, group size, time limit, lodging information and other personal details.

Tell the speaker the type of program and details of what you would like their speech to include. Continue to make contact periodically until the speaker leaves home to travel to the event.

Care And Feeding Of The Speaker

Assign a pre-arranged hostess "friend" to handle introduction, sit and converse with the guest at dinner to give the speaker a sense of belonging.

Be aware that it is disquieting for a speaker to enter a room of strangers, be expected to speak about personal issues and leave still feeling as if everyone is a stranger.

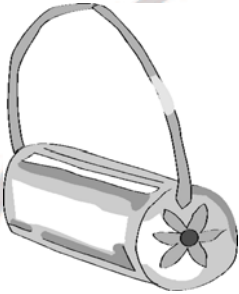
Pay all expenses from the time the speaker leaves their home until they return. If more meals are required, host or pay accordingly.

After The Banquet

Pay promptly. Stay with the speaker until they leave to return to their home. Thank them from your heart and always follow up with a handwritten thank you note.

Shouting Out...

PURSE-UE EVERY PURSE-ON



If you go to the trouble of preparing a terrific event, filled with fun, fellowship and great food, go the extra mile to publicize the event. Let's face it, you have to have women come so do your best to Purse-ue them.

It's All About The Purses!

Invitations, posters, registration forms, programs, handouts and centerpieces should all relate to your fun theme. Use the same colors, scripture, picture or logo on everything.



Purse-ue Every Purse-on!



Send invitations to everyone in your church. If a community wide event is desired, place posters in local restaurants, businesses, offices. Insert invitations in the weekly worship folder and in the monthly newsletter.

Don't forget...one of the best places to put posters is in the Ladies Room at church and in community businesses. If a local business hesitates to put another poster in their window, suggest this "out of the way" place!

Create Buzz!

Involve lots of people in the planning stages. They don't have to be on the team but delegate tasks or small parts. Ask as many people as possible to participate in the formal program. No memorization. They just read their part. The benefit? Everyone who is involved will attend and will be more likely to talk about the event and invite others. Many hands make light work. Cut stress with more help.

Wanna Have More Fun?

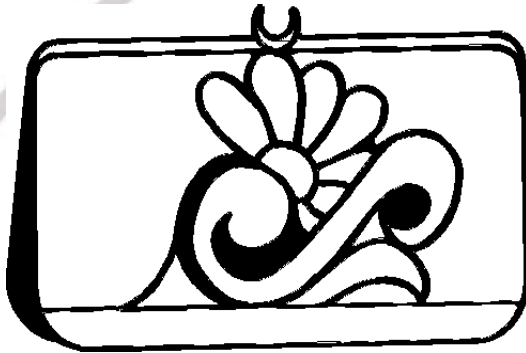
Advertise that prizes will be awarded for the wonderful PURSES the guests bring. Encourage everyone to dig out their favorite purses from years past or their present favorite bag. The stories that can be told and the ooo-ahh factor is priceless! Choose a few gals to judge the contest casually throughout the evening. Have fun telling stories at each table.

Be Creative!

If the banquet is around a holiday like Mother's Day, advertise the event to the men of the church that this is a great Mother's Day gift they can give their wives and mothers. Find creative ways to make your banquet a "gift" to the women who attend.



In Pursue-uit Of Beauty



Create a simple yet colorful decor. When guests enter the party area, they should see and feel the theme immediately. Discuss decoration at the beginning of the planning process. Follow our suggestions or invent

your own decorations.

Our tips are meant to spark your own creativity. Read and follow directions but use items that are available locally. Not every activity listed must be used.

Choose the best and leave the rest!

How Complicated Is This Going To Be?

This event can be as casual or involved as desired. If there are folks in your church who love to decorate, give them the responsibility to turn the room into a work of art. If no one comes forward, decorate simply at each table.

What Should Be Decorated?

Decorate tables with centerpieces and theme related items. Consider decorating the ticket table, the program area and four walls of the large room.

Let's Get SPurse-ific!

TABLES: Cover guest tables with colorful table cloths. Each table covering should compliment the color of the Purse and Accessory centerpiece.

CENTERPIECES: Feature one attractive purse in the center of each table. Scatter typical purse contents in and near the purse. Consider fancy handkerchiefs, key rings and keys, make up, compacts, mirrors, combs, lists, cell phones, pens, notebooks, checkbooks, candy bars, eyeglass cases, etc. Place a battery driven flashlight inside each purse, shining upward during dinner.

Option: Old purses purchased at a second hand store can be filled with plants, flowers, gloves, beads to decorate the tables. Or collect antique purses and decorate completely in an old fashioned purse theme. Lovely beaded purses and evening bags are often cherished items tucked away in trunks and drawers. Bring them out for a night on the town!

SERVING TABLE: If the dinner is a buffet, place several attractive purses with accessories at strategic places matching purses on individual guest tables.

TABLE GIFTS: Consider purchasing attractive key chains for each place setting. These are keepsakes that guests take home at the end of the evening.

Stage Presentation

Feature a dazzling array of purses and accessories, old and new, on the stage or at one end of the room. Make the display lovely to look at by building on a foundation of long tables placed side by side. Place books or boxes at different levels on the tables and hide with white coverings.

Display borrowed purses and accessories along the table on high and low levels to create visual interest. Add small identifying cards with each purse to inform owner, interesting information of each purse.

Option: Add one or more old fashioned coat racks to the display and hang purses on the pegs.

Light the display with spotlights or large, floor lamps placed behind the display.

Where Can I Find Props?

Purses and related accessories can be found in attics, basements, garages and closets. Ask everyone to donate old and new purses, feminine accessories that are popular in purses and anything else to add to the theme.

Local retail stores or boutiques may be willing to lend items from professional displays. Talk to owners of women's clothing shops.

Background Music

Play music as guests enter and during dinner. Take into consideration the fact that conversations will be taking place. CD/Cassette Volume should be just loud enough to hear. Play music at the end of the evening as guests are gathering their belongings and leaving.

Live music is always appropriate and fun. Ask a pianist, organist, harpist, small jazz band, classical string quartet, college or high school musicians to participate. Be prepared to feed them and offer a small honorarium.

Art Supplies, Decorations, Small Gifts

There are many resources available in local communities. Check out craft shops, party stores and discount stores. Make table decorations, programs and table gifts. Check the Internet for fun, affordable items available.

Door Prizes: There are many prizes that become perfect gifts. If possible, buy gifts shaped like purses. Consider picture frames, note holders, lamps, knick-knacks, make up bags, compacts, pill organizers, purses, key chains, flowers, potted plants, candles, stuffed animals, tea cups.

Find inexpensive items that are appealing to the feminine eye. Gifts are not necessary but often make the event special and fun for those who attend.

If young children are present, be sure to include toy gifts that charm them.

"PURSE-onaity PLUS" CENTERPIECE/FAVOR

This paper purse project takes on party personality with attitude! If you have wonderfully artistic and creative folks in your midst, try this Table Centerpiece instead of a real purse. (Enlarge the pattern to make the size desired.) Or, make a fancy "purse" for each guest and fill the fun feathered party favor with candies or treats!

Adapt instructions as desired!

Materials

Rubber Stamps in any fun, fancy design/pale pink, green, blue Ink pads

Paper: Pink swirled, green striped

White cardstock (one piece for each purse, one for trim)

Double stick tape

Pinking edged scissors

Green rhinestone jewel

Small pink fur boa

Glue

Instructions

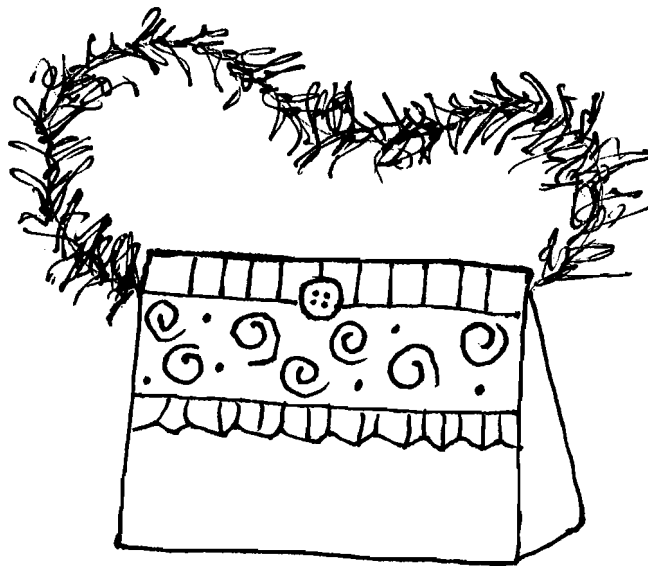
1. Glue swirl paper onto white cardstock. Trace purse pattern onto cardstock. Cut along pattern lines. Score and fold along fold lines as noted on pattern.
2. Stamp fun designs randomly on separate white cardstock using pink, green mint and sky blue inks.
3. Cut this stamped piece to create a faux flap for the purse. Cut along top edge with pinking scissors. Tear along bottom edge.
4. Tear piece of green striped paper to fit along the bottom of flap. Tape in place. Tape faux flap in place to create top flap of purse.
5. Glue jewel in place. Let dry.
6. Cut feather boa to desired length. Glue ends to inside of purse. Glue purse top flap edges together.
7. Place candies or treats into plastic bag and slip in through side of purse.

PURSE-ONALITY PLUS PATTERN (Enlarge or Reduce as desired)

Score and fold along this line

Score and fold along this line

Score and fold along this line



Catalog Stuff

S&S Arts And Crafts Catalog

S&S Arts and Crafts catalog offers art supplies and decorative items. For a free master copy of their current catalog, call 1-800-243-9232. Check out their enjoyable web site:

www.ssw.com

Oriental Trading Company Catalog

Oriental Trading Company catalog offers a wide variety of appropriate decorations and gift items for many fun themes. If you do not have their delightful catalog, call toll free 1-800-228-2269. Order directly through the company at their easy to use web site: www.orientaltrading.com

12 Wonderful Wood Purse Frames. Unfinished wood 8" x 5 ½" frames with a 6" x 4" photo space. Each includes a clear plastic photo cover, easel back, wire handle and two 2" flower shapes. JF-57/1108 \$12.95/dozen Price may change

24 Design Your Own Paper Purses. 8" x 3 ½" x 11" Simple assembly required. JF-57/6250 \$13.95/unit of 24. Price may change.

And So We Begin By...

PURSE-uing ATMOSPHERE!



Consider crowd psychology. No one enjoys going to a party where everyone remains a stranger, little conversation occurs and a subdued mood becomes awkward. Everyone enjoys an event where people are talking and laughing, light and temperature is controlled, music sets the mood, strangers are just new friends and tables are inviting.

When The First Person Arrives, The Party Has Started

Greet guests cordially, give them a name tag and direct them to the party area. If special items are on display, encourage guests to travel from spot to spot as the crowd gathers. They may examine table decorations. Help them choose a place to sit or find an assigned table and specific seat. Point out rest rooms and conveniences within the building. Keep guests out of the kitchen!

Get Acquainted

Put people at ease with smiles and hospitality. Help them get acquainted with simple table activities. Place conversation starters under each plate. Scatter pens or pencils at each table and place paper puzzles or short games in obvious places so guests can work together to win a table prize.



Setting Together

Help the guests "sense the whole". Enthusiastic group singing helps togetherness get started and so do mixers.

Small Groups

Quickly place guests in small groups and offer opportunities to make more intimate contact with others. Devise an activity that could be done in twos or fours. Dividing up by birth months is an effective way of creating smaller groups across all lines—age, color, sex.

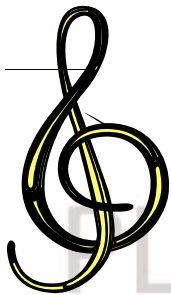
Alternate The Pace

Some activities might be interactive and some quiet. Have some activity requiring mental activity with pencil and paper, skits, done in groups of different sizes and sometimes in the whole group.

Build Toward A Climax

Complete a few exciting activities just before dinner and continue the fun after the meal.

Close With A Whole Group Activity



Do not end the evening with refreshments. Use a whole group activity which brings everyone together. It could be singing, listening to a story, letting people tell what they enjoyed or a frankly spiritual closing with a serious skit or talk, songs, hymns, praise choruses, sharing and a benediction perhaps featuring a fellowship circle.

Clean Up

Leave the church cleaner than you found it. Often those enjoying the fun are asked to help clean up. That can be fun and don't forget "many hands make light work".

Luke 12:33-34

Sell your possessions
and give to charity;
make yourselves PURSES



which do not wear out,
an unfailing treasure in heaven,
where no thief comes near,
nor moth destroys.

For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also.

It's Time For...

THE PURSE-FECT WELCOME!

Greet **YOU'VE GOT PURSE-ONALITY** guests in an entry area where they are royally welcomed and treated to a delicious chilled punch (Makes ours or serve your favorite) while coats are hung and table seating is confirmed.



Make this an delightful area by serving a delicious cold beverage in crystal punch bowls with crystal cups. Consider serving small appetizers on silver trays.

Cover the serving table in white linen and place a Purse centerpiece near the punch bowl.

Play soft background music as guests begin arriving about one half hour before the banquet begins. Encourage them to enter the hall where they roam from table to table and enjoy the Purse Display.

FRUIT PUNCH

Serves: 40

- 3 qt. Orange Juice
- 2 qt. Pineapple Juice
- 2 liters lemon-lime soda
- ½ cup juice from 10 oz. Jar maraschino cherries
- 4 cups ice cubes
- 1 medium Orange/sliced
- 1 medium Lemon/sliced
- 1 medium Lime/sliced

Combine juices and soda in a punch bowl. Add ice. Lay slices of fruit on ice to garnish.

Mmmmmmm...

Menu!



The menu is one of the most important details of the banquet event. Choose foods you know your group will enjoy and will talk about for a long time! We make a few suggestions but you know your gang best. Plan accordingly!

Plan food and assign a kitchen team to prepare the meal on banquet day. Since this is a special event for the gals, it doesn't seem fair to ask them to cook their own party food. Think about asking the men of the church to cook and serve or consider local caterers! One fun option for servers is to ask a local boy scout troop. They often look for community service projects.

OPTION #1

Tossed Salad

Swiss Steak

Mashed Potatoes/Gravy

Vegetables: Mixed Vegetables

Rolls/Butter

Dessert

OPTION #2

Jello Salad

Stuffed Chicken Breast

Baked Sweet Potato/Sour Cream/Butter

Vegetable: Buttered Corn or Almond Green Beans

Rolls/Butter

Dessert

OPTION #3

Pork Chops
Roasted Potatoes
Vegetable: Carrots and peas
Rolls/Butter
Dessert

Sometimes children and teens do not enjoy the delicious foods adults look forward to eating so consider planning an optional Children's Menu at a lesser price.

CHILDREN'S MENU OPTION #1

Chicken Nuggets W/Ketchup
Jello Cubes
French Fries
Cold Drink
Dessert

CHILDREN'S MENU OPTION #2

Hamburger on Toasted Bun W/Ketchup and Pickle
Potato Chips and Celery Sticks
Apple Slices
Cold Drink
Dessert

CHILDREN'S MENU OPTION #3

Hot Dog on Bun with Choice of toppings
Tater Tots
Fruit Cocktail Cup
Cold Drink
Dessert

Dessert For Everyone!

*Do not disregard the power of dessert!
Give careful attention to delicious details at the end of the meal.*

Consider homemade cake and vanilla ice cream, homemade pie and vanilla ice cream, Chocolate Sundaes, Banana Splits, Cherry Cheesecake, Vanilla Ice Cream with Homemade Cookie, Brownie With Ice Cream drizzled in chocolate syrup and nuts or Chilled Fruit flavored Sherbet in a variety of colors.

A fun idea is to make a variety of desserts which are offered by servers on large trays so guests can choose their favorite delicacy!

Special Dietary Requests

Ask guests about special dietary needs during banquet planning and ticket sales. While it is not possible to prepare totally separate foods, it may be possible to accommodate those who have restrictions due to health or allergies.

TABLE PURSE FUN!

Seat guests informally at prearranged tables.
Be sure families sit together
if this is a Mother-Daughter Banquet.



As groups arrive, encourage them to get to know
one another by playing games provided on each table.
Guests may team up to answer the questions.



Furnish small prizes for each successful table group.
Prizes may be Hershey Kisses,
Mini candy bars or other tiny treat.
Walk the prizes to the guests as they win.

Secret: Let EVERYONE win at least once!



Use the games we suggest or find others to fill the need.
Copy as many as needed on colorful paper.

Here's a great starter...

WHAT'S IN YOUR PURSE?

This is a cooperative table game that can lead to a lot of scramble and laughter before all is said and done. Everyone at your table must combine their loot to come up with as many of these PURSE items as possible.

In order for an item to qualify, you must show it to your table family before returning it to your purse. Assign one person the joyful task of checking off each item on the list. The task must be complete before dinner begins! Work fast!

Tissue Safety Pin Penny Dollar Bill Toothpick

Button Coin Purse Scissors Band Aid Needle

Nail Clippers Keys List Coupon Rubber Band

Comb Check Book Egg Candy Bar Lipstick

Shoe Lace Rain Hat Watch Cough Drop Stamp

Ticket Notebook Nail Polish Nail File Receipt

Pen/Pencil Hanky Knife Jewelry Gum

Business Card Phone No. Pictures Credit Card Book

Driver's License Pix of Pets Appointment Card Baby Wipes



Perfume
 Recipe

Hand Sanitizer Telephone Number

Heart
 Toy

Health Card Food of any kind

TOTAL:

How Well Do You Know Your Mother/Daughter?

This game can be read aloud or printed as handouts. Afterwards give a few minutes to compare answers and total the correct answers on both sheets for the combined answer total. Give prizes to the mother-daughter teams that have the most points.



1. What is your mother/daughter's favorite color?
2. What is your mother/daughter's favorite song?
3. What is your mother/daughter's favorite flavor ice cream?
4. What is your mother/daughter's favorite flower?
5. What is your mother/daughter's favorite food?
6. What is your mother/daughter's favorite animal?
7. What is your mother/daughter's favorite season?
8. What is your mother/daughter's favorite restaurant?
9. What is your mother/daughter's favorite holiday?
10. Where is your mother/daughter's favorite place to shop?

Purse Contest



Conduct a contest between guests to discover the most unique purses in the crowd. Assign one or two people as judges who wander from table to table, looking at all the purses. Or, conduct the contest from the front of the room, asking the questions aloud and making decisions on the spot.

Backpacks, wallets, fanny packs and baby bags do not count!

Award prizes when the formal portion of the program begins for the following purses (add your own fun categories as desired):

1. THE SPACIOUS (LARGEST) PURSE
2. THE LILLIPUTIAN (SMALLEST) PURSE
3. THE VINTAGE (OLDEST) PURSE
4. THE WHATSIS (STUFFED) PURSE
5. THE SYSTEMATIZED (ORGANIZED) PURSE
6. THE YOUNGEST PERSON CARRYING A PURSE
7. THE OLDEST PERSON CARRYING A PURSE
8. THE HUMBLE (PLAINEST) PURSE
9. THE WELL ADORNED (FANCIEST) PURSE
10. THE PERFECT PURSE (BEST MATCHES OWNER'S OUTFIT)
11. THE OUT OF PLACE PURSE (DOESN'T MATCH ANYTHING!)
12. THE WELL LOVED (WORN OUT) PURSE

In case of a tie or difficult decision, let the group vote by their enthusiastic applause for their favorite!

Let's Live In Harmony...

PURSE-uit OF MUSIC



Play pre recorded background music as the group arrives. Christian CD's, soft jazz, classical music or show tunes are appropriate.

Do not play CD's loudly. Conversation should be a priority with music as a pleasant diversion, setting the mood for the event.

Some communities have amateur/professional musicians willing to attend and play. Think about asking a violinist, guitarist, harpist, pianist, flutist or other soft instrumentalist to perform as guests arrive and as they enjoy dinner.

When adding a few choruses to sing after dinner, ask a pianist to accompany the group. Choose songs most people know and enjoy.

"You've Got Personality" (find lyrics and music online) is a fun song to use as a theme song. Sing it, play it or print the words.

*Over and over I tried to prove my love to you....
'cause you got-- personality, Walk, personality,
Talk, Personality, Smile, Personality,
Charm, personality, Love, personality
And, of course, you've got a great big heart....*

PRINTED PROGRAMS

Printed programs are not necessary but many groups enjoy creating a "take home" keepsake.



Create a printed program using a colorful envelope decorated to look like a purse. Find brightly colored envelopes at your local paper/office store. Make each program envelope look like a purse by attaching a narrow satin ribbon handle (glue or tape handle under each flap). Attach one large button, small silk flower head or bow at the tip of the flap.

Guests flip open their "purse" program envelopes to find appropriate information inside on separate colorful pages.

Include the menu, names of committee members, names of kitchen crew and servers, words to songs, small artistic touches and a bit of poetry.

Here We Go....

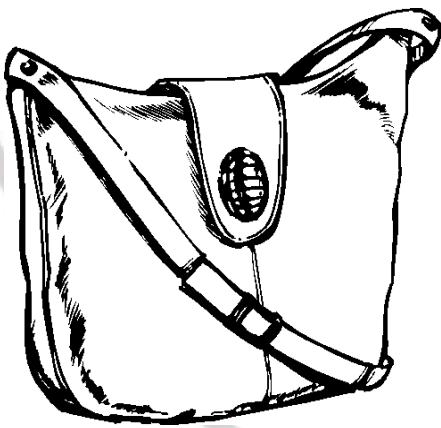
THE PURSE-fect PROGRAM

Assign program parts as desired from the following list. If there is any portion of our formal program that does not fit with your group, eliminate it and replace it with something you know they will enjoy.

The best after dinner program lasts no more than forty five minutes. Allow guests to use rest rooms before the program begins.

Sing praise and worship choruses between the program segments. Make it your own!

BEFORE DINNER WELCOME! (Carry A Huge Purse)



Good evening, dear guests. You are here for an enjoyable evening featuring a grand celebration of the ultimate woman's accessory...the PURSE! Admit it, we all have them. We all love them. We all have closets full of purses for every occasion. Black purses, white purses, red purses. Purses that match our best shoes, purses that are flowered and striped and buckled and snapped. We have purses that fit inside our purses. And if we are very lucky, we have purses that every other woman would "kill" to own. Purses....they are so PURSE-onal!

That reminds me: I switched purses the other day. Went back to my summer purse, more room. I, myself, like big purses. I need one to carry all of life's essentials. Don't kid me, you need the room too! Conversations in our home go something like this:

"Mom, do you have a kleenex (aspirin, eye drops–you choose)."
"Yes, of course I do."

"Honey, do you have a screwdriver?"

"Yes dear. I have your 4 favorite sizes and a Phillips. Which one do you need? I also have your hammer, wrench and the latest updated Chilton's Manual."

You get the picture. Some women (like me) need big purses, to carry the necessities of life. I find a lovely purse on sale/clearance in the store and bring it home only to find out that it won't hold the mittens, scarves, hats, umbrellas, tire chains, extra glasses, magnifying glass, nail clippers, mirrors and all the other necessities. I don't have room for the check book or car keys. I have to decide what to leave out! That will never do!

It won't do any good for car makers to include extra purses and storage in their cars. If someone needs something, the car is parked 10 blocks away and it's raining or snowing. No, I need to carry everything with me in my purse. Did you ever try to sneak cheaper snacks into the theater to avoid the \$5.00 tub of popcorn in the lobby? See? Then you know why big purses must be carried.

I don't worry about purse snatchers. If some poor, dim-witted soul decides to grab MY purse, he will quickly discover he has torn ligaments in 37 body parts that he never knew he had! So, purse snatchers have never been one of my worries.

I see women with purses the size of a Tic-Tac container!!! And I wonder....are they single? Haven't they learned anything yet? Or, are they really that "super-organized?" Maybe I should stop them and ask for a few PURSE-ON-AL tips and advice.

Well, that being said, it is time to celebrate the American Woman's most important accessory–THE PURSE. Enjoy your dinner and no fair filling your purse with extra dessert and then asking for more! We'll be watching!

**PRAY FOR THE MEAL!
EAT!**

Let's Get On With The Show...

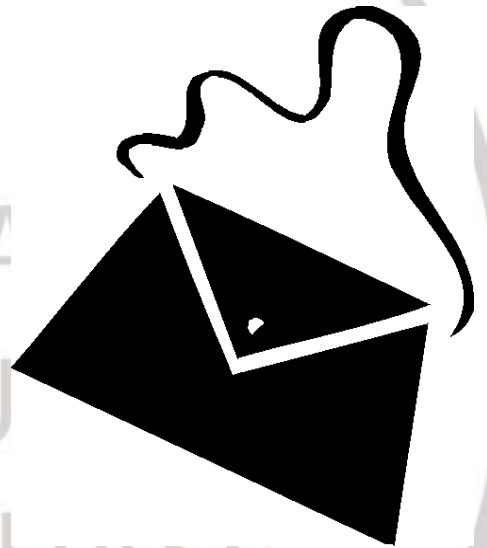
PURSE-ONALITY!

SIMPLE TEST REVEALS YOUR PURSE-ONALITY

It is test time! Please place your purse on your lap while you check out your very own PURSE-ON-ALITY.

One of the most vital pieces of a woman's wardrobe is her purse. And what's inside your bag provides a wealth of clues about who you really are.

COLORFUL CLUTCH: Show us your clutch if you are carrying one. Bright-eyed and energetic, you bustle through life with a charming effervescence that draws others to your circle in droves. You overcome most of life's pitfalls with a cheerful grace and you easily pump up the spirits of family and friends who are feeling blue.



COUTURE: Show us your couture bag if you are carrying one. You're a go-getter who wouldn't be caught dead without your designer duds. Sure your bag may be costly, but you're a self-confident sort who knows you deserve only the best. Your belief in your own abilities makes you a natural born leader, and others trust your judgment in important situations.

BACKPACK: Show us your backpack if you are carrying one. You're an unpretentious woman who's physically fit and ready for whatever life brings. You're never more alive than when you are enjoying outdoor activities that

challenge your endurance, but your loved ones are also vital to your happiness. Wherever you go, your family unit will always be included.

TINY PURSE: Show us your tiny purse if you are carrying one. If you are carrying a tiny purse there is no sense in asking if you have an extra package of crackers or a bottle of water. Food of any kind is banned from your purse. You are precisely organized. Your dresser drawers are lined with softly scented papers and are filled with neatly stashed items you truly need to keep. Your kitchen is well organized and your attic is nearly empty except for the neatly labeled Christmas boxes. If they weren't so embarrassed, your friends would love to ask you to come to their house to organize them too!

LARGE PURSE/CARRY ALL: Show us your large purse/carryall if you are carrying one. There's a cornucopia of items in your bag—from over the counter drugs to a complete make up kit. You're a practical woman who's prepared for any contingency, and your mother hen approach is just fine with your family and friends who thrive on your nurturing warmth.

SHOULDER BAG: Show us your shoulder bag if you are carrying one. You believe that hard work coupled with burning ambition will carry you to the top. People admire your drive because you get ahead without hurting others. You're also a witty conversationalist who is a welcome addition to any gathering.

Look around your table and see if others have been nodding in agreement as your PURSE-ON-ALITY has been revealed through this simple test. Don't try to deny it. After all, you are what your purse says you are!

SHOPPING FOR THE PERFECT PURSE

Based on Liz Curtis Higgs' article, "Christianity Today" Oct/Nov 1998)



I am a one purse woman! Really! Don't tempt me with colorful fabrics and soft leathers. I know what I want and I want the Perfect Purse.

Some women have entire closets full of handbags, shoulder bags, clutch bags, saddlebags in every color, shape and size known to Purse-dom. They switch at the change of an outfit—red vinyl for Tuesday night PTO, taupe for Thursday, the big black blob for Sunday morning when they are responsible for toting around three study Bibles, a fistful of Sunday take home papers and offering envelopes that date back to Christmas.

But not me! I am a one purse woman! I don't suffer from multiple purse-onality disorder. I am on a mission to find the perfect purse. I know it is out there somewhere. I just haven't stumbled on it yet. I've even considered praying before shopping but ruled it out as "spiritually tacky". I wander down the aisles of my favorite stores with bleary eyes searching for the ideal size, the superior shape, the optimal color of the Perfect Purse.

Once I had a gray leather purse shaped like an orange slice. Very sleek and sophisticated but it had a problem handle. I had to carry it under my arm or press it between my knees or snag it between my teeth.

Then there's the name brand bag I bought for its snazzy gold logo. Alas, pride was my downfall because the gold logo kept falling apart leaving me with an open bag and two ugly gaps at the top. Lovely.

I tried a fanny pack once. Highly practical. Probably shouldn't have looked in the full length mirror. Looking back at me was a full sized fanny that was not attached to a pack.

The Perfect Purse has to be black and rectangular. Large enough to hold a book or two, glasses, scissors, glue stick, cotton swabs, postcards, lifesavers, notebook, cosmetic pouch, hand lotion and, well you get the idea.

One fashion consultant assured me that, when determining the proper purse size, a woman should never choose one larger than her hips. Oh, goody. Lots of room to work with!

Leather is a must. Pricey, but since it's got to last me for the rest of my earthly days, I can splurge. I know you're thinking, "Should a Christian woman be seen carrying black leather?" My Christian husband assures me that black leather appears nowhere in scripture, in any translation, and is therefore biblically correct.

The downside of a black purse is its' mass popularity. Watch what happens at a women's retreat when someone steps to the microphone and says, "Anybody lose a black purse?" A sudden whoosh moves through the room as three hundred women check under their chairs.

Consider the perfect purse handle. Small swing handles make me feel like Queen Elizabeth holding her purse close to her heart. Long straps let you drape your purse across your body but they are not an asset when trying to find change quickly, only to discover the bag is now squarely in the middle of your back.

Drawstring bags are fun if you didn't have one in the '60's the first time around. Another comeback, shapeless sacks with a magnetic snap, are '70's retro. Gold trim is doomed to wear off or, horrors, turn green! Tied on beads dribble away. Do not, under any circumstances, try to launder a fabric bag that says 'washable' on the tag unless you want a bag just big enough to carry your lipstick.

I'm partial to pockets and I know the perfect number. Lean in while I share this part. Two outside pockets that stretch the full length of the purse, long enough to hold an envelope. A little doo-dad tooled pocket with a zipper on one side is helpful so I can keep track of what I have tucked in there.

I don't want a purse for every season. I want one for a lifetime. Not stylish, but useful. Not color coordinated, just black. Not big, not little...just right.

While shopping yesterday, I rummaged through yet another stack of imperfect purses and out of the corner of my eye caught sight of something most precious. The Perfect Purse! It was black leather! Mid size model! Two letter-size pockets, with an insignia on the top and an intelligent strap length!

I grabbed it and headed for the counter, panting with joyful anticipation. "I'll take it," I shouted, nearly knocking over the clerk with my enthusiasm. As I slung my own purse on the counter and started rummaging for my wallet, I noticed a strange look on the woman's face. "You must really like your purse", she murmured.

"This purse?" I asked.

"Why, yes. After all, you are buying another one exactly like it."

"I what?" Bug eyed, I stared at the new purse, now side by side with my current model and realize the awesome truth, I already own The Perfect Purse!

"Visa or Mastercard," she asked.

"Yes," I breathed, tossing both credit cards on the counter. "I'll take every purse on the shelf."

When a woman finds The Perfect Purse, the only thing she counts are her blessings!

THREAT OF THE EMPTY PURSE

Read article as if reading a television news piece as an anchorwoman.



In the spirit of keeping you up to date and informed, we interrupt this important banquet to bring you the latest news.

Now the terrorists have done it: They've made women clean out their purses. More precisely, dump all the liquids, cleansers, lipsticks, gels, lotions, pastes and tools that are in many purses that usually ride along with female airline passengers.

With the current carry-on regulations introduced by the Transportation Security Administration prohibiting most makeup items, female travelers went on a crash purse diet, shedding personal goods that they rarely leave home without.

"All I have in my purse is my wallet, plane ticket and a shirt, in case I get cold," said Pamela Craig, 43, who arrived on Southwest Airlines from Los Angeles. "Normally I'd have my whole makeup case in here. But I checked it so it wouldn't get taken away."

Lynn Banks, 40, prepped her bottomless bag for her trip from Phoenix to Washington while watching reports on the morning news. "I saw that they were throwing things out of purses into garbage cans," said Banks, "So I packed away my lotion, lipstick, Clinique makeup and hand sanitizer. Women have all these things with them that they don't want to get lost in luggage. It's expensive stuff."

Most women viewed lightening their loads a minor disruption, worth the price in safety with the side benefit of less shoulder pain from lugging purses weighing as much as 30 pounds.

One woman, Lizzie Tiller, preparing to fly to Pennsylvania, held a different view. "My purse is my life," she declared. "No one has the right to take away my make up or to touch my purse. Why, I don't even let my children touch my purse. I put a little buzzer inside the flap so I would know if anyone got in there."

That little man over there, not only opened my purse, he had the nerve to be mad about my buzzer. He made me take off my shoes in front of the whole world and then he dumped all my purse stuff in a big tray. What is this world coming to when a woman's purse can be trifled with for any little thing?"

Mrs. Tiller will be driving to Pennsylvania later today after being considered a flight risk by Home Security. We take you back to your regularly scheduled banquet. Good night.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE

PURSE PARADE THE LATEST IN PURSE FASHION



Arrange a Purse Fashion Show. Ask two women to narrate the fashion show and ask volunteers to model the purses. These are specialized purses that will have to be made before the banquet. A small Purse Parade committee could be assigned the job of preparing purses, fashions and narration.

Use the purse ideas listed or create your own special purses. Adapt the purses to meet your needs.

Play soft instrumental music as the models walk the "runway" with grace and glamour. Each should twirl and show off her purse with great enthusiasm just like in a real fashion show.

NARRATOR #1: Welcome to our first annual PURSE PARADE. We will be showing off the latest in purse fashion so sit back, relax and enjoy the show.

NARRATOR #2: We're positive that no matter how you see yourself, trendy or casual, your ultimate goal is to look "together" –to look and feel elegant in your style of clothing and accessories.

#1: Women spend hours looking for the right outfit and analyze it many times to make sure it perfects and gives you that eye catching total look before other women scrutinize your accessories. So consider your choices before throwing any old handbag over your shoulder and leaving the house.

#2: You probably didn't know that a purse can flatten your curves almost as much as a pair of pants or shirt. Now that we have your attention, let us help you choose the right purse for you.

#1: Try to choose a purse shape that is the opposite of your body type. If you are tall and thin, look for the large sloppy bags that flatter your narrow figure. If you're short and voluptuous, play off opposites with a handbag that is tall and rectangular or long and sleek.

#2: Don't forget to watch for current trends. Here comes our first model with a handbag you will not soon forget. We like to call it the CHEERIO-BAG.

CHEERIOS BOX WITH LONG YARN STRAP. Worn by a mother with toddler in her arm. With the other hand, she reaches into the box to get Cheerios treats for her child.

This trendy bag is for the busy, young mother who runs here and there with an active toddler in tow. It isn't hard to see why this purse has been so popular with parents all over the country. Dare we say that a few young fathers have been known to carry this purse, although they tend to call it a "brief case". Thank you, young mother.

#1: Our next purse is a delight to hold and practical as well. It is our LIGHTNING BAG.

OPEN PURSE WITH LARGE FLASHLIGHT INSIDE SHINING UPWARD. Worn with an elegant evening gown.

Who among us has not found themselves left out in the dark after a long evening at a formal event? The solution is this brightly lit purse that shouts "you'll never get lost again". Perfect for those dark evenings when the lights dim and it's time to find our way home. No more searching for keys. No more wondering who that strange person in the dark alley is. Just point your purse at him and watch him scurry back to the darkness. The added benefit is that every woman looks good in dramatic up lighting. So carry your own light and shine all evening long!

#2: This is the perfect purse for the athletic woman who enjoys walking and running. Behold.... our WATER PURSE.

2 OR 3 LITER POP BOTTLE. Fill with small purse items and water. Put cap on filled bottle. Attach a handle to it (ribbon) to carry at the wrist. Wear walking/running clothing and running shoes.

Our perfect athletic purse is one which carries not only refreshing water but also all the purse accessories any woman could need on her daily walk or run. A bit of change, comb, ID and other details neatly floating in their own small plastic bag inside a practical water bottle. Wear this purse with pride as you get fit and healthy. It makes a statement...Don't mess with me. I carry a WATER PURSE.

#1: I've been waiting for this purse to appear. Look ladies! This is our very own design that will become a national phenomenon. Be the first to own a TOOLBOX PURSE.

MAN'S TOOL BOX. Decorate toolbox with silk flowers and bows. Carry it with the intended handle. Wear blue jeans and oversized sweatshirt with tennis shoes.

Purse manufacturers have finally recognized that we need a feminine toolbox, not a soft sided pouch. We need compartments with strong dividers to organize keys, multiple lipsticks, cell phone, PDA, iPod, digital camera, sunglasses, wallet, pain reliever, mints/gum, tissues, feminine products and other necessities (such as soft wipes for the spill-prone. That's just the stuff a single woman hauls around. When you get married, you need compartments for the "hey, honey, can you put this in your purse for me" items. Then when you have kids, you have to add a plastic-lined, hazardous waste compartment for all the soiled and half-used items your children hand you-"Here Mommy!" Can we have some applause for this amazing purse? (Lead applause.)

#2: I see it coming down the runway! This purse is what every woman desires. It is roomy, soft and satisfying.

PILLOWCASE PURSE. Fill a large white pillowcase with anything soft—it will not be opened. Tie a belt tightly around the pillowcase opening and carry the belt slung over your shoulder.

This is our simple PILLOW PURSE. Every woman has days when she wishes she could stay home in bed. This PILLOW PURSE solves that problem by being the soft solution to any hard day. Curl up in the car for a quick nap. Lay your tired head down on your desk using your lovely PILLOW PURSE. Fussy child? No problem! Whip out the PILLOW PURSE and soon you will have a slumbering sweetheart.

#1: Why no one ever thought of this before, I'll never understand. We have carefully designed a lovely coat with a built in purse. We call it...well, we call it the HANDS FREE PURSE.

HANDS FREE PURSE. Wear a large coat with the biggest pockets you can find. Fill the pockets with purse items. Put hands in pockets to model.

Our lovely model will demonstrate how easy it is to leave home every day with hands free to move about the country. Fill these roomy pockets with delightful items that are also useful. A bit of cash, keys and makeup. What more could a busy woman need. Take the best and leave the rest is the motto of this amazing, innovative idea. After all, haven't we been filling our husbands' pockets with our purse items for years? It's time to declare freedom from our men's pockets and fill our own! Don't forget, this is the HANDS FREE PURSE.

#2: Our next lovely offering is the classic SPLIT PURSE-ONALITY!

SPLIT PURSE-ONALITY: Carry two large over the shoulder strap purses. Crisscross the straps across your body so the purses hang on both hips.

Who among us has not longed for more room for all the gear we gals carry from place to place? Our brand new, innovative purse aptly named SPLIT PURSE-ONALITY is the perfect solution. Two large, over the shoulder, bags complete any ensemble with their practicality. And you get two purses for the price of one. Now what woman can pass up a deal like that?

#1: We hope you have enjoyed this lovely PURSE PARADE. Let's ask our lovely models to return as a group so you can once again enjoy their up-to-date purses.

#2: So, take time to look for the right purse for you. It's not always the same purse your best friend carries. A purse should not only carry your personal belongings, it should reflect your style and looks.

#1: Don't forget! Laugh, love and enjoy being a woman who shines in this world. Have fun with your own unique purse! If you are a real PURSE-AHOLIC, you may find these purses and any fine department store near you. Thank you and good evening!

WISDOM FROM THE PURSE



Carry a large purse and pull "Somebody Said" from the purse before you speak. Read the part with enthusiasm.

I can't help it. I am always clipping little bits of wisdom from the newspaper and tucking them here and there all around my house. This time I tucked a wonderful bit of wisdom into my purse. If you are a mother, you'll appreciate it.

"SOMEBODY" SAID **Renee Hawkley**

Somebody said...A mother is an unskilled laborer. Somebody never gave a squirmy infant a bath.

Somebody said...You know how to be a mother by instinct. Somebody never took a three year old shopping.

Somebody said...That good mothers never yell at their kids. Somebody's child never sent a baseball through a neighbor's window.

Somebody said...A mother can find all the answers to her child rearing questions in books. Somebody never had a child stuff beans in his nose.

Somebody said...A mother always adores her children. Somebody never tried to comfort a colicky baby at 3 A.M.

Somebody said...A mother can do her job with her eyes closed and one hand tied behind her back. Somebody never organized seven giggling brownies into a cookie selling brigade.

Somebody said...The hardest part of being a mother is labor and delivery. Somebody never watched her "Baby" get on the bus for the first day of kindergarten.

Somebody said...Your mother knows you love her, so you don't have to tell her. Somebody isn't a mother!

WHAT MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

Two young girls talk back and forth, trying to “one up” each other with the wonderful things their mothers taught them. Have each girl wear a school backpack as they walk into the room and speak.



GIRL #1: I have a phenomenal mother! She taught me many things. My mother taught me to APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE. She said, “If you’re going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning.”

GIRL #2: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother is just as good as YOUR mother. She taught me RELIGION. She said, “You better pray that comes out of the carpet.”

#1: Oh yeah? Well MY mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL. She said, “If you don’t straighten up, I’m going to knock you into the middle of next week.”

#2: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me LOGIC. She said, “Because I said so, that’s why.”

#1: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me FORESIGHT. She said, “Make sure you wear clean underwear in case you’re in an accident.”

#2: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about SARCASM. She said, “Stop crying or I’ll give you something to cry about.”

#1: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about the science of OSMOSIS. She said, “Shut your mouth and eat your dinner.”

#2: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about CONTORTIONISM. She said, "Will you look at the dirt on the back of your neck?"

#1: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about STAMINA. She said, "You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."

#2: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about WEATHER. She said, "It looks as if a tornado went through your room."

#1: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me how to solve PHYSICS PROBLEMS. She said, "If I yelled because I saw a meteor coming toward you, would you listen then?"

#2: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about HYPOCRISY. She said, "If I've told you once, I've told you a million times, don't exaggerate!"

#1: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me the CIRCLE OF LIFE. She said, "I brought you into this world and I can take you out!"

#2: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION. She said, "Stop acting like your father."

#1: Oh yeah? Well, MY mother taught me about ENVY. She said, "There are millions of less fortunate children in the world that don't have wonderful parents like you."

#1 AND #2 IN UNISON: THANKS, MOM!

THE PURSE DRIVEN LIFE



Divide sections between available participants. Adapt to meet your needs. Each reader carries a unique purse. Enter the room from the back. Walk single file to the stage. Pull the printed part from the purse when it is time to read.

INTRODUCTION

(Speak as the participants are entering the room.) Look! Here come more purses and the women who carry them. We all know that a purse is just a purse until someone with pizzazz and purse-onality picks it up and makes it what it ought to be....A PURSE WITH PURPOSE! Guaranteeing a PURSE DRIVEN LIFE! I am holding onto the idea that one can look at a woman's purse and learn a great deal about her purse-onality!

I am intrigued with the concept of a PURSE DRIVEN LIFE. It should be intriguing to everyone as we contemplate our highest priorities in life. Not only do PURSE DRIVEN folks need to hang onto their purses with tight fists, but they worry endlessly about what is—or is not—in them.

#1: THE EMPTY PURSE

I guarantee you it didn't take me long to find the words I want to share with you from deep within my purse. Look inside! What do you see? That's right, nothing. It's empty. I have many more empty purses at home in my closet. I can never decide what to carry with me as I go about my life so I just carry this empty purse in hopes that I will find something important to place inside it.

Come to think of it, my life has often been like my purse. Empty! There are so many choices out there. How can I decide when decisions are so final? Should I fill my life with music or dance? How about fine art, painting and sculpture? I know! I'll fill myself with food and pop culture. I can fit a bunch of "Ring-Dings" and a few current CD's and DVD's in here.

But, those things still make me feel empty. There must be more to this PURSE DRIVEN LIFE. Old Testament leader Joshua meant it from his heart when he told God's people, "Choose this day whom you will serve...As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) That's it! I choose to serve the Lord! I choose Christ! He will fill my life with good things.

OPTION: Solo/Duet/Trio or Audience sings "Fill My Cup, Lord"

FILL MY CUP, LORD

Words and Music: Richard Blanshard

Like the woman at the well I was seeking for things that cannot satisfy.
And then I heard my Savior speaking,
'Draw from My well that never shall run dry'.

Fill my cup, Lord. I lift it up, Lord. Come and quench this thirsting of my soul.
Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more. Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole."

There are millions in this world who are craving the pleasures earthly things afford;
But none can match the wondrous treasure that I find in Jesus Christ my Lord.

#2: THE SMALL, OVERLOADED PURSE

I can't decide what to carry in my purse so I go with the old saying, "More is better". I should get a bigger purse because I carry everything, for every occasion. I guess I keep hoping someone else will bear these loads so I can enjoy my own small purse.

I am ready for any emergency situation. In fact, I am famous for being able to carry burdens others cannot carry. People often come to me for things they have forgotten. Pins, bandages, paper, pen, bananas...you name it, I have it. Most of the time I am proud that I can carry a purse to help friends and family get through those little life crises.

I must admit, carrying everything that everyone needs is becoming a burden. Why do I have to be the woman who knows everything, carries everything and answers every question. It would feel so nice to be free of this heavy burden. Isn't there anyone else who can carry this overloaded purse?

(Pause...) Oh, I get it. There is Someone who can carry my burden. It's Jesus. He is the perfect burden bearer. I don't have to have all the answers or meet everyone's needs. That's what He wants to do. I must leave room in my life for God to work. It is time to stop stuffing and carrying around useless burdens.

How could I have missed the message in Psalm 55:22? "Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you..." Or Galatians 6:2-3 "Bear one another's burdens...for if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." It's not about me carrying out this PURSE DRIVEN LIFE! It's Christ! He's the One who will carry my overloaded purse...If I let Him.

OPTION: Audience quietly sings the hymn "Burdens Are Lifted At Calvary"

BURDENS ARE LIFTED AT CALVARY
WORDS AND MUSIC: John M. Moore (1952)
1980 Singspiration Music (ASCAP)

Days are filled with sorrow and care, Hearts and lonely and drear
Burdens are lifted at Calvary. Jesus is very near.
Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Calvary, Calvary.
Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near.

#3: THE MAMMOTH PURSE

I just purchased a new purse. I should have been duly warned because this one came with its own light. Take it from me, if your purse is cavernous enough to require a light to find what's residing on the bottom, it is just too big! Another indicator that a purse is too big is that your cell phone always goes to voice mail before you can get your hands on it to answer. The real litmus test is the "big dig". If you have to disgorge the contents of your purse on your lap, the restaurant table or the adjoining car seat just to find a pack of gum, you need a better system!

My massive purse is symbolic of a larger life issue. Like my purse, my PURSE DRIVEN LIFE is full of good intentions, randomly packed. Lots of wonderful and necessary things are found in there, but it's too crowded. It's time to pare down. I need to readjust my priorities. As the old saying does, "The enemy of the best is the good." Which means you can be ineffective while doing good things.

I need to leave room for God—to give God elbow room. We calculate and estimate and say that this and that will happen, and we forget to make room for God to come in as He chooses. Would we be surprised if God came into our lives in a way we had never looked for Him to come? Do not look for God to come in any particular way, but look for Him. That is the way to make room for Him. Expect Him to come but do not expect Him only in a certain way. The great lesson to learn is that at any minute He may break in. Keep your life so constant in its contact with God that His surprising power may break out on the right hand and on the left. (Quoted from Oswald Chambers)

He wants to work miracles in my life but in order to receive His touch, I have to peel away the massive quantities of time I spend in busy-ness. After all, Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28)

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

#4: THE DESIGNER PURSE



Don't you love my designer purse? It is so fashionable. It's what all the wealthy socialites are carrying this season. It's the perfect color, perfect size and it carries the famous maker's name on the outside so everyone knows where I bought it and how much it cost. It's very expensive, you know!

Hmmm, the maker's name. Why do I feel the need to have everyone know the famous designer who manufactured my purse? After all, it isn't like he is personally sitting in a dark room somewhere hand stitching these things. He has "people" who make these purses. Who is this guy anyway? Is he still alive?

In this crazy PURSE DRIVEN LIFE world, there is another Maker who should be more prominent in my life. Why don't I feel the need to carry my real Maker's Name on the outside of my life?

Jesus proudly carried my name in His heart when He gave His life for me. It's time for me to carry my Maker's Name. The Psalmist explained why:
"For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's

womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth." (Psalm 139:13-15 NAS)

Forget the Designer Purse! I am a Designer Child of God, the Maker of Heaven and earth!

#5: THE COMFORTABLE OLD PURSE



I have always been a bit smug about my own free-spirited approach to purses. I don't lead a PURSE DRIVEN LIFE at all. I prefer older, smaller bags so that I can't carry too much with me. I left bigger bags at home and carried only an old wallet purse all over the country on my last vacation. I will carry the same handbag for years and pay no attention to the season of the year. Still, it is embarrassing to clean a closet and discover that I really do have a plethora of purses. I just can't bear to get rid of my old ones. And I have a vast collection of tote bags, backpacks and duffels to carry all the stuff that won't fit into my old purse. There goes my smugness!

Sometimes I wonder if that's how I treat Jesus. Is He just another comfortable, old tradition I have hanging around the house. Where is the excitement I used to feel when I sang praises to Him and studied brand new stories from God's Word? Has my faith in Christ become "ho-hum"? I use the same old rationality for being a Christian without realizing my 'Believer' closet is full of many joyful choices for serving the Lord. It's time to bring those comfortable traditions into the light of day, shine them up and shout for joy!

"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. For the Lord is good; His loving kindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 100)

#6: THE MESSY PURSE



My purse is an entire "Ecosystem"! I mean it! I think I have things growing in there. Don't worry about me. I heard recent statistics that "Messies" are 36% more efficient than "Neat-niks". I judge the condition of my Messy Purse on a variety of levels. It ranges from 'Cluttered but clean', 'Messy yet meaningful', 'Danger Zone so don't reach in without looking' and 'Whew-gotta dive in and hose out that purse!' Trust me, I know when it's time.

Don't look at me that way! God loves Messies! He always sees such an amazing improvement when we catch on to a specific spiritual concept. It's the way He knows His truth is working.

In my heart of hearts, I wonder if Martha of Bethany was a Neat-nik and her sister, Mary of Bethany was a Messie. Mary's prayer must have been the prayer of the Psalmist, "Make me know Thy ways, O Lord: teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day." (Psalm 25:4-5)

And my prayer? "Oh Lord, make me more like Mary of Bethany. Teach me, Lead me. I will wait for You."

CONCLUSION

The PURSE DRIVEN LIFE may be with us for some time. As long as God keeps creating women, there will be purses. Fads may come and go but there she will be, a woman carrying a purse filled with wondrous items.

It's always risky to go to lunch with one of my friends. She either has a \$100 bill or a quarter in her purse. If she breaks the \$100 bill, it is a sure bet that she will be down to a quarter within hours and I get stuck with the bill for lunch. She just cannot keep cash in her purse. She doesn't worry about it. She is confident that she will have another \$100 bill in there tomorrow. Even though I often end up paying, it is refreshing to be with this friend. She and her family are fairly well off financially and they are generous with their support at church and worthy

community causes. They are not PURSE DRIVEN. They are confident that the Lord will provide them with all they need. In fact, that's just how the Lord deals with them—bountifully!

And look at the verse I found to prove it. "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful. The Lord protects the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return, O my soul to your rest, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you." (Psalm 116:5-7)

Why do we cling to our purses when God promises that no matter the circumstances, we always will have enough? Many in our nation have more than enough. What are we to do with the excess? We're mostly told we must save it all for a rainy day, of course! Open another bank account, build another silo, hide it in a mattress, keep it in a purse under your pillow. That is the way to live a PURSE DRIVEN LIFE. With all that abundance stashed away and no intention to ever use it, a PURSE DRIVEN person is planning a future of worry and fear. For many of us, there will never be enough in savings to give us complete assurance of a well kept future. We can only get that assurance from trusting in a God of abundance. As we ponder our own abundance, our own fears and our own commitments to serving the Lord and the Lord's children, let us also be careful to make sure that we live mission driven, purpose driven, love driven lives and leave the PURSE DRIVEN LIFE for the real pros!

Let Us Pray: O Lord, we do love You, and we trust that you love us and hear us when we call on you in trust and in fear. Give us the wisdom and courage to share ourselves, our time and our possessions in service to You. Through Jesus and the Holy Spirit we pray, Amen.

COMPLETE
OUR PURSE-FECT EVENING
BY SINGING SONGS
AS A GROUP.