

Junior Soldiers

Unit 9 : Lesson 7



Generosity!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand why it is important for us to be generous and how our attitude to being generous is important.

'Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well!'

1 Peter 4:10 CEV

Consider & Prepare

Read:

1 Timothy 6: 18–19

Luke 21:1–4

Matthew 25:14–30

1 Timothy 4:12

If you are interested in doing a few lessons on giving and generosity, you might like to also look at Lesson 3 in Unit 2, 'Sharing is Caring'.

As Christians, we are encouraged to think about the importance of being generous, especially in giving from out of what God has blessed us with. Often, in churches, we will talk about tithing or giving our money to support certain projects. However, we are also told in the Bible that we need to be generous in other ways as well. Today the children are going to be learning about offering their treasure and time and talents. We have all been given gifts by God that we can use to serve him and others, and our tithing only covers one aspect.

As adults, we constantly talk about having no time or how precious time is for us. Many will plan out their days, weeks and years so that they know they have just enough time to get everything done. However, what can often be missed or pushed aside is the offering of our time to God. God is looking for time set aside just for Him that will include time in prayer, reading the truths in Scripture, and engaging in ways that help us to connect with Him. God wants us to love Him with all our strength, heart, soul and mind and also to love others as we love ourselves, so giving our time to care for or serve someone else is an important way of showing God that we love Him. Our time is precious to us, so it is important to show generosity and share this precious resource with others.

We have also all been given many talents. Whether they are drawing, singing, cooking, writing or any other skill. We need to remember that these talents were given to us by God, and that they should be used for God. We can do this by using our talents in ways that honour God.

A very important thing to remember when teaching this lesson is that children may want to give their time, talents or treasures, but don't feel they are worthy, good or old enough to give. Remember 1 Timothy 4:12 when teaching this lesson: 'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.' Ensure that the children know they are good enough to give and, more so, can set an example for others!

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Lollies
- Newspaper
- Instruction sheets

For 'The Main Thing'

- Butchers paper
- Bibles
- Textas

For 'Tying In'

- Small box or container for each child
- Textas or other writing/drawing implements
- Three different coloured pieces of A4 paper per child

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.



Connecting In

The Shoe Game...

For this game you will need to split the group into teams (depending on the size of your group). Each team will need a tub, hoop or a specific area marked out in the middle for their pile of shoes. You might like to set each group up in the corners of the room, but make sure players in each team are an equal distance from the pile of shoes in the middle.

Start by getting everyone to take their shoes off and place them in the middle of the room (all shoes from all teams together in the middle). Explain to the children that the object of the game is to fill up others team's tubs with shoes and for their team to end up with no shoes or the smallest amount possible in the time allocated.

You might like to play some music for this game and finish when the song finishes or you can have someone timing an allocated time.

One person at a time from each team is able to go to the middle and take one of the shoes and place it into another group's tub. Once all the shoes are gone from the middle, children are able to take shoes (one at a time) from tubs and place them into another groups. When the music or time frame finishes, ask everyone to sit in their groups and count how many shoes they have in their tubs. The winning team is the one with the least amount of shoes.

Link... 'What a lot of fun we had today trying to get rid of all the shoes from our own tub. I wonder if you have ever played a game like that before. Generally you will be trying to get as many items as you can into your teams tub rather than giving things away.

- Did it feel weird?
- I wonder if, like the game we played today, you like giving things to others, or if you prefer games where you have to get the most to win.

Today we are looking at how we can be generous. We played a game about giving away to show that we can share our things with others. But we will explore today that it's not just our possessions or money that God asks us to share and be generous with, it's also our time and our talents!



Pass the Parcel...

Play a game of pass the parcel with your group. To set up for this game you will need to make a parcel by wrapping layers of newspaper together with a lolly (make sure that you are aware of any food allergies in your group) and an instruction sheet (as outlined below) as part of each layer. At the center of the parcel have a piece of paper with 1 Peter 4:10 (CEV) written on it.

Children will sit in a circle and pass the parcel around the circle until the music stops. When it stops the child who is holding the parcel gets to open a layer (if possible have enough layers for all children to participate.) When the child opens the layer of the parcel, they will receive a lolly and an instruction with what to do with the lolly. Some examples of instructions are listed below, make sure that you add enough to include all those in your group:

- Give the lolly to a person who is really good at singing
- Give the lolly to a person who is a really good friend
- Give the lolly to a person who is really funny
- Give the lolly to a person who is always smiling
- Give the lolly to a person who is very helpful
- Give the lolly to a person who is encouraging of others

Play the game until you get to the center of the parcel and have the final person read the verse to the group.

Link... 'What a great verse.

- I wonder if that verse reminds us of the game of pass the parcel we have just played (*allow some time for the children to add their thoughts about the verse and the game.*)

Normally when we play pass the parcel we want it to land on us because we get to keep the prize. Today you needed to give the lolly away to someone else and give it to them for a particular thing that they do, perhaps a skill or talent.

- How did you feel when you had to give the lolly to someone else?

We can feel good when we are generous to others. God asks us to be generous, but He is not just looking for us to be generous with our money or things that we have, sometimes it is about taking time to help and serve others or to use a skill or talent or to be generous to others. Today we are going to explore how we might be generous with our time and talents.



The Main Thing

Time, talents and treasures...

To prepare for this section you will need three sheets of butchers paper laid on the floor with some textas for the children to use. Label one sheet 'Treasure', another one 'Talent' and the last one 'Time'. (Note: you may have to explain to the children that the word 'treasure', in this context, means possessions...not pirate's treasure!)

'The three main things that God encourages us to be generous with are our time, talent and treasure (that is, what we own). It would be easy to give just one part of our life to God's service and withhold other parts from Him, but God wants us to give ourselves fully to Him. God has given us everything, it shouldn't be hard to give back just some of what we have been given.

'We have three pieces of paper laid out for you to brainstorm about these three areas and what it might look like for you to be generous with your treasures, time or talents. You might like to write (or draw) some examples of how we can use each of these to be generous.' *(It would be good to have a leader at each of the brainstorming sheets to help children think about and explore what this might look like for them.)*

You might like to give the children some examples to get them going:

- Talent: Making a get well card, helping someone else with their homework, singing at church, making crafts.
- Time: Praying for others, helping with chores, going to church, spending time with a grandparent.
- Treasure: Tithing from pocket money each week, giving your clothes/toys to the op shop, sponsoring a child.

When they have finished brainstorming, collect the sheets of paper and look at the examples together. As you are reading through the examples for each page, read out the following explanations of using our time, talents and treasure to be generous.

- Time: We should be generous giving time to serve God, the church and others. The time we give can be anywhere, not just at church. We can consider what portion of our daily lives we give to God.
- Talent: We should use all the skills and abilities we have to serve God and help others. Using skills that God has given to us shows his love in our daily lives and brings him glory.
- Treasure: Being generous with our money and possessions means looking at how we use what we own to help God and others. This includes tithing (give money to the church) and looking after others (sponsoring a child or giving money to support the social work of The Salvation Army).

'If we do all of these three things and are generous in our giving, then we are being generous for God. But we also need to remember that we do need to do these things for the glory and honor of God and not for our own benefit or reputation.'

Exploring the Bible...

Split the group into two (if there is not enough children for this, then just choose one Bible reading for the whole group to do and read the other passage).

Give each group one of the Bible passages listed below and ask them to read through it and act it out for the other group. It would be good to have a leader with each group and allow a few minutes to prepare.

- Matthew 25:14–30
- Luke 21:1–4

Once they have finished acting out the Bible passages, explore the following questions:

- I wonder what Jesus is saying to us in these passages.
- What sort of behavior do the people who are generous show?
- Who do you think was more generous in each of these stories? Why?
- I wonder what it would look like for you to be as generous as the people in these stories.
(Encourage the children to share how it would look for them personally.)



Tying In

Offering boxes...

For the following activity you will need a small box or container for each child, three different coloured pieces of A4 paper that the children can cut into strips, scissors and writing implements. If you have time you may like to provide some craft resources for the children to decorate their boxes.

Explain to the children that we are going to be making our own offering boxes where we can put all our ideas that will help us to be generous with our time, talents and treasures. They will use the three different coloured pieces of A4 to cut up strips that they can write/draw their suggestions and ideas onto (it would be good to have the three sheets of brainstorming accessible for the children to help them with what they want to put into their offering box). They will use one colour for time, another for treasure and the last one for talent. As the children write/draw their ideas they will fold them up and put them into their offering box. Encourage them to write as many as possible and assist them if they are not sure by helping them to work out what talents they might have.

To finish this activity, get everyone to bring their boxes with them to sit in a circle. Get a few children to pray, or get everyone to say a sentence prayer going around in a circle committing their boxes to God and asking him to help them to be generous and to have a generous attitude.



Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Offering Boxes...

During the week:

- Use your offering box by selecting a piece of paper and seeing how what's on that slip will encourage you to be generous today.
- Pray and ask God to help you to be generous and have a generous attitude to others.
- See if there are some more offering ideas that you can add to your box. Perhaps your family or Big Bud might like to add some, too.

Next time you meet with your group, share how you have been generous.

Home & Beyond

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