

Discovering the Joy of Giving
Lesson 3



Objectives

- To understand the joy of giving financially to support God’s kingdom.
- To understand how God views our financial resources.
- To understand God’s priorities versus our priorities.
- To understand about being a cheerful giver.

Materials/Preparation

- A small prize (such as a five-dollar bill, a free movie rental coupon, or even a CD) wrapped multiple times
- One set of winter clothes: large gloves or mittens, a heavy coat or jacket, and a hat or stocking cap
- Pair of dice (or spinner)
- Copies of “My Favorite Gifts” (Reproducible 1)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Bibles
- Poster board or large pieces of paper
- Pens or pencils
- Scotch tape, staplers, or glue sticks
- Hat or basket
- STW pledge cards (completed by students and extras)
- Copies of “My Money Page” (Reproducible 2)
- Index cards
- Week 3 Student Devos

Starting the Journey (10 minutes)

Bring to class a small gift that is wrapped multiple times in numerous boxes and multiple layers of wrapping paper (or newspaper). Each individual box should be wrapped and heavily taped. You want to make it hard to get into.

Ask students to sit as close as possible in a circle. Invite a volunteer to sit in the middle of the circle. At your word the volunteer should put on the hat, coat, and gloves you have brought and then start to unwrap the gift. At the same time, the students in the circle should take turns rolling a pair of dice (or spinning a spinner). If a student rolls doubles (or spins a designated number or color), it is now his or her turn to continue the unwrapping. The first student has to stop and remove the winter clothes and the next student must put them on before he or she continues the unwrapping. Meanwhile, the other students are still taking turns rolling. As soon as someone rolls doubles, that person then gets to unwrap. The student who actually finishes the unwrapping gets the prize. Encourage speed and frenzy. Feel free to adapt this activity to fit the size of your group.

When someone finally gets to the prize, say, **Man, you really tore into that box! You must really like to get presents. Today we’re going to discuss getting presents—and giving them.**

Gaining Speed (20 minutes)

Distribute copies of “My Favorite Gifts” (Reproducible 1) and give students about five minutes to fill them out. If your class is small, invite students to share their two most special gifts from their lists; if your class is large, divide into groups of three to five and have students share in their groups. Ask students to explain why they chose those specific gifts.

Explain that giving is a very important part of God's plan; he talks a lot about it in the Bible. List the following questions (but not the answers!) on the board:

- *How much was to be set aside as a tithe?* (10 percent)
- *What things could be given as an offering?* (Gold, silver, bronze, grain, birds, sheep, goats, calves, fruit)
- *What were the requirements for things to be acceptable as offerings, and why?* (Firstborn or best of the bunch; no blemishes; no substitutions. God demands the very best)
- *What were the purposes for giving tithes and offerings?* Building materials for the tabernacle (house of worship); as a sacrifice to please God; to provide for the priests; to learn to revere God as provider; to provide for widows, foreigners, orphans, and so forth)

Share the following passages with the group. Students should seek the answers for the questions you have written as the passages are read. As students identify the answers, write them on the board:

- Genesis 14:17–20
- Exodus 22:29–30
- Exodus 35:4–9
- Leviticus 27:30–33
- Numbers 18:8–10, 25–29
- Deuteronomy 14:22–23
- Deuteronomy 26:12

Pit Stop (10 or more minutes)

Note: If you are tight on meeting time, we suggest you skip this option.

Divide the class into groups of five to ten (if you have fewer than ten students, stay in one group). Make a copy of “The Money Page” (Reproducible 2) for each student, cut the copies apart, and hand the money out. Give each group a pen or pencil and a piece of poster board or a large piece of paper. Each student should have the same amount of fake money, eight \$1,000,000 bills. Each student in the group should pick one charity or organization to give to and write the name of it on the poster board or piece of paper. Each student should also give a short plea for why that charity or organization is worthy, trying to sell the other students on giving to it too.

After all students in the group have made their “giving pitches,” they should attach (staple, tape, or glue) their fake money to the poster board or paper. Each student can give to as many charities or groups as he or she wants, but cannot give to his or her own charity. Next, bring everyone back together. Take a look at what causes raised the most money. Ask several students to explain why they gave as they did.

Pass around a basket or hat and collect a real offering. Tell students they should only give what they can honestly give cheerfully. This can serve as “seed money” for your group’s STW contribution; or, you might give it to a local ministry (other than your own church). The goal is to create a culture of giving.

Down the Straightaway (15 minutes)

Read together the following Scripture passages; for each, ask students to identify some rules or guidelines for proper giving. Suggestions are in parenthesis:

- Matthew 6:3 (Give without making a big show of it.)
- Mark 12:41–44 (Give generously regardless of how much you have.)
- Acts 5:1–11 (We should be honest about our giving.)

- 1 Corinthians 16:2 (Give in accordance with your income.)
- 2 Corinthians 9:7 (Give cheerfully.)

Ask, **How is the concept of giving different between what you studied in the Old Testament and what you have seen in the New Testament?** Jesus did not throw out the concept of the tithe (10 percent), but rather expanded it. The New Testament teaches that we should cheerfully give way more than ten percent—whatever God and other people need. In the Old Testament we see that most of the gifts went to God, either as temple offerings or as support for the priests. In the New Testament we find most of the gifts going directly to people in need. In the Old Testament, giving was part of the law; in the New Testament, the act of giving was more from a sense of selflessness and genuine love for other people.

Heading for the Checkered Flag (10 minutes)

Point out that people are infinitely more important than money or possessions. God wants us to be willing to give our money for other people and for the Kingdom, not just to buy things for ourselves.

Ask, **What kind of person or group is it easy for you to give to? Which ones are hard for you to give to?** Invite students to respond. Sometimes we reason that some people (such as children or victims of natural disasters or accidents) are more deserving of our help, while others (such as the homeless or some people with AIDS) are less deserving of our help. Point out that Jesus did not use such a system of “measurement.” God can work through our efforts and our giving to reach people who truly need him; even people who bring out about their own suffering still need God! Explain that the secret to generous and joyful giving is really understanding that people are more important than possessions; when we give money to others we can change their lives for the good—forever!

As a group, make a list of things that *could* happen when you give money away. For example, others might be able to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time; they might get to eat instead of going hungry; they might get medical care that will save their lives; they might learn a trade or skill that will enable them to provide for their families.

Crossing the Finish Line (5 minutes)

Distribute STW pledge cards to any students who were not present last week and briefly explain them. Collect the cards from any students who have completed them, and encourage the rest of the group to continue to think and pray about their commitments.

Invite a volunteer to close in prayer, thanking God for what he has given you and asking him to help your group members be givers with cheerful hearts. If you wish, you can write (or ask students to write) the words of 2 Corinthians 9:7 on index cards and challenge them to memorize the passage.

Distribute the Week 3 Student Devos and challenge students to complete this simple handout over the coming week.

Reproducible 1 My Favorite Gifts

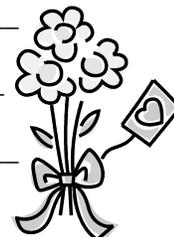
Think back over all the different gifts you have received for Christmas, birthdays, graduations, or any other special occasions. Select one that you remember as being very special because the gift itself was awesome—maybe an awesome toy or game, a bicycle, an MP3 player, or something similar. What did you get? Why did it mean so much to you?



Next, pick a gift that was very special because of the *person* who gave it to you—something such as a pocket knife from your grandfather or a book of poetry from your best friend. What did you get? Why did it mean so much to you?



Now, think back over all the different gifts or presents you have ever *given* to someone else. Pick the one that stands out in your mind the most, a gift you were really excited about giving. What did you give? Why did you enjoy giving that particular gift to that person?



Reproducible 2
The Money Page

