

date: 6/18/17

Bible Passage: Luke 21:1–4; Matthew 6:19–21; 2 Corinthians 9:7
(Giving as Worship)

God Is Generous

REMEMBER VERSE

**Your Father knows what you need
before you ask him.**

Matthew 6:8b

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

When I was a child, my family attended church each week. As I grew up, I faithfully tithed—I took a tenth of everything I earned and gave this to the Lord as my monetary offering. When I got married, our tithe became a line item in our family budget spreadsheet. One day I realized that our tithe did not require prayer or relationship with the God we were giving it to. Sure, we gave regularly and even happily. However, there was not a connection between the dollar amount and our heart of worship. God is generous, so He wants us to be generous when we give—to give more than is usual or even necessary. But if we didn't have to think about what we were giving, how then were we giving generously?

My husband and I decided to alter our tithing habit to include a heart of generous giving. There was a designated amount that became our base, but we would pray and ask God what He wanted us to give and what we were to keep. As we began this dialogue with the Lord, our offerings became an active part of our worship.

Now each month the amount changes. Out of curiosity one day, we added up the amount of our offerings from the past few months. To our surprise and joy, the amount was far greater than our original intent. We've continued to be blessed to see God move in and through our lives as a result of the changes He has made in our hearts. I'm experiencing the joy of tithing and offering being a part of my relationship with God in ways that I never have before.

Michelle Anthony
Tru Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

The Lord speaks through numerous verses on tithing and offering in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the people requested what amount they were to give as a portion of the first fruits. The tithe, or tenth, was established as a percentage the people were to offer to the Lord. This tenth was to be the first 10 percent of all income—including harvest, cattle, the selling of property, and wages earned for each day's work. There were three different "tenths" the people were to give—two were yearly and one was every three years. This tenth was then broken down and distributed among the priests and Levites, the treasury, and the poor. God commanded kindness and generosity in the treatment of the priests and Levites, for they would not inherit wealth from the acquiring and selling of land. As for those who were from foreign lands, or already inhabiting the land in which His people were to dwell, God directed His people to care for the strangers with kindness. To anyone who asked for help, the people were commanded by God to offer what was asked for or needed. If the people asking were refused, the Lord counted it as sin against those who declined to help.

Although a tithe, or tenth, is not mentioned in the New Testament, the offerings of first fruits and generosity continue. In Luke 21:1–4, Jesus talks about the heart of giving to the Lord when He compares the offerings of the wealthy and the widow who had little financially. To give generously is not a request from the Lord, but a command. For if God is the provider, then as His people we are freed to give generously to others, knowing that He is generous to us. Giving is a matter of the heart between God and His children. "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

This week, read through the following Scripture: Luke 21:1–4, Matthew 6:19–21, and 2 Corinthians 9:7. The first time through each portion of Scripture, just take it in—no agenda. As you read through each a second time, what words stand out to you? What phrases? Jot down these words or phrases on a piece of paper or in your journal. Ask God what He would like you to hear from Him. Read the verses a third time. When you finish, sit for a few moments with your eyes closed in the quiet and receive from the Lord. Finally, under the words and phrases you've written, conclude your time by writing anything you've taken away from your time with God in His Word.

As you move through your week, revisit the things you've written in your journal. Is there anything new God is speaking to you? Are there any barriers in your life that aren't allowing you to give generously? Since reading through these verses, have you had any experiences related to what God spoke to you in your time of quiet? If so, take a few minutes to document the encounters and celebrate with Him! May God bless you as He uses His generous provision to you and your family to bless others.

EXPLORE::: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Counting Coins

In The Big God Story passage today, children will hear of people giving coins to the temple treasury. The following activity will familiarize children with coins and their differing values.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Coin cutouts (see Resources)
- Money cards (see Resources)
- Card stock (tan and white)
- Scissors
- Real coins of different values (5)

PREPARE AHEAD

Print the Coin cutouts onto tan card stock and the Money cards onto white card stock and cut them out.

SET UP

Set the Coin cutouts and Money cards, along with the real coins, on the table.

RELATE

Welcome children to the table. Show them the real coins. **Do you know what these are?** Children respond. **That's right! They're coins. We all use different types of coins. They're worth different amounts of money. Some are worth more, and some are worth less. Do you know what these coins are called?** Have kids identify the names and values of each coin with your help. **Great! Each coin is worth a different amount, and when you put them together, you'll have more money.** Show kids the different Money cards and Coin cutouts. **Let's work together to match the play coins to the picture coins that you see on these cards.** If children are older, have them identify which is the largest amount and the smallest amount. Then have them match the coin values to those shown on the Money cards. Kids can switch cards and repeat the activities as time allows.

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

God Is Generous

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "Everybody, Everywhere" and "I May Be Small," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song

will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with children.

Lead children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**Your Father knows what you need
before you ask him.**

Matthew 6:8b

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Your Father: Bring thumb and index finger together, all other fingers straight and pointing upward.

knows what: Tap forehead.

you need: Open hands in front of you, palms up.

before you ask him: Bring both hands in front of chest in prayer posture.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- What'sIt: Two Coins (see optional image in Resources)



- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What's It: Two Coins

Jesus uses the sacrificial offering of a poor widow to illustrate a point in regard to giving. It's the posture and attitude of our heart that directly affects how we give. The widow had little but gave all she had—not giving from what she had left over. God is our model for generous giving.

RELATE

Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What's It by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, *cue the Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What's It in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What's It. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What's It from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

Two coins in the Wardrobe of Wonder? What can you do with coins? Children will answer. How do people get money? Interact with responses. You're right! Grownups get money from their jobs. Your moms and dads may give it to you as an allowance. This is making me very curious. I'm really starting to wonder about what we're going to hear from The Big God Story today. Friends, do you know what time it is?

The Big God Story

Luke 21:1–4; Matthew 6:19–21; 2 Corinthians 9:7

God Is Generous

Storytelling Technique: Props

SUPPLIES

- Bible

RELATE

Hello, friends, it's good to be here with you! I'm so excited to get to learn with you from The Big God Story. I know God has some great things for us today, and I don't want us to miss anything He wants to teach us. Let's pray together and ask God to take away anything that might distract us so He can speak to us from His Word. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Sit center stage on chair or edge of stage. Open Bible. **One day, Jesus was teaching some people in the temple. As He looked up, He saw some rich people putting their gifts into the temple offering boxes. He also saw a poor widow. A widow is a woman whose husband has died, sometimes leaving her all alone with no one to take care of her. This poor widow put in two small copper coins. Jesus said, “Listen, because what I am going to tell you is true. That poor widow has put in more than all the others. All those other people gave a lot because they are rich. But even though she is poor, she gave everything she had”** (paraphrase of Luke 21:1–4).

Did you hear that? Put Bible down; stand and begin to move about as storytelling. Jesus said the poor woman who could only give two coins gave more than the rich people who put in a lot of coins! Even though they put in more money, the two small coins the poor lady put in the offering were more valuable to God. Why do you

think the two small coins were more valuable to God than the many coins the others put in? Children answer. **Could the two coins buy more food than the many coins?** Children answer. **No.** **Could they buy more clothes than the many coins?** Children answer. **No, they couldn't.** **But those two coins were worth more to God because of what was in the woman's heart when she gave them. She didn't own very much, but she gave *everything* she had. She gave generously because she wanted to!**

What does *generous* mean? Interact with responses. ***Generous* means that when you give something, you're giving more than what is expected. God is generous, because He often gives us even more than we need.** Begin snow props here if using. **So, if you were outside in the snow, and all you were wearing was a T-shirt, would you be cold?** Children answer. **Yes, you would be so cold. If I saw you were cold and I gave you a jacket, would that help you get nice and warm?** Children respond. **Yes, it would. That jacket was what you needed to help you to be warm. That would be very helpful of me, sure. But what if I *also* gave you a hat for your head, gloves for your hands, a scarf, and a nice big cup of hot cocoa with whipped cream on top? How would that make you feel?** Children answer. **That is giving generously. God is so generous to us. So when we give, we're showing God's generosity to others.**

I wonder, how can we give generously to others? Grown-ups have jobs and earn money, so they can give some of the money they're paid to others. They can also buy things for others with the money they earn. Some kids get an allowance to help around the house, so they can give some of the money they're paid to others. But what if you don't have a job or any money? How can you still give generously to others? Encourage children to share ideas. **These are all very good ideas. Sometimes spending time with people is what they need most. But we can also give some of the things we have to others, because God has generously given us these things.**

God has blessed us with so much. He is generous, and He gives us what we need and more. He might give us things like clothes, food, and toys, but He also gives us things like joy, friends, free time, and talents. Why do you think God is so generous to us? Wait for responses. **Yes, because God cares for us and He loves us. He also has given generously to us so we can give generously to others. He has blessed us so we can be a blessing to others.**

RESPOND:: 20 min.

Small Group Leaders

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages](#) (see Resources)
- Crayons

RELATE

Today in The Big God Story, Jesus was in the temple while people were giving their offerings. Jesus was pleased at the offering of the widow because even though she was poor, she gave everything she had from her heart. She gave generously to God. God is generous to us so that we too can be generous.

I wonder ... How is God generous to me?
I wonder ... How can I give back to God?
I wonder ... What are some things I can give to others?
I wonder ... Is there someone I could give generously to?

BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- HomeFront Weekly: Lesson 4 (see Resources)

RELATE

God is generous to us. Because He's been so generous to us, we can be generous to others. God is pleased when we share the ways He has been generous to us with others.

Have children pair up and say the blessing to one another as they repeat after you.

May you see the ways God is generous to you.

Gather children around you for a final group blessing:

Children, as God has been generous to you, may you go out and be generous to others.