

LESSON 57

God Loves a Cheerful Giver

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-14



BIBLE TRUTH

EVERYTHING WE DO, INCLUDING OUR GIVING, SHOULD SPRING FROM GRACE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: a big box of blocks

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 135)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 57—one for each child; markers or crayons

Sowing and Reaping

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ foam cups
- ✓ potting soil
- ✓ grass seed (a bag of dried beans if you don't have time to grow the grass)
- ✓ plastic wrap
- ✓ aluminum pan

Giving to Others

SUPPLIES: sandwich bags; several boxes of cookies (Make sure that no one in your class has special dietary considerations that would prohibit participation.)

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60-75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn God's reflection on the motive behind our giving.

Open the class by asking what it means to be a cheerful giver. If the children can't answer, give a couple examples: (1) "What if someone wanted to play with one of your toys? What do you think a cheerful giver would say?" (2) "If a child had a bag of candy and a friend didn't have any, what would a cheerful giver do? What would the attitude of their heart be, happy to give or sad to give?"

See if they can tell you what makes a giver cheerful. A cheerful giver has received gifts. For example, if a child gets a whole bag full of candy, she wouldn't mind giving some of it away because she has so much!

When we are aware of all the wonderful gifts God has given us, it is easy to give some of what we have away.

Using some of the toys in your classroom (blocks work well), give one of your helpers a large pile of blocks and tell them to demonstrate what it looks like to be a cheerful giver. (The helper should pass out a block to each of the children with a smile on his face and say a cheerful greeting.)

Collect the blocks and have your helper distribute them again, only this time ask him to do it reluctantly with a bad attitude. He can do this with a scowl on his face and hand them out with a short terse comment such as "take this." Then draw out the children, asking them how God wants us to give, cheerfully or resentfully, and why.

Ask the class to name some of the wonderful gifts God has given them. (They might answer parents or birthday or Christmas presents.) Finally steer them to the cross and how the cross of Jesus Christ is the most valuable gift anyone could ever get. Jesus takes our sins away and promises everlasting life in heaven with him. If we have that greatest gift, it is easy for us to give to others. Seeing Jesus as the best treasure is something that makes giving easy and something that God loves to see in our lives.

Take time to pray and thank God for the wonderful gift of Jesus. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 135, “God Loves a Cheerful Giver,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What is Paul talking about in this passage?**
(Paul is talking about giving.)

- **What kinds of things does Paul want us to give?**
(Paul is specifically talking about money, but there are many things we could give to others.)

- **What kinds of things could you give?**
(Even young children can give their time and attention, particularly when mom or dad is talking to them.)

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

Paul was excited about the cheerful giving of the Corinthians. He was excited because their giving flowed out of their “confession of the gospel of Christ” (2 Corinthians 9:13). Jesus gave the greatest gift of his life by dying for us on the cross. It is out of our great thanks toward God that we should be motivated to give toward one another.

Although giving to others is a work, God intends our giving to always be motivated by grace. By remembering the gift God gave us in the cross, our hearts are stirred by the Holy Spirit to give. Paul said it like this, God is able to make “all grace abound” (2 Corinthians 9:8) to us so that the treasures of this world no longer have a grip on us and we become cheerful givers.

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Let's try to name everything that God gave us.
(Engage the children in this exercise and make a list on a whiteboard.)
- Help the children memorize James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."
- What is the greatest gift that came down from above?
(Of course the greatest gift is Jesus. Read John 3:16 and point out to them that God's gifts, especially Jesus, come to us not because we deserve or earn them but because of his love for us.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 57—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

Who do you think pleased God in the picture: the one who gave a lot or the one who only gave a little? (God was pleased with the one who gave with a right attitude. This is based on the story of the widow who was only able to give two small copper coins. She was honored by Jesus because although she only gave a little, she gave all that she had with joy [Mark 12:42].)

What is more important, how much we give or the heart attitude behind our gift? (Our attitude is more important because that is what gives God the most glory.)

What did God give us that is the biggest gift of all? (God sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. It is remembering what God gave us that helps us want to give to others.)

Sowing and Reaping

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ foam cups
- ✓ potting soil
- ✓ grass seed (a bag of dried beans if you don't have time to grow the grass)
- ✓ plastic wrap
- ✓ aluminum pan

Two weeks prior to class take three foam cups and fill them with potting soil and plant different amounts of grass seed in each. In the first cup plant three to six seeds; in the second, ten to twelve seeds; and in the third fifty seeds. Moisten the soil and then cover with plastic wrap, poking a few holes in it for some air circulation. When the seeds germinate move them to a sunny window.

If you don't have time to grow the grass, fill one cup with three to six dried beans, one cup with ten to twelve beans, and another cup full of dried beans. Use these instead of the grass seed to demonstrate a bountiful harvest.

Use the cups planted with the grass to demonstrate 2 Corinthians 9:6. Ask the class what they would rather do if they were farmers, sow sparingly and get a small crop or sow bountifully and get a large crop. The answer is obvious. Connect the illustration to how we are to sow our time, money, and energy in the kingdom of God.

Optional: Have the class plant some grass seed in an aluminum pan. Each week check on the growing grass and remind them that 1 Corinthians 3:7 tells us that only God makes things grow.

Giving to Others

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ several boxes of cookies (Make sure that no one in your class has special dietary considerations that would prohibit participation.)
- ✓ sandwich bags

Make arrangements with another teacher to have your class bring cookies to their class.

In class, give everyone a cookie to eat. Then ask them if they would like to take cookies to another class. Pass out sandwich bags to the children and ask them to each take two cookies and place them in a bag. Then, having made arrangements with another teacher, take your class on their cookie errand.

When you return to your classroom ask the children how they felt about giving some of the cookies to the other class. Ask them why they enjoyed giving them away. Ask them how much it cost them.

Point out that all we have comes from God and that we should be willing to part with what we have for the good of God's kingdom. Tell the children that Paul commended the giving of the Corinthians as flowing from "your confession of the gospel of Christ." Explain that it was probably easy to give up the cookies because the teacher freely provided them. In the same way it should be easy to give up our money and possessions because of what Christ did for us when he died on the cross.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

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