



GENEROUS DISCIPLESHIP

PERSONAL JOURNEY

PREPARATION

- ➔ You may wish to invite a visitor who has an unusual 'talent'
- ➔ Ask members to donate any new toiletries
- ➔ Ask members to bring any 'talent' that they have, eg singing, playing the piano, reciting poetry, embroidery, knitting, writing ...
- ➔ Decorate your meeting space for a Talent Show, eg display gold stars, hang up a red curtain ...
- ➔ Gather resources to make greetings cards and/or bookmarks: card, glue, scissors, old greetings cards or other suitable pictures, crayons, paint, bookmark templates, or anything else that can be used for decoration
- ➔ Find some music for the card-making time, music to sing to or evoke memories to chat about
- ➔ Source items for parcels: wrapping paper or gift boxes, various new toiletry items

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

People often assume that when we think about giving, it's only about money. They forget to think of it as **generous** giving which is the giving of our time, our skills and abilities as well as our money.

Each of us has a particular gift or talent that we can use, whether we realise it or not. God has given us this ability and we should celebrate it and say thank you to him. There are those who bless us with the gift of music, but we should also celebrate those who have the gift of listening or washing up! Never underestimate the impact of those who work quietly and unseen in the background, giving and using a gift that most of us probably take for granted.

Whatever age we are, many of us get to a stage in our life when we believe that we cannot give as everyone else does. Yet that is the time when we unknowingly give more of our time or use our skills and abilities to help others.

This should be encouraged and celebrated, particularly with those who have reached that place in their life thinking that they have nothing else to offer.



ACTIVITIES

DISCUSS

Start the session by asking for stories of generous acts that the members have experienced, either themselves or that members of their families or friends have experienced.

VISITOR

You might know someone who has a particular creative talent that is not within your group. Why not invite them to come and share in this celebration. Find out more, eg how they discovered they had this talent; who taught them; how they have been used.

SHARE

Hold a Talent Show! Celebrate the talents that members have. You might find some that have been very well hidden!

Encourage members to show off any creative talent that they have, eg: play the piano or another instrument; read a poem that they have written or one from a book; demonstrate cake decorating; show an article that has been knitted; show an article of embroidery. The list is endless, but hopefully you will be able to encourage those members who might normally shy away from the limelight to come and talk about and/or share their particular passion.

After each person has displayed their particular talent, why not ask them to explain how it started, who showed them or any other question that you think the members would be interested to learn about this member's ability. Encourage members of the group to ask questions too.

As an act of generosity, are there items that the members have made that you could gift to those who are not able to be with you?

CRAFT

Make greetings cards and/or bookmarks. It's always good to receive a 'thank you' or 'thinking of you' card, especially when it's from someone that you would not expect to hear from or a group of friends that you are no longer able to get together with.

Set out materials on a table, if possible, which a number of people can sit around, and leave them to it! Encourage conversation, or put on a selection of music which will get them singing and the memories flowing.



GIVE

Make up presents of toiletries. As an act of generosity, ask the members to donate new toiletries and put together presents that can be given to those no longer able to join with the group or to the local food bank or women's refuge.

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

A call to generous giving (*NLT*)

 'Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will.

They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. Since you excel in so many ways - in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us - I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.

I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.'

When you hear or read the first few verses that Paul has written, are you struck by the amazement and wonder shown through those words? At this time the members of the church in Macedonia were persecuted and vilified for their audacity to declare themselves as Christians, a people who openly confessed themselves as followers of a risen Lord. They lived in a country that had reasonable wealth, and as citizens of Macedonia they could have lived quite comfortably. Yet because of their beliefs they lived in poverty.

Paul was absolutely blown away that even though the Macedonian Christians lived a 'hand to mouth' existence, this did not stop them giving away more than they could afford to give. In fact, they actually insisted that this happened. They

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demonstrated a true example of sacrificial generosity, something that the Corinthians could and should have done. Why? Because the Macedonians' faith and trust in God enabled them to fully understand that if they gave the very best of themselves, then he, God, would support and look after them.

This wasn't just 'Here's our money, it's all we have, now leave us alone'; this was 'Here's our contribution to the church - but what else can we do to help you?' Or, using Paul's own words, 'they begged us eagerly to let them have the privilege of sharing in the work of service for God's people'.

Paul saw that the Macedonians were truly devoted to God and that they were willing to give and use all that they had and all of who they were to help those who needed it, regardless of the fact that they were probably in need themselves. These are circumstances that possibly resonate with us or people we know, just now. So when the Corinthians needed to be given an example of why it was important to give, Paul told the story of the Macedonians, and he praised and thanked God for their continued depth of faith, trust and love for all.

While we recognise that we do need to support our church with our money so that it can carry out the mission where we are, we also need to understand that it's at those times when we honour God first and let him use all of who we are, that can make the biggest impact in someone else's life. You know, the time we spend with people using the skills and abilities that he has blessed us with - sitting at a table in the café and listening to a friend or stranger's concerns; washing up for lunch club; or making up food parcels - these times of generosity honour God.

Maybe now is the time to have a conversation with a church leader to ask the question, 'How can I give to this faith community?' Or to take a look around and consider, 'What can I offer?'

Let's show our thankfulness and praise to God so that we can be the most generous givers that God wants us to be.

REFLECTION

Invite members to join in a time of prayer and reflection. Play the song SASB 623 'Take my life and let it be'.

- ♪ SASB 623 'Take my life and let it be'
[Video \(no lyrics\)](#) International Staff Songsters by Music and More (3:52)
[Lyric video](#) feat Chris Tomlin by Scott Bacher (4:23)

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve as you deserve,
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To labour and not to seek for rest,
To give of myself and not ask for a reward,
Except the reward of knowing that I am doing your will.
AMEN.

St Ignatius of Loyola

SONGS

- ♪ SASB 364 'Give thanks with a grateful heart'
[Brass instrumental lyric video](#) by Salvation Army Video Songbook - Kelston Stanford (3:38)
[Video](#) (no lyrics) feat Pasadena Tabernacle Songsters of The Salvation Army by Music and More (4:49)
[Lyric video](#) feat Jehaziel (4:18)
- ♪ SASB 25 'God's love to me is wonderful'
[Brass lyric video](#) by Clydebank Salvation Army (2:55)
[Video](#) (no lyrics) feat Chelmsford Citadel Songster by lovegodandloveothers (2:39)
- ♪ 'The goodness of God'
[Official lyric video](#) feat Jenn Johnson by Bethel Music (4:54)
[Trio lyric video](#) feat Jo, Grace and Erin Moir by Regent Hall (4:48)
- ♪ '10,000 reasons (Bless the Lord)'
[Live performance video](#) (press cc for lyrics) by Matt Redman (4:18)



WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

- Connect website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/connect
- Family Ministries website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/families
- Emails: familyministries@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Facebook: @sarmyfm
- Twitter: @ukifamily
- Instagram: safamily_ministries



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