**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 3 of 4

# Giving

### MEETING AIM

To explore the area of giving – how and why we should.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:1-4

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

This is our third session exploring what we call Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. We might imagine that Jesus taught this all in a ‘one-er’ as it’s put together that way in the Bible. However, it’s more likely that Matthew carefully curated this selection of teachings together to enable the early followers of Jesus to remember (memorise) what Jesus had taught in a structured way.

Last time we thought about salt and light. Jesus then goes on to talk about some of the ‘big ticket’ questions – murder, adultery, divorce and revenge – before challenging the disciples to love their enemies and then to give to the needy, as we’ll explore today. It’s worth noting that that Jesus says ‘when’ you give – it’s not an optional activity for extra points!

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

As the children arrive, sit everyone down in a circle. Chat about anything the children have done this week. Share something that you have done this week too. Ask the children to share what it feels like to keep a good secret.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** a variety of small objects; similar-sized small boxes; wrapping paper; sticky tape

Before the session, wrap up a selection of objects to look the same. You could use individual cupcake boxes or empty matchboxes to ensure uniformity. The objects can be sweets or novelties or even totally random things – a ping-pong ball, a pebble, an odd cufflink – it doesn’t really matter.

Give each child a box and ask them to go and swap it with someone else. Then ask them to swap again. Repeat several times before allowing the children to open their boxes and find their ‘treasure’. Say that in today’s story, Jesus tells the people to give in such a secret way that they almost don’t know what they’re giving.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** a leader to act like a ‘great’ Christian

Before the session, ask a leader to prepare a short monologue about how amazing they are at being a Christian. They should talk about all the incredibly helpful and sacrificial things they’ve done. Make it as ridiculously over the top as you possibly can.

Invite your volunteer to deliver their speech. Then ask the children what they think God would think about this person doing all this stuff. Ask what they think of the person and the way they told their story.

Read (or ask someone to read) Matthew 6:1. Ask the group what they think about this person now.

Continue to read the rest of the passage up to verse 4. What does Jesus say we should do? How does he say we should do it? Who would be a needy person? As people suggest ideas, ask them to strike a pose that captures the sort of person they’re describing.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* Why did Jesus say not to make a big deal out of giving?
* How old do you think you have to be to start giving to people in need?
* How rich do you have to be before you start giving to people in need?
* Do you think Jesus asks all of us to give to those in need?
* How could you be a sneaky giver and give as secretly as possible?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** small pieces of card (credit-card size would be fine); pens

Give out the pieces of card and pens and encourage the children to make some ‘challenge cards’ for the week ahead. Talk about the things they could do to give to those in need:

* Take unwanted things to the charity shop
* Put change in a charity pot
* Buy pairs of socks and give them to homeless people
* Put food in the food bank baskets at the supermarket
* Buy a homeless person a sandwich.

They could come up with a range of different things that would be appropriate for their own situation. Encourage them to choose an idea or two that they think they could do this week, and write these on a card.

Explain that in order to keep ourselves safe, we need to ask an adult to help us with this – they can be in on our giving secret. Make sure you let parents and carers know what you’re doing so that they can support their children in this activity.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** pictures of people in need; world map or globe

Display some picture of people in need. These could be examples of local or maybe international need. Stick up your world map on a wall or display the globe. Let the children reflect on how they might give to these people in the pictures. Use the map or globe to explore what the children know about areas of need around the world. (Be careful not to stereotype areas of the world as needy; be specific about the need in certain places. For example, where people might be in immediate need because of natural disasters or war.)

Pray and ask God to soften our hearts towards those in need so that we give naturally in the course of everyday life without even realising what we’re doing.

**JENNY CHEUNG**

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