



ELEMENTARY LARGE GROUP

LESSON 3

GENEROSITY AND CHEERFUL GIVING

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Generous

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 9

GOD'S BIG STORY: Paul writes to the Corinthian Christians, encouraging them to give generously to the believers in Jerusalem and reminding them that God loves a cheerful giver.

WORD OF WONDER: The three most important things to have are faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What's the most generous thing someone has ever done for you?
- ****AWVBS RECAP VIDEO**
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship
 - ****AWVBS GIVING VIDEO**
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Generous

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 9

WORD OF WONDER: 1 Corinthians 13:13

I lived for a time in a small farming community. I wasn't on a farm, but all my friends were. I learned from them a great deal about planting and harvesting. When it comes to planting, you'll almost always overspread seeds. If you hold back from putting them out there, you'll find that by harvest time you won't get a great return.

When it comes to generosity, the same is true. If we hold back from being generous, we miss out on the amazing returns that could have come our way.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6–14. Paul understood this principle: We're to be generous with our time, talent, and treasure the way God is generous with His love for us.

There's also a second principle with generosity that has to do with our heart attitude: "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). If we give grudgingly, we can miss the gifts God desires for us. Still, we all struggle sometimes. My encouragement? Give anyway. What I've realized is that if I give God all I have, even when my heart doesn't feel all that grateful, God takes my little and turns it into abundance. Because that is who God is!

Is there something you're only releasing a little of? Give God all of it, and see what He does!

—Tom Bump

Children's Ministry Leader, Author, and Coach
Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS GENEROSITY AND CHEERFUL GIVING

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Corinthian assembly of Jesus' followers were prone to create divisions between people of different economic status. Paul writes to them with care, using rhetoric to build them up and prompt the desire to give generously.

WHAT?

The collection Paul mentions comes up elsewhere too (see Romans 15:25–26). Paul planned this effort to help the poor of Jerusalem, and he saw a financial gift as a way for Gentiles to bless the people of Israel, showing their unity in Christ.

WHERE?

As the capital of the region of Achaia, Corinth was a wealthy city by ancient standards. It had a thriving mercantile industry, where Paul earned a living as a tentmaker according to Acts 18:3.

WHEN?

There isn't a consensus for dating 2 Corinthians, but Paul would have likely exchanged letters with the Corinthians in the AD 40s and early 50s. The collection Paul successfully brought to Jerusalem precipitated his arrest, which eventually brought him to Rome.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Jesus is careful to warn His followers, "You can't serve God and money at the same time" (Matthew 6:24). Followers of Christ are commanded to help the poor and share from material abundance, since wealth can only come from God.

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Generous

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 9

WORD OF WONDER: 1 Corinthians 13:13

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be sure to move to their level and introduce yourself to any new friends. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

Welcome Question

Consider using a:30 or 2:00 Countdown to let leaders and kids know it's almost time to begin!

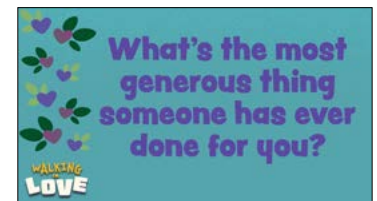
At Your Start Time...

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At your service start time, call attention to the Welcome Question on the screen and invite Small Group Leaders to begin:

"What's the most generous thing someone has ever done for you?"

"Generosity is when we show kindness by cheerfully giving something valuable—such as our money, time, or things we own—to someone else. God has been so generous to us, and He helps us be generous to others. This is what we'll learn about today."



AWVBS RECAP

"Who was at Adventure Week VBS last week? Before we start Small Group time, we are going to watch a video showing all the fun we had! Check this out!"

VIDEO: AWVBS RECAP

"Wow! We had such an amazing time learning about God's Rock Solid Truth and how God's Truth Never Changes! If you're here visiting because you came to AWVBS, we're so glad you're here! We're going to sing and worship just like we did last week, but first, it's time for Small Group!"

Small Group

While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! I have a little game for us first today!

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

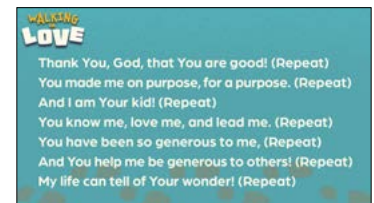
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You have been so generous to me, (Kids repeat.)

And You help me be generous to others! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Invite an older kid to set the microwave for 60 seconds and press the start button. Allow kids to watch through the window, remaining several feet back.

The soap will expand well beyond its original size. Carefully remove the plate from the microwave and invite kids to touch the expanded soap. Be aware that the soap will be very warm to the touch.

Wow! What happened to our soap? Why do you think that happened? Allow kids to make observations and guesses. **Those are great ideas! This is what happened: Ivory® soap has tiny pockets of air throughout it. (Most soaps don't have these pockets.) Therefore, when we heated it up in the microwave, the air in those pockets became steam and expanded, causing the soap to grow!**

In this experiment, we were generous with our soap—we freely gave it away! And what happened? The soap grew bigger and spread farther. That's what generosity is like! Today we will discover that just as God gives generously to us, He invites us to share generously with others and to trust Him to handle the rest. Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HELPS US BE GENEROUS.**



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words with these as a guide if needed: **God, thank You for bringing each kid here today. Thank You that You have been so generous to us through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Open our hearts to hear Your truth, and help us be generous to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! These songs are very special because we got to sing them for Adventure Week VBS! Everyone stand up and dance and sing with your whole heart!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: BREAKER ROCK BEACH, PRAISE

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

Remind kids that this beautiful letter is from Paul to the church in the ancient city of Corinth.

"Let's start by watching part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll experience more of the story!"

VIDEO: GODS' BIG STORY



LESSON 3 **GENEROSITY AND CHEERFUL GIVING**

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Apostle Paul costume, inflated balloon, Bible, bubble solution, bubble bottle for Paul (optional), bubble machine (optional), handheld bubble blaster (optional), bubble bottles (several, optional), bubble wands (1 per kid, optional), mini bubble bottles (1 per kid, optional), DIY time machine or streamers (optional)

Walking in Love Experience It! Script Background:

During the Walking in Love Series, the Apostle Paul takes a break from his missionary work in the first century and walks forward in time to share God's message with the kids in your church! (Join kids in suspending disbelief and welcoming this enthusiastic time traveler!) The Walking In Love Experience It! Scripts have been designed independently of each other but can also be used as a cohesive unit. If choosing to utilize more than one Experience It! Script during the Walking in Love Series, try to have the same dynamic volunteer act out the part of Paul each week. (If this isn't possible, then have the volunteers playing the part of Paul wear the same costume.) This will help keep kids engaged while creating anticipation and excitement from week to week.

- Consider of these directions for Paul's costume: 1. First century-inspired clothing, such as a simple tunic with a rope tied around waist. 2. Silly, mismatched outfit, such as a Hawaiian shirt, hat, and scarf.
- To create the illusion that Paul has taken a walk forward in time from the first century and appeared on your ministry stage, consider creating a time machine or dressing up a doorway with streamers for Paul to enter through.
- Two opening options are written into today's Experience It! Script. If your church used the Experience It! Script in a previous Walking in Love lesson, choose Option 1. If today's is the first Walking in Love Experience It! Script you plan to use, select Option 2.

This lesson's Experience It! Script incorporates the use of bubbles to express the joy of giving generously. Every time the Apostle Paul states the Wonder Truth, "God helps us be generous," bubbles should flow generously in your environment for about 10 seconds. Here are some bubble options. Choose any combination that works best in your ministry environment:

- Have the Apostle Paul blow bubbles each time he mentions the Wonder Truth.
- Set up one or more bubble machines around the perimeter of your teaching space. Consider stationing an adult volunteer or older kid at each machine to turn it on each time they hear the Wonder Truth and then off again a few seconds later.
- Provide a handheld bubble blaster for each adult leader. Invite them to spray bubbles throughout the room each time Paul states the Wonder Truth.
- Invite several responsible kids to the stage area and give each a bottle of bubbles. Invite them to blow as many bubbles as they can every time Paul says the Wonder Truth.
- Provide a bubble wand for each kid and challenge them to "catch" and "share" bubbles each time they're blown.
- Provide a mini bottle of bubbles for every kid. Instruct them to blow bubbles only when they hear Paul say the Wonder Truth. As an alternative, consider providing mini bubbles as a take-home gift to help kids remember the story and Wonder Truth.

Make It Inclusive!

Bubbles can overwhelm kids with sensory sensitivities, so if needed, create a special spot for kids to sit away from the bubbles or limit the bubbles to the stage area.

Opening: Apostle Paul enters stage right, stumbling as if he has tumbled through time and landed in church. Paul looks around and smiles with excitement to see a room full of kids who have come to hear God's Word!

PAUL: Hello! It's great to be back with you today in (pause) what year is it again?

Pause for kids to answer. **That's right! It gets a little confusing sometimes when you walk through time. If we didn't meet last time, my name is Paul. Many people refer to me as the Apostle Paul because I am a Jesus follower and missionary. I dedicated my life to Jesus and helped the early church get started, and today I'm visiting you from the first century.**

If Paul is in a silly costume, say: **I want to apologize for my clothes. I had no idea how I should dress here in the 21st century. How did I do? Do you think I'll blend in dressed like this?** *Pause for kids to respond.*

Begin Lesson 3 Script:

PAUL: I have a question for you today: Has anyone ever written a love letter? *Pause for kids to respond.* **I've written a ton of love letters, but probably not the kind you're imagining. I like writing letters to churches telling them that, above all, showing one another love would make them more like Jesus. Generous love will never come to an end because God helps us be generous! Say it with me (pause and allow kids to respond with you): God helps us be generous.** Cue bubbles.

Which do you think is easier: showing love to people who are close to us or showing love to people who are far away? *Pause for kids to respond.* **Let's try an experiment. Hold up a balloon. We don't have these back in the first century. What's this called?** *Pause for kids to respond.* **Ah, yes! A balloon. Let's see how easily I can toss this balloon to one of our friends in the front row.** Gently toss a balloon to the closest kid. Ask for the balloon back. **Fairly easy right? Now, let's see how easily I can toss this balloon to our friends in the back of the room.** Hit the balloon hard; it still shouldn't travel very far. **It was easy to toss the balloon to those closest to me, but it was difficult to toss the balloon to those farther away. It's the same way with showing love. Our humanness makes it easier for us to show love and concern to people who are closest to us and most like us. It's good to show love to our family, but it's a little harder to show love to our neighbor.**

The church at Corinth was one of the churches I wrote to, and the people who lived there were called Corinthians. I had a special challenge for their church, something even more difficult than hitting a balloon: to show generous love to a group of people who were far away. But God helps us be generous, so I knew they could do it! Say it with me (pause and respond with kids) God helps us be generous. Cue bubbles.

There were Jewish Christians living far away in Jerusalem who needed help. And I had a plan to collect money, or an offering, to help the poor. The Christians living in Corinth weren't Jewish and didn't know the Christians living far away in Jerusalem, but we're all united through Jesus. So, I wanted the people who lived in Corinth to give to Jewish followers of Jesus—people who had done so much to spread the Good News.

Why would anyone do that? Well, listen to what I wrote to the Corinthians. *Pause and hold the Bible open to 2 Corinthians 9:6–7 as you read.* **“Here is something to remember. The one who plants only a little will gather only a little. And the one who plants a lot will gather a lot. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give. You shouldn't give if you don't want to. You shouldn't give because you are forced to. God loves a cheerful giver.”**

OK, everyone close your eyes for a moment—no peeking! Imagine a farmer who wanted to grow wheat in a field. The farmer opens his cupboard where he's saving some seeds to eat. The farmer thinks *(say in a different voice)*, **“What should I do? Should I eat these delicious seeds or plant them in the field?”** The farmer decides that instead of eating the seeds, he'll plant them in his field. To grow lots of wheat, the farmer needs to plant lots of seeds. Giving money to other people is a lot like planting seeds, since giving away money means giving up something that feels useful. You can open your eyes now; but keep listening!

Keep the Bible open to 2 Corinthians 9:10 as you continue: **“God supplies seed for the person who plants. He supplies bread for food. God will also supply and increase the amount of your seed. He will increase the results of your good works.”** I wrote these words to the Corinthians, but they're meant for each one of us too. We can all remember that God is the one who gives us resources in the first place. God doesn't give only for us to turn around and hold our gifts tightly. God invites us to share whatever we have with those in need and to trust Him to handle the rest. God helps us be generous. Say that again with me *(pause and encourage kids to say with you)*: **God helps us be generous!** *Cue bubbles.*

Generosity will make others thank God. It reminds the world that God is the Creator and Sustainer, the God who sends rain and makes food grow. We can't do anything to repay God's generosity, but we can do our best to follow and imitate Jesus with the Holy Spirit's help. Jesus didn't focus on His own needs. He put the needs of others ahead of His own. God helps us be generous. Say that again with me *(pause and encourage kids to say with you)*: **God helps us be generous!** *Cue bubbles.*

Thank you for being generous today and for allowing me to spend time with you. I'm about to take a walk back in time to a period and place that's very far from here. However, as we learned today, don't let distance keep you from being generous! God helps us be generous no matter where we are. Peace to you!" Exit stage area.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Display the Generosity Wonder Truth Slide. Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD HELPS US BE GENEROUS**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus teaches His followers: "You can't serve God and money at the same time." As followers of Jesus, we are to share what we have with others, since God is the one who provides us with everything we have to begin with!"



Responding in Worship **GIVING**

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

"Today we talked about generosity and giving. We had a very unique opportunity last week during Adventure Week VBS to give money to help provide clean water and food to people in South Sudan.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. There ARE motions to this video for AWVBS, kids may do the motions if they know them, or just worship and reflect.



WORSHIP VIDEO: NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. Use your own words, with these as a guide if needed.

Blessing: May the God who is so loving and generous with us help you be generous to others as you share His love through your time, words, and actions.