



Developing the Spirit of Generosity

The next brick in the spiritual foundation is learning to be generous. Why is this Rite of Passage so important? Generosity is a godly characteristic we want to see our children develop. At the age of five, your child may be starting school for the first time. Kids at this age are beginning to think beyond themselves and are learning to care for other people. This is a great time to help them learn to be generous to those around them. In this Jumpstart, you will find help for teaching your child to share with others in the context of everyday life and at church as well. Listed below are some of the spiritual concepts your five-year-old is ready to understand.

- God is the creator of all life and He is worthy of praise.
- God is concerned about people and cares for them.
- The Bible teaches me how God wants me to live.
- God helps and provides for people.
- We learn what God and Jesus are like by reading the Bible.
- The church provides a way for people to help others.
- People at church give money so others can learn about Jesus.

-Jesus taught how God wants us to treat other people.

What are the Benefits?

When children learn Bible based generosity at a young age, they grow up understanding that God put us here to do His work; to help others. Children develop empathy and learn to care about others more than they care about themselves. When parents teach these concepts, their children have an opportunity to grow up and make a difference in this world. Learning to be generous takes the focus off of us and puts it on others who need God's help. the Bible gives many examples of what it means to be generous.

Jumpstart 1 Having a Heart for Others

Exodus 25: 1-9 – The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. And this is the contribution you shall receive from them: gold, silver and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goat’s hair, tanned ram’s skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece. And let them make me a



sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.”

God wanted His people to be generous and give of what they had to build the tabernacle. We are to be the hands and feet of Jesus by helping others and honoring God. Sit down as a family and talk about people you know who need help. Perhaps there is a child at school who has very little in the way of toys. Ask your child if there is something he can do to help. Maybe he can look around his room and see if there is something he can share. Of course, you can always go out and buy a toy to share, but sacrificial giving is an important step in learning to be generous.

Jumpstart 2 Giving and Trusting

The Bible gives us many examples of Jesus caring for people. Find John chapter 6 and read verses 1-14 – Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - with your child. Jesus shows us that sacrificial giving and faith go hand in hand. The young man with the loaves and fish gave up all the food he had to eat. Jesus gave thanks for the food and God blessed it and fed five thousand people. Help your child understand that God can do things we can't do. Even after everyone ate, there were twelve baskets of food left over. Everything we have comes from God and learning to give, and trust Him with what was given, is an important step in spiritual growth.

Jesus met a need that day. He fed hungry people because He loved them. Research needs in your community. Find out through your church if there are families who need food. Cook a meal together as a family or purchase a meal and deliver it to the family in need. Another option is to buy a grocery store gift card and give that. You can help your child develop a giving spirit by leading the way and sharing God's love with others.

Jumpstart 3 Giving at Church

“Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and He saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And He said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.” Luke 21: 1-4

Learning to give money to God at church is a practice that children will not develop unless they see their parents giving. This is a hard concept for many adults. When you look at the bills you have to pay, you wonder where the money will come from to tithe. The Bible tells us how God wants us to look at this: *“Bring the full tithe into the*



storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need." Malachi 3:10

Because everything we have is from God, He expects us to make Him a priority. Our tithe, or a tenth of our money, should be given first, before any other expenses are met. For most of us, this means sacrifice. Read the two Bible passages above together as a family. Get a one-dollar bill and ten dimes and put them on the table in front of you. Explain to your child that the tithe is 10% of what we have and that is what God asks us to give to Him through the church. Show your child the dollar bill and the ten dimes. Say "If we give one tenth of this dollar to the church, we would give one dime. Ten cent is one tenth of a dollar." Get out another dollar and share with your child that a tenth of two dollars would be twenty cent or two dimes. If you give your five-year-old an allowance, help them calculate what one tenth would be and encourage him to give that amount. Help your child understand that giving to God should be done with a grateful heart and a spirit of thankfulness for all He has given to us.

Jumpstart 4 Giving of Ourselves

More than anything, Jesus wants our full attention and devotion. Read the account of Jesus visiting the home of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 together as a family. The Bible says that Martha welcomed Jesus into her home and then stayed busy with the preparation of food. Mary, however, sat at the feet of Jesus to listen and learn. She gave Jesus her full attention. When Martha complained, Jesus reminded her that Mary had chosen the best thing. Teach your child that loving God and striving to be more like Jesus every day is what makes God happy. He created us to love and worship Him. Make a chart with the title "I Can Be More Like Jesus." Ask your child to list ways she can love God by trying to be more like Him every day. Post the chart in an area where it will be seen every day.