



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

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 (NIrV)

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.



Curiosity

LESSON 3 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

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Planting Play

SUPPLIES: bin, shredded brown paper (enough to fill the bin), pom-poms (1 per kid), fake flowers (1 per kid), sand (optional)

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church. Ahead of time, fill the bin with shredded brown paper or sand.

Welcome! I'm so glad you are here today! I have something I want to give you, but I need your help first. Can you help plant these pom-poms like seeds?

Encourage toddlers to dig in the pretend soil in the bin and pretend to plant the pom-poms as if they are seeds. **Thank you! Now, let's pretend our pom-pom seeds grew into flowers! Can you help me make flowers?** Encourage toddlers to put the flowers in the bin as if flowers have grown in the bin.

How wonderful! I wanted to give you these flowers to look at and play with, but I needed your help first. Thank you for being generous and giving me your time! And we got to pretend something grew. We're going to learn about how God can help us be generous and help us grow as we share with others.

Allow kids to play with the pom-poms, flowers, and soil bin.



9:00 Service

Belief

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:
God, You have given us every good thing in our lives. Help us listen to You today and learn how we can share Your love with others by being generous. In Jesus' name, Amen.

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read from the passage, 2 Corinthians 9:6-14

Generosity & Cheerful Giving

And/or the summary script below:

⁶Here 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. ⁷You should each 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. ⁸And God is able to shower all kinds of blessings on you. In all things and at all times you will have everything you need. You will do more and more good works. ⁹It is written, "They have spread their gifts around to poor people. Their good works continue forever."

¹⁰God supplies seed to the planter. 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. ¹¹You will be made rich in every way. Then you can give freely. We will take your many gifts to the people who need them. And they will give thanks to God.

¹²Your gifts meet the needs of God's people. And that's not all. Your gifts also cause many people to thank God.

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¹³You have shown yourselves to be worth by what you have given. So people will praise God because you obey him. That proves that you really believe the good news about Christ. They will also praise God because you share freely with them and everyone else. ¹⁴Their hearts will be filled with longing for you when they pray for you. God has given you grace that is better than anything.

Summary:

Paul, who was one of Jesus' followers, wrote letters to the early church to help them follow Jesus. The book of [2 Corinthians](#) is a letter Paul wrote to people who lived in the city of Corinth. Paul told them that, above all, showing one another love would make them more like Jesus.

It's easy and good for most of us to show love and care for people who are close to us. But it is a little harder to show love and generosity to strangers. To remind us that God wants us to love all people, I have a card to share with you. **(Show the heart card.)** Paul wanted the Corinthians to love and help people they didn't even know! The heart reminds us of this.

Paul had a plan to collect money, or an offering, to help the people who were poor in Jerusalem, which was another city. Paul wanted the Corinthians to share their money, and I have another card I want to share with you! **(Show the coin card)**. The money picture reminds us that Paul wanted the Corinthians to share money with people they had never met.

Why would anyone do that? Paul says, "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" ([2 Corinthians 9:6-7](#)). To remind us how God loves a cheerful giver, you can smile at someone! Cheerful means being happy! **(Show the smiley face card.)**

Imagine that a farmer wanted to grow wheat in a field. To do that, the farmer would need to plant a lot of seeds instead of keeping all of them. Paul says giving to others is like planting seeds. Paul tells the Corinthians that God will give them what they need and give them lots of good things when they share with others. To remind us to plant seeds of generosity, like a farmer planting seeds, here is a seed card! **(Show the seed card)**.

We can remember that God is the One who gives us everything we have in the first place. God does not give us gifts and blessings just for us to hold on to our gifts and not share them. To help us remember that God gives us good gifts because He is generous to us, and we can share with others, let's turn our cards over. What do you see when we put the pieces together? It's a gift! The gift reminds us that God gives us gifts generously and that we can share with others!

Generosity means we share happily with others. Generosity will allow others to thank God. It reminds the world that God is the Creator and giver of everything we need. We cannot do anything to repay God's generosity, but we can do our best to follow and do what Jesus did. Jesus did not focus on His own needs, but He put the needs of others ahead of His own. God helps us be generous.

Word of Wonder

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 (NirV)

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

How does your generosity show others God's love?

- **How do you feel God's love when you are generous?**
- **[OBJ]**



Identity

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

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Activity: Time to Give

OR

Craft: Father's Day Card

ACTIVITY SUPPLIES: large pom-poms, clear jar

Place the jar in the center of the room. Scatter the pom-poms around the jar on the floor. Invite toddlers to pick up the pom-poms and put them in the jar. Encourage them to watch the jar fill up as they “give” the pom-poms. Even

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when the pom-poms overflow, act excited and continue to encourage toddlers to give.

Wow! You are giving so many pom-poms! You're giving more than the jar can even hold! That's how much God gives us. When we remember just how many good things God has given us, we can easily give and share more with others.

CRAFT SUPPLIES: white half sheet cardstock, craft stick, foam popsicle cut out, mouth stickers, google eyes

Glue the craft stick at an angle, then glue the foam popsicle on top. Add eyes and mouth.



Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for His generosity toward us so we can show generosity to others.

God, thank You for all the good gifts and blessings You have given us. We are grateful! Remind us that You've given us everything we have, and because of that, we can give good things to others. Thank You for helping us be generous. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you experience God's blessing when you are generous. May God give you the courage to give to others and show God's love.