



TeenTalk Giving

The activities in this third session of Teentalk focus on direct giving as a natural part of our lifestyle as Christian people. As noted in the [TeenTalk Introduction](#) young people are very familiar with the concept of charity and fundraising for good causes. Some of the activities in this section build upon that awareness and raise the question of direct giving as a personal choice. As with the *Lifestyle* section the resources in this *Giving* section offer a series of building blocks for youth leaders to construct an appropriate session for their group. The excellent site, www.g-nation.co.uk promotes charitable giving amongst school age children. To use the site fully you must sign in but some resource can be accessed through the teachers section. In particular the [downloads](#) section in the Teachers zone has attractive classroom worksheets in Acrobat format. *Vibrant Spirituality* by Jenny Baker (£6.99) offers 10 ready to use meetings for 11-16 years. It focuses on issues of spirituality such as forgiveness and creativity. The first session is on money and has some useful ideas.

Fundraising £500

This and the following two activities explore young people's experience of fundraising and raises the question of the role of direct giving by individuals. Divide the group into smaller groups and tell them that they have to come up with ways to raise £500 for the church or a charity. This can be a fictional activity or you might wish to make it a real challenge given a local church or community need or a current issue on the news. Be careful to avoid the word "fundraising" when you give these instructions. Allow 5 or 10 minutes and then ask each group for their ideas. As the group reports back record all the ideas on a flip chart and be careful to affirm them; there will be good ideas among them. Then simply ask if any group thought of just asking people to give a money donation? If not explore why this might be - why not just ask people to give? To extend this exercise you might wish to do a simple analysis on the results. Often the effort is not rewarded by the gains and it is a transaction because people get something in return for their donation. It is not a criticism of fundraising as such but an awareness of the real situation.

- How much will each activity raise?
- What will be the cost to each person who attends? (e.g. ticket for a dance)
- What will the people get out of it? (e.g. stuff from a jumble sale)
- How much time will be needed to organise the event and how many people?

Band Aid

Obtain a copy of Do *They Know it's Christmas?* the Band Aid single from 1984 or the re-release from 2004. Even better get a copy with the video of the pop stars singing the record. Ask the group about the reasons for the song, the famine in Ethiopia and why so many pop stars gave their time to make the record. Explore the mixed reasons why people get involved. How much did the record raise? Did pop stars make an individual donation? Are they aware of other charity single releases? Are the group more likely to buy a CD that supports a charity – why?

Oxfam video

This activity could follow on from the Band Aid exercise above or standalone. Discuss Comic Relief with the group; better still have some video snippets available from the event. Explore with the group the reasons for Comic Relief, why people get so involved and what group members may have got out of being involved. The programme shows some very large cheques made out to Comic Relief and people do give some serious one off donations. Then show

the Oxfam video (it might be a World Vision video or another charity). They are frequently shown on TV, very often on cable TV stations. The point is that the charity is looking for *regular planned giving* and the amounts they are looking for each month are very low indeed – just £2-£3. Discuss with the group why OXFAM would want regular giving and why the request is pitched so low. Alternatively (or in addition) obtain an alternative Christmas gift catalogue which some charities produce. This suggests gifts that can be made to the third world instead of to us at Christmas. Discuss why some people do this and how the group feel about it.

Giving it all away: George Michael and Bill Gates

Former Wham front man and successful solo pop star George Michael announced in March 2004 that he would release his songs online and ask for donations to charity and stated that he no longer wanted the fame or the money. He already had enough of both. Download the [George Michael story](#) and give a copy to group members. Ask for comments and the issues that it raises. Among them:

- He has everything money can buy but thinks he will be happier doing this. Why is this? Do group members agree?
- Is it only the rich that can afford to give?
- Could or should everybody give away everything they have?
- Do we know of other people who have done this? Bill Gates, founder of software giant Microsoft is planning to do just that. Download the [story of Bill Gates](#) for further discussion in the group.

Giving it all away: John Wesley

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism was famous for his generosity. His is a remarkable story of a man who gave away everything he did not need – so remarkable that few people can live like that! Use [the story of John Wesley](#) (possibly alongside the stories of George Michael and Bill Gates) to raise the question of how we decide how much we can give. Introduce the idea of tithing, the giving of 10% of income as one Biblical model. Explain why giving a percentage is important using the advice in [Money Matters to Teens](#) from the preaching section of Giving in Grace. Another possibility is to invite a member of the local church to come to the youth group and talk about their experience of living and giving. This could be an excellent intergenerational exercise.

Money autobiography

A money autobiography is a way of helping people to think about the early messages about money that we learn as children. Follow this link for more advice on a [money autobiography](#). The group should break into pairs or threes and share their earliest memories of money as children. What were they and were they good or bad memories? When did they first receive pocket money – was it given or did they have to work for it? Are they earning now and how did it feel when they got their first job? It is these early messages that often shape our basic thinking about money so becoming aware of them is important. Asking whether giving was a feature of those early memories or what makes it hard for us to give is a key part of the process. This is a fairly adult exercise; it is most suitable for older teens and should be kept fairly light-hearted with an emphasis upon confidentiality and respect. This approach could be linked to the [story of John Wesley](#). His own early life was one of poverty followed by much wealth and then a formative incident when his chambermaid needed financial support.

Why I can't give

This activity builds on any of the activities above and explores the possible objections to giving money on a regular basis. In smaller groups ask the young people to think of five reasons people might offer for not giving on a regular basis. Then ask the smaller groups to suggest some answers to the reasons given. A similar exercise can be found in the Vibrant Spirituality Resource by Jenny Baker with some additional activities around giving.

Timothy Bible Study

Download the [Bible study on 1 Tim 6:17-19](#), one copy for each group member. This uses the simple Swedish method of Bible study. Divide the group into pairs or threes and give each group a copy of the study sheet. There are some sample questions included but encourage the groups to add their own. The study leads into the question "How do I decide what to give?" Use the [John Wesley](#) story or invite a church member to tell their story.

Tithe Bible study

This study more directly addresses the question of giving 10% or the tithe as a definite amount to give. Before using this study make sure that the leader has read the [guidance](#) in the Giving in Grace website around the value of teaching 10% as a form of proportional giving. The Bible passage is Deuteronomy 14:22-29. Download the [background notes](#) to the passage for the leader and a copy of the [Compass worksheet](#) for each group member. On the Compass worksheet group members write at each point of the compass what the passage says about each of the elements in the story: God, the individual giver, the poor and the Levite. Finally, in the centre of the compass write a word that describes the community that celebrated the tithe together. Do this exercise in twos or threes rather than individually and then share thoughts in the full group. You may like to also use a [dramatised reading](#) that gets at the underlying elements of the story.

The soldier's doughnuts – a story (NB: the source is unknown; please [advise](#) if you know it)

As World War II ended, orphaned children were starving in Europe's cities. Early on a chilly London morning, an American soldier was returning to his barracks. Turning the corner in his jeep, he spotted a lad with his nose pressed to the window of a pastry shop. Inside the cook was kneading dough for a batch of doughnuts. The hungry boy stared, watching every move. The soldier pulled to the curb and walked quietly to where the little fellow was standing. Through the steamed-up window he could see the morsels being pulled from the oven, piping hot. The boy released a slight groan as he watched the cook place them on the counter. The soldier's heart went out to the nameless orphan. "Son, would you like some of those?" The boy was startled. "Oh, yeah. I would!" The American stepped inside, bought a dozen, walked back to the lad, smiled and held out the bag. "Here you are." As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat and looked back. "Mister," the child asked quietly, "are you God?" We are never more like God than when we give. "For God so loved the world that he *gave*..." (John 3:16)

Living on a budget

This budget setting exercise is important for two reasons. Firstly because money management is not taught in Schools and it can come as quite a shock to young people to realise what they actually spend their money on and what it costs to live. Secondly because giving must be a priority in the budget so that it is handled as a priority; if not it will not happen. Three resources in particular are useful background reading for group leaders and would be an excellent purchase for each youth group member. These are published by [Credit Action](#), a biblically based money

education charity. Credit Action publications are approved by the National Consumer Council

- Money manual for School Leavers
- A Young Single Person's Guide to Better Money Management
- Money manual for Students

Divide the group into smaller groups:

- *Make a list of what they spend their money on each week.*
- *Write up their answers on a flip chart or wallpaper. Are there any common items? Were some people unable to say where all their money had gone?*

Now give the following scenario to work on in the smaller groups:

You are 19, have left home and are living in your own flat. You have 15 minutes to decide the 7 or 8 main weekly or monthly bills you have to pay and roughly how much they are. Add the totals together to get a monthly cost and then multiply by 12 for a year.

After the 15 minutes get the groups together and record their suggestions on a flip chart or some wallpaper.

- *What items have been missed out? Does giving feature? Write it in!*
- *What are classed as essentials that are really luxuries? Allow time for discussion around needs and wants.*
- *What annual salary are we looking at here? What awareness does that create about people who do not or cannot earn that amount of money?*
- *What adjustments can be made to the budget?*

If time is available it would be good to give each group member a copy of one of the Credit Action money management booklets mentioned above. If you have a small group waiting to go to or at university or older teens at school but earning £40-£50 pw group them together and give them the appropriate booklet. The booklets contain some basic guidance on costs of living which will help the group keep things realistic. Also flicking through it will raise other helpful issues such as the advantages and disadvantages of credit cards and the high interest rates on store cards.

This is an important exercise and it may be appropriate to use it outside of Giving in Grace. However, if it is used in this Giving session of TeenTalk it is important that time is given to discuss the questions:

- *Should personal giving to the church and Christian charities be a budget priority?*
- *How do I decide how much to give?*

Money

The TEAR Fund resource *Lift the Label* has a very useful idea (pages 35-37) for linking giving to lifestyle and could incorporate the Timothy Bible study listed above. The young people create a graffiti wall with words under the headings: *Life, Leisure and Luxuries*. The sections in the resource entitled *Save More! and Get more!* explain how to make the link with giving. This could be a full hour session for a youth group. Alternatively the *graffiti* wall could be created as an exercise in the first *Lifestyle* session of TeenTalk and then kept and introduced again in this third *Giving* session.