



Introduction for youth leaders

Welcome to [TeenTalk](#) - a collection of flexible resources that will enable your youth group to engage with Giving in Grace in a way that is appropriate to the make up of your group. Your group might be a Sunday morning teaching group, a midweek evening study or a games club with a 15 minute epilogue at the end of the evening. If your group has any kind of “teaching element” - from an hour long session to a short epilogue - you will find resource materials here that can be used and adapted to suit your needs.

The TeenTalk resources

TeenTalk is all about enabling our young people to think about the importance of personal giving and generosity as part of the lifestyle choices they make. There is a complex and confusing world full of professionally crafted and immensely powerful money messages. It is no surprise that the message about giving and generosity is easily drowned out by louder and more compelling voices. As they make their lifestyle choices TeenTalk aims to help young people reflect critically upon and ask questions about the world in which they live, to explore the central question of money and the ethical issues that surround it. The resources are divided into four sections which, taken together, form a coherent approach to a complex question:

- **Lifestyle matters** explores issues of personal choice that young people have to make, the pressures upon them from advertising and a consumer culture that makes these decisions so complex and difficult.
- **Ethical matters** raises some of the serious issues around fair trade, poverty and international debt that lie behind the individual choices that our young people must make. Young people are often very aware of injustice but unaware of the underlying issues. A tiny fraction of the cost of a pair of designer trainers goes to the shoeless young person who made them while millions of pounds can go to the sports celebrity who advertises them.
- **Giving matters** focuses on the decision to give as a lifestyle choice and the value of forming early habits of generosity. Our practice of giving cannot be divorced from the lifestyle choices we make and can also shape the way we make those choices.
- **So what?** encourages young people to make a response, to do something about issues they have discussed

Building blocks

For the sections **Lifestyle**, **Ethical**, and **Giving** the resources are designed as a number of building blocks including icebreakers, activities and some biblical reflection which can be used to construct a session that suits the needs of the group. A short epilogue might use just one idea while a full one hour session can be constructed from a number of the building blocks. Hopefully this approach will meet the needs of most groups. Youth group leaders should take some time to explore the suggestions and structure the building blocks around the teaching time at their disposal. *Please note that the resources in the **Ethical** section are designed around published materials. Time is needed to order them and there is a small cost involved.*

So What?

TeenTalk is part of Giving in Grace and it is important to keep focused on this. There are plenty of resources and there will be plenty of time to return to the other important issues at a later date. and take full advantage of the resources available. The **So What?** session ensures that the young people are presented with a definite challenge at the end of the series - just as the adults will be invited to do in church. This final session suggest a range of possible responses that young people might choose to make. The choices that the young people make will depend very much on their own relationship to the church and also that of their parents. In some cases they will be the children of committed church going parents; in other cases neither they nor their parents will attend church.

At the heart of Giving in Grace is the principle of *Differentiation* - the recognition that our congregations can be divided into Core, Congregation and Fringe groupings depending on their relationship to the church. It is important that the response that young people are invited to make is appropriate to that relationship with the church. Make sure differentiation is kept in mind when planning to use the TeenTalk resources. The issue is raised in the discussion paper [Money Matters to Teens!](#) available on the Giving in Grace website. There is also a discussion paper on the principle of Differentiation on the Website which would be useful for youth ministry leaders to read. A member of the Giving in Grace planning group will be able to help with access to these documents.

Planned giving and young people

One of the options in [So What?](#) is for young people to consider taking planned giving envelopes for their giving to church. We want our young people to consider the issues of lifestyle and justice in trading but we also want them to begin to develop the habit of regular planned giving and for the church to be part of that giving - not the whole of it, but certainly a priority within their overall giving. Envelopes help develop that personal discipline; indeed experience suggests that where young people and their families are core members of the church this can be very effective when it is suggested, encouraged and modelled by their peers and their parents. However, where families are either Fringe members or have no association with the church it can encourage abdication of any need to be involved or a “tipping” attitude towards giving. Taking envelopes is the right response for some young people but not for others.

How much should I give?

This is a question that might be raised and it must be taken seriously. If we leave it ambiguous people will do nothing. Never give a specific amount of money as a response. Firstly stress that it should be *their* money - not what is given by their parents. Secondly talk about giving a proportion or percentage of their income, be it pocket money, Saturday job or weekly paper round. Giving a proportion of income makes and keeps the connection between income and giving. This means that as a young person gets older and their income changes giving and generosity remain significant factors in decision making. Proportional giving is the Biblical standard as St Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 16:2. It is illustrated in the Old Testament in the law of the tithe where 10% of income is the proportion of giving to income. The House of Bishops suggest 5% to church and 5% to other charities. However, teenagers' access to and accountability for “their” money varies a great deal. Encourage debate not group pressure.

And finally

Keep focused on the purpose of TeenTalk. Giving in Grace is not a fundraising activity for the local church and it certainly is not about asking young people to help solve financial problems. TeenTalk as part of Giving in Grace is about teaching the value of early and formative habits of giving, generosity and lifestyle choices.

There is a wide range of resources here. We hope you find them helpful not only in Giving in Grace but also in other youth group sessions at a later date. Feedback and any new ideas would be very much appreciated; please email: carol.griffiths@liverpool.anglican.org.