



Lifestyle is the first of the three sessions in [TeenTalk](#), the Giving in Grace teaching programme for teenagers. The resources here should be seen a selection of building blocks that youth leaders can use to build a session that will suit the time and resources available to the group and the preferences of the young people involved. Many of the resources in this Lifestyle section and the other sections of TeenTalk can be revisited at a later date if so desired. The resources focus upon the lifestyle choices and pressures to choose that our young people have to face as they get older.

Advertising logo quiz

This simple icebreaker exercise can be played in pairs or small groups. Give each pair/group a copy of the logo sheets – a selection of the logos of well known companies. The [logo quiz](#) is accessed from the TeenTalk web page on the Giving in Grace website. Ask the group to complete as many as they can in a five minutes - perhaps less. Read out the answers and award a prize to the winners. This activity could be extended by selecting a handful of the logos and asking the group to explore the image the particular company has in the eyes of the young people. What image does the logo convey to the young people? The excellent TEAR Fund resource *Lift the Label* has a session entitled *Value* (pages 7-9) which builds on this exercise and bases it on the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-9. For more on *Lift the Label* see the [Ethical Matters](#) section of the TeenTalk resources
Bible verses: Romans 12;1-2 (Luke 19:1-9 if using the Lift the Label resource)

Why do I shop?

Shopping is now a leisure activity. It is sometimes called “*Retail Therapy*” because it is said to make people feel better. A 2004 survey for the National Consumer Council showed that 91% of children in the East Midlands aged between 8 and 10 said that they enjoyed high street shopping. Often this is because as people buy things they feel that they are regaining a sense of control over their lives. This simple exercise invites the group to say how they feel about shopping, to begin to reflect on some of the deeper issues that lie behind a Saturday afternoon in town. Use a flip chart or wallpaper to record answers from the group. Some questions are:

- Who likes to shop and why?
- Is there a male - female divide in the group?
- Are there times you feel more like shopping than others?
- What would make a trip “successful” and how do you feel afterwards?
- What influences the things you buy?

The TEAR fund website has an extensive Bible reflection called [God, Justice and Shopping](#) based on Amos 8:5-6 which could be used to develop this activity into a Bible study which would raise issues of fair trade that will be explored in the second session of TeenTalk.

Bible Verses: Ephesians 5:15-17



The ration basket

Week Three of the all age *Preach Exodus!* resource has a simple idea called *Ration Basket* which is an intergenerational activity built around the experience of rationing from WW2. It is not strong enough as an exercise on its own but would work as part of a longer session. It could be useful around Remembrance Sunday.

Bible verses: Philippians 4:10-12 or Luke 17:11-19 Parable of the 10 Lepers – the importance of gratitude.

Do you buy it?

This exercise helps small groups to think about priorities and spending patterns. It explores the difficulties in knowing how to make wise choices in the way we handle our money. Split into small groups. Each group will need an imaginary budget of £200, (perhaps use Monopoly money) and a challenge card which gives sets a shopping challenge for the group. Download the [sample challenge cards](#) which can of course be edited to suit. Together each group needs to decide how much money to spend and why or indeed whether they accept the premise of the challenge. In addition to the cards you will need to have a selection of shopping catalogues (e.g. Argos & Index) and maybe some catalogues from specialist suppliers. Set a 15-20 minute time limit to really focus the exercise. When their time is up ask each group in turn to read out the instructions on their challenge card and explain what they have bought and why. Discuss the following:

- 1 Was the challenge dealing with a genuine need?
- 2 How did you decide how much money to spend?
- 3 Could you have fulfilled the challenge with £100?
- 4 What values does your spending illustrate?
- 5 Are you more likely to buy the best if it is for you than for church use?
- 6 Would it have been easier with just two choices of product instead of a catalogue of choice?
- 7 Does more choice equal greater freedom?

Bible verses: Luke 12:13-21 The Rich Fool

My treasure

The previous week invite some (or each) of the group members to bring in something that they really value, something that they could not live without. Let each young person introduce their object and say why it is so important to them. Each should be allowed to introduce their object with respect and without criticism and group leaders will need to control the group carefully at this point. Questions can be asked about *why* something matters; for example an MP3 player may be a valued object because music is important, perhaps a particular type of music. Give at least three or four young people the opportunity to share what matters to them. The *Lift the Label* value session (page 7) suggests an interesting variation. As group members arrive put all their individual treasures in a bag. In the session produce each item and ask group members to guess whose treasure it is and say why they think it belongs to which individual.

Conclude by reading Jesus words in Mt 6:19-21 about storing up treasures in heaven. The objects we have matter to us for all kinds of reasons. They will one day wear out, become outdated and be replaced. Time may permit discussion on what new technology or fashion will make our object out of date. But who we are has eternal value.



Are we taking as much care and giving as much time to our spiritual lives as we do to our possessions?

Bible verses: Matthew 6:19-21

Treasure hunt

This exercise could link with the previous *My Treasure* activity in which case some treasured possessions will be available. Anyway have some other treasure handy - e.g. an iPod, a PS2 game, top designer clothing, some expensive perfume, a quality mobile phone. Show the treasure to the group and then ask one or two people to be the hunters. They leave the room while the treasure is hidden and then come in to search for it. The rest of the group members play the traditional game of *hotter and colder* as the hunter moves nearer and further away from the objects. The point is that there is more than one object in the room so the rest of the group will want to persuade the hunter to find something that *they* think is valuable or important. With so many competing voices the hunter will eventually have to choose to listen to one voice over all the others; they may want to go on to find even more treasure! When the object(s) is found reflect together on why or how the hunter made a decision to be guided by one voice out of many in the room. This activity could be used in connection with the *Advertising Logo Quiz* or the *Why I shop* exercise as an illustration of the power of advertising and or peer pressure.

Bible verses: Galatians 5:13-15

Magazine messages

The average teenager in the USA will watch around 38,000 adverts on TV alone every year. That is a lot of messages about what to buy, what to think and feel - and there is much more from radio, billboards and magazines. Begin by writing the words SUCCESS IS... on a flip chart or sheet of wallpaper. Ask the group to quickly suggest some words that would show that someone had succeeded in life and write them up.

Next pass around old copies of popular teen magazines and also some "celebrity" and lifestyle magazines - OK, Hello, HEAT, Company etc. Don't be too prudish in the selection. The teens are reading this stuff anyway and it is influencing the way they think and feel so it is important to engage with this material not pretend it is not there. In small groups ask the young people to choose articles or adverts that strike them especially. Rip these pages out and then discuss in the group what this adverts is saying about money, about how we should look and what success is supposed to look like. Then in the full group ask individual groups to share the pages they have ripped out and the messages that they contain. Summarise by saying that money gives us power, freedom and choice, but it does not guarantee the quality of the choices we make or the way we use that freedom. In Romans 13:1 Paul says we are not to let the world mould us but to be renewed in our minds. Becoming aware of the messages and influences all around us is part of renewing our minds and setting us free to ask what is acceptable to God and to act accordingly.

Bible verses: Romans 13:1 or Matthew 6:25-33

Graffiti wall

If resources permit a graffiti wall could be a useful way of linking together the Lifestyle and Giving sessions of *TeenTalk*.¹ The idea is outlined on pages 35 of *Lift the Label* in the two sections *I've Gotta Have it!* and *What Makes the World Go Round?* Use these two sections to build a graffiti wall which can be revisited in both the [Ethical Matters](#) and [Giving](#) sessions of *TeenTalk*. In particular the remaining activities in *Lift the Label* (pages 35-37) can be



completed to make a strong link between lifestyle and giving in the third and final Giving session of TeenTalk.

Bible verses: Philippians 4:10-14

Life auction

Give each group member a list of the auction lots (numbered 1-21) below – **but do not put the quantity of each lot that is available. Keep that information for the leader only.** Tell each individual (or the group can work in pairs) that they have £1000 – even better use Monopoly money. Each person or pair reads the list of auction lots and decides how much money they are prepared to bid for the lots they choose. For example, one may bid £1000 to be famous while someone else will allocate £300 for fame, £400 to be healthy and £300 for a mobile phone. When everyone has planned their bidding begin by auctioning off the list items one by one and telling the group how many are available. So if 3 people have bid for the one mobile phone it goes to the highest bidder. People can up their bid but that will mean less money for other things that they want later in the auction. The leader must act as judge to help decide who gets the item if more than one person wants it and both are offering the same money. If a member doesn't get something they want, they can reallocate money to something lower down on the list. "Enough for all" means that as many people who bid for that item can have it – there is no limit.

Lot	Quantity available (leaders information only)
1. To pass all exams with A or A+	2
2. To own a top of the range mobile phone	1
3. To have a life-time supply of designer shoes	1
4. To be really good looking	sold out
5. To own a large house in the country	1
6. To have a good relationship with parents	3
7. To always be healthy	sold out
8. To be a great sports person	1
9. To own the top 40 chart albums	2
10. To be famous	sold out
11. To have friends who never let you down	3
12. To be really close to God	*enough for all
13. To meet and marry a really good-looking person	sold out
14. To be filled with God's Spirit	*enough for all
15. To win a weekend trip to New York	3
16. Never to feel lonely	3
17. To have a job of my dreams	2
18. For all my family to be totally healthy	5
19. To eliminate hunger in the world	*enough for all
20. To understand everything in the world	1
21. To be a kind and caring person	*enough for all

After the 'sale', talk about who got what. Were there any disappointments? Why?

Keep your Aaron

This activity is designed to help the group discuss choices related to wealth and possessions. Read together the Bible passage Exodus 32:1-10. The background is that Moses has been away a long time and some of the Israelites are starting to suggest that Aaron should make new gods for them. Explain that you are Aaron and the rest of the group are the Israelites. Divide the group into two; ask half the group to provide reasons why you should make new gods and the other half to give reasons why you should not. Allow some thinking time and then stage a brief debate between the two sides. Remind people of Aaron's course of action: the creation of a golden calf.

Repeat the process for some contemporary situations relevant to the group members. Choose from the examples provided, adapting them to suit the situation and age-range of the group or congregation. In each case, invite a group member to 'role play' the named character, with the task of listening to the arguments for and against and deciding which is the most persuasive. Which of the situations was most relevant? When do we face difficult choices about money and possessions? Does the belief that all we have comes from God make a difference?

Alison says her favourite thing is her new scooter. It was a birthday gift. She's wanted one for ages. She rides it a lot but is very careful not to get it scratched. Ali's best friend Zoe wants to borrow it for the day. Zoe once borrowed a tape of Ali's and it came back broken. *Should Ali agree to lend Zoe her scooter for the day?*

Ben wishes his family had a car. His bedroom is plastered with pictures from car magazines. His friend Tyler's family have just got a Ford Focus. Ben has started ignoring Tyler. He has put up a poster of a Focus and throws things at it. Ben's mum has got fed up with it all and has told him if he doesn't cheer up he's got to take all his car pictures down. *Should Ben take the poster down and make friends with Tyler again?*

Charlene took a favourite CD to school to use in an assembly. Mia, a girl she does not get on with, grabbed the CD out of her drawer and was throwing it around the classroom. The box damaged and the CD was scratched. A week later it was Mia's turn to take a CD into school – she chose a band that Charlene hates. On the way home, the CD falls out of Mia's bag. Charlene is some way behind her, but no one else is around. *Should Charlene leave the CD lying there or run after Mia and give it back?*

Dan has started going to a youth group at his local church. At first he thought it was great – he liked the leaders and they did some fun things. He's enjoyed hearing stories about Jesus and he wants to know more – somehow it seems important. But the other young people aren't very friendly. They live in bigger houses and go to a school the other side of the main road. They don't say anything bad, but when it's time to break into groups, no one wants him in theirs. *Should Dan keep going to the group or give up?*

Elaine is a member of the church council that makes decisions about how the church uses its money. The church has started to raise money to build a new kitchen, but Elaine disagreed with this decision. She thinks there are more important ways for the church to spend its money at the moment. Everyone has been asked to pledge money to the kitchen project. *Should Elaine give money to the project or not?*

