



TeenTalk

So what?

So What? This is the final week of the [TeenTalk](#) resources for teenagers within Giving in Grace. This is the session when we remind the group of the issues they have discussed, the conclusions they came to and present them with the opportunity to decide what they are going to do as a result of this programme and a chance to make that commitment within a pledge. Unlike the other sessions this one is more carefully structured and focused on helping the young people make an appropriate response to issues that have been discussed. The first part of the session should be reflective and will be determined by those exercises used in the preceding sessions that had most impact. Use these to remind the group of the issues and draw from them the most important messages they took from earlier sessions.

Tzedekah

The word Tzedekah is a Hebrew word which, while often translated as *Charity* has a much fuller meaning which includes the ideas of *justice* and *righteousness*. Tzedekah is something that a person does, actions that are taken to act justly. In practice there are levels of Tzedekah; for example giving a gift grudgingly is lower than giving cheerfully. We have adapted this idea using the picture of a ladder. The aim is to help the young people to do something about what they have learned about [Lifestyle](#), [Ethical](#) and [Giving](#) matters to help them take the next step or move to the next rung on the ladder - whichever rung they are starting from.

Meeting people where they are: Differentiation

Remember that all the young people in the group are at different points in their own faith journey. Some will be regular church members; others hardly attend church at all. Their families also will be at different points in their journey; some will be committed worshipers, others never attend church. Some will be a real mixture, such as a committed Christian teenager from a fringe family. This may well affect people's ability to respond just as much as their disposable income and commitments do. Try and ensure that this session is handled with particular sensitivity to these factors.

Response forms

Teentalk is part of the Giving in Grace initiative in the local church. The adults in church will be invited to consider their own giving to the ministry of the local church and to return a response form which promises definite action. Youth leaders should not be hesitant about challenging the young people to also make an appropriate response to all they have considered. A special **response form** for young people can be downloaded from the [TeenTalk page](#) on the Giving in Grace website and should be handed out at the end of this final session. This form gives a range of possible responses that will enable every group member to take an appropriate next step. It is based on the idea of the Tzedekah ladder explored in this session. Some of the response forms may require some action to be taken by the leaders. For example, young people may request weekly giving envelopes, agree together to sponsor a third world child or establish a fair trade stall in church.



So what? Session outline

1. Micah Bible Study (10 mins)

Print or photocopy copy for each group member a copy of the [Micah Bible study](#). Divide the group into pairs or threes and ask them to discuss together the Bible passage. Each person writes something in the boxes next to the pictures. Some sample questions are included but encourage the groups to add their own. Encourage group members to refer back to previous sessions to explore issues of justice and mercy and to think in terms of material things as well as intangibles such as offering God my love, my skills etc.

2. Tzedekah- the ladder for justice and righteousness

While the young people are still in their groups of twos or threes give each member a copy of the document [Tzedekah: a Ladder for Justice and Righteousness](#). This is the main document for the session. Also give each group some Post It notes and pens for them to write on. (It is in MS word format to allow for local editing and adaptation)

- **We agree!** Ask group members to look at the first page and to decide for each step if they agree with the statement. If they do agree they should write in something that they could practically do to put that statement into practice. Below is a list of examples if they are slow with ideas!

Step 1	Money is a gift.	They could say a prayer of thanksgiving- even the offertory prayer at night after receiving their pocket money or wages.
Step 2	Money belongs to God.	They could use WWJD (what would Jesus do) when planning spending and saving.
Step 3	I am accountable for how I use it	They could start to budget
Step 4	I need to share my blessings with others	They could commit to buying fairtrade chocolate
Step 5	Giving and sharing as a priority	They could plan their giving from their income not their leftovers
Step 6	I should be content	They could avoid comparing themselves with adverts and magazines selling image"
Step 7	I should decide- how much to give, how much to spend, how to save, and how to live	In a budget they could Take envelopes at church or a collection box Budget for clothes and music etc and stick to it Start saving and save ethically Refuse to buy from unethical companies

- **General discussion:** Once small groups have had time to discuss the steps, then get them together to put all the suggestions from their Post It notes up on a board for general group discussion. Which suggestions do they like? Which seem impossible? If groups struggle, use other people as examples- e.g. what should celebrities do to act justly- refuse to advertise designer products until they are sure companies deal ethically?
- **Making Commitments:** Then ask the group to turn to the second page of the [Tzedekah: the ladder of righteousness and Justice](#). Invite individuals to think about what they personally can do with however much or however little they have. Give some time for this perhaps playing some evocative music such as Band Aid 2004.



3. A Group Commitment

Then help the whole group to plan to take some action together towards one of the 7 steps. One practical thing a youth group can do to turn their thinking into positive action is to run a fair-trade stall at the church after a Sunday Service, or to jointly sponsor a third world child. The TeenTalk resource [Ethical Matters](#) has more guidance on this. When they consider giving some members may want to take church envelopes or have an offertory or a Christian charity box to contribute to. These can easily be arranged with the church's planned giving officer or Children's Society or other mission-giving representative. But stress that this is not charity when we feel like it but a regular commitment to acknowledge God's goodness to us, enable his will to be done and share our blessings with others through our local church, which is God's address for us. The [Discussion paper on theology](#) may be useful to help you as leaders to ensure that Church is seen as a conduit of our giving because giving is an act of worship and thanksgiving.

Close

The session finishes with a prayer using the Micah passage. Before the prayer hand out of the [TeenTalk youth response forms](#) (in Word format for customising by the local church) with [envelopes](#) for the young people to return their responses at the following session when they will be dedicated using the offertory prayer. Alternatively this can be done in church if this is appropriate, perhaps linking in with the Thanksgiving service at which the adult congregation will return their own response forms.

The Lord's Case Against Israel Micah 6:1-8

Listen to what the LORD says:

"Stand up, plead your case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say.
Hear, O mountains, the Lord's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.
For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel.

"My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me.
I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery.
I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.

With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Amen