

# Seasons of giving

All age resources to  
accompany a preaching series



Using 'Seasons of Giving' with Children 3

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# Using 'Seasons of Giving' with Children


*There are four weeks of material designed to help those who work with groups of children aged between 2 years and 13 years to learn alongside church adults as the whole congregation explores issues around generosity and giving.*

The material is designed with a core age group of 5-11 years in mind. It can be used in a typical Sunday morning peer group learning slot of between 20-40 minutes depending on your church tradition. Some of the activities might also be used in the main worship service when everyone is gathered together, either as part of an all-age service or as an introduction to the topic. For example, it may be a good idea to share the story together and use a creative approach as outlined in the material. When the congregations splits into age appropriate groups, the leaders can choose whether to recap the story or simply to continue with one of the other activities.


## Each session offers the following sections:

-  An opening activity  
this is a game or activity which can be used to introduce the theme.
-  A story  
a creative way of exploring the story together
-  Something to make/do  
this is a craft or similar activity which allows the children to make something to take away
-  A prayer activity  
simple active response
-  A closing activity  
a simple gathering into a circle
-  There is no 'talk'. Instead there are sections called 'connect'. These sections provide guidelines on how to reflect with children after most of the sections, allowing them time to ask questions, offer suggestions and find ways to respond to the story.

## There is also some additional material for the under 5s and 9+

-  The **under 5s** material is entirely play based, and simply offers suggestions as to the kind of toys which might encourage play that explores some of the themes of the day. It is more appropriate to offer very young children an opportunity to explore using their own imagination and initiative. Adults can simply notice where play is focused and join in accordingly.

However, there is also a simple version of the story which can be used with this age group and a short prayer response which can be used.

-  **Think Spot** is designed to encourage thinking amongst older children, enabling them to take on some of the issues for themselves and get involved. It is important to listen to this age group and enable them to get involved in the life of the church through activity and through giving. Encourage ideas and help them to put them into practice.

# Week One: Taking stock

## Autumn Thankfulness

*This material is centred round the story of the Rich Young Ruler found in Luke's Gospel. Although it is tempting to leap to a conclusion as to the central meaning of this interaction between Jesus and the young man, like all encounters with Jesus, there are several layers of meaning to the story.*

All of the Seasons of Giving material aims to help us think about attitudes to what we own, and how we share and give in response to God's generosity to us. In the conversation between the young man and Jesus it becomes clear that attitudes to possessions can be a stumbling block, and although we are not told either why the young man found this aspect of Jesus' call difficult nor whether he eventually found courage to respond, we can imaginatively enter the story and begin to think about our own attitudes to the things we have in our lives.

Seasons of Giving also uses the metaphor of the natural seasons, as experienced in the United Kingdom, to help frame the teaching. These seasonal ideas can also be used for the children's activities, regardless of whether the material is being used in the actual calendar season. This session has an emphasis on autumn, often a very beautiful time of year, but also the time when we traditionally give thanks for all that God has given to us as we celebrate harvest festival. Even if this session is being used at a different time of year, harvest themes will be both fun and interesting to explore.

The key focus of the activities and the reflection is to take account of the blessings we have in our lives and give thanks to God accordingly. It may be that the idea of a generous response arises naturally through questions and comments and these ideas should be affirmed and 'stored' for future weeks.

### Scavenger Hunt



You will need to give each person a small paper/plastic bag with a list of items to collect. A rainbow hunt works well eg:-

- ✿ Find one or more items for each colour of the rainbow: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Violet, Indigo
- ✿ Split the group into twos and threes and send them to look around the churchyard or other outside space.
- ✿ Alternatively you might like to place and hide sufficient items around the indoor space, for example, small food items, wild flowers, empty packaging.
- ✿ When everyone has finished take time to look at what everyone has collected.

### Connect



- ✿ Talk about how lovely it is to collect things and to own things.
- ✿ Talk about some of the things we might collect at home, not just collections of shells or cards, but the toys we have, all the clothes in the wardrobe, the furniture. Sometimes it's difficult to remember all the things we have and enjoy.

Today's story is about someone who had lots and lots of things and lots and lots of power, but he still wasn't happy.



## The Rich Young Ruler

You will need some props as indicated in the story. One person is the rich young ruler and stands at the front.

There once was a person who had a lot of money. (Place handbag/satchel around volunteer).

It wasn't long since he was at school, but now instead of books, his bag was full of money, lots and lots of money. (Give a second bag, and stuff some pretend money into bag).

He had so much money he could buy lovely things to wear. (Drape coat around shoulders)

He had so much money he could go wherever he wanted. (Give large suitcase)

He could buy presents whenever he wanted for other people. (Give gift boxes)

Or just to treat himself. (Put jewellery around neck)

And he wasn't just as ordinary rich person.

Oh no. This person had money, had things..... and he had power.

You see, he was a ruler. Someone with authority. (Give a briefcase or crown)

He was a rich, young, ruler, with everything money could buy.

He was also a good person. He gave money to the poor and kept all of God's laws. (Give a charity brochure)

He went to the temple. (Give a hymn book).

He helped people. He did the right thing.

But he didn't feel right. He felt as if something was missing.

He looked all around him. To the left, to the right, to the skies, to the earth. And he couldn't work out what it was.

He worried a bit. Then a bit more! He worried so much that he went to meet Jesus.

He told Jesus that he had always tried to do the right thing.

And Jesus looked at him. Jesus saw the way that all the money and all the things were dragging him down.

So Jesus said: "There is just one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything. And I do mean everything. Give the money away. Then come back and follow me."

"What, everything?" said the rich, young ruler.

Jesus nodded slowly.

And the rich young man looked very sad. Because he had such a lot of good things.

And Jesus looked very sad too.

Then Jesus said: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to discover

God's Kingdom"

(He might have said its easier for an elephant to get through a mouse hole - but he didn't).

Pause.



### Connect

- ✿ Ask the children which part of the story they liked and which part they didn't like.
- ✿ Wonder together about what happened next.
- ✿ What might the rich young ruler decide to do?
- ✿ Why might it be difficult?

Sometimes we forget that we have been really blessed by God. We forget to say thank you and we forget to share with others



### Thank You Cards and Gift Cards.

You will need enough blank cards of two different sizes (one post-card or A6 size, one the size of a small gift tag) for each child to have one of each.

You will also need lots of coloured torn paper to make a mosaic picture on the front.

The thank you card is a prayer card thanking God for all the good things we have in the world. Illustrate with a mosaic picture of something special at home or in creation.

The gift card is to give to someone who might need a special message or action. For example it might say : I give you, Mum, a sit down while I empty the dishwasher/ I give you, Dad, time to listen to a story read by me to you/ I give you, little sister, a walk to the swings.

Help the children to identify ideas and then write into the card and decorate.



### Connect

As the children make the cards continue to reflect on saying thank you for the good things we enjoy and also on the types of gifts we can give to others. For many families giving adult members time by helping out is a much appreciated gift.



### Prayer Activity:

You will need enough old carrier bags for each child to have one.

Hand one to each person.

After each section of the prayers mime taking things out and putting things in to the bag.

Use these or similar words:

(Place hand in bag and pull out an imaginary object)

Thank you God for this church and for all the people here.

(Place hand back in bag as if putting something in)

Dear God, we pray for all those people who don't get a chance to hear about you. We ask you to help those churches who are struggling to keep going.

All: Please

(Repeat actions)

Thank you God for our homes and families and all the good things we have there.

Dear God, we pray for those who are without homes and are alone. We ask you to be close to all those people who have very little.

All: Please

(Repeat actions)

Thank you God for places to learn and places to play.

Dear God, we pray for those who can't get to school and those who work so hard they have no time to play. We ask you to give courage to those who work to change things.

All: Please

(Repeat actions)

Thank you God for all the beautiful things in your world that we can enjoy

Dear God, we pray for those who can't get outside today because they are unwell or unhappy. We ask you to be close to them with your love.

All: Please

## Harvest Circle



You will need either real autumn leaves/nuts/conkers/cones OR pictures of them

(If you are doing this activity in the autumn/harvest season then you could make a direct link to a recent Harvest service)

Place a pile of autumn objects into the centre of the circle.

Invite the children to close their eyes and think of something for which they are really thankful. Encourage them to be specific, for example, the walk we went on yesterday with the dog or the new computer I had for my birthday, rather than generalisations.

When they have thought of something, invite each person in turn to select an object from the pile in the centre, saying 'Thank you, Lord' as they pick it up. When everyone has made a choice, conclude with a great thank you shout together.

## We are so Rich!



You will need two small tables.

On one table display lots of objects from creation. The objects should be textured and tactile, make sound effects, and be robust enough for young children to handle and use. For example, your table might include:

- ✿ A selection of stones of different sizes;
- ✿ A tray of earth; A bundle of twigs;
- ✿ Some water from a pond in a container; a selection of shells, leaves, feathers etc.

The second table displays objects from the home. The objects should be appropriate and suitable for children to handle, and might include toy versions as well as the real thing. For example, your table might include:

- ✿ Wicker baskets in various sizes; plastic containers with lids; empty yoghurt pots;
- ✿ A selection of wooden spoons; shape cutters; cake cases; cushions

Invite the children to spend time playing with the objects as they wish. If you are able to use outdoor space then you could include a short walk together looking at creation.



## The Rich Young Ruler (simple version)

One day Jesus met a young man. The young man was very, very rich. He was very, very good.

He followed all God's laws and tried to be kind to people. But he wasn't happy.



So the young man asked Jesus a question. "How can I find peace now and always?" he said.

Jesus said to him: " You have so many things. Go and sell everything you have. Give the money away. Then you will find peace and joy. Come back and follow me."

But the young man was very, very rich. He couldn't imagine selling everything. So he walked away.

Jesus was very sad and very thoughtful.



#### Connect

- ✿ Wonder with the children about the activities they have been doing and which they enjoy.
- ✿ Talk about the things they can enjoy at home and the things in the world outside. We all have lots of things – we are rich!
- ✿ Take time to say brief thank you prayers before letting the children continue to play.



#### Elephants and Mouse Holes

Jesus told the young man that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God's kingdom. Explain that the 'eye of a needle' was a very small gateway into Jerusalem and that a camel had to unload all its goods to even have a chance of getting through. Ask the children to suggest some new images that convey the same idea.

Why might having too much stuff make it hard to follow God?

Place 3 pictures of different types of people eg a famous footballer; a mum with children; a farm worker from a developing nation on to the 'think spot'. Ask the children to consider how each person might be rich.

Everyone has things to be thankful for... and everyone can share with others.

Encourage a time of thanks and prayer.



# Week Two: Setting Priorities

## Winter Generosity

*This material is centred round one of Jesus parables, told in response to a question asked by a discontented bystander. The question is the kind of random question that sometimes crops up in open session with public figures, where the person wants the authoritative speaker to answer a personal concern.*

On this occasion the questioner was worried about whether he was being treated fairly – a family dispute is probably lurking in the background. Jesus warns about greed and illustrates that with a graphic parable about amassing wealth, only to have life end suddenly. It is this kind of story that gives rise to the popular saying: You can't take it with you when you go". However, as with all parables, there are layers of meaning which may reveal themselves over time. There is a dramatic, humorous, even macabre tone to the story, which appeals to the 7 -11 age group in particular, so when telling the story emphasis the extreme qualities.

The key emphasis in this week's teaching is taken right from the end of story, when Jesus reminds us that we need to be 'rich towards God', holding possessions lightly and acting generously in response to God. This session has an emphasis on the season of winter – with the sense of ending that comes as the cycle of earth's productivity enters rest and stillness, but also with an accompanying sense of generosity as we share resources so that everyone's needs can be met. For children, winter is also associated with Christmas, another season of abundance and generosity which is also picked up on in the material.

### How Big Can You Build?



You will need a range of different types of building materials ranging from lego to cardboard boxes.

You will also need lots of empty yoghurt pots and/or cardboard tubes.

The task is to build a series of storage containers of different sizes. Encourage the children to work together as they build at least three different structures.

### Connect



- ✦ Place some of the pots and tubes into the different structures, and talk about how they fill up.
- ✦ What will happen if all three structures are full?
- ✦ Ask what the different structures might be used to store.
- ✦ Talk about storage at home and when it's too small, when its too big.
- ✦ What are the options when we run out of space?
- ✦ Either get more storage or maybe get rid of some stuff.

The story today is about someone who didn't want to get rid of stuff.



## We're Gonna Need a Bigger Barn!

(NB This story is adapted from a Godly Play technique, but is not a Godly Play story.)

You will need a circle of green coloured fabric; three rectangles of different sizes; some pictures of sheaves of corn, baskets of apples, bunches of grapes; a picture or model of a table and items to suggest a meal; a model or picture of an easy chair.

Have all these objects in a bag close by.

Begin by taking out the green fabric, and ask the children of what it reminds them – grass – could be a park, a football pitch, but today its going to be a field, a field on a farm.

One day a man called out to Jesus, asking him to do something. He didn't want healing for himself. He didn't want healing for a friend. He didn't want Jesus to help him understand.

No. He asked Jesus: "Tell my brother to share the money we have inherited with me."

Jesus said: "I can't do that! Sort it out yourselves. But you need to be careful that you don't get too greedy. Life is about more than possessions."

And he told this story.

"Once there was a rich man. He had a very successful farm. (Smooth hand over green fabric).

It produced so many things that the man had to build some big barns. (Slowly place the three rectangles down).

He filled his barns with the harvest from his farm. (Place the corn, the apples, the grapes, into the barns.)

But still the land continued to produce good things.

Never mind thought the man: "I will pull down these barns and build some new barns. Really huge barns!. Meanwhile, I'm going to relax and enjoy myself." (Slowly put down the table, the food to eat, the easy chair.)

He settled down for a really good meal, making his plans for the big barns, the big harvest, and all the good things he would enjoy.

But that very night he died. (Turn the chair over the table)

And God said to him: "Now what's going to happen to all your barns? (Lift up each barn in turn) Who will get enjoy it all now? It is better to be generous when you are alive than to store up treasure on earth."



## Connect

- ✿ Ask the children which parts of the story they liked, and which they found difficult.
- ✿ Remind them that it was a story Jesus told.
- ✿ Wonder about whether the story could have had a different ending?
- ✿ Talk together about the things we might be able to share



## Gift 'Christmas' Boxes

NB If you are using this material in or close to the Christmas season, then it may be appropriate to use this session to make up shoe boxes for a local or international charity appeal. The children can wrap the shoe boxes in appropriate paper and then pack them with contents according the charity's requirements.

Alternatively you can make an 'out of season' gift box which acts as a reminder of all the things we might be able to share generously with others.

#### You will need:

Some small baskets or mini-boxes; shredded paper, some small sweets; shiny foil, coloured paper, empty tubes with lids eg sweets/crisp containers, glue, coloured tissue, thin card and things to decorate, tealight

Each item in the basket represents something which can be shared with others

Wrap the small sweets in the shiny foil to represent all the foods we enjoy

Use the coloured paper to make either a people paper chain or draw and cut round hands to represent all the people in our lives

Cut a slot in the lid of the cardboard tube (adult help needed). Seal it down with tape. Cover tube with glue and stick tissue paper over to decorate. This is a money box to represent all the money we have.

Use the thin card to make and decorate a book mark to represent the opportunity we have to go to school and learn.

Place the shredded paper in the box or basket and arrange the objects on top, including the tea light, which reminds us that we each have the light of Christ within us.

The boxes can either be given to others or kept at home to remind each child of the things they can share with others.



#### Connect

- ✦ As you make the boxes talk about how we can be generous with the things we have.
- ✦ Begin to think about how God has blessed us and how God might want us to use the things we have in our lives to help others to know him and to live well.



#### Body Prayers

This prayer activity can be done with visual images or just using appropriate actions. Adapt words according to your local situation.

Invite children to place hands on head

Dear Lord thank you that we have the opportunity to learn and to study. Please help us to use the things we know to help other people. We pray for all those who teach and work to understand our world

Invite children to stretch hands out and wiggle fingers

Dear Lord, thank you for all the people we know in our lives – our families, our friends and those who help us. Help us to be a good friend and to notice those who are lonely or afraid. We pray for all those who care for us and help us when we are in need

Invite children to rub hands on tummy

Dear Lord, thank you for all the good food we enjoy, for warm homes and safe places. Help us to be people who share generously with others, welcoming them in to our lives and sharing when we can. We pray for all those who work hard to provide us with all we need

Invite children to cup one hand over another

Dear Lord, thank you for all the money we enjoy, for the work that provides and parents who care. Help us to use our money wisely and to share with other people. We pray for those who have no work and who are finding it hard to provide for their families

Invite children to touch feet

Dear Lord, thank you for all the places we go, the journeys we make and the fun we have. Help us to include other people in our activities and to share joy with those around us. We pray for those who find it hard to get out, especially those who are unwell or without help

Invite children to put hand over heart

Dear Lord, thank you for all the love in our lives, and especially the love of Jesus. Help us to tell other people the good news and to share love each and every day. Amen

### Use Your Loaf



You will need an uncut loaf of appropriate size. (If you have wheat or other allergies in your group, then use another appropriate food good for sharing)

Gather into a circle.

Break the loaf into pieces and pass it among the children. Encourage them to break pieces of and share with each other saying, "Share this with me in Jesus name"

End by holding hands together and standing still for a few moments.

### Collecting & Storing



You will need lots of building materials, baskets, containers and things to put inside the containers.

Give the children plenty of time to play at collecting things, fitting them into containers and building houses or containers to put things in. When the time is right gather the children into a circle



### We're Gonna Need a Bigger Barn! (simple version)

(As you tell this story place things into a basket or container, but have more things than will fit)

One day Jesus told this story:

There was a farmer who grew lots of things. He grew apples and wheat and grapes and more apples and tomatoes and more wheat and cucumber. He grew so many things that he couldn't fit them all into the barn. "Never mind" he thought. "I will knock down this barn and build a bigger barn. But not today. I'll do it tomorrow. "

The farmer sat down at his dinner table. He had a lovely meal with lovely things to eat and drink.

Then the farmer remembered. God is not interested in how much we have. God is interested in what we do with it. God wants us to share all the good things with other people.

### Connect



✿ Talk about the story and encourage the children to think about sharing and helping others.

✿ Use one of the prayer actions to end, then leave time for the children to play again.



## Rich Toward God

The story that Jesus told was the answer to a question about inheritance. Explain that inheritance is the money you are left if someone dies. Talk about whether this story was a good way of answering this question. There has been a lot of talk following the Olympics about 'legacy; - what is left behind when something is finished. What things might the man in Jesus' story be leaving behind? How do we choose to do things that are rich toward God?

Place some charity publicity or images of situations of need on the think spot – choose different kinds of need. For example, a young child who is hungry; someone who is homeless; an animal who has been abandoned; a natural disaster etc.

Invite the children to choose one and talk to each other about how helping in these situations might be about being rich toward God. What kind of legacy might they want to work towards?

# Week Three: Putting Things Right

## Spring integrity

*This week's story is the very well known meeting between Jesus and Zaccheus. Zaccheus is a man who has acquired his wealth by cheating and taking more than is really due to him. He is not popular at all, but probably struggles to find anyone who likes him. His life is transformed when Jesus seeks out his company – and Zac takes action to sort out his life and make a new beginning. The emphasis for this week is on taking action to do the right thing.*

The seasonal theme is Spring – which is the time for new beginnings, when life seems to flourish again and things that appear to be lifeless bring colour and energy once more. Children are very familiar with the whole concept of making amends after they make wrong choices. It's one of the areas in which they have things to teach adults who can often avoid facing up to the consequences of the decisions and actions they have made. The activities reflect these themes of making new beginnings and making sure that our actions and our values reflect one another as we try to show God's love in the world.

### Opening Activity



You will need lots of gummed paper chain strips.

Give each person a handful of paper strips.

First make a circle with one of the strips – this is the beginning of your chain.

Invite people to walk around the space trying to tag people on the body part that is called out by the leader eg knee, ankle, wrist. If you succeed, then you add a link to the chain. If the person misses, then you take their chain and add it to your own.

Stop the game when some people are developing long chains and others have nothing.

(If the space you have is limited you can adapt this game by doing a quiz. All those who get the answers right get to add another link to the chain. Those who get the answers wrong have to give their chain to someone who got it right.

For example a true/false quiz:

1. The peregrine falcon is the fastest animal in the world T
2. The radius is the longest bone in the arm F (Humerus)
3. Snickers is the biggest selling chocolate bar in the world T
4. More people go to church than watch football at the weekend T
5. Donkeys can live more than 60 years F (about 40)

### Connect



- ✿ Talk about how it feels to lose what you already have and how it feels when some people have a lot and some have little.
- ✿ Did the game feel fair?
- ✿ Why do some people end up with a lot and some people have more?

**Today's story is about someone who took money off people who didn't have much until he had lots of money but not many friends.**



## Zaccheus

Either use a good story version eg from Lion Storyteller Bible or Big Bible Story Book OR use this script for 4 people

### Scene One

- One: I am a poor person. I have to pay my taxes like everybody else. Sometimes the tax collector takes just a bit more than he needs. Funnily enough, he is quite rich
- Two: I am the tax collector. I have loads of money. But I don't have many friends. I'm also quite short.
- Three: I am the wife of the tax collector. I don't have much say in this story.
- Four: I am Jesus and I am going for a walk.

### Scene Two

- One: I am a poor person. I am out with my friends in the crowd. We want to see Jesus. We are not going to let anyone in front of us. Especially not the rich tax collector.
- Two: I am a tax collector. I want to see Jesus too. I have no friends. No-one wants to let me near the front. I'm going to climb a tree. That'll show them.
- Three: I am the tax collector's wife. I'm having a quiet afternoon at home.
- Four: I am Jesus and I'm out for a walk. I need a place for a cup of tea. I see this little man in a tree and invite myself back to his house.
- One: I am now a shocked poor person.

### Scene Three

- Two: I am a tax collector. I have a new friend: Jesus. He likes me! So I'm going to give back everything I have taken wrongly. In fact, I'm going to give back more than that. I'm going to give back loads of money. I am happy!
- Three: I am the tax collector's wife. I was having a quiet afternoon at home. Now I have a house full of people I don't know and my husband giving away all our money!
- One: I am a poor person. Well, I was... but now I've got all the money back that I paid out to that cheating tax collector and more beside. I am happy!
- Four: I am Jesus. I am very happy. And so are the people in this house – especially the tax collector because his life has changed for ever.

### The End



## Connect

- ✿ Ask the children if they know the name of the tax collector (Zaccheus).
- ✿ Wonder together about how the different people in the story might have felt that day.
- ✿ Think about why Zaccheus might have had no friends (the job of tax collector is never popular- Zaccheus would have been employed by the Romans to collect extra money from his neighbours.)
- ✿ Talk about what made Zaccheus change his mind and give money away.
- ✿ Think about situations when we might need to do things differently or make a new start.





### Water wonders (option 1)

A science experiment rather than a craft activity. (Adapted from Fun and Freaky Science published by David C Cook 2009)

#### You will need:

- ✿ 2 large bowls and lots of plastic cups
- ✿ Water
- ✿ Cocktail stick or toothpick
- ✿ Black pepper
- ✿ Washing up liquid
- ✿ Cooking oil
- ✿ Food colouring
- ✿ 2 x Eyedropper or mini syringe
- ✿ Paper towels to dry hands!

NB Each time the children try one of the experiments they will need a clean cup of water.

If you don't have access to a tap, then use cheap bottled water.

#### Experiment 1:

Demonstrate using the large bowl 2/3 filled with water. Sprinkle pepper on the surface. Let the children use the toothpick to move the pepper to the sides of the bowl. It will keep floating.

Drop a few drops of washing up liquid into the centre. One drop is enough to send the pepper to the edges.

#### Experiment 2:

Demonstrate using the second bowl 2/3 filled with water. Add a few drops of food colouring.

Use the syringe to drop several drops of cooking oil into the centre. Watch as the drops come together to form one big drop. (You can stir with the toothpick to speed it up.)

Give the children individual cups and let them do the experiment for themselves using the cups instead of the large bowl.

#### Why It Works:

The water has a strong surface tension like a skin which allows the pepper to stay on top of the water. The washing up liquid breaks the surface tension so the pepper is pulled away. Eventually the detergent will spread out and make a thin layer that brings the pepper back.

The oil floats on top of the water because the water and oil have different kind of molecules.



### Connect

- ✿ Talk about the different experiments and which they liked best.
- ✿ Think about why the pepper moved away and why the oil drew together.
- ✿ People didn't like Zaccheus because of the things he did – just like the pepper they kept away from him. But Jesus accepted him – he wants everyone to be a part like the oil drops coming together.
- ✿ It was new beginning for Zaccheus. How might life be different now?



## Spring Flower (option 2)

### You will need:

- ✿ Paper or Styrofoam cup, small or medium sized
- ✿ Straw, clear if possible
- ✿ Green pipe cleaner
- ✿ Green construction paper
- ✿ Tissue paper
- ✿ Pencil
- ✿ Scissors
- ✿ Glue

Draw round hands on the green paper and cut out. You will need enough hand shapes to go round the cup – probably 3 or 4 depending how big the hands are. Glue them on to make the grass.

With a pencil, poke a hole into the bottom of the cup. Insert the pipe cleaner into the straw, and then insert the straw into the hole in the cup. This makes the stem of the flower.

Cut out 3 or more 10cm circles out of the tissue paper). Poke the pipe cleaner into the middle of each piece of tissue paper and then fold down the pipe cleaner to secure the paper. Fold the tissue paper up and wrap the pipe cleaner around the bottom of the flower to secure it in place. Move the straw up and down to watch the flower grow out of the grass! (see [www.busybeeskidscrafts.com](http://www.busybeeskidscrafts.com))



## Connect

- ✿ As you make the flower pots talk about how Zaccheus made a new beginning.
- ✿ Think about how we can share generously the things we have, sometimes helping people who have less than us, sometimes just knowing that because we are friends of Jesus we need to share.



## Prayer Trees

You will need a narrow and long sheet of paper with a tree trunk and branches drawn on to it.

You will need lots of coloured paper in shades of green and paler blossom colours.

Invite the children to draw and cut out leaf shapes and make paper flowers. If they want to write a prayer on to the leaf, they can. Then stick the leaves and the flowers to the tree to make a prayer tree.

When all the leaves are stuck down pray a gathering prayer.



## Light in the Darkness

You will need enough nightlight candles for each child and a sand tray or similar safe place in which to place them.

Gather into a circle.

Remind the children that we have been thinking about how meeting Jesus can help make a new start, make us life differently and act generously. Invite each child to come forward and light a candle, if they wish, as a reminder that they too are included in Jesus love and a sign that they want to learn how to live differently.

### In the Right Place

You will need some toys that belong in certain containers eg a doll in a cradle, cars in a garage, bricks in a box, toy food in a basket etc. Encourage the children to take things out of their containers and give them to someone else. Then give them back and return them to the containers. Play as long as the children are enjoying this game before gathering into a circle.


### Zaccheus (Simple Version)

Zac was a man who had no friends. He didn't have any friends because he took too much money off people. Zac was rich but not very happy. One day he heard that Jesus was coming to town.

He went out into the crowds. But he couldn't get close to the front. He couldn't see Jesus. So he climbed a tree. When Jesus walked by he saw Zac in the tree. Jesus smiled. "Hey, come down. I need some tea and your house is a good place." Zac was so excited he nearly fell out of the tree.

He went home with Jesus. Then he gave away lots of his money. Jesus was very happy that day.

### Connect

 Talk briefly about how meeting Jesus changed Zaccheus. Instead of wanting more things he wanted to share what he had with other people.

### Closing prayer with actions eg:-

Dear God, we don't want to be mean (clasp hands together tightly). Help us to share (open hands wide). **Amen**

### Big Change

Meeting Jesus had a dramatic effect on Zaccheus. He changed from being a rich but lonely person into a generous sharing person. Think about ways in which people can be like Zaccheus –even children. How do we share what we have as people who follow Jesus?

Place some short sentences and pictures about ways in which children have acted generously on to the think spot. These could include stories from Blue Peter fund raising; Children in Need; stories from the children's pages of Christian Aid, or the story of two children who ran a lemonade stall to raise money for the church roof.

Spend some time looking at them and thinking about ways in which children can take part in giving within the life of the church as well as in the community or school.

# Week Four: Living well

## Summer Lifestyle

*This week's story is very simple, very short. Yet in its brevity it encapsulates a lifestyle that is characterised by generosity and by a desire to give back to God in thankfulness for all that God has given.*

It is challenging to get children to think about giving, yet if we are to take children seriously as disciples then it is important that we see that they can participate in all the actions that would characterise adult discipleship. We know that children can be very generous with their limited resources, readily sharing with others. Equally we know that the pressures of our contemporary culture can mean that even the youngest child may be materialistic and greedy. The story of the widow's mite helps children to think about giving in a practical and genuine way.

The season of summer is a season of abundance and fruitfulness. As "Seasons of Giving" draws to a close, this is the time to think about how the past few weeks will bear fruit and how children will play their part in a church that is characterised by a lifestyle of generous giving and joyful gratitude.

### Opening Activity:



#### Game 1:

You will need a series of paper squares ranging from 10cm to 2cm; rulers and scissors. (You will need enough sets of squares for children to work in twos/threes)

Invite the children to measure, draw and cut a 1cm strip from each of the squares.

Place the strips to one side before moving on to game 2.

#### Game 2:

You will need to bring a matchbox with 10 tiny things inside.

Have a few empty matchboxes

Split the children into groups of 4/5 and give each group an empty matchbox and a sheet of paper. Give children 2 minutes to write a list of 10 items that would all fit into the matchbox.

When they have finished see how many items on their lists match with your pre-filled matchbox.

### Connect



- ✿ Talk about small things, and how they can be very precious.
- ✿ Look at the strips of paper, all about the same size and then look at the amount of square still left.
- ✿ Cutting a strip off has hardly made a difference to the large square, whereas the tiniest square is now cut in half!

**Today's story is about someone who gave something very little, but which was also very big.**



**This story is told with some actions to accompany key words.**

- ✿ Loads of money - pull hands apart and say 'Woah'
- ✿ Hardly any money - make tiny space between first finger and thumb and say 'Aah'
- ✿ Temple - put hands together as if praying and say 'A-a-men'
- ✿ Gave - put fingers of one hand into palm of other and pull away and say 'mm'
- ✿ Question - draw questions shape into the air and say 'oh'

When telling the story allow time for the gestures and sounds to be made, making sure you practice beforehand.

Jesus was teaching his followers in the temple. Suddenly he looked up and saw some people putting gifts into the temple collection. These people were rich. They had loads of money. So they gave loads of money into the collection. Then Jesus saw a poor widow. She had hardly any money. So she gave hardly any money into the collection.

Jesus turned to his followers and asked them a question: Which of these people gave the most? The rich ones with loads of money? OR the poor widow with hardly any money?

The followers thought this was a stupid question. Of course the rich people had put loads of money in the collection. And the poor widow had hardly any money to give.

But Jesus surprised them. He said: "Listen carefully. The poor widow has given more than anyone else. Although she had hardly any money, she has given it all, almost everything she had to live on."

And all the disciples nodded wisely.



## Connect

- ✿ Ask the children how they would have answered Jesus 'question.
- ✿ Think and wonder about how they feel about the rich person and the poor person.
- ✿ Explain that sometimes this story is called "The widow's mite" because that is the name of the tiny coin, like a penny. But Jesus noticed she only had pennies to live on - so giving a penny was worth a lot. How can we be like the widow?



## To Make/Do:

A coin purse: You will need some small scraps of felt or thin sheet foam, fabric glue, Velcro(self-adhesive if possible) and ribbons, sequins, buttons etc to decorate.

Give each child a 4cm x 10cm strip of felt. Fold the felt so that a 2cm piece is left separate. Glue two edges together to make pocket. Glue 1cm square of Velcro to the front of the pocket. Fold down the 2cm single piece and glue to the Velcro square. Decorate with buttons, ribbons etc.

NB There are many different ways to make a small coin purse. For example see [www.origami-instructions.com](http://www.origami-instructions.com) to see how to make a folded paper coin purse or [www.dailymotion.com](http://www.dailymotion.com) for how to make a coin purse out of duct tape.



## Connect

- ✿ As the children make the coin purse talk about how it could be used specially to bring a gift to church each week. Or perhaps it could be used to save some small coins that could be given to a charity.
- ✿ Think about what size of coin might fit.
- ✿ Explain that it doesn't matter what the value is, but that like the widow, we think about giving as something we should be doing because of all that God has given to us.



## Invite the children to hook their little fingers together and pray in these or similar words.

Dear God, thank you that every person is special to you. Help us to share the good things we have with others to help make a difference.

Invite the children to touch their smallest toe (through their shoe!) and pray in these or similar words.

Dear God, you see the smallest things that we do and the smallest actions we make. Help us to be generous and kind even when no-one else is looking.

Invite the children to curl into the smallest ball that they can and pray in these or similar words.

Dear God, even though we are small you are close to each one of us. Help us to know that we have a place with your people and help us to follow you each day.

Invite the children to jump up in a star jump as they shout Amen.

Closing Activity: Chocolate Gifts

Gather the children into a circle.

Give each child 2 chocolate coins (or chocolates).

Invite them to place one chocolate coin each into a pile in the centre of the circle.

Think for a moment together about how difficult it is to give away things. Think about what might happen to the chocolate gathered in the centre. Thank the children for their generosity in sharing what they have and being willing to give it away.

Then let them decide what to do with the other chocolate coin!



## Under 5s Extra:

You will need some shape sorting and stacking toys for the children to play with. Encourage them to discover which shapes belong in which place and also to stack the cups/rings making sure the small one is included. You could play hiding the smallest item under the largest and then discovering it.

If the children are a little older (i.e 3 – 5 years) you could also provide miniature items to play with such as "Polly Pocket" or "Puppy in my Pocket".

Play as long as the children are enjoying looking for small things and finding a place before them before gathering them into a circle if you wish.

## Simple Story:

This story is so short that you could use the version provided earlier or this even simpler version. You might like to tell this by moving your fingers to indicate the people moving.

Jesus and his friends were sitting in the temple. They were watching the people coming in and watching the people going out. Sometimes the people were putting money into the temple collection box. A rich man came in and gave a lot of money. A poor woman came in and gave a tiny coin.

Jesus said to his disciples: "That woman has given almost everything she has. God is really pleased with her." The disciples were amazed and they all smiled at Jesus.

## Connect



✿ Sharing is difficult for very young children, and developmentally only becomes possible as they reach around 4 – 5 years old. Talk about how good it is to give things to other people and it makes them happy. Even small things make people happy, and God is very happy when we learn to give things to others and to share what we have to help other people.

✿ End with a simple prayer with everyone holding hands.

## + Think Spot:



Begin with a conversation about how much things cost. Place some familiar items onto the think spot e.g a burger bun, a can of fizzy drink, a chocolate bar, a computer game or DVD.

Talk about whether they have pocket money and if so how they decide what to use it for.

If appropriate add some items that may be part of the church costs or the needs of communities elsewhere in the world (Charities like Send-a-cow are very good at breaking down costs into accessible amounts so that children can see that in some parts of the world the cost of a burger would allow someone to go to school each day.)

Talk about how the widow gave a small amount to God through the temple, and think about whether that might be possible for children.

Introduce the phrase: 'the longest journey begins with the smallest step'. Sometimes we think that there is nothing we can do towards a situation, but just making a small decision can play a key part in making something happen. If someone gave 50p a week it would be £26 in a year! Talk again about how children can play their part in giving.





