

Choose to Be Generous

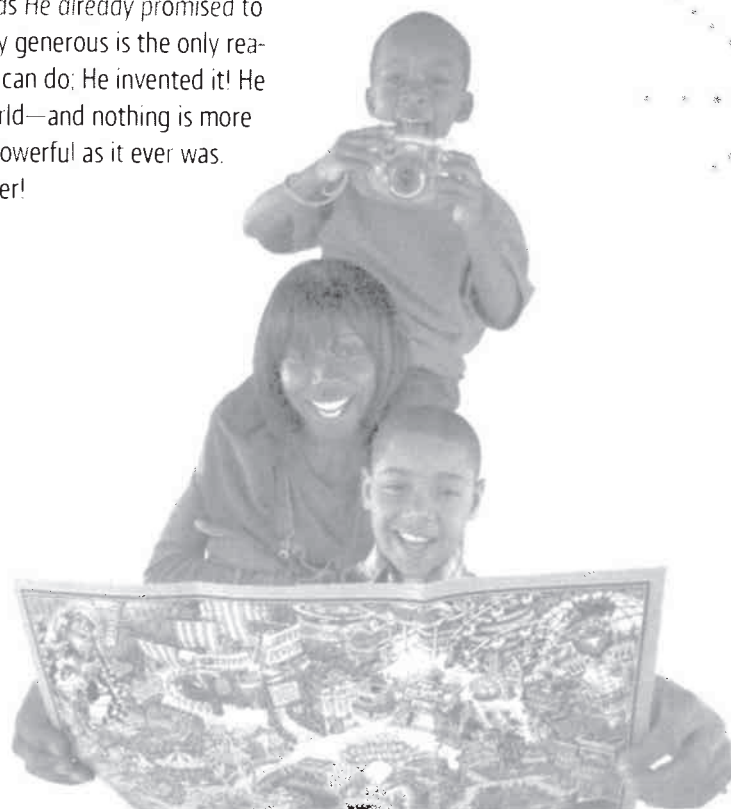
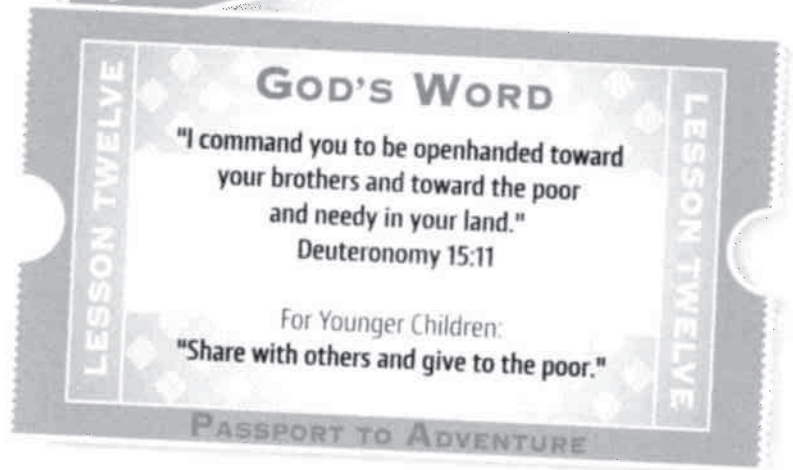
Bible Story • Barnabas Makes a Difference •
Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Teacher's Devotional

It's important to most of us to know our rights and make sure others respect those rights. Giving away the right to one's OWN property is NOT popular! In the Roman Empire, it was about the same—personal rights, power, greed and pride were alive and well! And yet into that culture, God chose to send His Son to die and rise to become the head of the Church, God's family in the world.

Giving up the right to one's personal property was just as strange then as it is now. But because God's love so powerfully captivated His family, they made a supernatural choice to let go of their material possessions out of compassion for those who had needs greater than theirs. Acts 2:45 tells us that the believers "gave to anyone as he had need" and in verse 47 we read that God's family enjoyed "the favor of all the people." People took notice of such generosity! Outsiders were awed by the joy with which God's family shared. It was clearly not an enforced program, but a glad result of God's love!

Being generous is just as awesome today—for it is God's grace in action! Invite God's Spirit to reveal ways you can reflect the love of God's family. Ask, "What things am I clinging to? Why? Then consider: Have I received astounding grace from God? Does all I have belong to Him? Has He already promised to supply my every need? If so, then being awesomely generous is the only reasonable response! You see, God knows what grace can do; He invented it! He wants us to be messengers of His grace to the world—and nothing is more grace-filled than generosity. Generosity is just as powerful as it ever was. Try it and see—it will turn you into an amazing giver!



Planning Page

Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them (see pp. 14-18 for schedule tips and pp. 24-25 for guidelines in combining older and younger children). Also plan who will lead each center (for staffing tips see pp. 19-21). Use the reproducible planning sheet (p. 238) to record your plans.

Bible Story Center

Bible Story • Barnabas Makes a Difference
Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Younger Child Option • Use toy people, magazine pictures of food and clothing, coins and brown fabric to illustrate story action

Older Child Option • Talk about choosing to be generous, receive two souvenir bags of trail mix and plan to give one or both to others as a way of telling about Jesus

Art Center

Younger Child Option • Make puppets to show ways to obey God's command to share with others

Materials • Bible, Lesson 12 Pattern Page (p. 210), sturdy paper or card stock, scissors, markers or crayons

Older Child Option • Make marionettes and act out situations in which to obey God's command to be generous

Materials • Bible, scissors, craft sticks, straws, heavy white thread, spoon-shaped craft sticks, fine-tip markers, craft foam, tacky glue, hole punch, measuring stick

Game Center

Younger Child Option • Toss coins onto paper plates and tell things to share

Materials • Bible, six paper plates, pennies or other coins in a bowl

Older Child Option • Play a hula-hoop game to collect Bible verse cards and talk about ways of choosing to be obey God's command to be generous

Materials • Bible, index cards in at least two colors, marker, at least two hula hoops

Worship Center

For the Younger and Older Child • Participate in large-group activities to review Bible verse and to worship God together

Materials • Bibles, Theme Music CD and player, at least six small items (marbles, beans, buttons, coins, mini balls, etc.), construction-paper squares in at least four colors (one square for each child, song charts (pp. 246, 251))

Coloring/Puzzle Center

Younger Child Option • Review the Bible story while completing coloring page

Materials • Lesson 12 Coloring Page (p. 211) for each student, crayons

Older Child Option • Complete puzzle page to discover what it means to obey Deuteronomy 15:11

Materials • Lesson 12 Puzzle Page (p. 212) for each student, pencils

Bonus Theme Ideas

Bonus Theme Ideas can be used at any time during this session: as an additional activity center, to extend the session for a longer time, or for added theme excitement.

CHOOSE TO GIVE GENEROUSLY

Contact your church staff or local charities to find out about projects children can help raise money to support. Explain to children how the money they raise will benefit others. Provide inexpensive small gift bags. Each child traces around his or her hand on the bag and prints "Give a Hand." Children may also decorate bags. Children take home bags and collect spare change. Children may also earn money by completing jobs at home. Send a letter to parents explaining the project. Be sure to report the results to the congregation!



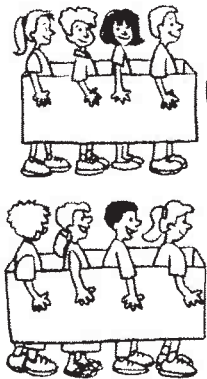
MIX AND MATCH SANDWICHES

Cut pita bread or bread slices into halves or wedges. Set out mustard and mayonnaise in small shallow containers. Place a variety of lunch meats, cheeses, lettuce and tomato slices on paper plates. Children create their own sandwiches with the ingredients provided.

Post a note alerting parents to the use of food. Also, check registration forms for possible food allergies.

ROLLERCOASTER RELAY

Collect a large appliance box for each team. Cut out two sides of each box (see sketch). Divide group into at least two teams. Each team chooses a name for his or her rollercoaster car (Cool Coaster, Terrific Tracker, Space Speeder, etc.). Each team gathers at a starting line. Place a box by each starting line. (If boxes aren't available, provide a hula hoop for each team.) At your signal, three or four team members get inside their box, lift up the box and run to the opposite side of the playing area and back to the starting line. Continue until each team member has had at least one turn.



Bible Story Center

for younger children

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Collect * Bible.

Introduction * Hold out your hand if you can think of a toy that kids your age like to play with? Volunteers who respond tell toys. When you and your friends play together, you take turns sharing your toys. Our Bible story tells about a man who shared. Listen to find out what he shared. It wasn't a toy!

Tell the Story * After Jesus went back to heaven, His friends stayed together. They loved each other. One of the ways Jesus' friends showed their love was by sharing everything they had. Nobody had to ask them to share. They LIKED to share!

Some people had lots of food and clothing. But they didn't keep it all for themselves. They found other friends of Jesus who did not have enough food. They shared their food. They found friends of Jesus who needed clothes. They shared their clothes. If one family had more food than they needed, they didn't throw it away. They gave it to another family who did not have enough food.

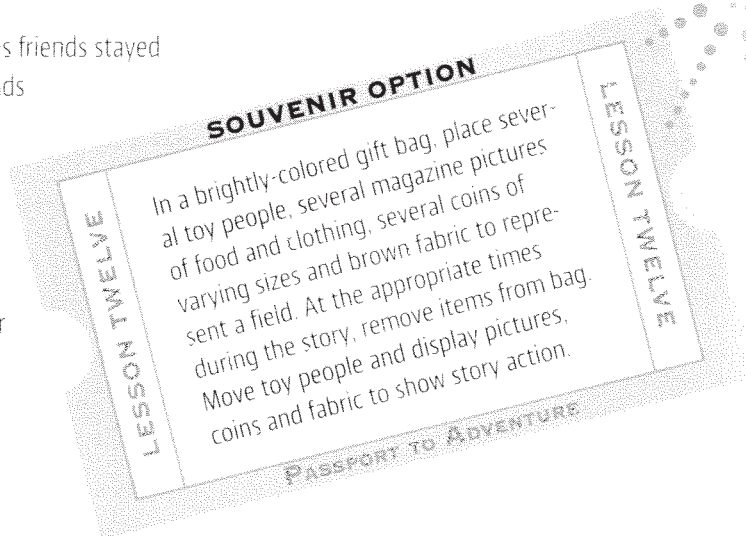
One of Jesus' friends helped other people so much that his friends gave him a nickname! Their new name for him was Barnabas. Barnabas meant something like "Mr. Glad Helper." He was a cheerful man. He was always helping people and he loved to cheer them up!

The Bible tells us that Barnabas owned a big piece of land. He could have kept this field for himself. But Barnabas wanted to share. So he sold his field and got the money for it. Now, Barnabas could have spent that money on something he wanted for himself. But Barnabas wanted to share. So he gave the money to the leaders of God's family. He said, "Here, take this money. I want to share it with people who need it."

Barnabas had learned about Jesus. He was glad to help other people, as Jesus had said to do. Barnabas didn't keep his field. He wanted to share! He didn't keep his money for himself. He wanted to share! He showed he loved Jesus by sharing what he had with other people who needed it. And he had lots of fun sharing!

God's Word & Me * No one MADE Barnabas share with other people. Barnabas WANTED to share! When we're glad to share with others, it means that we are generous. In the Bible it tells us, "Share with others and give to the poor."

Some people are poor—they don't have enough money to buy food or clothes. Being generous means helping poor people have the food or clothes they need. Being generous can also mean letting others have a turn to use our things like bikes, balls or toys. Pray, Dear God, You help us have so many good things. Thank You. Please help us to be generous and share with others. In Jesus' name, amen.



Bible Story Center

for older children

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Collect * Bible, three large index cards, marker.

Prepare * Print and number each of the following questions on a separate index card: (1) After Jesus went back to heaven, how did people in the church treat each other? (2) Where did you get the money you gave to the leaders of the church? (3) What happened when you heard about Paul?

Introduction * What is something kids your age find easy to share with others? Hard to share? Volunteers tell. Let's find out what the first Christians chose to share, and you can decide if you think it was hard or easy. To tell the story, give cards to volunteers. Volunteers ask questions in order. Answer questions as though you are Barnabas, using the information below.

Tell the Story * Barnabas was one of the first Christians. He was not a famous follower of Jesus like Peter, but Barnabas loved Jesus! Barnabas was part of God's family after Jesus returned to heaven. The things that happened during that time were amazing!

After the Holy Spirit came, most everyone who had followed Jesus was telling everyone ELSE about all Jesus had done—how He had healed and helped people, how He had died to take the punishment for our sins—and then had come back to life! MANY people were hearing the good news about Jesus. As they became followers of Jesus, these new followers would tell OTHERS! God's family GREW!

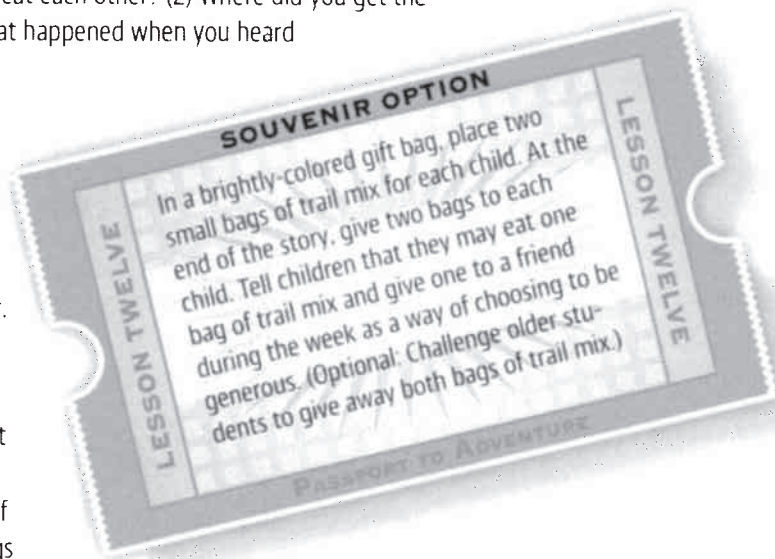
Followers of Jesus were EVERYWHERE! Barnabas and the other followers met together to worship God, singing and praying. They listened to the disciples teach about Jesus. God's family met in homes and at the Temple, too. One thing Jesus had taught them was to share with anyone who had a need. So these followers shared everything they had! They wanted everyone to have the food and clothes they needed.

If a man had only one old, torn shirt, someone with two good shirts would give a shirt to him! When a woman and her child didn't have food, people who had food would share it with them. But the Bible tells us that Barnabas wanted to do even more than give away clothes and food.

You see, Barnabas owned a field, a large piece of land. Barnabas probably had been growing extra food there and selling it to make more money. Barnabas may have even thought he could build a big house there! But being a Christian gave Barnabas a new idea about what to do with his field! Barnabas decided to sell his field and give the money to the leaders of the church. That way, there would be money to give to people who needed something no one else had! Barnabas knew that sharing this money was what God wanted him to do. So, he sold his field, got a good price and took the money to the leaders of the church.

The leaders were probably a little surprised when Barnabas said, "This is the money from a field I sold. Please use it in any way you think is right. I know that sometimes people need other things besides food and clothes—and this money will help."

The leaders were glad to have a large amount of money to use. They were faithful people who would ask God the best way to use the money. Besides, Barnabas would not have been able to use that land anyway. God had other plans for his life besides growing crops or building a big house on that land.



You see, a young man named Paul became a follower of Jesus not long after this. His powerful preaching made some of the political leaders SO unhappy that they tried to kill him—but he escaped! Paul stayed away for a long time. When Paul came to Jerusalem, no one wanted to have anything to do with him. But Barnabas spent time with Paul to hear his story. Once Barnabas heard about how Paul had changed and what Paul was doing to tell about Jesus, Barnabas took him to meet the other apostles. Paul was a bold preacher! Soon, there were others who wanted him dead because he was preaching about Jesus. So Barnabas and the other church leaders sent him off to another city called Tarsus.

Later, Barnabas went to visit Jesus' followers in the city of Antioch. Barnabas found out that these followers needed help in learning about Jesus. And Barnabas knew just who to get to help them! Barnabas traveled to Tarsus and found Paul. He came back to Antioch with Barnabas and the two of them preached and taught in Antioch for about a year. What a difference Barnabas's generous actions made!

God's Word & Me ✨ Barnabas was generous in lots of ways. He shared what he had, he gave money to be used in good ways, and he welcomed Paul into God's family. Read or ask a child to read Deuteronomy 15:11. **Just like Barnabas, we show we love Jesus by choosing to give what we can and sharing with others, too.**

- ✨ **You may not have a lot of money or other things to give. How can you still share?** (Let someone play your favorite game. Clean out your closet and give away things you don't need.)
- ✨ **Make a tight fist and then open your hand completely. What do you think being openhanded means?** (Sharing and giving freely.)
- ✨ **What is one object you can share this week? What can you do to welcome and share friendship with someone this week?** Pray with children, asking God to help them be openhanded and willing to share.

Game Center

for younger children •

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Collect ✱ Bible, six paper plates, pennies or other coins in a bowl.

Prepare ✱ Lay paper plates in two rows on the floor. Set up one game for each group of six children.

Do

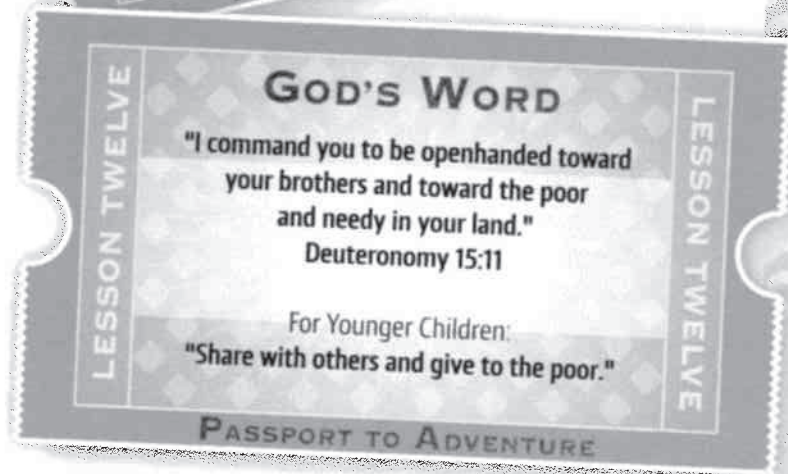
1. Children stand several feet from paper plates and take turns to remove a coin from the bowl and toss it onto a plate. (Adjust distance children stand from plates as needed.) If a coin lands on a plate, child names an item he or she can share with others.

2. After everyone has had several turns, collect coins and play another round, this time inviting all children to repeat Deuteronomy 15:11 together whenever a coin lands on a plate.

Talk About

- ✱ **When has a friend let you have a turn to play with a toy? What are some things you like to share? What are things that are hard to share?**
- ✱ **The Bible tells us, "Share with others and give to the poor." What are things we can give to poor people? (Food. Clothes. Toys. Books.)**
- ✱ **Let's think of one thing we can share this week. We'll ask God to help us share. Pray briefly, Dear God, sometimes it is hard to share. Please help us want to share and give to others. In Jesus' name, amen.**

For Older Children ✱ Write each word of Deuteronomy 15:11 on a separate paper plate. Arrange plates in word order in a grid. Each time a coin lands on a plate, the plate is removed. Challenge children to repeat verse, saying the missing word. Continue game until all or most plates have been removed.



Game Center

for older children

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Collect ✱ Bible, index cards in at least two colors, marker, at least two hula hoops.

Prepare ✱ Write each word of Deuteronomy 15:11 on a separate index card. Make one set for each team, using a different color for each team. Scatter cards around an open playing area.

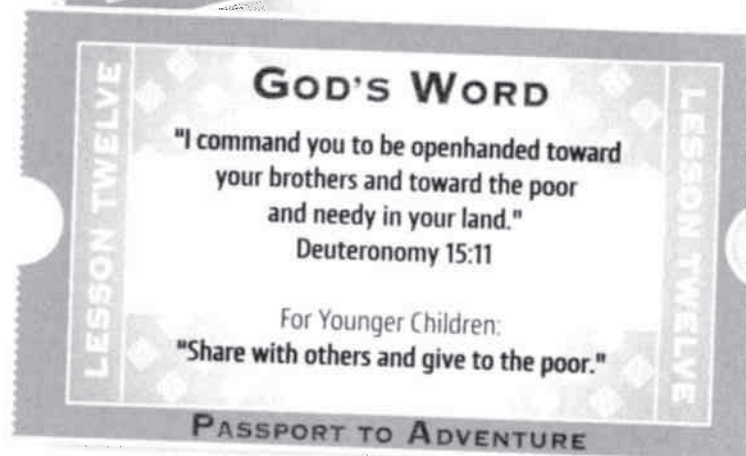
Do

1. Help children form two teams. Assign each team a color of index card to collect and give each team a hula hoop. A group of two or three children from each team stand inside a hula hoop and hold it at waist height.
2. At your signal, children in hoop move as a unit to gather three verse cards and bring back to their team. Next group of children take a turn to gather three verse cards. Continue until team has gathered all cards.
3. Teams work together to put the cards in verse order and read the verse aloud. Repeat game as time permits.

Talk About

- ✱ Read Deuteronomy 15:11. **When might a kid your age be openhanded in the way he or she shares with others?**
- ✱ **Do you think it is easy or hard to be openhanded and generous? Why?**
- ✱ **How would your class at school be different if kids obeyed the words of Deuteronomy 15:11? Your family? Our city?**
- ✱ **What is one thing you have a hard time sharing? Giving?** Lead children in prayer, asking God to help them share and give this week.

For Younger Children ✱ Lay several hoops on floor in a row or a circle. Children take turns jumping from hoop to hoop. As children jump, lead all children in saying the words of Deuteronomy 15:11 (one jump for each word).



Art Center

for younger children •

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Collect ✱ Bible, Lesson 12 Pattern Page (p. 210), paper or card stock, scissors, markers or crayons.

Prepare ✱ Photocopy one Pattern Page for each child onto paper or card stock. Cut slit in each page (see sketch). Make sample puppets.

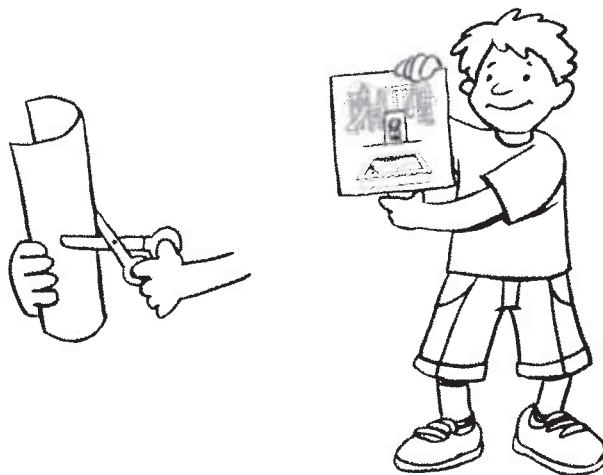
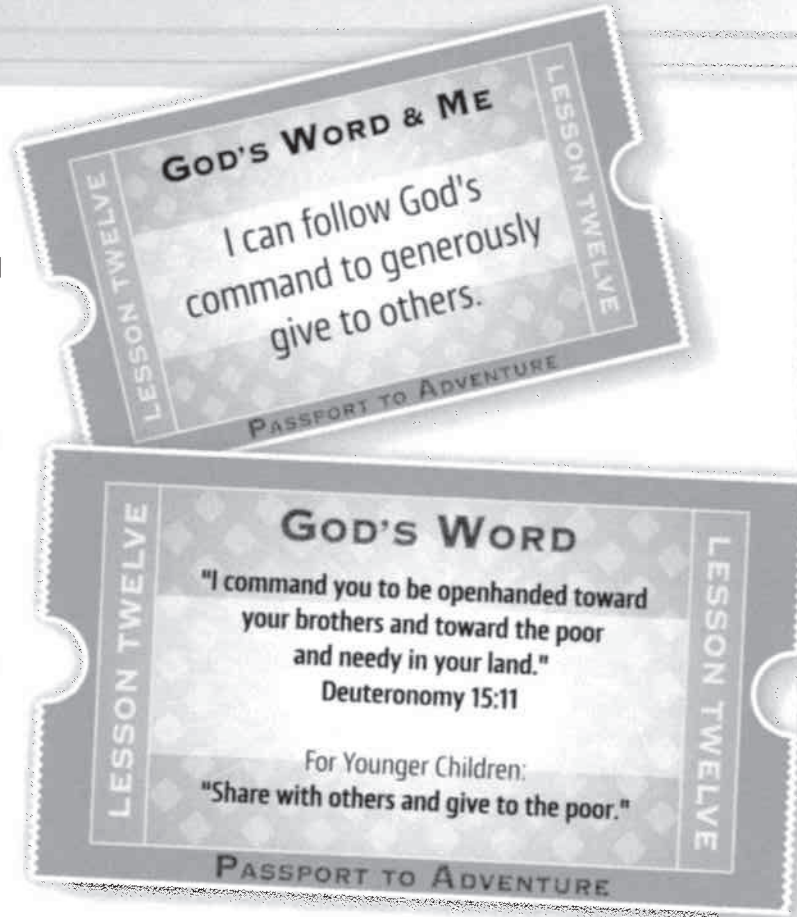
Do

1. Demonstrate using the puppets with the page to act out a situation in which a child is generous.
2. Give each child a Pattern Page. Each child cuts off puppets and colors page and puppets as desired.
3. Children insert puppets to act out stories of their own choosing. Be ready to talk with children to help them think of situations and words for puppets to say.

Talk About

- ✱ Leah, what is happening in your story? What are your puppets sharing?
- ✱ The Bible tells us, "Share with others and give to the poor." When we share with others and give them what they need, we are being generous. Chloe, what is something one of your puppets could give to the other?
- ✱ Let's think of one thing we could share or give this week. Then we'll ask God to help us share it! Pray briefly, Dear God, please help us to remember to share and give to others this week. In Jesus' name, amen.

For Older Children ✱ Using the Pattern Page as a guide, children make and illustrate their own pages and puppets, showing situations in which kids their age can choose to be generous.



Art Center

for older children •

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Collect • Bible, scissors, two craft sticks for each child, one straw for each pair of children, heavy white thread, one spoon-shaped craft stick for each child, fine-tip markers, craft foam cut into clothing shapes (see sketch a), tacky glue, hole punch, measuring stick; optional—wire cutters, yarn, fabric trims.

Prepare • Cut craft sticks and straws in half. Cut 4-foot (1.2-m) length of heavy thread for each child. Make a sample puppet. (Optional: Collect magazine pictures of children's faces or take photos of children's faces. Use wire cutters to cut sticks.)

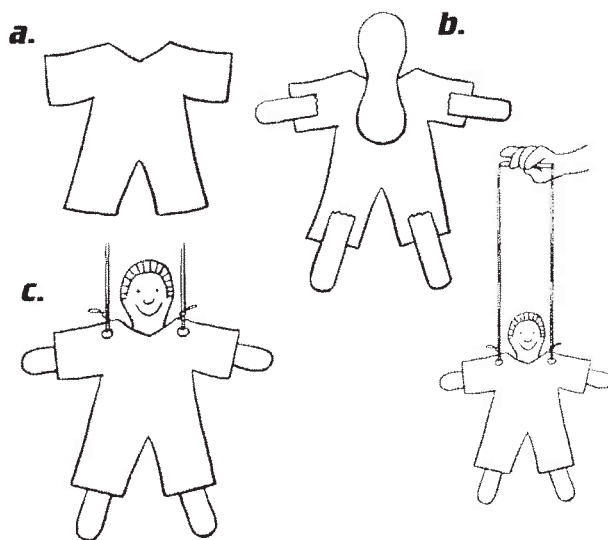
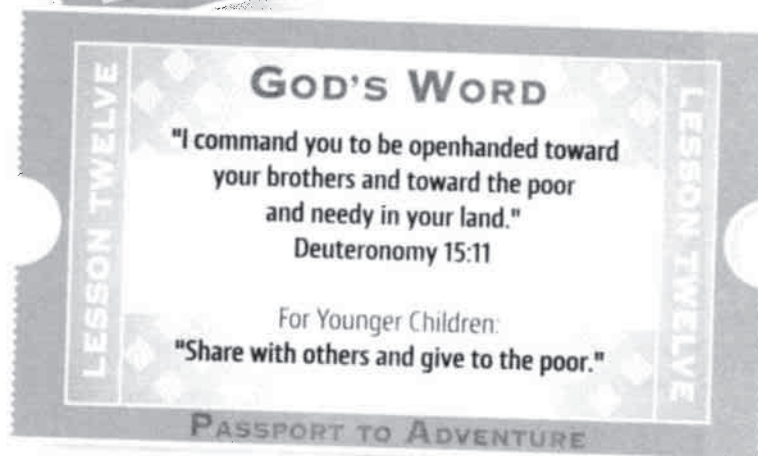
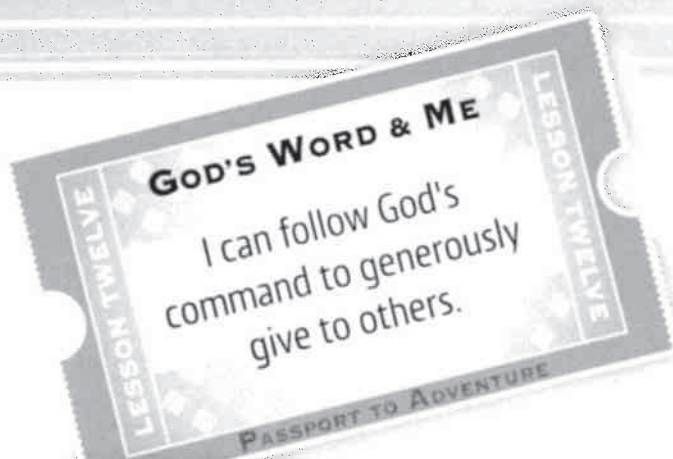
Do

1. Child draws a face on spoon-shaped craft stick and then punches holes at shoulders of clothing shape. (Optional: Children glue on magazine pictures or photos of faces, and use yarn and fabric trims to decorate clothing.) Child turns over shape, glues spoon-shaped craft stick to the top for the head and four craft stick halves for hands and feet (see sketch b).
2. Child inserts a length of thread through each hole (see sketch c). Child then slides straw section down one thread, ties ends of thread together and slides straw to the top to act as a control stick (see sketch d).
3. Children form pairs or trios and use their marionettes to act out ways kids their age may show generosity.

Talk About

- **Todd, thanks for sharing the hole punch. That's a way to be generous! How many other ways can we be generous and share while we're making our marionettes today?**
- **Read Deuteronomy 15:11. What would you tell a kid your age to do to obey the words of this verse? When has someone obeyed this verse by being generous to you?**
- **What are ways your family or our church obeys this verse by being generous toward poor people?**
- **Think of a way you can choose to be generous this week. Let's ask God to help us remember to be generous! Pray, asking God to help children to remember ways they can be generous.**

For Younger Children • Give each child a spoon-shaped craft stick. Child draws face on stick to make a puppet. Cut craft foam into triangle shape to make clothing for child to glue onto his or her puppet.



Worship Center

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

Collect ✱ Bibles, Theme Music CD and player, at least six small items (marbles, beans, buttons, coins, mini balls, etc.), construction-paper squares in at least four colors (one square for each child, song charts (pp. 246, 251).

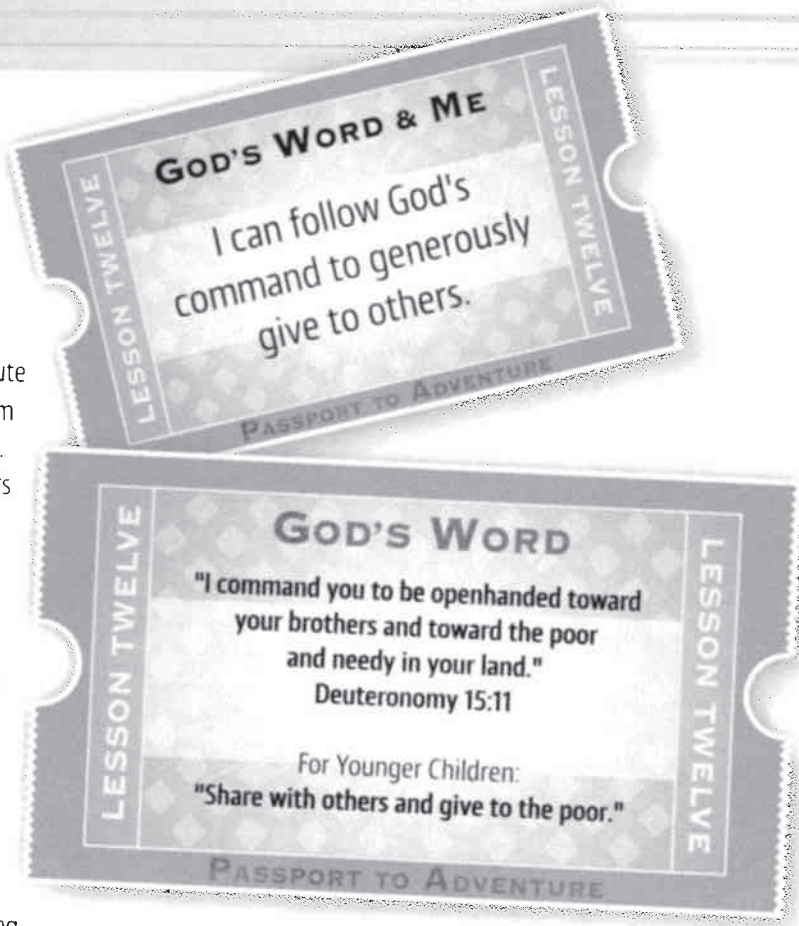
Team Game ✱ Have all children stand up. Distribute small items randomly among children. As you play "Psalm 47:1-2," children begin shaking hands with each other. Children who are holding small items pass them to others while shaking hands. Stop the music every 10 to 15 seconds to see who has the items. Play as time permits.

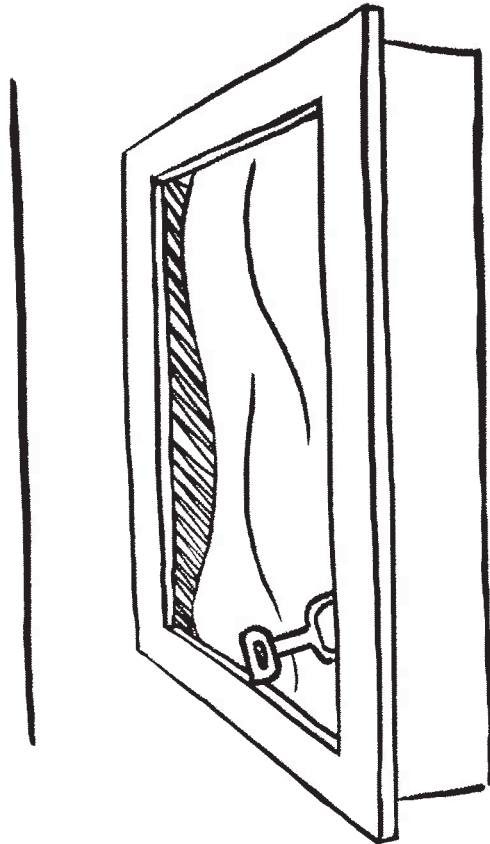
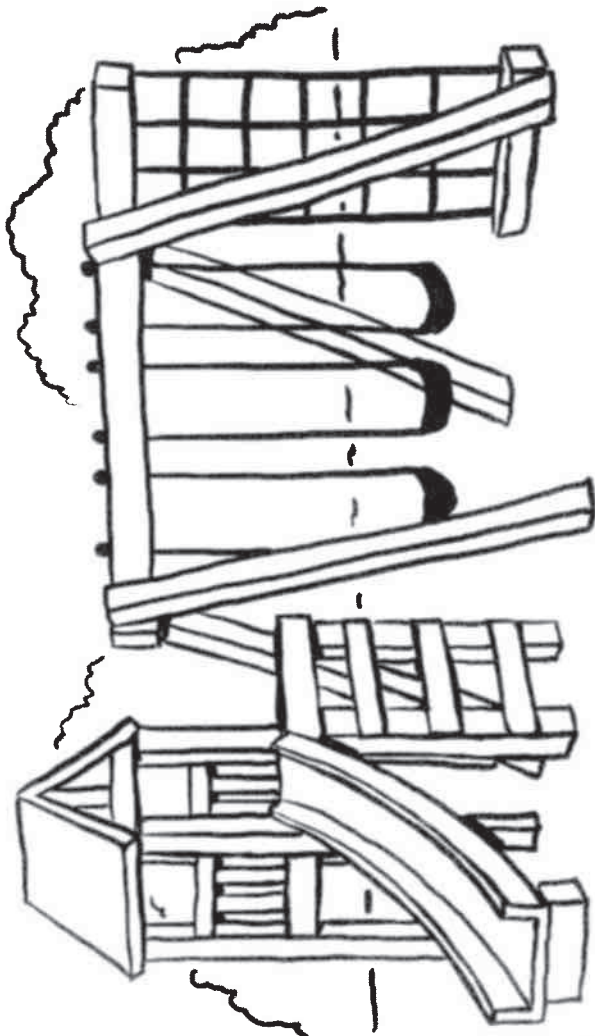
Bible Verse Game ✱ Repeat Deuteronomy 15:11 aloud with children. Mix up colors of paper squares and distribute randomly to children. Then as you call out each color, children holding those colors stand up and say words of verse together. When the word "openhanded" is said aloud, each child extends an open hand to another child. (Variation: Children run to front of room before reciting the verse.)

Song ✱ You, or another leader, lead children in singing "Love and Power," adding motions and/or clapping if desired.

Prayer ✱ Tell children briefly about one or two needs of poor people in your community or in the world. Then lead children in prayer for the people. (Optional: If possible, be prepared to tell children how they can give generously to needy people in your community.)

Song ✱ You, or another leader, lead children in singing "Choose Jesus," adding motions and/or clapping if desired.





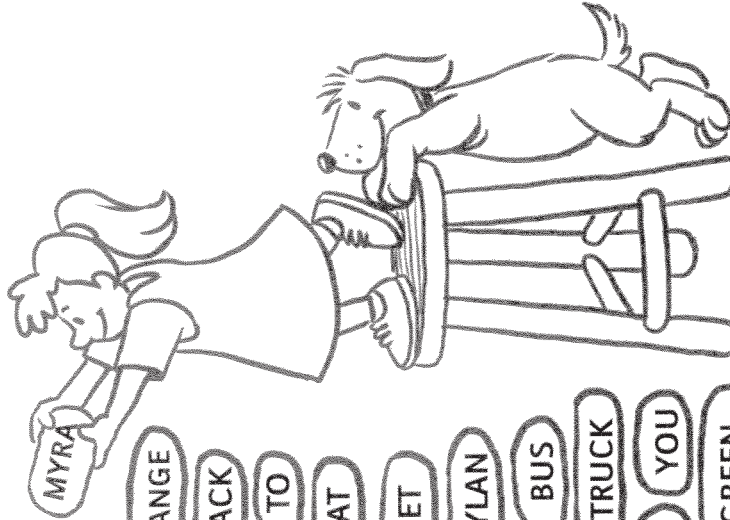
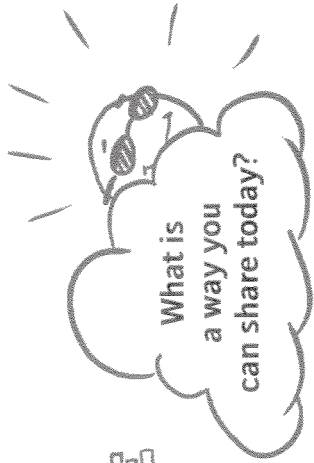
Barnabas shows his love for Jesus by sharing.

Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-31; 11:22-26

What can you share?



CROSS THE WALL



| | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------|
| BLUE | BICYCLE | DENISE | SCOTT | ORANGE |
| BALL | CHOOSE | SCIENCE | AIRPLANE | ZACK |
| AMY | KITE | TURQUOISE | YO-YO | BILLY |
| MATHEMATICS | JENNY | JOSH | BOAT | |
| BE | READING | TREVOR | PUZZLE | JET |
| SPELLING | ART | MAGENTA | GENEROUS | DYLAN |
| CAR | JORDAN | AND | MUSIC | JILL |
| SOCIAL STUDIES | PURPLE | TAXI | SKATEBOARD | TRUCK |
| PINK | JUMP ROPE | OPENHANDED | MICHAEL | AS |
| LANGUAGE | BARTHOLOMEW | YELLOW | GIVE | GREEN |

- The bricks that Milo and Myra used to build the garden wall all have words on them! Use the steps below to cross out the words so you can reveal the hidden message!
- STEP 1:** Cross out all the names of colors.
- STEP 2:** Cross out all the types of transportation.
- STEP 3:** Cross out all girls' names.
- STEP 4:** Be fair! Cross out all boys' names.
- STEP 5:** Cross out all of the names of school subjects.
- STEP 6:** Cross out all of the names of things kids can share.

What words are left? Go from top to bottom and left to right to fill in the blanks!