



Date: _____

Series: Lookin' for a Leader
Fall Year 3, Lesson 19

It's Better to Give than to Receive

Primary Scripture: Matthew 26:6-13. Jesus is anointed with expensive perfume.

Key Verse: Acts 20:35b, "... the Lord Jesus said, 'Giving gifts is more satisfying than receiving them.'"

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

We live in a "me first" world. God's way is just the opposite. His wisdom calls us to think of God and others before ourselves. God demonstrated this as he gave his own Son, Jesus, for us. Kids need to learn how to be thoughtful of others first and to share what they have.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Through Jesus' death and resurrection, Jesus shares with us his own righteousness so that we might be forgiven.

Jesus in us: Because of Jesus' love given to us, we have his power to share that love with others, just as he has shared it with us.

Jesus through us: To follow Jesus is to have his same mindset: considering the needs of others first. As we think of others first and serve them, the message of Jesus is delivered in a winsome way.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

The theme "it is better to give than to receive" is demonstrated in the following story.

Call two boys forward to play Mike and Joe as you narrate.

Once there was a boy named Mike. He was going down the street on his skateboard when he stopped at his friend Joe's house. As they talked for a bit, Mike found out that Joe's dad was out of a job. Joe's family did not have much money. Joe did not even have a skateboard.

Joe asked Mike about his skateboard. "Wow! That's a great skateboard. Where'd you get it?"

"I got it from my brother," Mike said proudly. "He just gave it to me because I'm his brother. Isn't that cool?"

Joe nodded and smiled. He thought out loud, "Wow. I wish that I had..."

What do you think Joe wished for? Most people think he might wish he had a brother who would give him a skateboard. That is not what he wished for, though. Listen to what he said.

"I wish I had a skateboard that I could give my brother."

Wow! That's a surprise, isn't it? Today we will find out that God says it is better to give than to receive. Giving gifts is even more satisfying than receiving them.

Can you guess how the story ended? Mike took his skateboard and said, "Here, Joe. You can have my skateboard so that you'll have a skateboard to give your brother."

Wow! Let's think today about what we can give to others. Let's start by first giving to God our worship and our praise. Let's honor him for being our God and the one who has given us his only Son, Jesus.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Invite a child forward and pretend to take something from your pocket and put it in her hand. Have her make a fist and hold it close to her chest.

**What do you think _____ (insert kid's name) is holding onto?
It's a secret.**

Let kids guess.

Sometimes we hold onto things inside our hearts that we have done wrong. We think we should not let God see what those things are. We feel like we can hide them from God. Can we hide our sins from God's eyes? Let kids respond...

Invite a second child forward. Pretend to take something else from your pocket and put it in his hand. Have him make a fist and hold it close to his chest.

Other times, we feel guilty about something we have done and we keep thinking about how bad it was. That's like holding onto our guilt and not letting go.

What might a child your age feel guilty about doing? Let kids respond...

Place your hand on the first child's hand and say:

God sees into our hearts. We can't hide our sin from him. He wants us to open our hearts and tell him about them. When we do... Open the child's hand... we discover that our sin is gone. We can't see it any more, and neither can God.

Place your hand on the second child's hand.

God says that he forgives us when we trust in Jesus as our Savior. God wants to take away our sin and help us not to sin anymore.

Open the child's hand...

Let's tell God about the things we might be holding inside. When we do this, we are giving those things to him, and then they are gone!

After confession, give the assurance of God's forgiveness. Because Jesus died on the cross for the punishment of our sins and then rose again, we have God's forgiveness.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Challenge the kids to think of one thing they could give to another child that would really help that child. It could be as simple as a kind word or favor. It might also be a tangible gift or a way they could witness to a friend about how Jesus gave himself for them.

Now have them place their imaginary gifts in the offering basket. The large group leader might interview some children as to what gifts they are bringing. The children with real offerings should place those in the basket as well.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Supplies needed: toothpicks, Lifesaver candies

Divide kids into teams of ten. Keep boys and girls separated. Give each child a toothpick and each team a Lifesaver. The challenge will be to pass the Lifesaver from one child to another by using only the toothpick held between the teeth. The game is one of cooperation and showing what it means to share.

Afterwards, give all the children a Lifesaver as part of the sharing.

Application to game:

Needed: Gordy puppet, cup of unwrapped Lifesavers

The Bible reading is set up with the puppet play, "Gordy First." (See Appendix A for the puppet play.)

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Matthew 26:6-13 can be shown on the *Visual Bible: Matthew*, produced by Visual Bible International, 1997.

Application:

Application 1:

After the video, ask the children a few review questions.

Why were the disciples irritated? *(They thought the woman anointing Jesus wasted money.)*

What did Jesus say? *(It was a beautiful thing to give this gift.)*

What did this perfume prepare Jesus for? *(Jesus knew he would die on the cross. The perfume anointed his body for his burial. This offering of love would probably be a fragrance he could smell while going through the pain of his crucifixion.)*

What do you think you could give first to Jesus? *(Take a few answers.)*

Application 2:

Needed: two chairs with a hat on each of them (a construction hat and a straw hat), enough KFC buckets for all kids to get one

Interact with kids as you read the story of the “Me First Village.” (See Appendix B.)



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Have kids tell about times they have experienced someone serving them and how that made them feel. Have them share a plan they have to serve someone else.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chairs:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use special a scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

The Power of the Cross:

- a misting spray bottle filled with water

Learning Game:

- toothpicks
- Lifesaver candies

Application 1:

- Gordy
- cup of unwrapped Lifesavers

Bible Reading:

- *Visual Bible: Matthew*, produced by Visual Bible International 1997

Application 2:

- two chairs, with a hat on each one of them (a construction hat and a straw hat)
- enough KFC buckets for all kids to get one

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Gordy First

Mrs. Wilson: **Boys and girls, let's invite Gordy to come out and help us figure out what we might have learned from the last game. Hi, Gordy.**

Gordy: *Gordy comes onstage with a cup of unwrapped Lifesavers.* Hi, Mrs. Wilson. Hi, kids.

Mrs. Wilson: **Did you like playing the game?**

Gordy: I sure did. I especially liked the Lifesaver part.

Mrs. Wilson: **Good. I hope you learned something. What did you learn about the Lifesavers?**

Gordy: I learned how to get lots of Lifesavers.

Mrs. Wilson: **What do you mean?**

Gordy: Look in this cup.

Mrs. Wilson: **Oh, I see. There are four or five Lifesavers in here. How did you get those?**

Gordy: Oh, it was simple. I was in charge of passing out Lifesavers to the other kids.

Mrs. Wilson: **You had these left over?**

Gordy: No, these weren't leftovers. These are the ones I offered the other kids.

Mrs. Wilson: **But how did *you* get them?**

Gordy: They didn't want 'em.

Mrs. Wilson: **Now what kid wouldn't want a piece of candy?**

Gordy: These kids. (*Gordy points to kids in the group.*) All I did was take the Lifesaver, give it one little bitty lick, and offer it to them.

Mrs. Wilson: **Yuck!**

Gordy: That's what they said. They said, "You can keep it." So I said, "Cool!"

Mrs. Wilson: **What did you learn?**

Gordy: I learned that it's better to get more for yourself than to give anything away.

Mrs. Wilson: **I sure am glad that God doesn't see it that way.**

Gordy: He doesn't?

Mrs. Wilson: **No. Jesus says, "It's better to give than to receive." In Acts 20:35, he says it this way, "*Giving gifts is more satisfying than receiving them.*"**

Gordy: No way!

Mrs. Wilson: **Yes way. If that wasn't true, how do you explain Jesus? He wouldn't have given himself for you if it were not better to give than to receive.**

Gordy: What do you mean?

Mrs. Wilson: **Jesus shows us it is better to give than to receive by giving his whole life for us. You know that Jesus died on the cross for your sin and now he is alive to be your friend. He is with you wherever you go.**

Gordy: Yes, that is a pretty good gift.

Mrs. Wilson: **Better than Lifesavers.**

Gordy: Because Jesus gives, I should give, too?

Mrs. Wilson: **Exactly. Everyone else might say the smartest thing is to get whatever you want. God says that's not true. The smartest and wisest thing is to give to others first. We will discover this in God's word today. Say "bye," Gordy.**

Gordy: Bye, Gordy! Oh, by the way, Mrs. Wilson... Here. (*Gordy holds his Lifesavers out.*) It's better to give than to receive. You can have these Lifesavers.

Mrs. Wilson: **Gee, thanks, Gordy. Bye.**

Return to "Bible Reading" segment.

Appendix B

Me First Village

Props: *Two chairs, with a hat on each of them (a construction hat and a straw hat). Enough Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets for all the kids. (If for some reason, there are not enough buckets to go around, have one bucket between two kids and then they can act out minor skirmishes over who gets to use it when their part comes up.)*

Special Parts:

- The Boss of *Me First Village* (wears the construction hat). This person should be an animated actor or actress.
- The stranger (wears the straw hat).
- Additional villagers (4-6 kids).

When reading the script, the ** means that some pause is needed so that the child might repeat the word or actions. However, you may have too many **, so don't read through too slowly or the action will bog down.

Group Narrator Reads:

Once upon a time, there was a village called “Me First Village.” What this village loved to do was to build things, but for some reason, they were not very good at it. Here come the villagers now.

Kids come up with buckets under their arms.

It looks like they are getting ready to build something now, and what is it that they are going to build? What will they use to build?

Kids point to buckets.

Oh, they are going to build with Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets. Obviously. Well, here in Me First Village, they take their building very seriously. So they began by clearing the land, pulling out the grass where they will build. (Children act out building.) They throw loose rocks away.** (Children act out throwing rocks away.) And they smooth out the ground.** (Children act out smoothing out the ground.) And now they begin to build.**

But, oh, no. They are having trouble. Every time anyone sets down their bucket, someone else tries to move it aside to put their bucket there first. (Watch for these astericks throughout the narration for children's involvement.) No wonder they can't get much building done.**

While each of them is trying to be first, the boss comes and tries to help them get something done.

Boss character comes forward.

And why is he boss, you ask? Why, because he wears the boss's hat, of course! He says to all, "Stop!" (Child actor repeats underlined portions.) (**"Stop!"**) **"Me first"** (With thumb pointing to chest, boss repeats, **"Me first."**) **And with that, he goes and lays down his bucket.**

The others came and put their buckets next to his. And soon there were enough buckets so that a second row of buckets could be laid. And then a third row. And then the strangest thing happened.

One of the villagers said, "Wait a minute. ("Wait a minute.") Why is he/she boss?" ("Why is he/she boss?") and with that, the villager took the boss's hat and said, "Me first." ("Me first" with thumb gesture.)

Then he kicked out the boss's bucket and put in his... (*Crash and tumble.*) Soon all the villagers were yelling "Me first." And they were all trying to wear the boss's hat.**

As all this mess was happening, a stranger came into the village.

Stranger comes forward.

He looked like anyone else, but he wore a most unusual hat. In fact, it wasn't a very nice hat at all. It was a *straw* hat. It certainly wasn't a boss's hat. The village became very quiet and looked at the strange figure in the most unusual hat.**

They were all so surprised, when he took his bucket, went to someone next to him, and held it out. Then he said, "You first."

The whole village gasped in disbelief. They had never heard of such a thing before. The one with the bucket carefully placed it down and then turned to another and said, "You first." Soon others were saying it. ** And many were helping to build.**

But the person with the boss's hat was angry. He went to the villager with the new hat and screamed, "Me first." Then he took him by the arm and led him out of the village. But when he did, he noticed the stranger was no longer wearing his hat. He had left it in the village. Now Me First Village was different. Now one of their buildings finally stood.**

All exit.

Narrator reads Matthew 20:26-28:

(Jesus said,) “Whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant... It’s the same way with the Son of Man. He didn’t come so that others could serve him. He came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many people.”

Return to “Witness and Tell” segment and continue.