

GIVE BACK TO GOD

“The only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small.”
— C.S. Lewis

Remember the account of the little boy who, surrounded by thousands of hungry people, gave his lunch to Jesus? Most probably, he didn't make the bread or catch and cook the fish. The lunch he brought with him was likely given to him because someone cared for him. That child decided to respond to others with loving care. He decided to pass his own lunch along to others rather than keep it all to himself. **He shows us the wisest of stewardship choices — he gave what was precious back to God.**



Because the boy surrendered his personal sense of ownership to the will of Jesus, he took part in a miracle. He was open to experience what can happen when ordinary things are placed into the generous, creative hands of our loving Lord. Imagine his joy and delight!

Stewardship is the care and management of things that belong to someone else. Our time, our bodies, our money, our abilities. All these things are on loan to us from God. We are just taking care of them for a while. Stewardship flows out of our love for God and our desire for others to experience his love and care. Our love for God means that we share everything we are and everything we have for his purposes and plans.

The invitation to live as faithful stewards is woven throughout the Bible. We are advised to “think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth,” as we open our hearts and hands to share (Colossians 3:2). We are instructed, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace” (1 Peter 4:10).

What a wonderful foundation for life! **Imagine what joy lies ahead for children who walk through all of life anticipating what God will do with their resources if they open their hands to him.** What a privilege to help children habitually ask, “What do you want me to do with this, God?” What a difference that will make as they make decisions with their gifts and resources!

Stewardship is about multiplication, not subtraction. When we give our gifts and resources back to God, we participate in expanding the reach of the gospel beyond our own small circle of influence. May we echo Scripture, “I will most *gladly* spend and be spent for your souls” (2 Corinthians 12:15 ESV).

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INVITATIONS TO ENGAGE

Start the conversation with your child!

“Come and sit with me a minute so we can talk about God’s generosity to us and how we can show him our love by giving back to him.”

EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-6 years old)

What if you needed to share this little cracker with everyone in our family? How would you feel if you were hungry and I had the cracker, but I didn’t want to share?

The Bible tells us a story about a little boy who shared food that he really needed. Let’s read John 6 and see what happened when he gave his food to Jesus instead of keeping it all for himself. (Read John 6:10-11.) **Do you think it was hard or easy for him to give his lunch? How do you think that little boy felt when he saw what happened to his lunch? If you were that little boy, what would you say to Jesus?**

Let’s talk to Jesus and tell him what we think of that story. Let’s tell him, “Thank you for all you give us.” Let’s ask him to tell us if there is something he wants us to share.

ELEMENTARY AGE (5-10 years old)

While we read John 6:1-13, I’m going to set this snack in front of us. But we aren’t going to touch it or eat it, because it isn’t really ours. We are just supposed to take care of it for a while. (Have the child read parts of the verses.)

How hard do you think it was for that boy to share his food that day? How would it be different if he was with Jesus again a few days later and there was another chance to share his food? Why?

Draw pictures of things that are hard for you to share. Would it be easier to share if you knew that Jesus only gave those things to you to take care of for a little while? **Let’s talk to Jesus about those things that are hard to share. We will thank him for loving us and ask him to show us how he wants us to show his love to others.**

PRETEEN/EARLY ADOLESCENT (10-14 years old)

(Gather some paper money and three envelopes labeled *SAVE*, *SHARE* and *SPEND*.) **As we read God’s Word, we want to remember that everything we have comes from God, and he has given all of it to us to take care of for a while — even money.**

Do you know that Jesus mentioned money more than almost anything else? So, if we want to love what God loves and value what God values, we need to know what he thinks about money.

Please read 2 Corinthians 12:15 and 1 Peter 4:10 to me. Let’s also read Proverbs 30:24-25: “There are four things on earth that are small but unusually wise: Ants—they aren’t strong, but they store up food all summer.” **So, if we were going to divide up this money in a way that reflects what God’s Word says, how much would we put in each envelope?** (This is only part of a longer conversation about stewardship of money, talents, relationships, time, and all of life.)

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Money Matters for Kids, by Larry Burkett • *The Third Conversion*, by R. Scott Rodin

Stewardship games: <https://oureverydaylife.com/childrens-activities-for-mark-1241-44-12082920.html>