



## Generous – Lesson 1

### 4K and 5K

**Divine Attribute:** God is Generous

**Heart Response:** Give freely

**Memory Verse:** 2 Corinthians 9:8 NLT

“God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.”

### Points of Emphasis:

1. Everything belongs to God.
2. God gives us everything we have.
3. God wants us to give our lives fully to him.
4. God wants us to give freely and share with others.

### PERSONAL PREPARATION

When we come to the place in our faith where we trust in Jesus Christ, the one who rescues and saves, we are overwhelmed by his incredible gift of grace and mercy that he freely pours out on us. God is generous. He gives us everything we have: the air we breathe, the food we eat, the abilities we have, and the life we now get to live with purpose in his name. When we stay focused on the truth that God gives us everything we have, it is easy for us to give freely from what he gives us.

However, we often go through life treasuring everything else: money, success, education, and our reputations. We think we should be rewarded for our willingness to follow him with things: a stable job, a vehicle, Godly relationships, money, and good health. We often look to our “forgiveness” or “getting to go to heaven” as the reward of a life of following Jesus.

When we truly believe that he is the greatest treasure and that there is nothing better out there, we live differently. When we understand who God is, we, with great joy, would give up anything just to have him. When we fully embrace God’s generosity towards us and understand that he gives us all we have, we no longer hold tightly to

our time, talents, and treasures. We recognize that we are stewards of them instead. We start looking more like a funnel and less like a bowl: as God gives generously to us, we give freely to others.

The Bible lessons in this unit will look at three encounters Jesus had with people and their understanding of God’s generosity. As you read through the Bible lessons on the lives of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-31), and the widow (Mark 12:41-44), ask yourself what treasures you are holding onto that God has given to you. Ask God to search your heart and show you where your treasure is. Do you live like you believe there is no greater treasure than him? Thank God for the amazing generosity he has poured into your life and look for ways to give freely and share his generosity with others.

### CENTER TIME

*10-20 minutes as the kids begin to arrive*

To help the children transition into class, please use a center format at the beginning of each service. Set up three centers in your classroom to allow children options of activities. Ideas include, but are not limited to:

1. Read books on the floor.
2. Color at the table.
3. Play with blocks on the floor.
4. Play with puzzles at the table.
5. Play with Play-Doh at the table.

### OPENING ACTIVITY

*10 minutes at the start of service*

The following activity is provided to begin engaging the children for the upcoming lesson. As the teacher of your class, you have an important opportunity to come alongside the parents of these children to teach them about God.

## Memory Verse Poster

### Supplies:

Memory verse poster (one per bin)

Piece of paper – already in room (one per child)

Hang the verse poster on the board. You can give each child a piece of paper to color as you go over the memory verse with them a few times, if you like. You may want to prompt them to color specific things, related to the lesson/unit/verse. You could say something like “While we go over the memory verse, draw a picture of something God has given you, like your house, or family, or friends.”

## BIG GROUP TIME

*please check your classroom schedule*

Please talk to your class about the purpose of this time—to have fun worshiping God together. Give your class practical ideas of what this means (obey the teachers up on the stage, sing and praise God with a happy heart, keep your hands to yourself, etc.). Teachers, you are crucial in helping create a peaceful, orderly environment to worship God during this time. Thank you for your help!

## SMALL GROUP TIME

*25-30 minutes*

## Bible Story

### Supplies:

Bible

Lesson picture - Zacchaeus (one per bin)

**Do any of you know what the word “wealth” means?** (Allow time for answers.) Wealth is basically anything you have. It can be things like money you received for your birthday, your toys, your clothes—things like that. Who gives us our wealth? (Allow time for answers.) **God!** That’s right! God is generous! He gives us everything we have!

Let’s listen to a story from God’s Word, the Bible, about a man named Zacchaeus. It’s from Luke chapter 19. (Open your Bible to show the class.)

Jesus went to the town of Jericho. A man named Zacchaeus lived there. Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector in Jericho. He had lots and lots of money, but had not obeyed God’s law. Zacchaeus had taken money away from the people of Jericho. He loved money and wealth more than he loved God and others. Should we love wealth more than God? (Allow time for answers.) **No!**

**Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus, but he is too short to see over all of the people. Let’s all pretend to look for Jesus.** (Put your hand over your brow as if blocking the sun from your eyes to find Jesus.) **Good!**

**Zacchaeus runs** (pretend to run) **and climbs a tree** (pretend to climb a tree) **that is beside the road, since Jesus is coming that way.**

**When Jesus comes by the tree, he looks up at Zacchaeus.** Jesus says, “**Zacchaeus! Come down! Hurry! I am coming to your house today!**” (Show lesson picture.) **How do you think that makes Zacchaeus feel?** (Happy, surprised, confused.)

**Zacchaeus climbs down quickly. He is so excited to be taking Jesus to his house!** But the people of Jericho are mad! They say, “**Jesus is going to the house of a sinner! Zacchaeus does not obey God! He takes money from all of us!**”

**While the people of Jericho are busy being mad, Zacchaeus looks up at Jesus and says, “Lord, I will give half of all of my wealth to the poor. And if I have cheated and taken money I should not have from the people of Jericho then I will give them back four times as much as I have taken!”** Zacchaeus is sorry that he loved wealth more than he loved God and others. He confesses to Jesus the sin he had done.

**Jesus tells Zacchaeus, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”** Jesus generously forgives Zacchaeus and all who are willing to confess their sin and trust in him.

You see, meeting Jesus helped Zacchaeus see that he was a sinner and that he needed to be rescued. Zacchaeus was willing to admit he was wrong and wanted to change. He wanted to put God first instead of continuing to be greedy by keeping all his wealth to himself. He wanted to give freely and share with others like God had freely given to him.

Jesus is generous to forgive. Jesus helped Zacchaeus see his sin and forgave him. Jesus can help you see your sin and forgive you, too. When we say something is “mine” and we don’t want to share, we need to remember that God is generous and he gives us everything we have.

## Prayer

Prayer time may not be appropriate immediately following story time. If this is the case, we ask that you be intentional about praying spontaneously or formally with the children at other times during class.

**Dear God, help us to know that you give us everything we have. Help us to give freely and share everything you have given to us with others. Amen.**

## Up a Tree

### Supplies:

Zacchaeus worksheet (one per child)  
Bag of green tissue paper scraps (one per bin)  
Crayons

Give each child a worksheet. Have them draw Zacchaeus in the tree and color the treetop and the trunk. Then have them glue green tissue paper scrap “leaves” to the treetop. As they work, remind them how desperate Zacchaeus was to see Jesus that he climbed up in a tree.

\*\*\*Have fun and let them do the crafts themselves, as much as possible. This is a hands-on way for them to learn who God is and remember what they learn. It doesn’t matter if they place the label or stickers in the wrong spot. What matters is teaching them who God is. \*\*\*

## SNACK & ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

last 30 minutes

Please wash the children’s hands before snack time and say a prayer thanking God for the food. As they are eating their snack, please take time to go over the review questions.

## Review Questions

1. **Who is generous to us and gives us everything we have? (God!)**
2. **What is wealth? (All that we have: money, toys, clothes, food.)**
3. **What did Zacchaeus do with his money before he knew Jesus? (Kept it for himself.)**
4. **What does God want us to do with all that he gives us? (Freely give and share!)**
5. **What did Zacchaeus do with his money after he met Jesus and Jesus forgave Zacchaeus? (He freely gave more than he had taken from others.)**

## Give Freely

### Supplies:

Funnel (one per bin)  
Large bowl (one per bin)  
Bag of lentils/peas/rice (must fit through funnel) (one bag per bin)  
Small cups (one per child - in rooms)

Give each child a small cup, half full of peas/lentils/rice. People didn’t like Zacchaeus because he took their money from them. Zacchaeus was very wealthy. Have someone pretend to be Zacchaeus. Place the large bowl in front of them. Then have each of the children give Zacchaeus all of their wealth (their cup of peas) by pouring their cups into the large bowl. **Zacchaeus didn’t know Jesus. He thought his wealth was only his. He thought he didn’t have to share anything! But what happened after Zacchaeus met Jesus? He wanted to give back more than he had taken from the people. Jesus had been generous to Zacchaeus. Jesus forgave Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus then wanted to give freely to others as Jesus freely gave to him. God wants us to be**

**like funnels, not bowls. He is generous and gives us all that we have and he wants it to funnel out of us in the same way.** Show the children how the funnel allows the beans to move through it, as opposed to the bowl that keeps all the beans to itself, like Zacchaeus did. Allow the children to refill their cups and try pouring the beans into the funnel while holding it over the bowl. We are to be like funnels with what God gives us, not bowls.

## Paybacks

### Supplies:

Coins (10-12 per bin)

Hold out some coins. Show them to the children. Remind them that Zacchaeus recognized his sin and said he would give away half of his wealth to the poor (take away half of your coins). Remind the children that Zacchaeus also said he would pay back four times what he owed to the people of Jericho. Say, **“So, if Zacchaeus owed someone one coin (hold up one coin), he would pay them back with four”** (hold up four coins). Repeat for emphasis. Help the children to see that Zacchaeus was not only giving, but giving freely and generously when his heart had been changed.



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