

Youth Activity: DARE to Be Generous

This youth lesson was written for a 60-minute session but could be easily expanded. Most of the time should be spent on the DARE to Dream activity, which could be continued in a subsequent session.

OPENING ACTIVITY - GIVING A GIFT

Supplies Needed: A box full of random items (the more “random” the better and more fun). Items could include things like a paperclip, a stapler, scissors, nonfunctioning cell phone, canister of Play-Doh, ink pen, rubber ball, etc....

Have the youth sit in a circle. The leader will provide these instructions:

The person to my right is going to take this box, open it up and, without looking inside, take out an item. You will look at the item and then you will “gift” this item to someone else in the circle. When you gift the item to them, you will say why you are giving them this gift and offer a word of encouragement about why this is a gift just for them. Then they will hand the box to their right and the next person will do the same—without looking, take out an item and then “gift” it to someone else. Do this until everyone has had the opportunity to “gift” someone to someone else. (This will take some time, but have fun!)

Discuss

After everyone has had time to give a gift to another and receive a gift from another, ask some of these questions (or some of your own):

- What was difficult about the game?
- What was easy?
- How did it feel to give a word of encouragement from your heart?
- How did it feel to receive a gift?

YOUTH SHOULD RETURN THE RANDOM ITEMS TO THE BOX WHEN THE ACTIVITY IS OVER.

CONNECTING TO SCRIPTURE

In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminds us how we should give to others. Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* paraphrase says it like this:

⁶⁻⁷ Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving.

The One Great Hour of Sharing theme this year is about giving a love offering to the world. When we offer our gifts on this special day, they are used all around the world to fund projects and assist people, sometimes not much older than us right here.

But to give, we have to decide that we want to give with a grateful and generous heart. A farmer plants many seeds to ensure that there are enough in the ground to take root. To give in this way, we have to make a personal decision to give, we have to have our heart prepared to do so and when we do, we reflect God’s love and generosity in the world.

Discuss

1. Why do you think God cares about the attitude behind our giving?
2. Have you ever given something reluctantly? How did it make you feel?
3. What does it mean to be a “cheerful giver” or a “lavish giver”?
4. The theme of One Great House of Sharing is “Our love offering to the world.” How does the manner in which we give gifts show our love for others?

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DARE TO DREAM

Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter has two books (*Dream Like Jesus* and *Believe Like Jesus*) in which she describes a four-part model or outline for dreaming about how things in the world might be different. She uses the acronym **DARE** to describe it.

In this activity, break the youth up into equal sized groups and ask them to talk about dreams they have for offering generosity to the world. It could be a dream they have for the church, school, or even personally ... anything that can bring new life to some aspect of a community through our generosity and giving spirit. It could also be a way to connect their community to One Great Hour of Sharing. Follow the DARE model as outlined below:

1. **DREAM** - What is this idea? Why is it needed and how will it change things?
2. **ALIGN** - Where do you feel God is leading you? Who are the people you would need to make this a reality?
3. **REALIZE** - How do you do it? What would it mean? Who would help pull off this dream?
4. **EXPAND** - If everything went according to your wildest dreams, where would you take it next?

Encourage the groups to not be restrained from dreaming due to resources like money, time, or people. These are to be God-sized, Jesus-inspired, Spirit-led dreams. (Note: By nature, youth can be "self-limiting" at times. Please encourage youth to dream about BIG possibilities first.)

Groups can describe their ideas in words, but drawing pictures or depicting it in other creative ways would be more fun and engaging.

After an appointed time, call the groups back together and allow them to share their dreams with the group.

Discuss

After each group has shared, discuss these (or other) questions:

5. Were you drawn to any particular idea?
6. What was it like to dream without worrying about parameters like money or time?
7. If you were going to propose any of these ideas to your church council or leadership team, which would it be and why?
8. How would the community be different because of the enactment of this dream?
9. How does this DREAM serve as a love offering to the world?