

# Bulletin for Generosity

## Business

### Chalice Lighting

When we kindle this light, we are joining  
With earnest people everywhere who seek,  
In the midst of busy lives, a deeper way,  
A larger hope, a just and peaceful world.

*Christine Robinson*

### Sharing of Joys and Concerns

**Silence** – holding ourselves and each other in silent support

### Shared Readings

If truth doesn't set you free, generosity of spirit will. *Katerina Stoykova Klemer*

It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving. *Mother Teresa*

Until we can receive with an open heart, we're never really giving with an open heart. When we attach judgment to receiving help, we knowingly or unknowingly attach judgment to giving help.  
*Brené Brown, The Gifts of Imperfection*

The sage never tries to store things up. The more he does for others, the more he has. The more he gives to others, the greater his abundance. *Tao 81 tr. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English*

Not only does [the power of giving] destroy the power of money, but even more, it introduces the one who receives the gift into the world of grace . . . and it begins a new chain of cause and effect which breaks the vicious cycle of selling and corruption. *Jacques Ellul*

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
Nothing is going to get better. It's not.  
*Dr. Seuss*

Real generosity is anonymous to the extent that a man should be prepared even to be considered ungenerous rather than explain it to others. *Idries Shah*

It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding.  
*Kahlil Gibran*

Learning how to be generous to others means first learning how to be generous to yourself.  
*Lucinda Vardey*

Generosity invites us to put ourselves in another's shoes, see and feel the existence of a pressing need, realize that it is within our power to help, and then act in whatever way we can. It's really as simple as that. *Barbara Bonner*

## **Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

### **Round 1**

Share about a time when you were either the recipient or the giver of generosity.

### **Round 2**

Share more deeply stories and experiences of generosity as a result of your exploration of the preparation materials.

### **Round 3**

As time allows, share additional thoughts on generosity or reflect on what others have shared.

## **Closing Words**

We cannot live for ourselves alone.  
Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads,  
and along these sympathetic fibers,  
our actions run as causes and return to us as results.  
*Herman Melville*

## **Song**

### **The Covenant**

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, or giving advice
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.

# Facilitator Notes for Generosity

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**Sharing of Joys and Concerns** (each person about 2 minutes)

**Silence** – holding ourselves and each other in silent support (3 minutes)

### Shared Readings

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## **Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

In the rounds of sharing, pay close attention to the allotted time so that all members have the opportunity to share.

**Round 1** (each person about 2 minutes)

Share about a time when you were either the recipient or the giver of generosity.

**Round 2** (each person about 5 minutes)

Share more deeply stories and experiences of generosity as a result of your exploration of the preparation materials.

**Round 3**

As time allows, share additional thoughts on generosity or reflect on what others have shared.

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## Preparation for Generosity

Generosity is an important character virtue in many cultures. In ancient times, it was often associated with the nobility; our English word “generosity” originally meant “of noble birth.” Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* lays out a reasonable approach to generosity—giving to the right people, in the right amounts, at the right time. Giving gifts is often a way to achieve status in a society. Many cultures, however, especially the Arabic and Islamic, consider generosity important for ordinary people as well, emphasizing hospitality toward strangers in offering them food, water, and shelter.

Some religions extend generosity to a more radical and spiritual view. Jesus said that the widow who gave her last copper pennies was more generous than rich men who ostentatiously gave treasure they could easily afford. He identified feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting those in prison, and other assistance to “the least of these” as paths toward redemption. Buddhism identifies generosity as the first step to spiritual awakening, because being generous helps us let go of our attachments. Jacqueline Kramer of the Hearth Foundation identifies three degrees of generosity in Buddhism: “miserly giving, where we give away what we no longer want . . . kindly giving, when we give that which we would like to receive . . . and kingly giving, where we give the very best of what we have in terms of time, material goods, or, in some cases, even our lives.”

Generosity is also important in our personal relationships. We express love by giving, but many people find it hard to strike a balance between giving and receiving. Some of us feel uncomfortable when we receive gifts or compliments, perhaps because we feel that we don’t deserve much. We can learn to extend generosity towards ourselves as well.

Consider generosity with all the resources you have available. Be generous with your eyes and your touch; welcome people and signal to them that you accept them as they are. Be generous with your skills and intelligence; work toward making this world a better place. Be generous with your heart; grow your personal relationships. Be generous with your muscle; help people when they need you to add your strength to theirs. These many ways of being generous inform each other. The practice of generosity means holding the intention to be giving in any way you can. *Mark Ewert*

They who give have all things; they who withhold have nothing. *Hindu Proverb*

Generosity is paradoxical. Those who give, receive back in turn. By spending ourselves for others’ well-being, we enhance our own standing. In letting go of some of what we own, we better secure our own lives. By giving ourselves away, we ourselves move toward flourishing. This is not only a philosophical or religious teaching; it is a sociological fact. *Christian Smith*

For it is in giving that we receive. *Francis of Assisi*

There are two kinds of games—games that end, and games that don’t. . . . Infinite games pay it forward and fill future coffers. . . . Sustainability, ensuring the future of life on Earth, is an infinite game, the endless expression of generosity on behalf of all. *Paul Hawken*

What is called generosity is really only the vanity of giving; we enjoy the vanity more than the thing given. *François de La Rochefoucauld*

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving." The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture. They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.  
*Kahlil Gibran*

Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness. *Dalai Lama*

It takes generosity to discover the whole through others. If you realize you are only a violin, you can open yourself up to the world by playing your role in the concert. *Jacques Yves Cousteau*

Generosity has little to do with giving gifts, and everything to do with giving space to others to be who they are. *Patti Digh*

## **Questions to Ponder**

1. What was your family's view of generosity? Has your view changed as an adult?
2. Think of a time when you experienced generosity as either the giver or receiver and recall how you felt. Try to imagine the feelings of the person on the other side, as well.
3. Ask yourself, "Am I usually on the giving or the receiving side of generosity?" What life changes would you like to make in giving or receiving?
4. What do you see as the relationship among grace, gratitude, and generosity?
5. How do balance your desire to be generous with your desire for financial security?
6. There are many different ways to be generous. Think about your own generosity in giving money, praise, love, or your time and attention.