

Alley SG - October 21 & 22, 2017

Bible Story: Cheer Factor (God Loves a Cheerful Giver) • 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Bottom Line: Use your money wisely.

Key Question: How can you best use your money?

Memory Verse: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.” *Luke 16:10a NIV*

CONNECT TIME: “Get Your Head in the Game” (At Service Start / 5-7 minutes)

What You Need: A penny for every person

What You Do:

- **Give** everyone his or her own penny.
- **Show** them how to balance them on their chins—this means the penny lies flat on the chin and students are looking up into the air.
- **Share** that the goal of the game today is to knock other people’s pennies off.
- **Tell** them that the winner is the last one still standing with a penny balanced on his or her chin.
- **Encourage** students to spread out and balance their pennies, then tell them to begin playing.

ATTENTION: Warn them that people who are too rough will have to sit out—it doesn’t take much to gently knock the penny off. Be watching the students as they move around, so as to not injure themselves or run into the TVs.

Wrap Up and Say:

“It can be hard, even when playing a game, to stay cheerful. When your penny got knocked off, you were annoyed. There are things in life that knock us off balance, too. God talks about a lot of things in the Bible—even about the attitude He’s looking for when people give money to the church or others in need. Let’s head to Large Group to hear more.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area. Make sure they bring the penny with them.

1. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: Two large pieces of a paper, thick markers, painter’s tape

What You Do:

- **Draw** a big smiley face (or get a volunteer to) and write the word “Cheerful” underneath on one of the 2 large pieces of paper.
 - Tape it to the right side of your space or put it on the floor.
- **Draw** an angry-looking face (or ask a volunteer) and put the word “Forced” underneath on the other piece of paper.
 - Tape it to the left side of your space or put on the floor.

Point to the right side of your space and tell students that area represents people who give easily, generously, and cheerfully.

Point to the left side of your space and say that this area represents people who worry about having enough money or give money just because others tell them to.

- **Ask** them to stand in the spot that describes them best—to the right the cheerful generous giver and to the left those worried about giving or forced to give by someone else. *NOTE: If someone stands in the middle, just ask him or her why he or she chose that spot. He or she probably has a reason.*
- **Challenge** the students to talk to other people who chose the same answer and pick a spokesperson to share with everyone else about why they went that way.
- **Ask** the right side spokesperson, then the left side spokesperson, to share their thoughts.
- **Ask** if they think that their answers change based on the situation—ask if there's anything that could happen that would make them answer differently.
 - If so, what? In other words, are there some situations where you cheerfully give but others where you are more nervous or have to be forced?
 - What makes them different?
- **Ask** those who tend to be more “worried” or “forced” givers what they wish other people knew about how they feel.
- **See** if the cheerful givers can think of anything that would make it harder for them to give generously in the future?

Wrap Up & Say:

“There are times that it’s easy to be a cheerful giver—to give generously without a worry in the world. But there are other times and situations that can make us hesitate, worry, or even complain if someone forces us to give when we don’t feel ready. But God wants us to live generously without holding back, trusting Him with the future.”

2. Discussion Questions

What You Do:

- Why do you think God cares if we give cheerfully or not? Why does it matter to Him if we give because someone forced us to?
- Does God need our gifts and our money?
- Why do we give money to the church?
- If you make money or an allowance, do you give part of it back to God and the church? Is it hard to give money you’ve earned or gotten as a gift? What makes it harder?
- How does giving and helping others change us?
- What kinds of things do you happily give money toward or would you like to give money toward in the future?

3. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- **Read** Deuteronomy 15:10.
- **Ask** if anyone can put that in his or her own words or rephrase it a different way? (*Tip: You might need to re-read just a phrase or section at a time and pause.*)
- **Ask** the following questions:
 - Why do you think this verse says that when we give generously with a good attitude that God will bless our work?
 - What does giving generously have to do with being blessed?
 - What work are you doing that you think God might bless if you found ways to be more generous—with your time, with your energy, with your talent, or with your money?
 - Who do you think is the best example of a cheerful and generous giver? Why do you he or she is that way? How could you be more like that?

4. Making it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: Pennies from “Get Your Head in the Game” connect activity

What You Do:

- **Pass out** a penny to each person.
- **Ask** them to think of at least one way they know they can give generously and cheerfully this week or this month.
- **Tell** them to put their pennies in the middle of the group after they have shared their ideas.

5. “God Time” Take Home Sheets

What You Need: “God Time” Sheets (one per child), pens (one per child)

NOTE: The God Time sheets are intended to be a closing time activity each week in The Alley. Children will begin working on their sheets, as well as be encouraged to bring their sheets back the following week for \$3 in Alley Cash. Children cannot turn in their sheets the same week. The goal is to keep the lesson on their minds and in front of them throughout the following week.

Before they leave, ask everyone to put one of their hands in the middle over top all the pennies, like you’d huddle up with a sports team before a game, and then have them close their eyes so you can pray and send them out.

Dear Jesus, we want to be generous people. Everything is Yours anyway. Help us as we leave to clearly see places where You’re already at work and other opportunities for us to show people love. We don’t want to be people who just talk about You at church. We want to become more and more like You. Help us to realize when and where we can use our money wisely and cheerfully to do good. In Jesus’ name, Amen.