**EXTRA! Ideas for Adults – Character Counts – Session 5**

**Generosity**

**The Point: God’s generous grace moves us to be generous.**

**Get Into the Study**

*Share the following after discussing the opening question.*

America’s top twenty-five philanthropists have given a cumulative $241 billion to charity, according to *Forbes*’ annual study of America’s most generous philanthropists. That giving increased $30 billion over the past year. During their lifetimes, those philanthropists have given away 15 percent of their total worth. Among the top givers:

Investor Warren Buffett tops all American givers with a cumulative $62 billion donated to charitable causes over his lifetime. That marks 30 percent of his net worth. Causes supported by Buffett include poverty alleviation and healthcare.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates, along with his wife Melinda, has given $47.7 billion to charity, with their focus on poverty alleviation and health. Gates has given way 26 percent of his net worth.

Investor George Soros has given $23 billion to charity, with democracy and human rights among his leading causes. At 76 percent of his wealth given away, Soros has given away a larger percentage of his net worth than anyone else on the list of top American philanthropists.

Businessman and former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg has given away a cumulative $21.1 billion, 17 percent of his net worth. Much of that has gone to health, education, and combatting climate change.

We do not mention these philanthropic individuals as an endorsement of their lifestyles or beliefs. The world might be enthralled with these giving figures, but God does not measure generosity in dollars. Rather, He measures it according to the response of our hearts to God’s abundant grace. That’s means the most generous people in the world likely will never make *Forbes*’ top philanthropists list.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeswealthteam/2025/02/03/americas-most-generous-philanthropists-2025/>

**Get Into the Study (Option from Adult Leader Guide)**

In advance, play a [video clip](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qwn5SzEiVc4&ab_channel=NBCNews) showing someone who is known for their generosity. Then ask **Question #1**.

**Study the Bible**

*As you discuss question 2, share the following.*

Committed Christians in the United Kingdom give nearly five times more to charity than average citizens, and their top motivation is gratitude for God’s blessings, according to a survey released earlier this year by the Christian charity Stewardship.

“Committed Christians” (defined as attending church and reading the Bible at least once a week) give an average of £314 per month, which equals 11 percent of their income. In comparison, the national average for charitable giving is £65 per month. Christians across all levels of commitment give nearly double the national average, with £124, or 5 percent of their income, going to charity.

Committed Christians also are more likely to give with a grateful heart. When people who increased their charitable giving were asked why, the top answer among committed Christians (32 percent) was “gratitude for the blessings (home, finance, family, etc.) God has given me.” That was the third most popular reason for giving among all participants at 14 percent. The second most common motivation for committed Christians (30 percent) was “gratitude for what Jesus did for me on the cross.” That answer came in ninth among all participants with 11 percent.

Greater spiritual commitment translated to greater joy in giving. Among committed Christians, 42 percent said they felt joy about charitable giving over the past twelve months. Only 10 percent of cultural Christians (defined as identifying as Christians but attending church less than once a month) felt joy about giving. Like the Macedonians, followers of Jesus today abound with joy in their giving.

<https://evangelicalfocus.com/europe/30379/committed-christians-give-five-times-more-than-the-average-citizen-uk-study-shows>

*The week’s writer for Extra is David Roach. David is pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Saraland, Alabama. He and his wife Erin have three children.*

**Study the Bible (Option from Adult Leader Guide)**

In advance, invite a volunteer to lead the group in singing a [song](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wri2ta3Zv0M&ab_channel=IanChai) about being a blessing to others. Afterwards, ask for testimonies about people’s experiences with generosity as a blessing (both by giving and receiving). Ask them to reflect on how these experiences affected their attitude toward others. Relate generosity and gratitude. Have members consider how grateful they are to Christ for His love gift of Himself and His daily provision. Encourage the group to share how they might generously pass on Christ’s love to others in tangible ways. Then close in prayer.

**Additional Questions**

**Icebreaker**

* What’s the biggest tip you or someone in your family ever received?
* On your first job, how much were you paid per hour, and what did you do?
* Who is the most generous person you know?
* When you hear the word “generous” what person immediately comes to mind?
* Who’s someone you remember more for their philanthropy than for their achievements?

**2 Corinthians 8:1-2.**

* What is the relationship between joy and generosity?
* In what ways can people going through affliction and poverty still show kindness and generosity toward others?
* When have you been impacted in a big way by generosity?
* What role does generosity play in our stewardship?
* Who has been an example of generosity to you and why?

**2 Corinthians 8:3-6**

* What motivates people to give above and beyond what seems to be their share?
* How does commitment to Christ impact your attitude toward giving?
* What are non-financial ways we can give generously of ourselves to the Lord?
* What does it practically look like to “give” yourself to the Lord?
* How are we to reconcile fiscal responsibility with the idea of giving beyond our ability?
* Why do our motivations matter when it comes to giving?
* How does generosity begin by giving ourselves to God?

**2 Corinthians 8:7-9**

* What is the connection between God’s grace and our generosity?
* What are some specific ways Jesus has demonstrated generosity to us?
* How should we understand the connection between generosity and grace?
* What riches have you gained from Jesus’s sacrificial generosity?