

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Here is a brief outline of a presentation you could do to help the children in your church to engage with the issue of poverty – and the idea of changing the story for a child in desperate need. At the end you can find some activities to really bring your presentation to life.

SET THE SCENE

When we talk to children about poverty and difficult situations on the world, it is important not to allow the children to be frightened by these situations. Always remind them that there are small things they can do to help, and there are people and organizations (like Compassion) that are working hard to help these children and change their story.

THE BIBLE

Read this verse – or a section of it – to the children. Depending on the age of the children in your group, you may want to tell the story in simpler terms.

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

⁹ As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 9

New International Version (NIV)

This bible story explains the relationship between planting seeds and giving generously. This would be a fun activity to do in springtime with some seeds. The kids can get different seeds and talk about what they would expect to grow. If you plant 3 seeds, for example, how many vegetables or flowers would you expect from that crop? And if you plant thousands of seeds, what would you get back?

So it is in giving of ourselves. Giving generously is just like planting seeds. We cannot see immediately the results of our planting, or the fruits of our labor. But by putting it out there – our effort, our faith, our trust – more will return to us.

While we should not give because there is a reward in it for us, we can part with our valuables knowing that we will be taken care of.

DISCUSSION

Explain reaping and sowing, as they may not know what those terms mean.

Ask if the children can think of a time when they gave something of theirs to someone else, or shared something of theirs.

Ask how it makes them feel to give something of themselves (share a toy, give to someone less fortunate, etc.).

Explain that by giving we are actually receiving good feelings and happiness. And God loves our generosity.

When we give cheerfully, we are blessed.

GO A LITTLE DEEPER

Tell the group that there are many children in the world who live in poverty. Share a few photos from Compassion's website.

Talk about the challenges that come with poverty (no school, not enough food, disease, lack of water).

As children, maybe we cannot cure poverty by ourselves, but small things we do with a happy heart, can make a difference. By simply sharing what we have with someone who doesn't have a lot we can really honor God.

Compassion is an organization that helps people to change the lives of children who live in real poverty, just like God calls us to. With the help of their sponsor and their local church, Compassion ensures these children and their families have everything they need to live a happy life.

PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for all the wonderful things you have given us to enjoy in our lives.

Today we pray for children who do not have such happy lives and feel forgotten, sick, hungry or afraid.

Please help us remember those who are not as blessed as we are, and help us find ways to help them whenever we can.

Please help Compassion and all these children to be safe, happy and to know your love today and every day.

Amen

WHAT ABOUT US?

Give each child a Child Packet to take home. Ask them to share it with their family and encourage them to talk to their parents about ways they can help those in need. Perhaps they are able to sponsor a child through Compassion.

If this is not possible, be sure to cover other ways to participate. Maybe their family can donate items to a food drive or clothing drive. Children may be able to donate gently used toys to a shelter for families.

It's important to remember that, small or large, every personal effort makes a difference. We can all change the world by changing the story one person at a time.

ACTIVITIES

Practice Gratitude

Cut out pictures from used magazines and catalogs representing things for which we are grateful. Help the children glue the photos onto a page and write simple prayers of thanks for all we have.

Seeds of Love

Using the sowing and reaping example from the bible verse, collect seed packets and have the children plant them and care for them. As the plants grow, you can continue the activity by transplanting in pots the children decorate themselves and give to their parents or a local senior-care center or hospital.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Here is a brief outline of a presentation you could do to help the young people in your church to engage with the issue of poverty – and the idea of changing the story for a child in desperate need. At the end you can find some activities to really bring your presentation to life.

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FILM TIME

If you have the time and facilities, show the short Compassion Sunday video and discuss.

INTRODUCE COMPASSION

Compassion gives Christians an opportunity to respond to God's call and change the life-story for a child through sponsorship.

Through Compassion, someone (like you or me) can sponsor a child in need for just \$38 a month; their sponsorship ensures the child is healthy, receives education, good food and has a safe place to live.

Most importantly, a child is able to grow in their knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus.

Each Compassion child is helped and cared for by a local church. Sponsorship is a really powerful way to start a chain of events that will change the story for a child forever.

WHAT ABOUT US?

Sponsoring a child may be possible for even a small group of young people. If this seems appropriate for your group, brainstorm ways you could support a child in need. With adult guidance, could your group do a job to earn the money to sponsor a child? Remind the kids that this is a long-term commitment, so the group needs a long-term plan for making the money each month.

Some activities they can consider for once-a-month fundraising:

Car washes

Pet washes

Yard work

Rummage sales

Bake sales

Babysitting

If the group cannot sponsor a child through Compassion, help them find other ways to change the stories of others who are less fortunate.

Plant seeds together and take care of the plants as they grow. Donate the plants to a local senior-care center with decorated containers and cheerful notes.

Do you have room for a small community garden? Plant and grow vegetables or fruit and donate the produce to a soup kitchen or other organization.

Organize a clothing or food drive

It's important to remember that, small or large, every personal effort makes a difference. We can all change the world by changing the story one person at a time.

CHILDREN'S QUIZ: QUESTIONS

Compassion Sunday is all about how we can “Change the Story” for a child in great need. Here are some Bible verses with missing words. See if you can find the words to fill in the blanks. If you get stuck, you can look the verse. Jesus changed the lives of all the people He met. Think about how God can use each one of us to change the story for others. Think especially about other children around the world that live in poverty and hardship.

disciple hungry gifts cheerful generously

1. “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, for God loves a _____ giver.”
2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)
2. “They have freely scattered their _____ to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”
2 Corinthians 9:8-10 (NIV)
3. “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go _____, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’”
John 6:35 (NIV)
4. “Give to him _____ and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.”
Deuteronomy 15:10 (NIV)
5. “And if anyone gives even a cup of water to one of these little ones because he is my _____, I tell you the truth he will certainly not lose his reward.”
Matthew 10:42 (NIV)7.

CHILDREN'S QUIZ: ANSWERS

1. "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, for God loves a cheerful giver."
2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)
2. "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever."
2 Corinthians 9:8-10 (NIV)
3. "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'
John 6:35 (NIV)
4. "Give to him generously and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to."
Deuteronomy 15:10 (NIV)
5. "And if anyone gives even a cup of water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth he will certainly not lose his reward."
Matthew 10:42 (NIV)