

Enough Already!

Lesson 10

LESSON AIM

To help kids realize that ★ *God wants us to give him our best.*

OBJECTIVES

Kids will

- ✓ sort boxes for charity, giving reasons for their choices,
- ✓ role-play Israelite families deciding what to give to the Tabernacle project,
- ✓ make Giving Envelopes for their special project, and
- ✓ pray that they will give their best to God.

BIBLE BASIS



Exodus 25:1-9; 35:20-29; 36:4-6

Here are some new and surprising insights from this trip through Exodus.

- ✓ It takes 15 chapters to recruit a reluctant Moses, go through the plagues, and then finally deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians at the Red Sea.
- ✓ Three chapters, 16 through 18, tell of the Israelites' wanderings to Mount Sinai.
- ✓ Six chapters, 19 through 24, are devoted to God's giving of the Covenant.

You'll need...

- boxes of clothes and toys to sort for keeping or giving away
- white trash bags
- permanent marker
- photocopy of "God's List" handout (p. 113)
- brochures from the international gift-giving organization of your choice
- photocopies of your letter to parents (sample on page 116)
- large glass jar
- photocopies of "Giving Envelope" handout (p. 117)
- hole punch
- gift ribbon
- scissors
- glue sticks
- Bibles

- ✓ The rest of the entire book—chapters 25 through 40—is concerned with building the Tabernacle and instructions for worshipping God there.

That's a big part of a very important book of Israel's history outlining in extreme detail how to build and use a "holy tent" as God's dwelling place among his people. Kind of turns your head, doesn't it? Not only are the instructions given in detail, later chapters repeat them as the craftsmen complete each task. It's obvious that God cared deeply about the careful planning and perfect execution of this project. But why?

Here we see the heart of a deeply loving God who truly wanted to be with his people. It's possible that this Tabernacle-centric focus gives us a foreshadowing of "God with us," which is eventually fulfilled and perfected in the coming of Jesus.

For this reason, we'll spend three lessons on the Tabernacle, each with a different focus. Throughout this three-week process, kids will begin to grasp the strong desire God had to *be with* his people—not only to provide for them, but also to receive their love and trust in return—perhaps to restore some of the intimacy lost in the Garden of Eden.

In today's adventure, kids will discover that ★ *God wants us to give him our best.*



2 Corinthians 9:7-8

When Paul gently reminded the church at Corinth that "God loves a person who gives cheerfully," he continued a tradition that went all the way back to his (and our) ancestors in Exodus. Since God had given the people undeserved treasures, it wasn't outrageous for God to want some of them to use for his purposes.

Where might the Israelites have gotten gold and silver jewelry sufficient for making the furnishings for the Tabernacle? The fine linen, the expensively dyed cloth, the bronze?

You'll recall that on the night of the Passover, the Egyptians were so anxious for the Israelites to leave that the Egyptians readily gave them gifts—expensive gifts just like those we're speaking of here. Scripture speaks of the Israelites "plundering" Egypt. It was God's intention that his people carry all the wealth they needed to complete the beautifully appointed Tabernacle. God blessed them abundantly.

Now it was the Israelites' turn to prove themselves cheerful givers. And they gave so overwhelmingly that Moses and the workers had to beg them to stop giving—a problem many a church today would delight in, to be sure.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR KIDS

In truth, unless your kids have had the opportunity to visit a developing country, they've no idea of the abundance with which they're blessed. More than enough is simply the norm in North America. Sacrificial giving is not.

These passages from Exodus provide an outstanding example of how God provided the Israelites exactly what they needed so they, in turn, could give back to him. Kids can be generous in their giving to help others and show honor to God. Sometimes they can also be amazingly selfish. Help them know they're blessed by God, and giving will be more natural to them.

Use this lesson to show kids that ★ *God wants us to give him our best.* Whether it's time, talent, effort, or money, God always supplies what we need so we can keep on giving.

ATTENTION GRABBER

Keep or Toss?

Bring boxes of items to sort for charity. You might bring clothing, shoes, or kids' toys.

Say: **Millions of people buy stuff every day. Then, after a few years, they realize they have too much and aren't using a lot of it. They go through their closets and sort things to keep and to give away to charity. Sometimes it's hard for me to make these decisions, so I thought I'd ask you to help.**

Designate an area for "Keep" and an area for "Give Away."

As you go through items, point out frankly what you like or dislike about each thing. For instance, you might say, "I really like this dress—it's comfortable, it fits me well, the color looks good on me, and I wear it all the time." Or, "I bought this because I liked the style, but it doesn't fit just right so I never wear it."

Have the kids evaluate each toy: Is it working or is it broken? Does it have all the pieces or is something missing? Does the child use it or has it been outgrown? What kind of shape is the toy in—battered with missing paint or shiny and new-looking? Is the battery working?

Have kids take turns evaluating and telling you why each item should go into the Keep or Give Away pile.

Say: **I appreciate the thoughtful choices you've made. Now help me put these things into bags and mark the bags.**

Hand out the appropriate number of white garbage bags to hold the piles kids have made. Have kids mark the bags "Keep" or "Give Away." Then form a discussion circle around the bags. Pull the Give Away bags out of the circle. Draw attention to the Keep bags, and ask:

- **What might be a reason to give away these bags rather than keep them?**
- **Why do you think we can—or can't—keep the best of everything for ourselves?**

Say: **Those are tough questions. You see, most of us have plenty of stuff. We don't realize it because most of our friends have about the same amount of stuff we do. We're not bad for having plenty of stuff—not at all. That's just the way it is in our country and we can take it for granted. There are many other people in the world who have very little. But the amazing thing is a lot of these people are just as happy as we are.**

In today's Bible passage we're going to find out how
★ *God asked the Israelites to give him the very best of what they had. The very, very best. Let's see how that turned out.*

BIBLE EXPLORATION

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Only the Best (Exodus 25:1-9; 35:20-29; 36:4-6)

Say: **Today I'd like your help in telling the Bible story. When I ask, "What does God want?" I want you to shout out, ★ "God wants us to give him our best!"** Let's start where the Israelites were in front of Mount Sinai, impatient for Moses to return. They'd pestered Aaron for an idol to worship because they didn't want to wait for Moses, and they ended up getting in really big trouble with God over it. They'd disappointed God with their lack of trust. What does God want?

Let kids shout, ★ *"God wants us to give him our best!"*

Say: **After that was all over, Moses told the people about the wonderful plans God had in mind for a holy tent. This was not just any tent—it was a special place where God would meet with his people. Usually we call this tent the Tabernacle.**

God planned every little detail of this tent. I'm going to save some of the details for next week, but believe me when I tell you this: It was absolutely beautiful. It would be God's home with the Israelites wherever they traveled. What does God want?

Let kids shout, ★ *"God wants us to give him our best!"*

Say: **Right in front of Mount Sinai, the Israelites knew God was with them. They could see smoke and fire on the mountain. They could hear thunder and feel the mountain tremble when God talked to Moses. But God's plan wasn't for the Israelites to stay at Mount Sinai. God wanted to lead them on to the Promised Land. God wanted to be with them in a way they could see and understand.**

God gave Moses a supply list so Moses could tell the Israelites everything they needed to build and furnish the Tabernacle. Take a listen.

The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel to bring me their sacred offerings. Accept the contributions from all whose

hearts are moved to offer them. Here is a list of sacred offerings you may accept from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth; tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather; acacia wood; olive oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; onyx stones, and other gemstones to be set in the ephod and the priest's chestpiece. Have the people of Israel build me a holy sanctuary so I can live among them. You must build this Tabernacle and its furnishings exactly according to the pattern I will show you." (Exodus 25:1-9)

What does God want?

Let kids shout, ★ "God wants us to give him our best!"

Ask:

• **Think of the best stuff you own. How would you feel about giving that stuff away?**

Say: **God asked the Israelites to give the very best of what they brought out of Egypt.**

The Israelites had these beautiful things because the Egyptians couldn't wait for the Israelites to leave Egypt. They wanted the Israelites out! In fact, they gave away tons of precious gifts to the Israelites and said, "Here, take these! Take anything you want. Just go!"

So the Israelites left Egypt loaded with the Egyptians' wealth—jewels, gold, silver, fine fabric—all the things God now asked from them to build the Tabernacle.

I'm not going to tell you how it turned out yet. Instead, let's form two family groups.

Point to one family. **You're the Happy-to-Give Givers.**

Point to the other family. **You're the Mumbly-Grumbly Givers.**

Choose an older child to be the father in each group, and give him or her the list of items from the "God's List" handout. Have the other group members decide who will be the mother and who the children. Say: **In your families, you'll act out the conversation that happened when the father came home with the list of things Moses requested for the Tabernacle. If you are the Happy-to-Give Givers, what would your conversation sound like? How about if you are the Mumbly-Grumbly Givers? You'll have three minutes to work together to come up with what your conversation would sound like, and then you'll present to our entire group. Remember, these are the very best items your family has, your most valuable possessions.**

GOD'S LIST

GOLD

SILVER

BRONZE

BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET THREAD

FINE LINEN

GOAT HAIR

TANNED RAM SKINS

FINE GOATSKIN LEATHER

ACACIA WOOD

OLIVE OIL

SPICES

GEMS

GOD'S LIST

GOLD

SILVER

BRONZE

BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET THREAD

FINE LINEN

GOAT HAIR

TANNED RAM SKINS

FINE GOATSKIN LEATHER

ACACIA WOOD

OLIVE OIL

SPICES

GEMS

Help each family brainstorm as necessary. After three minutes, call time and have the two families perform. Give a round of applause for each performance.

Say: **You did a great job. Now, in your family groups, choose a volunteer to read what really happened.**

Hand out Bibles, and direct the groups to Exodus 35:20-29 and then Exodus 36:4-6.

So the whole community of Israel left Moses and returned to their tents. All whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were moved came and brought their sacred offerings to the Lord. They brought all the materials needed for the Tabernacle, for the performance of its rituals, and for the sacred garments. Both men and women came, all whose hearts were willing. They brought to the Lord their offerings of gold—brooches, earrings, rings from their fingers, and necklaces. They presented gold objects of every kind as a special offering to the Lord. All those who owned the following items willingly brought them: blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth; and tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather. And all who had silver and bronze objects gave them as a sacred offering to the Lord. And those who had acacia wood brought it for use in the project.

All the women who were skilled in sewing and spinning prepared blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen cloth. All the women who were willing used their skills to spin the goat hair into yarn. The leaders brought onyx stones and the special gemstones to be set in the ephod and the priest's chestpiece. They also brought spices and olive oil for the light, the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense. So the people of Israel—every man and woman who was eager to help in the work the Lord had given them through Moses—brought their gifts and gave them freely to the Lord.

(Exodus 35:20-29)

Finally the craftsmen who were working on the sanctuary left their work. They went to Moses and reported, "The people have given more than enough materials to complete the job the Lord has commanded us to do!"

So Moses gave the command, and this message was sent throughout the camp: "Men and women, don't prepare any more gifts for the sanctuary. We have enough!"

(Exodus 36:4-6)

When it appears both groups have read the Exodus passages, ask:

• **Why do you think the Israelites responded that way when Moses asked the people for God’s list of gifts?**

Say: **Isn’t that something! The Israelites brought so many gifts to the Tabernacle that Moses had to ask them to stop giving. Wow! Let’s look at how ★ God asks us to give him our best.**

LIFE APPLICATION

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The Best We Have to Give

Before class, investigate various mission and charity websites. Talk to your church’s missions coordinator or other church leaders to discover whether your church at large is planning to participate in a local or international outreach project. One possibility is to join in partnership with Group Cares (groupcares.org), which works with Operation Kid-to-Kid. Before you make a final decision on your gift-giving project, run it by your ministry leader. This can be a thrilling opportunity for the kids in your class to “give their best” in an entirely new way.

Say: **We’ve just had an entire lesson about giving our best. In just a few weeks there’s a very special holiday coming up. It’s the holiday when we think *most* about giving. It’s the holiday when we remember that God sent *his* very best to earth in the form of a baby boy.**

Wouldn’t it be great if we found a way to give someone in need our very best? Well, I’ve talked to some of our church leaders, and they’ve agreed to let us participate in a very exciting giving project.

At this point, explain and show pictures of the giving project you’ve chosen. Let kids know if other classes are also participating. Then set out a large glass jar.

Say: **Each week when you come, you’ll have a chance to bring a special offering to God, just as the Israelites did. For our craft today, we’ll make a Giving Envelope you can bring here each week. We’ll tie that envelope to a letter to your parents explaining about our “very best” offering. We’ll collect offerings for three weeks and put it in this jar; then we’ll count our money and decide which gift we can give to someone in need.**

COMMITMENT

Giving Envelope

Before class, write a simple note to parents about your giving project, and copy it to go with the Giving Envelopes. Your note might look something like this:

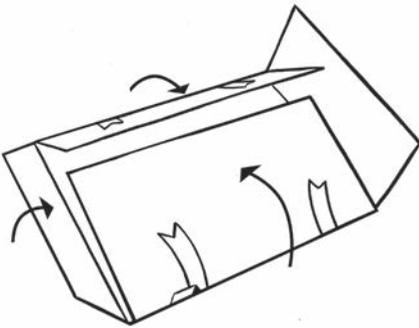
Dear Moms, Dads, and Caregivers,

In our Sunday school class, we've begun a special giving project. The kids will participate with [name your organization] to purchase [name what the kids will give]. We're very excited about this and hope you will be, too!

We've just learned how the Israelites gave their very best toward the building of God's Tabernacle in the desert. We hope you and your family might contribute generously to our special project. Please help your child remember to bring the attached offering envelope for the next three Sundays.

Thanks, and God bless!

[Your name]

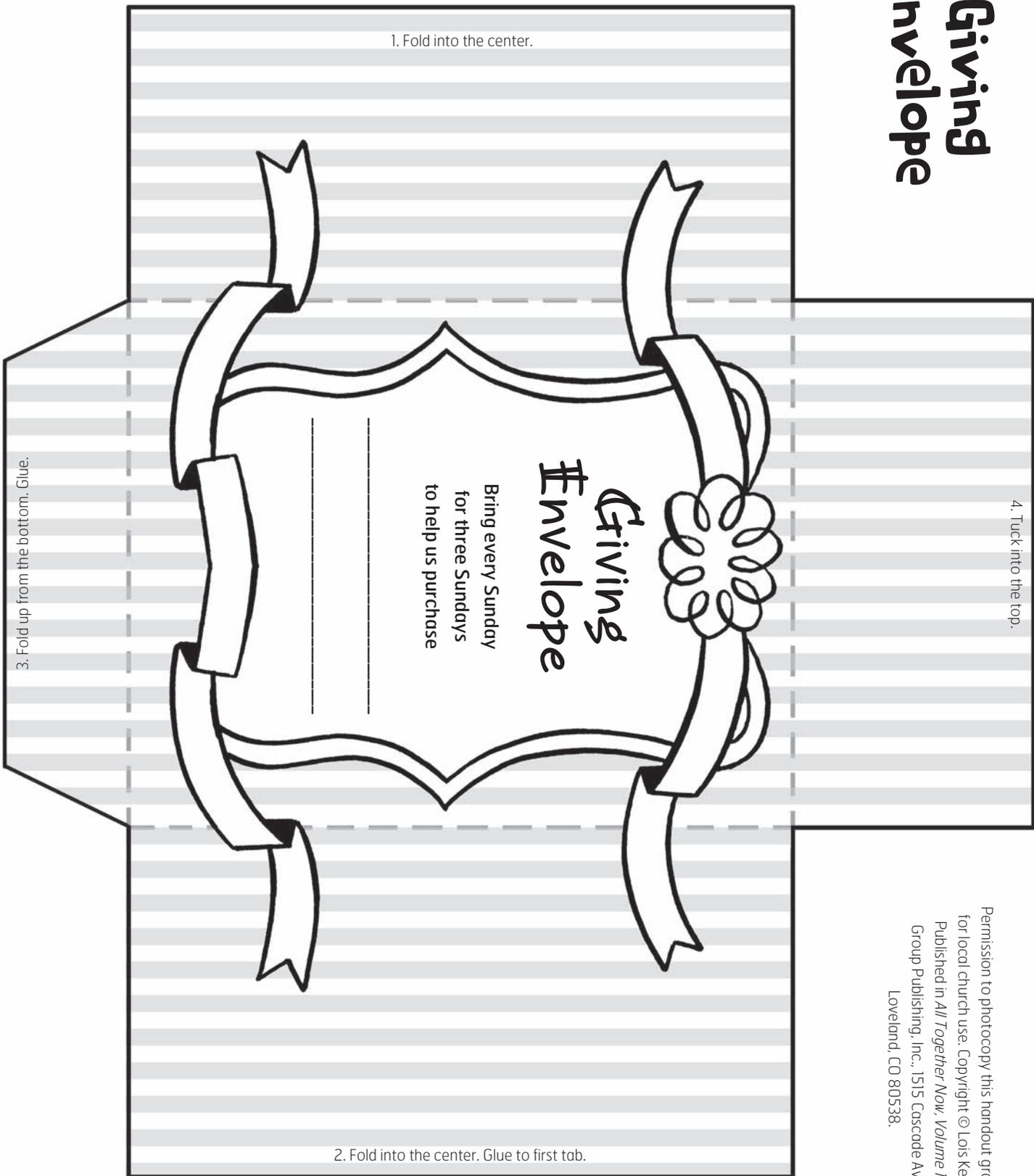


Gather kids at the craft table where you've set out copies of the "Giving Envelope" handout, scissors, glue sticks, your note to parents, brochures or printouts about your giving project, and gift ribbon.

This handout folds and glues together very simply. Have one sample cut out and folded but not glued to show kids the order in which to fold and glue it.

As kids work, punch holes in their envelopes, your notes, and information about your project. Help kids tie ribbon through the holes, making a neat package of all three items.

Giving Envelope



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CLOSING

Prayer

Gather kids in a prayer circle with their Giving Envelopes in front of them. Lead kids in prayer:

Dear Lord, help us think about giving in a new way after learning how the Israelites gave their best for the Tabernacle. We know that everything we have comes from you, so giving back is the most natural thing in the world! Teach us to show our love for you, dear God, ★ *by giving our best to you.* In Jesus' name, amen.