

## **CULTIVATING GENEROSITY IN CHILDREN**

Thank you for sharing many creative practices to cultivate generosity or gratitude in the given contexts below. And thank you for providing some thoughtful critique to these practices by reflecting on the instruction from Matthew's Gospel below:

“Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matt 6:1-4)

### **MORNING ROUTINE OR COMMUTE**

Bring attention to those times when we race to be first to the bathroom. Start the day right by allowing other family members to go first to the bathroom.

Pray together and give thanks for what you look forward to at the start of the day.

Have dollar bills, granola bars, or water bottles ready if you anticipate someone in need on the side of the street during your morning commute.

### **EVENING FAMILY TIME OR BEDTIME ROUTINES**

Read inspiring stories of generous people

Each family member shares one thing you are grateful for that day.

Ask forgiveness of each other each night after evening prayers (cultivating humility).

During prayers, ask the children who needs special prayers tonight, and one thing they would like to thank God for.

### **MEAL TIMES**

Instead of eating the last piece of food, allow others to have extra or the last piece.

Make an extra plate for a seminary student or someone in need.

Coordinate “meal trains” for families with new babies, sickness, or other hard situations.

Prepare a meal where everyone contributes, each according to their ability, either by sourcing ingredients, preparing them, serving them, or cleaning up afterwards.

When planning snacks for our kids to take to school for an event, like a field trip, we would give them a whole box of granola bars to share with others. It was great to see them start to plan this way: "Can I bring a whole box to share with others?" CONSIDERATION: It's important to discuss how sharing goes both ways. Another time, someone may share with us, and we are grateful for that. It is humbling to realize we need help too. Anyone could be on either side of a donation.

### **CHORES and HOMEWORK**

Encourage your children to do "surprise chores" for others. If it's not their turn to take out the garbage, let them surprise someone by doing the task without being noticed.

Rather than list only household chores, list a chore you could do for an older neighbor.

Ask your older children to help younger children with their homework.

Encourage a family homework table if working alone creates too much isolation.

Offer to host a weekly homework table with healthy snacks for kids in the neighborhood.

### **SHOPPING**

Shop less – evaluate whether money actually needs to be spent *ala* Pres. Stacey's whiteboard suggestion.

What can be done with unspent funds? How can we help the church or others?

Buy extra pieces of fruit and cut them up to include in a school lunch to offer to others to promote healthy social interactions at lunch.

Shop for a homeless gift bag each shopping trip where kids help pick the contents.

### **BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

Discuss with your child what gift they would like to bring to the party. Do they want to make a card, purchase a gift, or pay extra from their own money for a larger gift?

Make sure that your children always write and send thank you cards to all who attend their parties.

Explain to children the importance of community, as for them birthday parties are first gatherings, make them in charge of the party, ask for their ideas, and compare to other parties.

Ask that instead of buying gifts, you would bring a favorite book that your child would read and when finished, would donate to a children's home.

When it's your child's birthday, ask them to give gifts to the gifts. The child could choose individual gifts or one for all. CONSIDERATION: The gift should not be extravagant otherwise it may defeat the purpose of generosity and point to "how generous" the child is.

## **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Recently a member of our parish expecting her 4th daughter had a baby shower and requested gifts for the pregnancy center instead of for herself.

Invite people to celebrate with you who may not have family or close friends in the community.

Try to invite people from other cultures who speak other languages so you can share the traditions of your own family.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD**

Mow neighbor's side of lawn instead of stopping at the property line.

Share something tasty during the holidays. CONSIDERATION: What if you get caught mowing their side of the lawn or leaving baked items at their door? They might feel indebted.

Host a yearly "block barbeque" can help build ties between neighbors.

Find out who is elderly or out of work, handicapped, etc. and find a way for you and other neighbors to lend a hand. CONSIDERATION: You can do these actions in secret, but let your kids know for their own benefit.

## **GODPARENTS & GODCHILDREN**

Regular interaction on name days

Bring child to the Eucharist

Godparent Sunday is an opportunity to show gratitude to godparent influence

On the anniversary of your baptism, offer a small gift or card to your godparents or take them out for dinner.

Have the child show gratitude to their godparent by reciting by heart a saying from the Fathers or Scripture.

## **CHURCH GATHERINGS (Education, Special Events, Feasts)**

Gather all the plates from the tables and take garbage to the trash cans.

Ask children if they would like to host a coffee hour – form a group of children so it isn't too much for one family. Have the children plan what they will do, buy, and make.

Ask children what chores they can do at home to help pay for supplies for church gatherings. Have them bake and prepare food to share.

Directly ask a child to help, for example, “I need some help with serving. Can you take this cart . . . “

Ask children to help with hospitality – greeting, serving, and cleaning.

Have children bring a tithe from their allowance, a toy they really like, or some of their favorite food on certain feasts like Transfiguration, to give to specific charitable organizations that help other children.

CONSIDERATION: Other kids will see what is being brought, so this is not done in secret.

We talked about engaging young people in why we go to a particular church that may take longer to get to instead of the one nearby and the importance of participating in parish events and learning to help.