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elementary  
curriculum

# Generosity





# SECTION 1 Introduce Generosity

This curriculum offers approximately 3 hours of instruction, divided into 3 sections. Each section can be broken into smaller pieces if you prefer short lessons. For additional resources, visit [www.CharacterFirstEd.com](http://www.CharacterFirstEd.com).

## 3 WAYS TO BUILD GENEROSITY:

### Educate

Focus on generosity for a period of time. Use the lessons in this curriculum to talk about generosity and why it matters. Look for ways to emphasize generosity in other subjects, such as math, reading, language, history, social studies, science, music, health, and athletics.

### Evaluate

Think about daily decisions in the light of good character. Ask yourself and your students, "Is this the right thing to do?" Use the "I Wills" on page 4 as behavioral objectives, and refer to these standards when correcting negative attitudes and behavior.

### Celebrate

Catch people doing good and point out the character qualities they demonstrated. Children thrive on sincere encouragement, so don't overlook the little opportunities to praise each day!

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## DEFINE GENEROSITY (Discussion, 15 minutes)

**Point out and discuss key words in the definition. Review and commit the definition to memory.**



**Definition:** *Being careful with what I have so that I can share*

The word generosity comes from the Latin word *generosus*, meaning "of good or noble birth." Each person is born empty-handed and it is only from the generous care and investment of others that you can grow and develop. Part of generosity is realizing how much you have been given by others and using it carefully so that you can, in turn, share with the people in your life.

Generosity does not only mean giving other people your money and things. It also means giving your time, attention, hard work, patience, kind words, and talents to help and encourage others. It is not always easy to treat other people kindly or respectfully, but a generous person does not let others' actions define their own. They choose to be generous instead of stingy, and kind instead of hateful—no matter how the other person responds and acts.

Generosity also means giving with the right motives and without expecting anything in return. Freely giving and sharing with others means your focus is on them and what they need rather than on what you want. It is hard to give up what you want, or to give without getting anything back, but you'll find that often you end up enjoying giving to others more than receiving.

### Related concepts:

Giving, sincerity, thoughtfulness, awareness, perceptive, kindness, compassion

### Discussion:

- Why do you think generosity is important?
- How does a stingy person act?
- How does being generous help you be grateful for the things and people in your life?
- What are some wrong motives to give to people? What are some right motives?

**"True generosity is two parts love and one part sacrifice. To love another is to be willing to give of yourself—your time, your talents, your money...being generous and not expecting anything in return." —Dr. Virginia Smith**



Additional resources at  
[www.CharacterFirstEd.com](http://www.CharacterFirstEd.com)



## MAKE A DONATION (Project, ongoing)

**Discuss with students how they could be involved in a local charitable organization or shelter.**

Many shelters and charitable organizations depend on the generosity of people willing to share. Outgrown clothes, toys, and used appliances are often very appreciated by those who cannot afford them. As a class, choose a charitable organization or shelter to donate to. Instruct students to collect new or gently-used items (with parent permission) from their home by a certain date. Gather all the donations and give them to the chosen organization.

### Possible Items to Donate:

- Clothing for children and adults
- Shoes and accessories
- Toys and games
- Small appliances
- Common household items

Sharing things with other people is part of being generous. Another element of generosity is sharing time and abilities. Have students ask their family to volunteer with them to help organizations that meet other people's needs. Food and clothing drives, holiday dinners, and disaster relief all need the help of willing and generous people.

## GENEROSITY JOURNAL (Exploration, ongoing)

Many people have needs. When those needs are met, a burden is lifted off their shoulders. A generous person looks for opportunities to give and help others. Have students look for people in their lives and community who are giving their time, money, and abilities to help others. The students can find stories in news articles, at school, and at home. Have students conduct interviews with people they think are generous and compile the stories into a "Generosity Journal." Highlight the generosity of neighbors, grandparents, teachers, and family members. Use pictures and written reports to create a "Generosity Bulletin Board" to display their favorite stories.



# Generosity



Being careful with what I have  
so that I can share



# SECTION 2 Practice Generosity

## Reinforcing Generosity

Because every child has a need for appreciation and approval, communicate what really matters by praising the character of your students. As you are generous in giving specific praise to your students, the praise motivates them to be even more praiseworthy.

Some of the best times to use spontaneous words of praise are when children demonstrate generosity in the simplest ways:

- Sharing toys, equipment, or school supplies
- Demonstrating teamwork
- Allowing others to be ahead of them in line
- Apologizing and making restitution after doing wrong
- Helping classmates

Be specific with your praise in order to communicate—in an understanding and sincere way—how much you appreciated the student's good choice. Whether or not you use the term *generosity* when praising the student, it is important that they understand exactly why they are being praised.



## I WILL... (Discussion, 25 minutes)

### 1. Share what I have with others.

Sharing is an essential part of being generous. It is good to remember that what you have has been given to you by others, and you are responsible for using your things wisely. Giving a thoughtful gift is just as important as the gift itself.

- What is the difference between a thoughtful gift and a thoughtless gift?
- Choose a family member and discuss what a thoughtful gift would be for them. (What do they like to do? What do they need?)

### 2. Save in order to be able to give.

Each one of us has been given something, or in some cases, many things. If you receive an allowance, it is important to save a little each week so that you can share with others. If you have been given time, save some time each day or week to spend helping others. Forming good habits of saving our money and our time will ensure that we have them to give when others need help.

- Who benefits when you give your time, talent, or money?
- How does it make you feel when someone shares with you?

### 3. Not expect anything in return.

True generosity is inspired by a sincere desire to share with others and meet their needs. To use manipulation or deceit to benefit yourself under the guise of being generous is wrong and dishonest.

- How do you feel when you realize someone has manipulated you or has a hidden motive?
- Describe a time that you gave a gift without expecting anything in return.

### 4. Give of my time and talents.

Each person has unique abilities. You have incredible potential and should use your skills productively and in a way that helps those around you. Giving your time to others also means you must use your time wisely.

- Describe some habits that waste time. What could you do instead to use your time wisely?
- What are some of your talents? How could you be generous with your talents today?

### 5. Be kind and encouraging.

One of the greatest gifts you can give to someone else is to be kind to them. Often this means using your words to tell someone the good you see in them.

- Practice telling your teachers, friends, or family something good you see in them.
- How do you feel when someone says something kind to you versus when someone uses their words to be hurtful to you?



## TIME AND TALENT COUPONS (Craft, 15 minutes)

Challenge students to be generous with their time and talents. Use several sheets of colored paper and markers or crayons to make and decorate coupons. The coupons might be for chores like raking leaves, vacuuming, or helping with dinner. They could also be for hugs, reading a book together, or going on an outing. Encourage students to be generous and share their time and talents with others. When they're finished, they can give their coupons to others to be redeemed at a future date. Remind the students that it is important to follow through and do what they promised on the coupon they made.

### Supplies:

- Construction paper or index cards
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors

## COTTON BOWL GAME (Activity, 15 minutes)

This game helps to emphasize how important and effective teamwork is. Choose one student to try this game on their own. Have the student sit down and place a bowl containing several cotton balls on their lap. Ask the student to hold another bowl with one hand on the top of their head. With their free hand, have the student hold a spoon and attempt to scoop a cotton ball out of the bowl in their lap and into the bowl on their head. The object is to see how quickly the student can get all the cotton balls from the bowl in their lap to the bowl on their head. Before starting, blindfold the student.

Let the student begin and see how long it takes to get the cotton balls to the bowl on their head. The other students must be quiet for the first round. For the second round, assign a buddy to help give directions to the blindfolded student. They might say things like, "Go up a few more inches, now to your left" or "Move the spoon back towards your head."

This is also a good opportunity to practice working together and giving instructions with patience and kindness. Rather than getting frustrated or too intense when giving instructions, practice encouraging ways to communicate. Instead of, "WAIT! NO, NOT THERE!" try "Go up just a little bit more, you've got this!" or "Keep going, you're almost there. Good job!"

### Supplies:

- 2 plastic bowls
- Spoon
- Cotton balls
- Blindfold



## CUSTOM ENVELOPES (Craft, 25 minutes)

Part of generosity is reusing things in order to save and give. You can make your own envelopes to send notes to people. Choose a picture out of a magazine or draw a picture on scratch paper. Place an unfolded envelope (size 6 3/4) on top of the selected picture and trace its outline. Cut out the picture following the new lines.

Turn the picture face down and fold the edges to form a new envelope. Hold it together with glue or tape. Use your envelopes to mail letters or give notes to each other. Address the envelopes using address labels.

### Supplies:

- Magazine with pictures
- Envelope
- Pens or pencils
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Address Labels



## RECYCLING AT HOME OR SCHOOL (Project, ongoing)

Generosity includes recycling products in order to make the best use of resources. Have students become more familiar with recycling at their school or neighborhood. Establish recycling bins at your school and/or home. Instruct students to collect items from home (with parents permission or help) to bring to recycle.

Some recyclable items include newspapers, magazines, and other paper items, aluminum cans, glass bottles, and jars, plastic bottles, containers, and cardboard boxes.

### Conserve and recycle at home. Help students create a list for each of these questions:

- What are ways that you can conserve energy at home or school?
- What things can you re-use instead of throw out?
- How can you conserve electricity and water?

### Class recycling projects:

- Study how items are recycled
- Visit a recycling plant in your area



# SECTION 3 Generosity in Real Life

## Clara Barton

Clara Barton worked all day to help hundreds of wounded soldiers. She knew that wounded soldiers were often left suffering on the field and needed help before the end of the battle if they were going to survive. So Clara Barton decided to do something about it.

She bought her own wagon and medical supplies and asked the general to let her go out on the battlefield during the battle. The general did not want to let her go because he thought that it was too dangerous. Even though the general said no many times, Clara kept asking until he finally said yes. For the rest of the Civil War, Clara Barton willingly shared her time, energy, and money to help soldiers. She risked her life to help the soldiers by bandaging wounds and bringing them water and medicine.

Clara was born on Christmas Day in 1821. She traveled to Switzerland and Cuba and helped soldiers during the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and in the Franco-Prussian war. People called her the "Angel of the Battlefield." After the Civil War she helped create the American Red Cross and served as its president from 1882 to 1904.

Clara Barton was a truly generous person who gave without expecting anything in return; she shared what she had—time, attention, talents, money, kindness, medical help, and supplies—with others.



Learn more about  
Clara Barton's  
generosity at  
[www.CharacterFirstEd.com](http://www.CharacterFirstEd.com).



## THE PELICAN (Story, 20 minutes)

The pelican dove towards the water keeping her eye on the fish just below the surface. Keeping the soft underside of the pouch on her bill away from the sun, she splashed into the water, grabbing the fish with her long, strong beak. The impact of her dive into the water could be heard half a mile away. The pelican surfaced and flew towards her nest. As she approached, she waited for her mate to give the usual greeting—a sweeping bow with his wings spread. The female pelican landed in the nest and spread her wings to shield the baby pelicans from the heat of the sun. The pelican swallowed the fish to digest it for her babies and then allowed them to poke their heads down her throat to eat the fish.

The pelican gives in many different ways. Even when other birds attack and try to take things from the nest, the mother pelican will shield her eggs, making them her priority. Let's look at the ways a pelican gives to her mate, her babies, and even other birds.

### There are nine ways that a pelican shows generosity:

- 1. Respect** – Pelicans bow to each other in greeting. When a pelican approaches the nest, she waits until her mate greets her. To greet a returning mate, a pelican stands, arches his neck, spreads his wings, and bows to the other with a deep sweep of his head.
- 2. Shelter** – A pelican gives shelter to its babies. The heat of the sun is too intense and can harm the eggs and newly hatched pelicans, so the parent pelicans give protection to the babies. Before the eggs have hatched, the pelican mother and father will stand very carefully on the eggs to help incubate them. After the pelicans hatch, the pelicans will shelter the babies by spreading their wings and creating a canopy that keeps them safe from the harsh sun.
- 3. Rides** – Pelicans give rides to other pelicans. When pelicans fly together, they fly in a long line. Each bird flies just to the side and slightly behind the other. Because of the way the pelican's flapping wings make the air spin, it allows the pelican behind them to "catch a ride" on the spinning air, making it easier for them to fly.
- 4. Information** – Pelicans give information to other pelicans. When a pelican dives into the water for fish, other pelicans can learn which direction the wind is blowing based on which way the pelican dove. Also, depending on how deep the fish are, the pelican will dive from different heights which communicates to other pelicans the depth of the fish.
- 5. Time of Day** – Pelicans also give the time of day. Pelicans always dive with the soft side of their pouch away from the sun. This means that if the sun is in the east (morning,) the pelican will dive facing the east so that their beak shields their pouch from the sun.





**6. Food** – Pelicans not only feed their young, they also will give food to other pelicans that cannot get their own. Fishermen used to catch one pelican and tie it to a stake along the beach. When other pelicans saw that the captured pelican couldn't get fish for itself, they would catch fish and drop them by the pelican so it could still eat. The fishermen would then gather up the fish the pelicans dropped. Even though the fishermen would use that as an easy way for them to gather fish, the pelicans would keep bringing fish to the captured pelican.

**7. Living Space** – Pelicans build and give their home to their mate. The male pelican gathers all of the materials for the nest and builds it. Once it is ready, he brings his mate to the nest and gives it to her to seal their bond.

**8. Free Time** – Before the pelicans' eggs hatch, the eggs have to be kept at the right temperature. The pelican parents take turns standing on their eggs (very carefully so that they don't break), giving their time to make sure their babies can grow properly.

**9. Good in Place of Wrong** – Seagulls often steal fish right out of a pelican's beak, but instead of attacking and fighting the seagull, the pelican just dives for more fish. A pelican shares with the seagull, even when the seagull is being pesky.

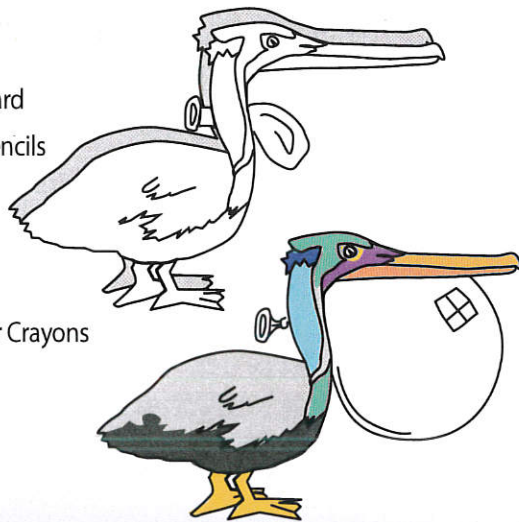
## PELICAN POUCH (Craft, 25 minutes)

Make several pelican patterns from the illustration provided. Each child should trace two bird shapes from the patterns on a piece of poster board and cut them out. The student may use the pelican Character Card as a reference to color their own pelican. When the students have finished coloring their pelican, have them glue the two pieces of the pelican together with a balloon in between both necks (make sure that when the sides are glued together, the balloon sticks out under the bill of the pelican (see illustration).

Students can blow up the balloon to simulate the pelican's pouch expanding when it catches fish. They may need to hold the pelican's neck on either side of the balloon when they blow it up.

### Supplies:

- Poster board
- Pens or pencils
- Scissors
- Balloons
- Glue
- Markers or Crayons





# Family Connection

**OVERVIEW:** People who are generous with others benefit not only the person they are helping, but they also experience satisfaction and joy themselves. Generosity demonstrates that we truly value others and are willing to reach out and meet their needs. We must learn to notice when others need our help, and then be willing to give of our time and our resources. **Today and every day, take a moment to look around you and notice the needs of others and commit to doing what you can to help.**

## Generosity

**Definition:** Being careful with what I have so that I can share

### I WILL...

- Share what I have with others.
- Save in order to be able to give.
- Not expect anything in return.
- Give of my time and talents.
- Be kind and encouraging.



The pelican gives of its time and abilities to take care of its babies.

### CHARACTER QUIZ:

1. A person who is not generous and will not share with others is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A generous person... a. finishes what they start. b. is quiet. c. shares what they have with others.
3. Clara Barton helped take care of...  soldiers.  animals.  the environment.
4. The mother pelican spreads her \_\_\_\_\_ over her babies to protect them from the sun.
5. Name three ways you can demonstrate generosity. \_\_\_\_\_

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