

Creating a Legacy of Generosity:

How to instill the values of giving in your children

As a parent, one of our most important jobs is to instill Biblical values in our children. One of the most important values we share as Christians is the scriptural principle of giving our time, talents, and treasure.

However, in a culture of consumerism based on “getting” rather than giving, this can often be one of the hardest lessons our kids have to learn. But it’s never too late, or too early, to instill the value of giving in your children. Here are some ways you can create a legacy of generosity in your family:

TIPS FOR YOUNGER KIDS (UNDER AGE 10)

Young children are like sponges, often absorbing our ways, as well as our words. The earlier you can start modeling generosity and speaking about it intentionally, the better. The more you demonstrate giving in your own life, the more it will become a way of life for them. Examples of creative giving include:

- **“Reverse Gifts” Birthday Party**

It is better to give than to receive. Acts 20:35. Fight the consumerism mentality and start young. Rather than having friends bring a gift to your child’s birthday party, help your child to identify a charity which could use help and ask all the guests to bring a gift for that charity. For example, a children’s shelter could use gifts of toys, clothing, or baby items. If age appropriate, bring your child along to deliver the gifts to the charity.



- **Introduce Children to Missions**

Invite missionaries or ministry leaders to stay in your home while they are traveling through your town. Years from now, your children may remember sitting at the feet of men and women who have devoted their lives to serve in places like India, China, South Africa, and Malaysia. The stories they share could mold your children’s lives and foster a heart for God’s people around the world.

TIPS FOR TEENS

Appealing to your child’s individual personality and interests are essential at this age. Discover what your children are passionate about. Examples include:

- **Family Book Club**

Are you having a hard time getting your teens to open up and talk? Start a family book club. Choose a generosity classic such as: Fields of Gold, by Andy Stanley, The Treasure Principle, by Randy Alcorn, or The Purpose Driven Life,

by Rick Warren. Read a chapter together and discuss it over dinner, or on a Sunday afternoon. For children who may be less verbal, or who may be motivated by rewards, encourage them to write a summary of what they read and pay them for writing their report.

- **Service Opportunities**

Is your teen in a Bible study group or a club? Consider having the club sponsor a child to attend camp, or take a meal to a family at Thanksgiving. Teach them to keep their eyes open to see others who may be in need, and then model what they can do to help. Even through small gifts of grace, your child can make an impact on someone's life.

ADVICE FOR ADULT CHILDREN

No matter how old your children are, there are lots of ways you can encourage their spirit of generosity. Examples are:

- **Offer Matching Grants**

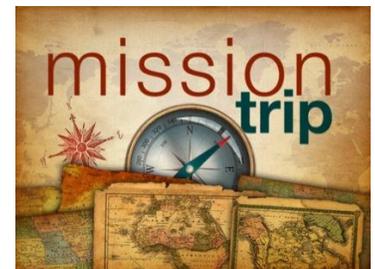
Consider offering a matching grant. For each dollar they give, you might do an equal match. Allow them to challenge your giving. This also allows each adult child to be unique in their personal giving decisions. They can define their personal giving philosophy and set personal giving goals without the restraints of doing what other siblings might do.

- **Inspire Personal Service**

Encourage your children to give personally towards things that interest them. Ask them, "What's the one area where you'd like to make an impact?" or "What opportunity do you see to get involved? Allow their creativity to flourish, using their unique talents and interests.

Take a Family Mission Trip

Perhaps you could take your children or grandchildren on a one-week mission trip this year. It is a time of family bonding that far transcends a week at any resort. It is purposeful, strategic, and full of life-changing experiences and memories.



Call us at The Idlewild Foundation at (813) 264-8783 for additional ideas or for assistance with establishing a giving fund to help with a lifelong journey of living and demonstrating generosity.

