

# *Generosity*

Sees and fills the  
need without  
waiting for  
thanks

“I have found that  
among its other  
benefits, giving  
liberates the soul  
of the giver.”

~Maya Angelou~

# January Character Connection Theme: Generosity

## Definitions



**Generosity** is unselfishness, magnanimity. To be generous is willing to give or share. A generous person is unselfish.<sup>1</sup> Much was said in December about keeping the magical spirit of Christmas all through the year. Encouraging generosity is one way of “keeping Christmas.”

\*Express gratitude.

\*Forgive others.<sup>2</sup>

\*Share.

\*Be concerned about the needs of the other person.

## Quotes

*“Help thy brother’s boat across the stream, and Lo! Thine own has reached the shore. –Hindu Proverb<sup>3</sup>*

“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.” –Maya Angelou<sup>3</sup>

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” –Charles Dickens.<sup>3</sup>

*“There is no delight in owning anything unshared.” –Seneca<sup>3</sup>*

“Without the rich heart, wealth is an ugly beggar.”—Ralph Waldo Emerson<sup>4</sup>

“Philanthropy is part of the unspoken contract that underpins the American dream. If that contract is broken, a backlash is likely. Every American, rich and poor, would lose.”  
—New York Times<sup>5</sup>

## Activities

\*\*Play “Hot Potato” and talk about the story of the “Warm Fuzzies.” In much of life’s circumstances, we are the winner when we generously give away.

\*\*SWEET REWARD: Set aside a large jar for marshmallows. When you see a class member be generous with their time or possessions, comment about the act, then add 1 large marshmallow to the jar. When you have 40 marshmallows, make Crispy Rice treats and enjoy the sweetness of generosity.

\*\*On January 6, La Befana is celebrated in Italy.<sup>6</sup> Befana, a kindly witch, visits with toys for good children. Encourage students to go home and leave a small gift or note for someone “from Befana” and watch the results of their generosity. Have students write about the experience.

\*\* Have students ask their parents about the philanthropy of the companies in which they are involved. There is much good happening. Often only a small amount of giving is publicly recognized.

\*\* A November 17, 1998 Deseret News article entitled, “(55-gallon) drum roll, please: Nevadan gives his 440<sup>th</sup> pint”<sup>7</sup> stated that Harry Loomer had donated enough blood (since 1954) that potentially helped 1700 people and saved countless lives. Small acts of kindness done over long period of time become significant acts of generosity. Have students compile a good news newspaper filled with articles that evidence

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<sup>1</sup> from The American Heritage Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> Six pillars of character, Definitions for Young People, Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, page 5

<sup>3</sup> quotation list submitted by Character Connection Representative

<sup>4</sup> The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Quotes and Quips, page 54

<sup>5</sup> Please see “Fading Philanthropy” Deseret News, Sunday, August 16, 1998

<sup>6</sup> The Random House Calendar for Kids

<sup>7</sup> article by Douglas D. Palmer, Deseret News, Tuesday, November 17, 1998

generosity.

\*\*Generosity does not need to be great and recognized. It can consist of small acts of kindness. As a class, memorize a poem such as this one by George Eliot:

If you sit down at set of sun  
And count the acts that you have done,  
    And, counting, find  
One self-denying deed, one word  
That eased the heart of him who heard,  
    One glance most kind  
That fell like sunshine where it went—  
Then you may count that day well spent.

But if, through all the livelong day,  
You've cheered no heart, by yea or nay—  
    If, through it all  
You've nothing done that you can trace  
That brought the sunshine to one face—  
    No act most small  
That helped some soul and nothing cost—  
Then count that day as worse than lost.<sup>8</sup>



## **Stories**

### **In Passing**

A local youth group, students from Pleasant Grove High School, were back-packing in American Fork Canyon. As they hiked towards their evening destination, they came across a dirty and littered campsite. These youth stopped, put down their packs, took grocery bags and began picking up the garbage that was covering the ground. After cleaning the campground, they continued on their way, carrying their filled grocery bags until they found a garbage receptacle.<sup>9</sup> *Generously, they gave of their leisure time to make the world more beautiful and usable for those that followed.*

### **Gold Sensation Barbie**

On a Thursday morning in November, a 19-year-old Sarah heard a television report about a Barbie stolen from the Assistance League of SLC. The Barbie had been part of a silent auction with the proceeds going towards clothing for needy women and children. That evening, Sarah took her own “Gold Sensation Barbie” and presented it to the charity. The Barbie was 14 inches tall, a limited edition, made of porcelain, and dressed in gold ruffles. It was in even better condition than the one donated. In 1993, this doll retailed for \$275. It was part of Sarah’s collection of 75 Barbie dolls. Sarah’s mother commented, “I’m proud. I tried to instill some compassion in my children, I guess it worked. . .When we left the thrift shop yesterday, it was really with a good feeling. We all got very emotional. (Sarah) was really happy she had done it.”<sup>10</sup>

## **Writing or Discussion Topics**

\*\*On self-fulfillment in his 400-page The Man, the Octopus, and the Orchidea French oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau said: "It takes generosity to discover the whole through others. If you realize you are only a violin, you can open yourself up to the world by playing your role in the concert."<sup>11</sup> *How does being*

<sup>8</sup> submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative

<sup>9</sup> submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative

<sup>10</sup> “Barbie doll replaces one stolen from charity” by Jennifer Dobner, Deseret News, Friday, January 30, 1998

<sup>11</sup> “Cousteau memoir reveals his secret for happiness.” Deseret News, Friday, June 27, 1997 (Reuter News Service)

*generous bring self-fulfillment? Does one first need to be wealthy to be generous?*

**\*\*A not-so-well-to-do woman lost her purse and the personal identification as well as some cash that it contained. A few days later, a young man returned the purse and all of its contents to her. The grateful woman offered to pay the young man for going out of his way to return her belongings. The young man refused payment, instead admonishing the woman to someday return the favor to someone else. Oddly enough, a few weeks later the woman found a student's backpack. The money in it was a tempting. She realized that just a few months ago she would have taken the money. Yet, she remembered the gratitude in her heart when her own belongings were returned. She returned it to the owner, refused a reward and admonished the owner, to return the favor to someone else. *How does this story relate to the following quote by William George Jordan: "No good act performed in the world ever dies. Science tells us that no atom of matter can ever be destroyed, that no force once started ever ends; it merely passes through a multiplicity of ever-changing phases. Every good deed done to others is a great force that starts an unending pulsation through time and eternity. We may not know it, we may never hear a word of gratitude or recognition, but it will all come back to us in some form as naturally, as perfectly, as inevitably, as echo answers to sound."*<sup>12</sup>**

**\*\*Encourage students to do one Random Act of Kindness. Write results in a journal entry. *Did your acts of kindness beget kindness? Did it matter whether your generosity was of value materially, emotionally, etc.?***



## **Role Plays**

**\*\*Rachel reads about the many people that are suffering from the effects of a devastating storm in a foreign country. *How can she help? What does generosity have to do with helping others? A 1988 earthquake devastated a part of Armenia. The Deseret News reported that in the last 10 years the Huntsman family has given \$18 million in assistance (such as medical supplies, food, clothing, eyeglasses, and Kerosene heaters) to Armenia. While the capital city looks "beautiful" compared to 10 years ago, there is still much rebuilding to be done. The Armenian president commented that it was significant that Huntsman's charity continued after the initial relief efforts.*<sup>13</sup> *While the need for generosity may be well publicized in the first few weeks after a disaster, many times the need for help remains for years.***

**\*\*Gordon brings five small candy bars for lunch to celebrate his birthday with his 4 friends. He and his 4 friends sit by Steven, the boy who smells and can never remember his spelling words. *What should Gordon do? In 1998, 80-year-old John Brooks Fuqua donated \$20 million to the business school at Duke University. The business school already wears his name in honor of an earlier \$17 million donation. And the reason for the donation? A Duke librarian was willing to let an unlikely young farm boy, Fuqua, check out books by mail.*<sup>14</sup>**

## **Book List**

The Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde.

Magical Hands by Marjorie Barker, Illustrated by Yoshi, Simon and Schuster 1989.

A Chair for My Mother by Vera Williams, Greenwillow, 1982 (also illustrates working together)

"Little Sunshine," The Children's Book of Virtues edited by William J. Bennett, Simon & Schuster, 1995

The Dog Who Had Kittens by Pilly M. Robertus, Illustrated by Janet Stevens, Holiday House, 1991



**FEBRUARY: Caring**

**MARCH: Fairness**

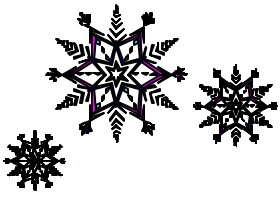
**APRIL: Integrity**

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<sup>12</sup> The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Quotes and Quips, page 25

<sup>13</sup> "Huntsman giving no-interest loan to Armenia." Deseret News, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 1998

<sup>14</sup> "'Farm boy' repays Duke favor with a \$20 million donation," Deseret News, Friday, January 30, 1998



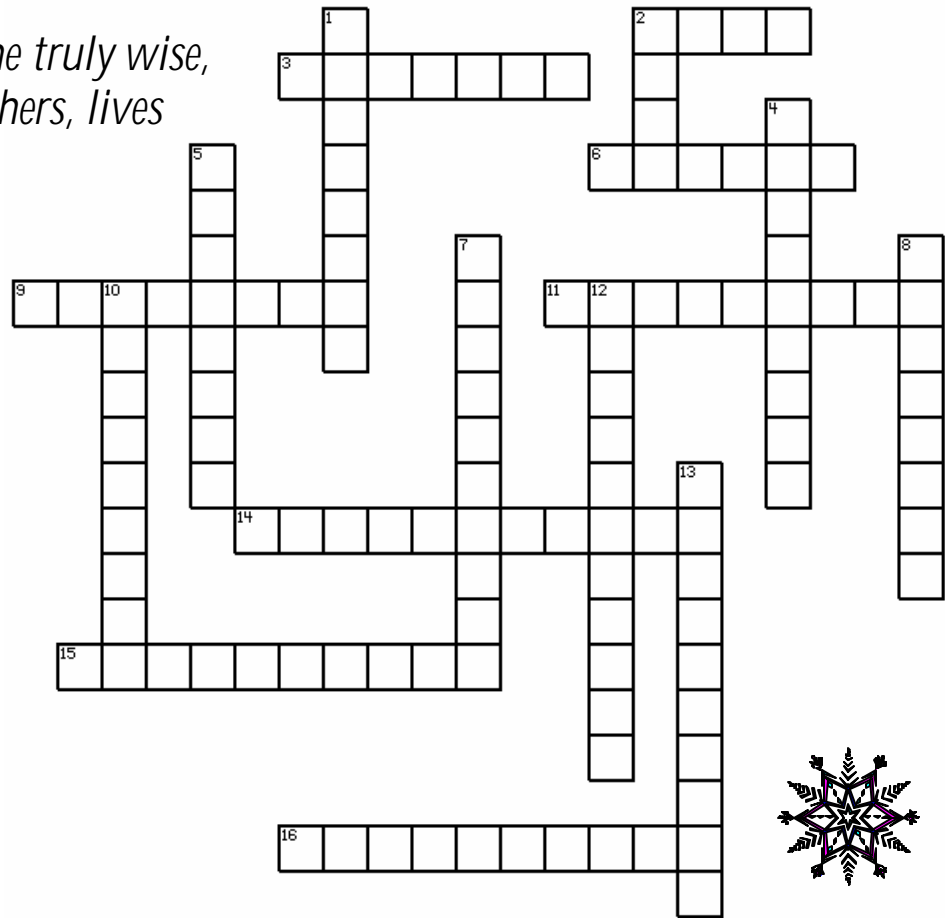
# Generosity

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*"The truly generous is the truly wise, and he who loves not others, lives unblest." —Home.<sup>15</sup>*

Word Bank

- generosity
- generous
- munificent
- bountiful
- abundant
- magnanimous
- unselfish
- amplitude
- forbearance
- forgive
- kindness
- nobility
- hospitable
- charitable
- give
- bestow
- gift



**ACROSS**

- 2. Something that is bestowed voluntarily and without compensation; a present
- 3. To excuse for a fault or offence; to pardon
- 6. To present as a gift or honor; confer
- 9. In plentiful supply, more than sufficient; ample
- 11. Greatness of size; fullness; copiousness
- 14. Tolerance and restraint in the face of provocation; patience
- 15. Generous in giving money or other help to the needy
- 16. Extremely liberal in giving

**DOWN**

- 1. The state or quality of being exalted in character; showing greatness
- 2. Convey; bestow
- 4. Abundant, plentiful
- 5. The quality or state of being hospitable; warmhearted; good
- 7. Welcoming guests with warmth and generosity
- 8. Unselfish, willing to give or share
- 10. Not selfish; generous
- 12. Noble of mind and heart, generous in forgiving; above revenge or resentment; unselfish, gracious
- 13. Liberality or willingness in giving; unselfishness

"Humanitarianism is a link that binds together all Americans . . . Whenever tragedy or disaster has struck in any corner of the world, the American people has promptly and generously extended its hand of mercy and help. Generosity has never impoverished the giver; it has enriched the lives of those who have practiced it. . . And the bread we have cast upon the waters has been returned in blessings a hundredfold."

—Dwight D. Eisenhower.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Edwards, Tryon, The New Dictionary of Thoughts, U.S.A: Standard Book Co. 1957, Page 229.