

CHARACTER  
*Connection*



*Generosity*

Giving and  
Sharing Freely

“It is more  
blessed to give  
than to receive.  
Besides you  
don’t have to  
write thank-you  
notes.” --Anonymous



## May Character Connection Theme: Generosity

### Definition

Generosity is “the liberality or willingness in giving; unselfishness, munificence.” It is also “nobility of thought or behavior; magnanimity,” amplitude or abundance.<sup>1</sup> A person who is generous is willing to share. That individual lacks pettiness or meanness in thought or behavior, gives freely because of desire of making another person happy, with no idea of receiving attention, a reward, or gift in return. Generosity is being thoughtful of the needs of others. A generous person is willing to sacrifice for another.

### Quotes

*"The truly generous is the truly wise, and he who loves not others, lives unblest." - Homer*

**"All my experience of the world teaches me that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the safe and just side of a question is the generous and merciful side." – Anna Jameson**

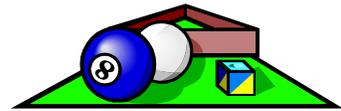
***"He who gives what he would as readily throw away, gives without generosity; for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice." -- Henry Taylor<sup>2</sup>***

*"Generosity is not giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is giving me that which you need more than I do." – Khalil Gibran, Sand and Foam<sup>3</sup>*

### Activities

\*\*Play Miniature Marble Pool using a shoebox lid with paper cups under pocket holes, marbles for balls, and a pencil for the cue stick. Note the transfer of energy from a moving marble to the stationary marble that it hits. *Talk about the positive thoughts and actions that occur within a person when generosity is present.*

\*\* Play Elbow<sup>4</sup> or Chain tag.<sup>5</sup> For Chain tag, the person that “It” touches holds “Its” hand. The next person touched is now third in the chain. Play continues until all participants are part of the chain. The last person tagged is the new “It.” In Elbow tag, all players except “It” and the runner pair up and link elbows. When the runner links elbows with someone in a pair, the person on the opposite end becomes the new runner. *Talk about the possible series of people affected, and chain of events that may occur, as a result of a generous act.*



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<sup>1</sup> “generosity” The American Heritage Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.webpages.ainet.com/gosner/quotationsarch/quotations1/topics/generosity.htm> compiled by: Todd McMasters [TMcmasters@aol.com](mailto:TMcmasters@aol.com)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.quoteland.com/qldb/author/79>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.seanet.com/~eldrbarry/mous/gamedex4.htm>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.inquiry.net/outdoor/ripley/5\\_tag.htm](http://www.inquiry.net/outdoor/ripley/5_tag.htm)

## Stories



### **The Circus**

My father and I were standing in line at the circus. I had waited months for a chance to go to the circus. Standing in front of us was a family with a mother and father and six children. The children were all under the age of twelve. This family did not appear wealthy by any means. Their children's clothes were neat and clean, but I could tell they did not have a lot of money. Each child stood in line holding the hand of a brother or sister. The mother and father were standing in front of the line. I could feel the excitement the children were feeling as they anticipated going to the circus that day.

The father stood at the ticket booth. He asked how much it would cost for his family to get into the circus. When given the cost he turned and looked at his wife and bit his bottom lip. They spoke a few words. My father and I could tell they did not have enough money to get into the circus. My father, watching the situation, pulled a twenty-dollar bill from his pocket, wadded it up and dropped it at the feet of the children. He then picked it up, handed it to the father, and said, "This must have fallen out of your pocket."

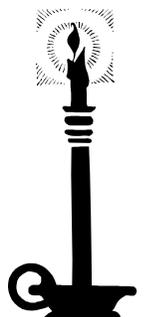
The man took my father's hand in both of his hands and whispered, "Thank you very much." He knew what my father was doing. The family now had enough money to get into the circus. My father and I didn't go to the circus that day, but we didn't go home empty.<sup>6</sup>



### **Florence Nightingale**

Florence Nightingale was born on May 12, 1820, in Florence, Italy, while her wealthy British parents were living abroad. Her childhood was spent in England learning social graces, management of a large household, languages, history, and philosophy. Her youth included parties and social activities, a presentation to Queen Victoria, and travel in Europe. Soon, however, she spent more of her time studying health and reforms and finally entered a school for nursing. This was not the usual course for a girl from a wealthy family, and her family opposed her new direction in life. Nevertheless, at age 33, she became a superintendent of a women's hospital in London. In 1854, during the Crimean war, she and 38 nurses sailed for Scutari. The "hospital" Florence was to take charge of was a rat-infested old Turkish barrack. The wounded lay on floors, dirty and uncared for. Florence found some men well enough to clean and put them to work. She then set up a diet, kitchen, and nursing schedule. This "Lady with the Lamp" walked the 4 miles of hospital corridors as she ministered to the sick until late in the night.<sup>7</sup> Lytton Strachey wrote, "Wherever, in those vast wards suffering was at its worst and the need for help was greatest, there, as if by magic, was Miss Nightingale."<sup>8</sup>

*Robert of Doncaste commented, "What I gave I have, what I spent I had; and what I left I lost."<sup>9</sup> Discuss what a person has when he gives generously. Show ten candles. Light one candle, then note the increased brightness in the room as each additional candle is lit. Talk about the brightness that is gained as the light from one candle is shared with the next. Celebrate Florence Nightingale's May birthday with a generous act of kindness.*



<sup>6</sup> submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative

<sup>7</sup> Manning, Kenneth R. "Nightingale, Florence" World Book 14, 1988

<sup>8</sup> submitted by PGHS PTA Character representative, from Hinckley, Standing For Something, pages 174-176

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes\\_generosity.html](http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_generosity.html)

## Muhammad Yunus and a Bank for the Poorest of Poor

Muhammad Yunus obtained his doctor's degree from Vanderbilt University, and then taught in Tennessee. When his native Bangladesh became independent, he returned in 1971 to teach economics at the University of Chittagong.<sup>10</sup> In 1974, a famine ravaged his country.

Discouraged by the hopelessness of the situation, he wandered through the villages near Chittagong. Dr. Yunus met Sophia, who made bamboo stools. Unable to afford her own materials, she had become a virtual slave to the bamboo and stool trader. Conventional banks would not give small low interest loans without collateral. Seeing a simple solution, Dr. Yunus loaned a total of \$30 of his own money to Sophia and 41 others.<sup>11</sup>

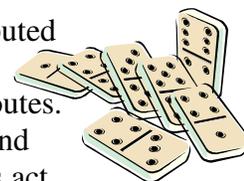
After repeated refusals by Bangladeshi banks to loan money to the poor, Dr. Yunus founded his own Grameen (or rural) bank. In a country where the annual per capita income is only \$210, the Grameen bank makes micro loans (without requiring collateral) of only about \$100 to the poor. It has served two million people—mostly women. Almost 98% of its loans are repaid --with interest. This repayment rate far exceeds Bangladeshi commercial banks. Recipients of Grameen loans have been able to increase their income by 50% over 3 years and their children have a lower rate of malnourishment. Truly, Dr. Yunus' generosity of time, concern, and means has bettered the conditions of many.



## Writing or Discussion Topics

\*\*Success is often measured by the monetary return in an investment. Have students talk to their parents about the returns from being generous in a work and home environment. The story is told of a salesman who sold a piano to a grandmother living in a sharecropper's one-room house for no-interest, egg-money payments. Twenty years later the salesman heard the granddaughter—now a very fine pianist.<sup>12</sup> Have students write a letter to someone whose generosity contributed to a success in the student's life.

\*\* As a class, create a domino design by standing dominoes next to each other in various routes. Note that one domino falling can cause more than one domino path to fall. List the chains and chain reactions found in nature. Talk about the potential chain of events from one generous act. Have students write a story telling the possible results from their one generous act or gift.



## Role Plays

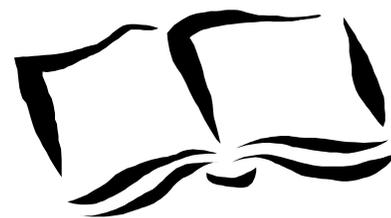
\*\*Jacob's class is on a hiking field trip. At lunch Susan finds that the lunch her mother packed is missing. Susan is hungry. *How could generosity solve this problem?*

\*\*Erica visits a large city during her summer vacation. She sees a tattered person begging. *How can Erica appropriately express her desires to be generous?*

## Book List

*The Quiltmaker's Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau

*The Library* by Sarah Stewart



**June: Family Goals**

**July: Family Service**

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.unesco.org/culture/simon\\_bolivar/html\\_eng/simon6.htm](http://www.unesco.org/culture/simon_bolivar/html_eng/simon6.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <http://showcase.netins.net/web/wfp/1994.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/lmaupin.geo/piano/redpiano.html>, accessed February 5, 2005



## Generosity Puzzle Answer Key

*Generosity doesn't always involve money and objects  
that can be prettily wrapped.*

*There are gifts of time given ungrudgingly,  
gifts of patience and silliness and enthusiasm  
wrapped in big genuine smiles.*

*There are gifts of doing more than your share  
and the gift of simply being there  
for someone else.*

*These are the best gifts of all:  
The gifts of being fully PRESENT..*

(From: [http://www.roseannshoppe.com/Inspirational\\_Poems/inspirational\\_poems.html](http://www.roseannshoppe.com/Inspirational_Poems/inspirational_poems.html))