



Diocese of Bristol

† TRANSFORMING CHURCH.
TOGETHER.

Transforming Church. Together:

A short course.

**OPENNESS
GENEROSITY
CREATIVITY
BRAVERY**

Booklet 2: Generosity

“Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is old and what is new” - Matthew 13:52



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Introduction

This is the second of four booklets exploring the four values that have been discerned as part of the Transforming Church. Together process in the Diocese of Bristol.

This booklet explores the value of Generosity and how we receive and give sincerely. It seeks to invite us both individually and as a group to ask how we can be generous to all.

This session includes:

The Transforming Church. Together prayer to start the session.

An introduction to the value.

Opening questions for us individually and to discuss as a group.

Images to explore and reflect on the value.

Bible passages to be explored together on the value.

A prayer to finish the session.

Within this booklet is an opportunity to feedback to the Ministry Team and PCC your thoughts on the value of theme of generosity within the context of your church.

This booklet is based on material provided by the Revd Dr Simon Taylor and the Revd Cheryl Hawkins.

The Transforming Church. Together prayer

You may wish to light a candle and use this prayer at the start of this session.

God of the Way, you call us to leave familiar places and to set out on new paths.

Enlarge our vision of your work in the communities we serve, speak to us through the people we encounter and open our hearts to the love.

Give us courage and boldness to engage together in this time of prayer and discernment, and by your Holy, life-giving, and creative Spirit, renew your church in prayer and service, and in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Space for notes

Generosity

We receive and give sincerely.

In looking at generosity we must begin by looking at the generosity of God – seen both in creation and in redemption. Creation is above all a free gift – it is not a reaction to anything that God creates the universe. Similarly, redemption is seen both in the rescue of Israel from slavery in Egypt and in the death and resurrection of Jesus – both a gift freely given by God.

Before answering the opening questions, spend a few minutes thinking about how God`s generosity has worked in your life.



Opening questions

What are you thankful for today? Write a list of everything you can think of to be thankful for?

Can you give an example when you experienced generosity in your Church context, either when you or your church was on the receiving end, or when you witnessed it among other members of the congregation?

Think of an example when you have shown generosity – how did it make you feel, was it easy or did it feel costly? What motivated you?

Share briefly what you are comfortable with in answering the above questions with the rest of the group.

Transforming Church. Together

Housegroup Feedback Form - Generosity

STOP

What gets in the way of achieving this value at our church?

START

What should we start doing to show this value at our church?

CONTINUE

What should we continue doing to show this value at our church?

What words would you use to describe the value of generosity in the context of our church?

Closing prayer

Silently sit and hold before God who or what God has placed on your heart during the session.

We pray together:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

Now and for ever.

Amen.

O Holy Spirit, giver of light and life.

impart to us thoughts better than our own thoughts,

and prayers better than our own prayers,

and powers better than our own powers,

that we may spend and be spent

in the ways of love and goodness,

after the perfect image of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Eric Milner-White and G W Briggs, Daily Prayer, 1941)

Reflecting on images

Below and on the next page are some images on generosity, reflect quietly on them. Which one resonates with you the most and why? Does a different image come into your mind?

If you feel comfortable in doing so, share with the rest of the group.



VOLUNTEER





Generosity - a warning

What things can get in the way of our generosity?

Luke 12: 16-21 warns against building barns to store generosity – God`s gifts are to be used.

How can we ensure we use the generosity we are given in a way that honours God and extends his kingdom?

Mark 6: 38, the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus asks the disciples, “How many loaves have you?” – the disciples are overwhelmed at the need to feed so many people, but crucially what Jesus does in response is not to create new resources, but to take what the disciples have (five loaves and two fish) and offer them to God before giving them to the people.

Even faced by overwhelming need and lack, we offer what we have.

Discussion questions

At the end of a Eucharist service the Congregation is sent out with the words (or similar): “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. In the Name of Christ, Amen”.

1. What new initiatives could we as a church undertake out of generosity and, despite limited resources, might transform our church and/or help us engage with the local community?

2. What are your fears around generosity?

Take time:

Before moving on to the next section, take a moment in prayer to lift before God your discussions. For the things you have found helpful, for the things you have found challenging.

What should our response be to such generosity?

**“all things come from you, and of your own have we given you”
(1 Chronicles 29:14)**

Our generosity is the second response to God’s own generosity towards us.

The Eucharist is a liturgy of thanksgiving (from the Greek ‘eucharistia’ meaning ‘thanksgiving’). The first part of the Eucharistic prayer (the preface) has always been a thanksgiving to God for God’s mighty acts in creation and redemption. This is found in the Jewish practice of blessing and thanking God before eating, and so seems likely to be have been Jesus’ prayer at the Last Supper. In the Eucharist, and in every grace said before a meal, we give thanks to God for all that God has done.

Discussion questions

At the end of a Eucharist service the Congregation is sent out with the words (or similar): “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. In the Name of Christ, Amen”.

1. How do we see our generous response in these words?

2. How can that generous response be transforming in our Community?

3. What are the challenges for you and your church in putting these ‘sending-out’ words into practice?



Bible reading:

A Generous God

Read out loud Genesis 1:1-5, leaving a short time for silence afterwards.

In this short extract we see creation is a free gift – it was not in reaction to any other person or situation that God created the universe, there was no conflict out of which creation emerged as a by-product.

Discussion questions

- 1. Where do you see God's generosity in your life?**
- 2. In a world of conflict how can the Church speak about a generous God that gives freely?**

What does generosity look like? Read out loud 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, 9:6-15, leaving a short time for silence afterwards.

Discussion questions

- 1. How would you describe generosity in this passage? What are the attributes of a generous spirit?**
- 2. How do we walk alongside people in our generosity? How does this passage show this?**
- 3. What do you think this passage means when Paul talks of equality in generosity?
(2 Corinthians 8:14-15)**
- 4. How does our generosity produce thanksgiving to God?**
- 5. Thinking about your Church - can you identify the generosity talked about in this passage with your church? If yes in what way? If no or maybe – what is different?**