

Introduction to 40acts Together

Lent has traditionally been a season of giving things up. The 40acts campaign encourages people to use this time to give something back. This week, as the journey through Lent begins, pupils will:

- Reflect on the meaning of generosity
- Begin to identify the range of resources they have which they can be generous with
- Explore the impact of living generously.

Create your own assembly on the theme of generosity from these ideas.

Additional media resources: [Jesus feeds 5,000 people film](#); Introduction to 40acts Together

♥ GAME

Put the word 'GENEROSITY' on display. Set a challenge – for pupils to make as many new words as they can from this one word.

Find out some of the different words the pupils have made. Ask: Who knows what 'generosity' means?



'Generosity' means giving to others – not reluctantly, or just a little bit, but freely and happily. It's one thing to know what the word means, and another thing to be able to make a habit of it! But that's what this school will aspire to do over the next seven weeks ...

♥ BIBLE STORY



Watch or read the story of when a crowd of 5,000 people came to listen to Jesus, but forgot to bring any lunch! (The story is found in John 6: 1–13.) www.request.org.uk/teachers/?p=2426

It was amazing that Jesus was able to use God's power to make that little amount of food feed so many people. But it was also amazing that the little boy wanted to give away his food in the first place! He could have kept it all for himself and not shared any of it. Instead, because he was so generous, many people were fed, not just one!

♥ OBJECT LESSON

Resources: bag/tin of favourite sweets, wrapped up

Show the parcel to the students. What do they think it is? Unwrap it. Ask: What could you do with this? Keep it to yourself? How might you feel if you did? What if you shared it? How would you feel then? Who should you share it with? How would they feel?

♥ SUMMARY MESSAGE

We are all a bit like a box of chocolates – sweet, richer than we think, and easily able to put a smile on people’s faces.



What do you have that you can share? Your time? Your talents? Your smile? Everyone has something that they can share or give away. It might seem like something really small, and yet it can bring happiness to many others when you do.

At this time of year, many Christians decide to give something up for Lent – the 40 days, excluding Sundays, before Easter. It could be cake, chocolate, coffee or TV. But at school this year, instead of giving up things, we’re going to give back to each other.

♥ INTRODUCTION TO 40acts



Watch a short film about 40acts at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmvpBGPlnXk



40acts Together is a project that will help us to be more thoughtful and helpful to each other. Each day in your class you will choose a kindness challenge for the day. As a class, you’ll try to complete that challenge. Each class may be doing something different. Will you be able to guess another class’s challenge? Will they be able to guess yours?

♥ CLOSING THOUGHT



Over the next few weeks we’ll be looking in more detail at the things we have and how we can become more generous – that is, willing and eager to give things away. But for now, think of one way you could make somebody happy today – either by giving them something or by doing something for them. And then do it!

♥ CLOSING PRAYER



*Dear God, thank you that you have given us so much. You give us life every day, family, friends and people who take care of us. In the next few weeks, help us to remember others and show us ways in which we can give back to those who give so much to us. Remind us that this is one way in which we can show we love you. **Amen.***



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Being generous with our money and possessions

We are beginning to look in more detail at the theme of generosity, starting with the material things that we have. Through the collective worship and classroom materials pupils will:

- Reflect on their attitudes towards money and possessions
- Explore the impact that choosing to be generous with these has on the people around them
- Recognise their power as consumers to be generous.

Choose from the following elements to create a suitable assembly on the theme of being generous with the things we have.

Additional media resources: [Jesus meets Zacchaeus film](#)

♥ GAME

Find a large quantity of simple items which your pupils can hold. Plastic balls, or plates containing unbreakable items, would be ideal. Invite a pupil up to take part in a challenge: how many can they hold at one time?

Give one item out at a time, encouraging the pupils to join in the counting. When the pupil drops something, take their score and invite somebody else to have a go. Run the challenge a few times.



We live in a part of the world where we are encouraged to have a lot of things – a lot of toys, a lot of clothes, a lot of food, a lot of money. But do we really need all this stuff, or even want it? Fortunately there is an alternative to storing up things for ourselves – and that's giving it away!

♥ BIBLE STORY



Watch or read the story of when a tax collector called Zacchaeus met Jesus (found in Luke 19:1–10). www.request.org.uk/teachers/?p=2445



Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He had a lot of money, but not a lot of friends. That's because he cheated people in order to get their money. Money was very important to Zacchaeus. But when he met Jesus he realised that there was something more precious than his money. He gave all the money back – and more besides. And he was happier than he'd ever been!

♥ OBJECT LESSON

Resources: a collection of coins/bank notes; a chocolate bar; a coffee cup; a charity magazine, etc.

Show different coins and notes to the pupils. Can they identify them? What could they buy with this money?



These may look like bits of metal and paper, but they have the ability to become something very different. For example, 50p can become a chocolate bar; £1 can become a drink; £2 can become your favourite magazine. But they don't have to become something to make us happy. They could become something meaningful for somebody else. Your 50p chocolate bar could become a thank you gift to brighten someone's day. £10 could become some chickens to help a family overseas start a farming business. And £42 could become a brand new toilet in Africa with the power to save people's lives! ¹

♥ SUMMARY MESSAGE



Having money and nice things can make us happy – for a time. But there's something that will make us ten times happier and last longer: becoming people who are willing to share what we have. We can share our things with friends, and then we are all happy. Or we can help others by giving away our things to people who need them more than we do. When it comes down to it, being generous is much more valuable than all the money in the world.

♥ SHARE TIME

Invite pupils to share some of the challenges they have completed over the previous week. What effect did completing the challenge have? How did it make the person on the receiving end feel? How did it make them feel?

♥ CLOSING THOUGHT



Think about a time when somebody shared something with you. How did it make you feel? What are some of the things that you could share with your friends?

♥ CLOSING PRAYER



*Dear God, thank you that all things come from you, and that you give us so many good things to enjoy. Help us to learn how to share what we have to bring health and happiness to other people. **Amen.***

¹

www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/oxfam-unwrapped/



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Being generous with our talents

As we continue exploring what it means to be generous, we look at the personal gifts and talents we have which we can use to help others. Through the collective worship and classroom material, pupils will:

- Recognise the different talents and interests they have
- Reflect on case studies of people who have followed their heart and changed the world
- Explore ways in which they can use their own talents to support others.

Create your own assembly on the theme of being generous with our talents from these ideas.

Additional media resources: [The parable of the bags of gold film](#)

♥ GAME

Resources: *bags of chocolate gold coins*

Invite a volunteer or two to take part in your own version of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* using the coins as prizes. The 'contestants' get additional chocolate coins with every question they answer correctly. As per the TV show, they can use lifelines:

- Phone a friend (i.e. nominate a fellow pupil or staff member to answer for them)
- Ask the audience (i.e. take a vote from the other pupils)
- 50/50 (leave them with two answers, including the correct one).



This week we are thinking about talent. We see a lot of it on TV, from talented sportsmen and women competing nationally and internationally to talented (and not-so-talented!) singers, dancers and bakers trying their best to impress a panel of judges.

But is there more to talent than this? What makes somebody talented? And what is talent good for?

♥ BIBLE STORY



Watch or read the parable Jesus told about a businessman's investment in his servants, found in Matthew 25:14–30. www.request.org.uk/teachers/?p=2452



In the story, the businessman goes away and leaves his servants with some bags of gold. He wants them to use them and make something of them before his return. The word originally used for a bag of gold was 'talent', which is where our word 'talent' comes from. The Bible teaches that all of us have been given something precious and unique from God himself, and we have a responsibility to use it wisely and well.

♥ OBJECT LESSON

Resources: *Monopoly money in different denominations (i.e. £500, £100, £50)*

Give out the Monopoly money to the pupils. Ask them to imagine for a moment that the money is real. What could they do with it? Take some ideas.

Suggest to the pupils that they are all rich – maybe not in money, but certainly in talent. We may not all have the same talents, but each of us has something. If you're not sure what your gift is, ask the people you trust. Sometimes they're better at seeing what we're good at than we are!

♥ SUMMARY MESSAGE

 *Most of us will never make it onto The X Factor, or win a gold medal at the Olympics, or have a picture hanging in the Tate. But we're all gifted. Our gift might be being a good friend to people when they need it most. It might be being great at learning new skills and teaching others, or getting on with people, or finding solutions to problems.*

How do you feel when you do something you love? Happy? Using our talents can make us feel 'alive' – as if we are doing what we were born to do. Being generous with our talent, and using it for a good cause, can make us happier still as we help others in the process.

♥ SHARE TIME

Invite pupils to share some of the challenges they have completed over the previous week. What effect did completing the challenge have? How did it make the person on the receiving end feel? How did it make them feel?

♥ CLOSING THOUGHT

 *Take some time to think about the things you enjoy – the things you are good at. Now ask yourself: how can I use this natural ability that I have to help other people – in my school community, in my family, in the world around me?*

♥ CLOSING PRAYER

 *Dear God, thank you that you created each of us and entrusted us with gifts, talents and abilities. Help us to recognise what they are so that we can use them in the best way possible, for the good of others and for your glory. Amen.*



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Being gracious and forgiving

Generosity goes beyond what we have and what we do with that. It is also about who we are – the way we see people and how we treat them. Through the collective worship and classroom material, pupils will:

- Consider the different ways we treat people on a daily basis, for good and for bad
- Reflect on the ethic of treating people as we would like to be treated
- Understand the importance of a gracious and forgiving attitude in our relationships with others.

Create your assembly on the theme of being gracious and forgiving from these ideas.

Additional media resources: [The parable of the lost son](#)

♥ GAME

Play a game of 'Simon Says' with the pupils. Everybody stands to begin – pupils sit down when they are out. Choose simple actions linking to the theme of the assembly, for example: Simon says, smile at somebody else; shake hands with the person next to you; pull a grumpy face; wag your finger; give a thumbs-up/ thumbs-down.



It can feel a little strange watching so many people doing the same thing as we are, reflecting our every move. But whether we realise it or not, we're always copying each other. We all pick up on how we are treated and act in a similar way – for good and for bad.

This week, as we continue our theme of generosity, we will look a little more at what it means to be generous in the way we behave towards other people.

♥ BIBLE STORY

Watch or read the story that Jesus told about a father's unconditional love for his son, found in Luke



15:11–21. www.request.org.uk/teachers/?p=2454



Imagine what it must have been like to have been the father in this story. His son was rude to him, left him and treated what he had been given badly. The father had every right to be angry and turn him away – but instead he forgave him. He gladly welcomed him back home.

Christians believe that this is the kind of love that God has for all of us. We are rude to God and each other and we use what we have selfishly. But when we say sorry, God forgives us. He does not make a list of what we do wrong. Instead, he always hopes the best for us and trusts us to get it right next time.

♥ OBJECT LESSON

Resources: *image of duck/rabbit.*

Show the image(s) to the pupils and ask them: What do you see? How? Can you see both? Can you see both at the same time?



It is possible to see the same event and interpret it in different ways – with very different consequences. For example, imagine somebody were to knock into you and you automatically thought they did it on purpose. What might you do or say to them? But what if you assumed they slipped and accidentally bumped you? What might you do or say then?

♥ SUMMARY MESSAGE



So far over the 40acts challenge we have thought about how we can be generous with things we have – with our money and possessions, and our talents. But there is another way in which we can be generous, and that's in how we think about and treat each other. This is known as generosity of spirit. It is about thinking the best of people, and being willing to forgive each other when we do wrong.

This is good for other people – it means that they always have a way to make things right. But it's good for us too. And just imagine the difference to our school community if we were all committed to bringing out the best in each other!

♥ SHARE TIME

Invite pupils to share some of the challenges they have completed over the previous week. What effect did completing the challenge have? How did it make the person on the receiving end feel? How did it make them feel?

♥ CLOSING THOUGHT



Think about a time when you made a mistake – accidentally or on purpose? How were you treated? How did you want to be treated?

Now think about a time when somebody upset you. How did you treat them? How can you show them that you forgive them?

♥ CLOSING PRAYER



*Dear God, thank you that your love is patient and kind. Thank you that you keep no record of the things we do wrong, but always believe in us to be the best we can. Forgive us when we think badly of other people, and act badly towards them. Help us to see other people the way you see them, and help us to treat them according to your amazing love. **Amen.***



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Being generous to the world around us

We have reflected a lot on the importance of being generous to others. But we live in an environment which is all too easily used and abused. Through the collective worship and classroom material, pupils will:

- Consider the importance of the natural world around us to our health and well-being
- Reflect on what it means to be generous to our environment
- Identify practical means of preserving the environment around the school and the home and further afield.

Create your assembly on the theme of being generous towards the environment from these ideas.

Additional media resources: [Jesus and the miraculous catch of fish film](#)

♥ GAME

Resources: Jenga/stacking blocks game

Play a game of Jenga. You could invite different pupils to take a block in turn, or play a proper game with one or two pupils versus a member of staff!



In some ways, this is a picture of our world. Over the years people have drawn out and abused many of its resources and left it weaker. Scientists warn that unless we treat it better, we could irreversibly damage the planet. During Lent we have thought about how we can be generous to other people, but there is another worthy recipient of our generosity – our world.

♥ BIBLE STORY



Watch or read the story about what happened when Jesus and his disciples went fishing together, found in John 21 1-14. www.request.org.uk/teachers/?p=2449



Just imagine what it would have been like to be in that boat! All night long, not a single fish had been biting. Jesus turned up and spoke – and suddenly the fish were there in their hundreds and thousands! For Christians it's a sign that Jesus is Lord of the created world around us – not us. It is not our business to abuse the planet. Instead we should recognise that it belongs to God and look after it accordingly.

♥ OBJECT LESSON

Resources: a plastic bottle; a banana; a plastic bag; a glass bottle; a tin can.

Look at the items together. They are all things that we might throw away every day. But how long do they take to biodegrade? Can the pupils guess?

Answers: banana peel: 2–5 weeks; plastic bag: 10–20 years; tin can: 50 years; plastic bottle: 450 years; glass bottle: 1 million years!

It's staggering to think that the things that we throw away every day can stay for such a long time afterwards! But this is just one example of the impact we make on our environment without thinking about it. Our choice whether to walk short distances or to take the car, whether or not to have a shower every day, whether or not to switch electrical items off at the wall ... All of these small decisions affect the health of the world around us.

♥ SUMMARY MESSAGE



Our planet is amazing. For a start, it is really beautiful to look at! But also it provides everything we need to survive: water, food to eat, resources which can be turned into energy to power our homes and buildings. But we need to take care of it. Simple things like recycling waste, or reusing items, may not seem like huge actions but they can make a world of difference

♥ SHARE TIME

Allow pupils to share some of the challenges they have completed over the previous week. What effect did completing the challenge have? How did it make the person on the receiving end feel? How did it make them feel?

♥ CLOSING THOUGHT



Be quiet for a moment. In the silence, think about some of the things you love most about the world around you. Imagine for a moment that the future of these favourite things is in your hands. How does that make you feel? What practical things can you do about it?

♥ CLOSING PRAYER



*Dear God, thank you for the beautiful world that you made for us to enjoy. Thank you for the animals and birds, trees and plants, rain and sunshine. Thank you that you give us everything we could ever need or want. Help us to remember that the Earth is yours and that we are here to look after it, to honour you and to be a blessing to others around us. **Amen.***



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Final thoughts on generosity

As we come to the end of Lent and the 40acts period, it is time to celebrate and reflect on the lessons learnt through the generosity project. Through the collective worship and classroom material, pupils will:

- Reflect on the impact of 40acts on the school and the wider community, and on themselves.
- Understand the importance of generosity within the Christian faith
- Explore the ongoing impact of generosity as a value for themselves and the school community.

Create your assembly from these ideas.

Additional media resources: [Easter film.](#)

♥ CELEBRATION

Resources: *pictures/filmed vox pops*

As the pupils enter, show your slide show of images collated from the last seven weeks. If you have collected vox pops from pupils talking about their experiences, watch it now.

♥ SHARE TIME

Take some time to reflect with the pupils.

- Which challenge was their favourite?
- Which was the easiest? Why?
- Which was the hardest? Why?

♥ BIBLE STORY



Instead of a bible reading, watch this short film which tells the big story of Jesus's death on the cross and what Christians believe about why Jesus died. www.goo.gl/xCWNOH



Why is it so important to be generous to others? There are a lot of good reasons, but for Christians one stands above the others. It is that God is so generous to us.

We have been running 40acts throughout Lent. At the end of Lent we celebrate Easter, remembering Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection. For Christians, Jesus' death is the ultimate Act of Kindness. It was a huge sacrifice, but he was happy to give his life so that we could be friends of God now and for ever. It's this sacrifice which inspires Christians the world over to give to others, whatever the cost.

♥ REFLECTION

Look at the following three statements in turn. After each, ask the pupils to explain what they think it means to the person next to them, and then take a few answers to share publicly.

Don't wait for people to be friendly – show them how.

'Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see' (Mark Twain).

'Be the change you want to see in the world' (Gandhi).

♥ SUMMARY MESSAGE

 *We have spent the last seven weeks practising generosity and kindness to others. We have thought about how we can be generous with the things we possess and with the talents we have. We have thought about how we can be generous in the way we think of others and the way we treat them. We have thought about the importance of treating our planet with the same respect and kindness.*

Most importantly, we have seen the difference it can make to ourselves, to our friends and to our school community. Although Lent is coming to an end, our generosity doesn't have to! Let's pledge to continue being generous in the coming weeks and months.

♥ CLOSING THOUGHT

 *Close your eyes. Think about the different challenges you have taken part in. First of all – feel proud of yourself. You've done really well! What lessons have you learned about being generous? How can you continue being generous to those around you?*

♥ CLOSING PRAYER

 *Dear God, thank you that you have given us a beautiful world to live in and friends and families who love us. Remind us today that we have a responsibility to care for each other and to show your love to those around us. Our prayer today is that we would all live out the purpose that you have for each one of us by demonstrating kindness with no thought of what may be in it for us. **Amen***



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