

A Disciple's Generous Response

Lesson Objectives

- Tithing is money given generously as a response to the generous gifts God gives.
- A disciple is a committed member who makes a generous response in congregational life and to the world.
- Generous responses to God's gifts of love and grace are also shown by being stewards of body, time, talents, and planet.

Teacher Thoughts

Church leaders and members have, over many years, been exploring God's scriptural encouragement to view stewardship of temporalities in light of God's grace and love demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ.

Tithing is deeply rooted in the scriptures and affirms God's generous gifts of grace and love. The spirit of generosity is not about formulas but about thankfulness. Therefore, a disciple's generous response asks, "How much tithing can I hope to give?" rather than, "How much should I give?"

The needs of a growing church and the call to discipleship have brought the church to a point of clarification and redefinition of the concept of tithing. This understanding is shaped by God's grace and love, which encourages people to establish principles that will stir the hearts of others.

- Generosity is a spiritual response, not a quantifiable calculation.
- The principle of tithing is a response of thanksgiving and is contributed first. A disciple's tithing response expresses love of God, neighbor, creation, and oneself.
- The principle of saving is an expression of hope for the future. Disciples save in order to create a better tomorrow for themselves, their family, the church's mission, and the world.
- Responsible spending is a commitment to live in health and harmony as they support personal needs and develop their talents and interests.

Opening Activity

What does a generous response look like? Take a loaf of bread, a pie, or a cake, and cut it in sections. Remove one piece to represent your giving amount. Look again. If you were sharing with a stranger, how much would you be willing to give? If you were sharing with a friend, how much would you give? If you were sharing with someone who hadn't eaten in three days, how much would you give? If Jesus were sitting at your table, how much would you give?

Stewardship is the response of my people to the ministry of my Son and is required alike of all those who seek to build the kingdom.—Doctrine and Covenants 147:5a

Blessings from 1 to 10

Give children a copy of page 4. Work together to think of ten ways they have been blessed. Let this be a fun activity while helping the students realize that God blesses them every day, in many ways. Students may choose to write different blessings in their books.

God loves a cheerful giver.
—2 Corinthians 9:7 NRSV

Sharing Because God Loves You

Sharing is an important part of the path of the disciple. The scriptures give many examples of times when people shared. Remember the boy who shared his food with Jesus and a huge group of people were fed? Can kids think of others?

Why is sharing important? What difference does it make? What things do people like to share? Begin a list from the comments that illustrates the variety of ways things can be shared: possessions, money, friendship, ideas, stories, clothing, food, worries, help, time, family history, and others.

Have the kids name a time when they were told to share and didn't want to. Why not? Name a time when someone shared with them. How did they feel?

What are some of the needs in the family? How can someone help meet those needs? What about needs in the community? What about needs in the world? What are some of the different ways kids can help in church?

Giving the Gift of Love

Let the class create and decorate cards for people in the congregation/community who are sick, homebound, or just in need of a little extra love. If possible, get together outside class to bake cookies or bread, and then deliver the gifts personally.

Sharing Generously in Service

The scriptures tell us that disciples of Christ will desire to share not only their money, but their time and talents with others. Arrange for the candidates to participate with the congregation or community in a service project.

Give to Others, Give to God

Ask the class to read Matthew 25:35–40 (36–40 IV). Discuss what it means by answering the questions below.

- *Are there people who are hungry?* How can you help them?
- *Are there people who are thirsty?* How can you help them?
- *Are there people who need clothes?* How can you help them?
- *Are there people who are sick?* How can you help them?
- *Are there people who need friendship?* How can you help them?
- *Are there people who need love?* How can you help them?
- *Are there people who need to know God?* How can you help them?

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

... Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?

... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. —Matthew 25:35–40 NRSV

Mission Tithes

Give each person a sample children's offering envelope to hold and examine. If you do not have access to these (ask someone with children), copy the sample envelope at the bottom of this page.

Point out the words Mission Tithes. Ask if anyone knows what this means. Explain that when they give money at church using these envelopes, they can give it specifically to the ministry of the church. Note the two sides: My Church at Home and My Church in the World. Whether they share their money with the local congregation or the church in the world, money given through these envelopes is called Mission Tithes.

Help the class understand what Mission Tithes are used for by making two lists. Explain that the Community of Christ is a worldwide church, and it is important to share generously with both the local church and the church in the world.

MY CHURCH AT HOME

congregation ministries
church school
vacation church school
family visiting
church building expenses
worship
camping ministry

MY CHURCH IN THE WORLD

world ministries
oblation (ministry with the poor)
world Hunger

MUSIC IDEA
"Lord, I Give You,"
32 in
Sing a New Song

Community Tithes

Disciples should respond not only by giving to the church, but it is also good to share with organizations in the community that are doing good works.

Discuss local organizations in your community. These might include homeless shelters, food kitchens, children's hospitals, and emergency assistance agencies. There are also organizations associated with the church that kids may be familiar with: Graceland University, Outreach International, World Accord.

Many congregations have partnerships with Outreach International or World Accord. Members may collect food for the local pantry or gather for workdays in the community. Explain that when people participate in these special projects, they are sharing Community Tithes.

Enough for All

Close this class by holding up a sheet of paper and sharing the following challenge.

"God has blessed me in many ways. Each corner on this piece of paper represents a blessing. It has four corners. (*Count them aloud.*) We are called to share generously with others. (*Tear a square off one corner of the paper, and give it to a student.*) When I shared, what happened? What does my friend have? (*Count corners of friend's square.*) Do I have less because I shared? (*Count the corners of your paper—now five. Continue until everyone has a piece of the paper.*) When you give generously in response to God's blessings, you also receive." Close with prayer, thanking God for all blessings.



Mission Tithes

Congregation Ministries	\$		World Ministries	\$	
	\$		Oblation (ministry with the poor)	\$	
	\$		World Hunger	\$	
	\$			\$	

MY CHURCH AT HOME

MY CHURCH IN THE WORLD

1...

2...

3...

6...

5...

4...

7...

☀ Blessings
from 1 to 10

8...

9...

10...

A Disciple's Generous Response

Share Generously

Mission Tithes

Whenever you give money to the church, that is called mission tithes. This includes money given to the congregation, the mission center, and the world church.

Community Tithes

The money you give to organizations (outside the church) trying to help people is called community tithes. This includes money shared with organizations like Graceland University, Outreach Internation, the Boys and Girls Club, or a food pantry.

As a disciple, I will take care of my body and soul.

I will . . .

- develop my **talents**
- use my **time** wisely
- **exercise**
- **eat** healthy
- get lots of **sleep**
- **study** and learn
- **laugh**, love, sing
- **worship** and praise God



As a disciple,
I will take
care of my
things.



I will. . .

- take care of my **toys**
- take care of my **clothes**
- **share** my things
- take care of my **pet**
- spend my **money** wisely
- **give** generously
- **save** money for the future.

Stewardship is the response of my people to the ministry of my Son and is required alike of all who seek to build the kingdom.—Doctrine and Covenants 147:5a

All that we have and all that we are is a priceless gift from God. What will be your response? Be thankful; be faithful; and give to others as God has given to you.

Save Wisely

To save money is to express hope for the future. As a disciple, save in order to create a better tomorrow for yourself, your family, the church, and the world.

Spend Responsibly

As a disciple, manage wisely the money you spend on family, personal needs, and the development of your talents and interests.



As a disciple, I will take care of the planet **Earth.**

I will . . .

- **recycle** trash
- turn off lights
- be **kind** to animals
- enjoy the trees in **nature**
- feed the birds
- protect the **water**
- **walk** or ride my bike
- keep the **air** we breathe clean



STEWARDSHIP CROSSWORD PUZZLE CLUES

Finish the sentences to discover the words needed for the crossword puzzle.

As a disciple, I will take care of my body and soul.

I will . . .

- develop my **talents**
- use my **time** wisely
- **exercise**
- **eat** healthy
- get lots of **sleep**
- **study** and learn
- **laugh**, love, sing
- **worship** and praise God



Stewardship is helping God take care of all creation.

As a disciple, I will take care of my **things**.

I will . . .

- take care of my **toys**
- take care of my **clothes**
- **share** my things
- take care of my **pet**
- spend my **money** wisely
- **give** generously
- **save** money for the future.



ACROSS

2. A disciple takes care of their ____.
4. I ____ so I can learn.
5. We all live on ____.
6. Mission tithes is the ____ I give to church.
7. God wants us to ____ healthy food.
8. We drink ____.
12. I take care of my ____ dog, Fido.
14. _____ is helping God take care of all creation.
18. I ____ generously .
19. I ____ tin cans and newspaper.
20. God wants me to use my ____ wisely.
21. I go to church to ____.

DOWN

1. When I am giggly I ____.
2. Things we play with are ____.
3. Trees are part of ____.
4. I ____ money for the future.
5. To ____ I run and play.
9. We breathe ____.
10. We need to ____ at night.
11. I should be ____ to animals.
13. We wear ____ on our bodies.
15. Singing is one of my ____.
16. I use my feet to ____ .
17. God asks us to ____ our things.



As a disciple, I will take care of the planet **Earth**.

I will . . .

- **recycle** trash
- turn off lights
- be **kind** to animals
- enjoy the trees in **nature**
- feed the birds
- protect the **water**
- **walk** or ride my bike
- keep the **air** we breathe clean