THE
GENEROSITY
PROJECT

Growing in God's Grace Generation to Generation

SESSION IV Creating Centers of Generosity: The HOW
2 Corinthians 8:1-9

A synodical, congregational and household ministry

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

THE
GENEROSITY
PROJECT

Growing in God's Grace Generation to Generation

Writer and editor: **Linda Staats,**
ELCA Generosity Project coordinator

Co-editors and contributors: **Jen Kooistra**
Stephanie Luedtke

Contributors: **Heather Roth Johnson**
Aly Kohlmeyer
Laura Ramlow
Jennifer Rome
Holly Slater
Sara Yotter

To host a workshop, train leaders or for more information, contact:
ELCA Generosity Project coordinator
TheGenerosityProject@elca.org

Permission is given for congregations and households to reproduce the handouts and resources for the implementation of The Generosity Project. Reproduction for resale or paid presentations is prohibited. All handouts and activities are to clearly identify the source as The Generosity Project – ELCA. 2018.

SESSION IV

OVERVIEW 4
PREPARATION 5
SEQUENCE & SCRIPT 6
WE WELCOME 6
WE GATHER 7
WE HEAR 8
WE SHARE 10
WE SEND 11
WE LIVE 12

SUPPLEMENTS 13
PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW & CONVERSATION PROMPTS 15
WE WELCOME Start It Out 17
WE GATHER Sing 19
WE GATHER 5G Connect 19
WE HEAR Act It Out 20
WE HEAR Act It Out 22

RESOURCES 25
SESSION IV – Creating Centers of Generosity 27
LIVE IT OUT! 28

OVERVIEW – SESSION IV

God's Story: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Foundation: "HOW to create centers of generosity?"

Focus: Creating centers of generosity. To know and joyfully share God's Stories of generosity.

The Generosity Project: 5G Session IV focuses on the phrase, "We want you to know …". Paul wanted the people who were a part of the Christian faith community in Corinth "to know" the witness and faith practice of their sister Christian community in Macedonia and their example of extreme generosity.

The first-century Christians who lived in the region of Macedonia were common, ordinary people. Their primary focus in daily life was how best to serve Christ. They were very poor, but they not only shared what they had, they gave beyond what was expected, resulting in personal great joy. They did not let their extreme poverty and many challenges stop them from recognizing God's abundant grace in their lives and singular desire to serve Christ.

In contrast, members of the church in Corinth had become engaged in quarreling and jealousy and were focused inward, on them. Paul reminds the Corinthians through the example of the sister churches in Macedonian that it's not about the amount of money but rather their response to what God has done in their lives and the desire to serve Jesus.

Paul challenges the Corinthians and us "to know" God's story and to live God's story in our daily life. The question, "Did you know?" becomes the impetus for sharing our own stories of generosity. So why should we tell and share stories of generosity? For the apostle Paul it was to:

- **encourage** the Christian community in Corinth to be generous – so we too want to encourage one another to be generous, in our households, congregations, synods and denominations;
- **replicate** the generosity of God in the Corinth faith community with the story of the generous response of the Macedonian churches – so we too want to replicate God's generosity in our households, congregations, synods, and across the ELCA;
- **excel** in generosity – so we too want to excel in generosity as reflected in the faith practice of joyfully sharing our time, talent, and money; and
- **"We want you to know …"** because of the grace of God granted us.

The research and "science of generosity"[1] tells us that being generous brings a multitude of personal benefits, including joyfulness, a longer and healthier life, less depression and simply a deepened sense of purpose in life. Yet, too often it is taboo in our culture and congregations to talk about money. But stop and think about it – don't we all wish for our loved ones to live, long, joy-filled lives – a life filled with purpose and meaning that comes from following Jesus?

For the Planning Team

Prepare

In preparation for Session IV, please read the biblical text and then explore the ideas in these two resources or others listed in Resources. Consider expanding the focus on gratitude to an all-congregation focus.

- "A month of gratitude," *Living Lutheran*, David Hanson, Nov. 8, 2017
- "Stewardship focus shifts to year-round giving, community building," Nov. 29, 2016

Ponder

- What was the core belief(s) of the Macedonia faith community and households?
- How did this shape their identity and economic decision-making?
- What new insights have you gained for your own life?

Pray

As we begin planning for The Generosity Project, Session IV, I pray:

1 University of Notre Dame. College of Arts & Letters, Science of Generosity. https://generosityresearch.nd.edu

[Links to Planing Guide will be added in the last round.]

PREPARATION – SESSION IV

REVIEW

☐ **PREPARATION:** Physical Space found in the Planning Guide p. __.

☐ **Invite:** Mountain Pose, Fountain Blessing, and ASL found in the Planning Guide p. __.

☐ **TGP: Vision, Principles and Goals** summarized, ready to share. Planning Guide p. __.

☐ **OVERVIEW on page 4:** Read and summarized in own words.

PREPARE

☐ **Preview**: Bible opened to God's Story found in 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (CEV)

☐ **Fun Facts & Map It on page 6:** Ready to share.

☐ **Map It:** Locate and mark city of Corinth in today's modern Greece. Identify cities of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea in northern Greece.

☐ **5G Connect:** Review preparations and instructions for Here I Stand: Money & Values Continuum Exercise on page 19.

☐ **Act It Out:** Use OPTION 1 on page 20 in Session IV or practice OPTION II with movement on page 22.

☐ **Reach Out**: Review the descriptions in Reach Out – A Glocal Story on page 27 and select one:

- **Book:** *Boxes for Katje*
- **Video:** YouTube: ELCA World Hunger: "Kanchan's Story" or another ELCA video

☐ **Center It:** Prepare five sheets of newsprint with the following words written at the top of each with one word or phrase per sheet: (1) Household 2) Community and school (3) Congregation (4) The name of *your* synod (5) ELCA and worldwide partners. Post each sheet on a wall with ample space between.

☐ **Take It Home on page 27:** Household Resources selected, displayed and/or ready to send home

SUPPLIES

- **Center It:**
  - ☐ sticky notes, enough for each person to have 8-10 sheets
  - ☐ five sheets of large sticky-backed newsprint, or with blue tape adhere sheets to wall

PRINT

☐ **Greet:** Generation Chart found in the Planning Guide p. __

☐ Start It Out on page 17: Table Tent with invitation to engage at the Gathering Table.

☐ **Live It Out!:** Printed and ready to send home or announce when and where available. LIVE IT OUT! on page 28

PROJECT, POST or PRINT

☐ PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW & CONVERSATION PROMPTS on page 15

☐ Sing on page 19: Words and melody ready to teach and sing.

SEQUENCE & SCRIPT – SESSION IV

Notes: Scripted text is in bold. Background information and instructions are in regular font style. Inform participants where to find their responses projected, posted or printed.

WE WELCOME Large Group Area

5 min

Greet

As people arrive, provide pre-made nametags or blanks ones for people to create their own at the registration/check-in area. Instruct participants to place stickers on their nametags that match the sticker next to the generation into which they were born, as indicated on the Generation-to-Generation Chart previously created. See p. __ in the Planning Guide.

Start It Out

After participants have checked in, invite them to the Gathering Table to engage in Start It Out by following the instructions on the Table Tent. (Draw a symbol for joy.)

Encourage folks to sit anywhere in the circle, or semi-circle of chairs, or on the large pillows scattered on the floor in the Large Group Area, once they have completed the activity.

Preview

Standing in front of or beside the Gathering Table, welcome everyone. Briefly share the flow of TGP: 5G Session IV so people will know what to anticipate in your time together. From your notes summarizing pp. __ in the Planning Guide, offer an overview of the Generosity Project, its vision, principles and goals. Share your hopes for the impact of TGP: 5G in your community of faith and its households.

Using your summary of the OVERVIEW – SESSION IV on page 4, lift up the theme: **In Session IV we ask, "Do you know – about God's story of extravagant generosity among the Macedonians?"** Point out the story in the Bible open on the Gathering Table. **We will follow the apostle Paul's encouragement and share our own stories of generosity.**

Fun Facts & Map It

- **The story of the Macedonians generosity was intended to motivate the Corinthians to be more generous, as they were long-standing competitors, like today's sports teams.[2]**
- Point to the globe or map: **God's Story is about a church in the city of Corinth in southern Greece. Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea were congregations in towns in an area called Macedonia in northern Greece.**

2 Bible Gateway. The Macedonia Believers Model Generosity

WE GATHER Large Group Area

15 min

Sing

Introduce the song leader(s). Project, post or print the songs selected or have the song leader introduce them through the echoing method. Sing the theme song repeated each session.

Invite

As we continue, lets take a moment to calm and center ourselves as we prepare for our time together and our focus on God's generosity. Comment on people's busy days and possible rush to be present for this session. **We are going to do this through stretching our bodies, taking deep breaths, and reminding ourselves of God's abundant generosity.**

Mountain Pose:
Please follow *my* instructions (or name the people leading/demonstrating this section), **as we use our whole bodies to affirm our identity as children of a generous God:**

You may stand up tall or sit up tall in a chair.

Place feet hip-width apart and pointing forward.

Press feet down into the earth.

Hands may be at your sides or palms together at your heart.

Lift your belly, head and heart.

Move your shoulders back and down away from your ears.

Your body is active and you are looking straight ahead.

Fountain Blessing:
State instructions while modeling the movements:

1. **Place palms together at the heart. Take a slow, deep breath through the nose and pause when the lungs are full.**
2. **Hold the pause as we bring our arms up overhead.**
3. **Exhale slowly, and "spray the fountain" as we our move arms out to our sides.**
4. **Bring our palms back together at heart center.**

Let's repeat the movement. Each time we breathe in and bring our arms up overhead (bring arms up), **it's like we are breathing in all that God has given us. And as we move our arms to our sides** (spray the fountain), **we are sharing God's generosity with others**. (Bring palms back together at the heart.)

Let's repeat that motion one more time. This time as we "spray the fountain" we will say together the blessing: "May I overflow with joy."

Stand up tall in Mountain Pose, or sit up tall in a chair.

Place palms together at heart center.

Take a slow, deep breath through the nose and pause when the lungs are full.

Hold the pause as we bring our arms up overhead.

As we "spray the fountain" say: *May I overflow with joy*

moving our arms to our sides and palms back together at heart center.

Invitation:
As we have committed this time to be together and learn more about God's generosity, we continue with the invocation or "invitation," that we may be filled with joy because of God's promise to be with us (Matthew 18:20).

We will incorporate American Sign Language sign for God, Jesus and Holy Spirit. Do them with me now.

This is the sign for God (make the sign for God and invite all to mimic it).

This is the sign for Jesus (make the sign for Jesus and invite all to mimic it).

This is the sign for Holy Spirit (make the sign for Holy Spirit and invite all to mimic it)

Let's practice them all together: God. Jesus. Holy Spirit.

Now, when I say the inviting words, you make the sign: We gather in the name of God, our Creator (ASL sign for "God"), **Jesus, our Savior** (ASL for "Jesus"), **and the Spirit, our Sustainer** (ASL for "Holy Spirit"). All: ***Amen.***

Light of Christ:
Invite someone to light the candle as the leader says: **We light the candle as a reminder that we are the light of Christ. May we reflect God's grace and generosity from generation to generation, at home, at school, at work and in our time together during this session.**

5G Connect

See the Supplement for a full description, explanation and instructions for leading the Here I Stand: Money & Values Continuum Exercise on page 19 .

Instructions to group: **We are going to engage in an activity called Here I Stand. It is a reflection activity using movement on an imaginary line in response to questions based on the ELCA Money Autobiography.**

The purpose of the Here I Stand activity is to identify experiences and individual opinions related to generosity and giving and to engage in further conversation about values that have shaped us.

Invite participants to place themselves in one continuous line, shoulder to shoulder, facing the leader. Since there is lots of rapid movement in this activity, give permission to those with mobility challenges to stay in one place but each time invite their response to the question.

There will be a series of questions. For each question, three to four possible responses are offered. I will point to the related locations on the imaginary line where you may choose to stand. To answer a question, you will move to the imaginary spot that represents your answer.

There are no right or wrong answers. It is important to remember that where one stands on the imaginary line is not as important as "why" that particular spot was chosen. Each person will have a different response and it will vary according to the question.

For each question taken from the Money Autobiography be ready to point to the extreme right, middle areas and extreme left on the imaginary line, indicating the choices of where to stand in response to a question.

Following each question, we will take time to reflect on and discuss our responses. Allow people time to move into position following each question. Use a variety of approaches for people to briefly reflect upon and discuss why they chose a particular spot in response to a question. Here are some suggestions:

- Invite people clustered in each of the specific points on the continuum to talk to one another about why they chose that spot.
- Invite several volunteers at opposite ends of the continuum to come forward and talk to one another, for the group to over hear, about why they chose that spot.
- Call upon a few representatives from each of the points in the continuum to share with the entire group their responses to why they are standing where they are.
- Invite participants to share their response with a person wearing a different colored dot than their own.

In preparation for We Hear, ask participants to form a small group by finding four people who have a different colored dot or symbol than their own. Instruct them to pull chairs together as they prepare to receive God's Story.

WE HEAR Large Group Area

15 min

Act it Out – God's Story

Take a deep breath, breathe and relax. Please make your self comfortable as we listen to God's story of the Macedonian's generosity found in 2 Corinthians 8:1-9. (CEV)

Read slowly: **My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia have shown others how kind God is. 2Although they were going through hard times and were very poor, they were glad to give generously. 3They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because they wanted to. 4They even asked and begged us to let them have the joy of giving their money for God's people. 5And they did more than we had hoped. They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do. 8I am not ordering you to do this. I am simply testing how real your love is by comparing it with the concern that others have shown. 9You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor, so that you could become rich.**

In your mixed-age small groups pull your chairs together. Sit knee-to-knee so you can easily hear one another.

Your assignment is to create a 280-character tweet for sharing this story. If you do not have someone in your group who knows about Twitter, then come up with a newspaper or 6 o'clock news headline for this story. Give everyone time to complete the task. Then invite each group to share their tweet or headline with the larger group.

We are now going to act out the story. (Option 1)

- **Each small group will be given a sentence or two of the text just read.** There is a scritp on page 21 for preparing prior to the session.
- **Someone in your group please read out loud to the other members of your small group the section of the story you received.**
- **You will have three to four minutes to decide as a small group how you will act out your portion of the story for the large group. This is to be like a silent movie. You may share your part of the story using actions and any props found in this room, but no or talking to tell the story.**
- **Select one person in your group to read your part of the story as the other members of your group act it out.** (Yes, they may talk to one another as they plan their part.)

Ring the chime or bell to call time. Let everyone know that you will nod to each group to stand when it is their turn to act out their portion of the Bible story. When all have finished, thank everyone for their participation in helping us "to know" and share the story.

Talk It Out – Your story. My story.

In your same mixed-age small groups, discuss the following questions: Inform people where they will find the questions projected, posted or printed.

- **Name a time when you were surprised by someone's unexpected generosity?**
- **What is the difference between being happy and joyful?**
- **When are you the happiest?**
- **What brings you joy?**

Reach Out – A Glocal Story

Do you know ...? Do you know of all the examples and stories of generosity in our world? Introduce the "glocal" story you have selected to share. Point out on the globe or map the location of the story. The choices are summarized in Reach Out – A Glocal Story on page 27.

- **Book:** *Boxes for Katje*, Candice Flemming, 2003.
- **Video: "Kanchan's Story,"** ELCA World Hunger.
- Or select another brief video focusing on your congregation's outreach, a story from your synod or other examples of the ELCA's mission and generosity around the world. ELCA stories are on the ELCA YouTube channel.

If time allows, invite the mixed-age small groups to further explore the story just received:

- **What were the core beliefs or values for the Macedonians?**
- **What are the core beliefs or values in the story we just received?**
- **What are my core beliefs about generosity?**

After giving time for the small groups to discuss the questions, ask them to move to the other area.

Now, let's move to our Small Group Area to sit around the tables. Be seated at a table with your household, or with the people you walked or drove. Households, please welcome someone who is attending solo as an extended member of your family for this time together. "Solo" folks, have fun choosing a role or title – are you the visiting aunt, uncle, cousin or friend?

Or you may invite those attending solo to create a small group of three to five people and to create a name for their new "household."

WE SHARE Small Group Area

20 min

Center It – Remember It

Why do you think it was important for the apostle Paul to share the story of the Macedonians with the congregation and people in Corinth? Pause. Receive and affirm all responses. **Yes, it was to:**

- **encourage the Christian community in Corinth;**
- **replicate the generosity of God by telling the story of the Macedonian's generosity; and**
- **he wanted others to also excel in generosity.**

We too want to make Christ known… .
We want to:

- **encourage one another in our households, congregations and communities;**
- **replicate the spirit of generosity in our households, congregations and communities; and**
- **excel in generosity as we practice our faith through the giving of our time, talent and money.**

This is the time for sharing our stories and creating reminders of the story. Later we will discover how this activity will become a part of the centerpiece for taking home. Here is what to do: There are five sheets of newsprint on the wall displaying the following words:

1. **Household**
2. **Community and school**
3. **Congregation**
4. **Name of *our* synod**
5. **ELCA and worldwide partners**

There are sticky notes on the tables. You are invited to write or illustrate examples of "Do You Know?" – the acts and stories of generosity and kindness you witness in:

1. **Your household** (cleaning your room, loading the dishwasher)
2. **The community** (donating items to a food pantry, walking dogs at a shelter) **and school** (fund raising for a classmate who has cancer)
3. **The congregation** (weekly offering, singing in the choir, helping with vacation Bible school, donating books to a school)
4. **Our synod** (Malaria Campaign)
5. **And the ELCA** (companion synod support, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran Disaster Response).

One example per sticky note, please. Once you have recorded examples of your acts of generosity and that of others, place the sticky notes on the appropriate labeled newsprint sheet posted on the walls around us. The examples do not need to be your own acts of generosity. They can be ones you know of.

Invite everyone to walk around to the various sheets and view the "stories" of generosity.

Ask a volunteer to read out loud two to three examples from each of the five sheets. Following each reading, invite the entire group to shout; ***"Now we know!"***

Connect It – Church and Home

Instruct people to quickly gather and huddle by households, including households newly created by the solo participants or households extended with solo guests. Each household group is asked to discuss:

What will you do different this week to:

- **Encourage one another in being generous?**
- **Replicate the stories of generosity and God's kindness that you have received this session?**
- **Excel in generosity?**

If time allows ask households to briefly share their responses with the group.

We will now move back to the Large Group Area and form a circle around the Gathering Table. Just as we gather around the Lord's Table, we gather around this table, a reminder of the common, ordinary tables where we gather and practice our faith in daily life.

WE SEND Large Group Area

5 min

And now we know – our stories show others the character of God. Point to the newsprint on the walls with stories posted on them. **These are the stories of generosity in our households, schools, communities and church throughout the world. We are freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. Every act of service, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence and joy in God's grace and generosity.**[3]

Sing

As we depart, we will sing a closing song together. Sing "Oh, God is Good" or another song of your choosing.

Pray

Let's pray together. (Lead as an echo prayer or indicate where the words are found.)

Thank you, God, for all that grows.

Thank you for your promise, seen in rainbows.

Thank you, God, for stars that shine.

Thank you for these friends of mine.

Thank you, God, for the moon and sun.

Thank you for all that's given – for everyone!

Help us, Lord, to learn to share,

To be more generous everywhere. Amen.

Invite additional individual and household prayers.

Bless

Turn to at least two others. Make the sign of the cross on their forehead or in the palm of the hand, and say, "(Insert name)**), because of God's generosity, may you overflow with joy."**

After all have been blessed by one another, in a bold, loud voice lead the following:

We are made in the image of (prompt all to echo or respond) ***God*!**

God is a (prompt all to echo or respond) ***generous God*!**

We are made to be (prompt all to echo or respond) ***generous too!***

Go, be a blessing to others as you serve God with grace-filled, generous hearts and hands. All: ***AMEN.***

3 "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. https://www.elca.org/dayofservice.

WE LIVE Large Group Area

24h
Everyday

Take It Home

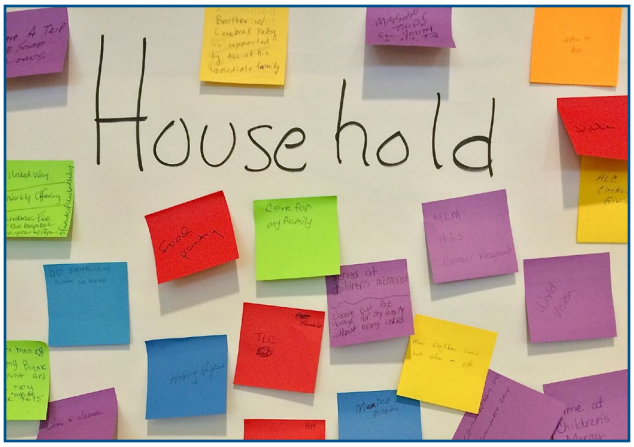
As you depart:

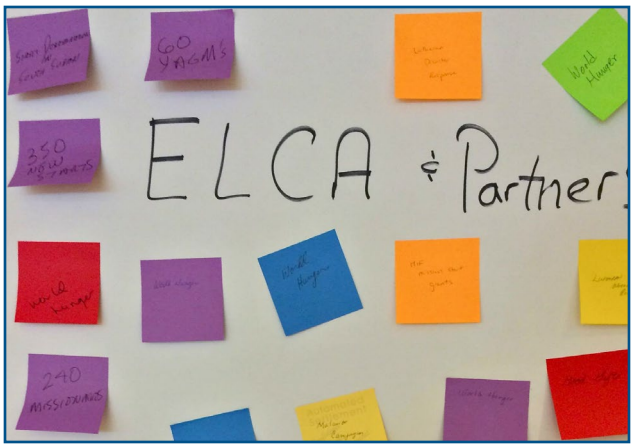
- **Take with you sticky notes from the newsprint sheets – select sticky notes other than your own and as many sticky notes as you initially wrote.**
- **These are your take home "center pieces," visual reminders of God's Story of generosity seen in the Macedonians – and each of you. Place them on your table, doors or the bathroom mirror. Pray for these ministries this week.**
- **Practice all week long the Fountain Blessing, songs we sang and our closing prayer – in the car, mealtimes and bedtime.**
- **Bless one another when leaving or returning to your home each day.**
- **Call, text or email your "solo" person, with their permission, to bless them this week.**

Direct participants to the TGP: 5G Resource Table and any resources placed there.

Live It Out

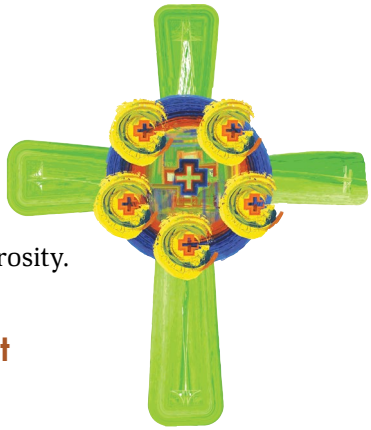
LIVE IT OUT! on page 28 and 29 may be shared at the end of the session or shared with participants at a later time using your congregation's communication and social media tools.





SESSION IV SUPPLEMENTS

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW & CONVERSATION PROMPTS – SESSION IV



God's Story: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Foundation: "HOW do we create centers of generosity?"

Focus: Creating centers of generosity. To know and joyfully share God's stories of generosity.

WE WELCOME Fun Fact

Paul told the Corinthians the story of the Macedonians generosity to motivate them, as they were long standing competitors – similar to today's competing sport teams.

WE GATHER Invite

I overflow with joy

We gather in the name of God, our Creator; Jesus, our Savior; and the Spirit, our Sustainer. Amen

WE HEAR Talk It Out

- Name a time when you were surprised by someone's unexpected generosity.
- What is the difference between being happy and joyful?
- When are you the happiest?
- What brings you joy?

WE HEAR Reach Out

- What were the core beliefs or values of the Macedonians?
- What are the core beliefs or values in the story we just received?
- What are my core beliefs about generosity?

WE SHARE Connect It

This week, how will you:

- encourage one another in being generous?
- replicate the stories of generosity you have heard this session?
- excel in generosity?

WE SEND Pray

Thank you, God, for all that grows. Thank you, God, for rainbows. Thank you for the stars that shine. Thank you, God, for these friends of mine. Thank you, for the moon and sun, Thank you, God, for all you've done – for everyone! Help us Lord to learn to share. Thank you, God, for your care. Amen.

WE SEND Bless

(Insert person's name), *because of God's generosity, may you overflow with joy.*

WE WELCOME Start It Out

Draw a symbol of joy.
You may draw anywhere on the tablecloth.

FOLD

WE WELCOME Start It Out

Draw a symbol of joy.
You may draw anywhere on the tablecloth.

FOLD

BOTTOM

WE GATHER Sing

Songs are suggested for Session IV to complement the Scripture and the theme. Some of the songs are public domain and others you will need to check with your congregation's copyright and annual licensing agreements before using.

SESSION IV – 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

- "Give Thanks With A Grateful Heart" – Henry Smith. 1970. Integrity's Hosanna! Music
- "Oh God, You Are My God (Step-by-Step)" – Michael W. Smith, Vineyard Music USA
- "Take My Life and Let It Be" – Frances Havergal, 1874

It is not necessary to have a piano or instruments for accompaniment, but if you are blessed with people with such gifts – engage them!

Use your Planning Team's song leaders to select, prepare and teach the songs each session. Consider selecting one song to serve as a theme song and sing it every session.

Be intentional about including songs familiar to each generation as well as camp-type songs that can easily be sung by heart.

WE GATHER 5G Connect

Here I Stand: Money & Values Continuum Exercise

The purpose of the multi-age Here I Stand interaction is to identify past experiences and individual opinions related to sharing, saving and spending and to engage in further conversation about values or experiences that have shaped one's giving.

For this exercise you need an open space where participants may easily form a line, standing shoulder-to-shoulder and facing the leader. Create enough room for people to easily move along an imaginary line in response to verbally or visually stated questions.

This activity works well with providing only verbal prompts. If you choose to project the questions, do so one question at a time. Be aware of the age range taking part in this activity. Choose three or four questions from those listed that fit your audience. Re-phrase the questions so any age may easily answer and engage in the activity.

Read over the questions on the next page so you are familiar with them. For each question, be prepared to point to the extreme right, middle areas and extreme left on the imaginary line with an explanation of what these locations represent related to participants' answers to each question.

Following each question, allow people time to move into position. Before moving on to the next question, ask people to briefly reflect upon and discuss why they chose a particular spot in response to a question. Use a variety of approaches to stimulate discussion:

- Invite people clustered in each of the specific continuum areas to turn to one another and share why they chose that spot on the imaginary line.
- Invite several volunteers at opposite ends of the continuum to come forward and talk to one another about their responses – allowing the group to listen-in.
- Call upon a few representatives from each of the points in the continuum to share with the entire group why they are standing where they are.
- Invite participants to find someone with a different colored dot than their own with whom to share.

This exercise is based on Writing a Personal Money Autobiography, a resource of the ELCA Rediscover Macedonia ministry. Additional questions, found in the original inventory, may be added to this activity as your time allows.

Here I Stand: Money & Values Continuum Exercise

1. **When you were about the age of 10, or as an elementary age child now, did (do) you feel rich or poor? [Emphasize that the focus is on "feel" not the actual reality.]**
   - Very poor
   - Moderately poor
   - Moderately rich
   - Wealthy

2. **Did you (do you) worry about money as a child?**
   - Yes, all the time
   - Sometimes
   - No, not very often
   - Never

3. **Are you a spender or a saver?**
   - Spend it the moment I have it
   - Depends on the situation
   - Save every penny

4. **When sharing or being generous, I prefer to:**
   - Give a larger amount to one recipient
   - Give smaller amounts to various recipients

5. **When sharing, I prefer to share my:**
   - Time
   - Talent
   - Treasure

6. **My preferred means of giving is by:**
   - Cash
   - Check
   - Credit card/Pay Pal
   - Automatic withdrawal
   - Apple Pay (digital wallet)

7. **When it comes to the ministries of our congregation (or insert synod or ELCA) I believe I:**
   - Know and easily share the stories
   - Am well informed
   - Could learn more

WE HEAR Act It Out

OPTION 1

God's Story of the generosity of the Macedonians
2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (CEV)

- Prior to the session, print out the verses of the scritp on page 21.
- Cut the verses into individual strips prior to the session.
- Each mixed-age small group will be given a sentence or verse of the text to read and act out.
  - If you have fewer than nine small groups or households, give several groups more than one sentence or verse. If you have more groups than verses, combine groups or have two or more groups act out the same verse.
- As they prepare, someone in each small group is to read to the other members of their group the verse(s) of the story they received.
  - Inform everyone that they will have only three to four minutes to decide as a small group how they will act out or portray their portion of the story for the large group.
  - They may use actions and any props found in the room, but no verbal sounds or words in the sharing of their portion of the story.
  - One member of each group is to be the reader of their assigned verse while the group acts out the verse of the story.
- Call time.
- Invite each group to stand as it is their turn and in order of the verses, read and act out their segment of God's Story.

My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia have shown others how kind God is.

Although they were going through hard times and were very poor, they were glad to give generously.

They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because they wanted to.

They even asked and begged us to let them have the joy of giving their money for God's people.

And they did more than we had hoped. They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do.

Titus was the one who got you started doing this good thing, so we begged him to have you finish what you had begun.

You do everything better than anyone else. You have stronger faith. You speak better and know more. You are eager to give, and you love us better. Now you must give more generously than anyone else.

I am not ordering you to do this. I am simply testing how real your love is by comparing it with the concern that others have shown.

You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor, so that you could become rich.

WE HEAR Act It Out

OPTION II with movement

God's Story of the generosity of the Macedonians
2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (CEV)

Gathering:
Invite people to sit on the floor or in a chair, as they are comfortable.

Today we will encounter the Bible story through movement. As I lead you through the various movements please adapt them to match your body's needs.

Chime

We will begin by ringing a chime or bell. I will ring it, and I would like you to raise your hand when you can no longer hear the sound of the chime.

Ring chime. When all hands are raised, instruct people to relax their arms, set down the chime and move on to Breath.

Breath

We will take three nice, full breaths. For our breathing I need two helpers – one for us to listen to and one for us to look at. I need one helper to count to three as we inhale and again count to three as we exhale. We will listen to you. I also need one helper to hold both their hands in front of them like they are holding a soft ball. As we inhale, you will grow the space between your hands. As we exhale, you will shrink the space between your hands. We will watch you.

Assist the two helpers as needed as they lead the group in taking three nice, full breaths, both inhaling and exhaling. Thank the two helpers.

Reading of Story:

As we listen to our story the first time, I invite you to lie down and get comfortable, whether on your belly or back. You can also sit in a tall, relaxed form on the floor or on a chair. Choose whatever is most comfortable for you. Close your eyes and listen as I read you the story of the generous people of Macedonia.

Read: 2 **Corinthians 8:1-9** (CEV). **My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia have shown others how kind God is. [2]Although they were going through hard times and were very poor, they were glad to give generously. [3]They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because they wanted to. [4]They even asked and begged us to let them have the joy of giving their money for God's people. [5]And they did more than we had hoped. They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do. [6]Titus was the one who got you started doing this good thing, so we begged him to have you finish what you had begun. [7]You do everything better than anyone else. You have stronger faith. You speak better and know more. You are eager to give, and you love us better. Now you must give more generously than anyone else. [8]I am not ordering you to do this. I am simply testing how real your love is by comparing it with the concern that others have shown. [9]You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor, so that you could become rich.**

Now open your eyes and come to a tall, seated or standing position.

Second Reading of the Story

Now we will add yoga movements to go along with the story. I will give you instructions for each movement before I read the part of the story the movement accompanies.

We begin in Upward Mountain Pose. Stand with feet hip-width apart and arms straight up overhead. Palms face each other and fingers extend up. Press feet down and lift belly, head and heart. Keep your shoulders back and down. You can also do this with your arms while sitting.

While in Upward Mountain Pose read: **My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia have shown others how kind God is.**

Next we will do Crescent Moon. From Upward Mountain, breathe in, press feet down and stretch to the right slightly, curving your body to look like part of a crescent moon. Lengthen both sides of the body. You can also do this while sitting.

While stretching in Crescent Moon to the right, read: **[2]Although they were going through hard times and were very poor, they were glad to give generously.**

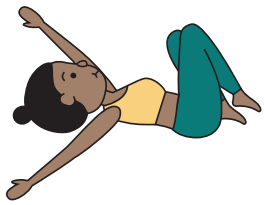
Exhale and come back to center. Now stretch into Crescent Moon to the left. While stretching in Crescent Moon to the left, read: **[3]They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because they wanted to. Exhale and come back to center.**

Next, we will do Arm Swings. Inhale and turn palms outward. Raise your arms out to the side and then overhead. Exhale and lower your arms back to your sides. Move your arms with your breath. See how slowly and smoothly you can move, like a bird flying in slow motion.

While doing Arm Swings, read: **[4]They even asked and begged us to let them have the joy of giving their money for God's people. [5]And they did more than we had hoped. They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do.**

Now we will do a Twist. You can do this in a chair or on the floor.

Demonstrate a Chair Twist: **Sit in a chair with feet on the floor, hip-width apart. Press down through the feet and sitting bones. Stretch up through the top of the head. Take the left hand across to the right knee and place the right hand on the back of the chair. Slowly and gently turn your belly, heart and head toward the back of the chair, possibly looking out across your right shoulder. Inhale and lengthen your spine, exhale and twist. Keep your shoulders back and down.**



Floor Twist: **Lie down on your back on the floor. Stretch your arms out flat to either side of you. Bend you knees, placing your feet on the floor. Lean your knees to the left. Slowly and gently, turn your belly, heart and head to the right. Inhale and lengthen your spine, exhale and twist. Keep your shoulders back and down.**

As you are in the Twist, read: **[6]Titus was the one who got you started doing this good thing, so we begged him to have you finish what you had begun.**

Inhale to untwist and look forward. Repeat on the other side.

As you are in the Twist to the other side, read: [7]**You do everything better than anyone else. You have stronger faith. You speak better and know more. You are eager to give, and you love us better. Now you must give more generously than anyone else.**

Our last movement is Chair Pose. Stand with legs hip-width apart, like in Mountain pose. Or you may sit with your feet on the floor hip-width apart. Inhale and raise and straighten your arms overhead or by your ears. Exhale, bend your knees and take thighs back like you are sitting in an imaginary chair. Keep knees in line with your feet. Lift the belly, head and heart. Feel your strength.

While in Chair Pose read: [8]**I am not ordering you to do this. I am simply testing how real your love is by comparing it with the concern that others have shown. 9 You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor, so that you could become rich.**

Now return to Mountain Pose. Good job everyone.

Third Reading of Story

As we listen to our story the last time I invite you to lie down and get comfortable, whether on your belly or back. You can also sit in a tall, relaxed way on the floor or on a chair. Choose whatever is most comfortable for you.

Close your eyes and relax. I will ring the chime. Raise your hand when you can no longer hear the sound of the chime.

Ring chime. When all hands are raised, invite them to lower them, followed by the final reading of the story of the generous people of Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (CEV). My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia have shown others how kind God is. 2 Although they were going through hard times and were very poor, they were glad to give generously. 3 They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because they wanted to. 4 They even asked and begged us to let them have the joy of giving their money for God's people. 5 And they did more than we had hoped. They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do.6 Titus was the one who got you started doing this good thing, so we begged him to have you finish what you had begun. 7 You do everything better than anyone else. You have stronger faith. You speak better and know more. You are eager to give, and you love us better. Now you must give more generously than anyone else.8 I am not ordering you to do this. I am simply testing how real your love is by comparing it with the concern that others have shown. 9 You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor, so that you could become rich.

Now open your eyes and come to a tall, seated or standing position.

RESOURCES FOR SESSION IV

Session IV – Creating centers of generosity

The following books, articles, web links and media resources are suggested for Session IV.

OVERVIEW Planning Team Prepare

- "A month of gratitude" *Living Lutheran*, David Hanson, Nov. 8, 2017
- "Stewardship focus shifts to year-round giving, community building," Nov. 29, 2016

WE HEAR Reach Out – A Glocal Story

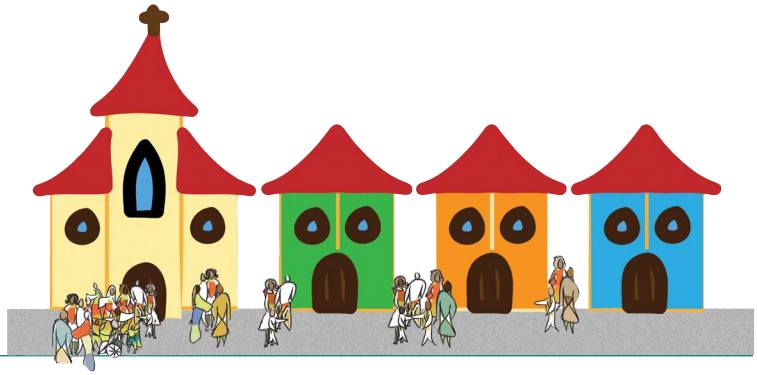
Select one of the following to share. Be prepared to point out the location of the story you select on a map or globe.

- **Book:** *Boxes for Katje*, by Candace Fleming. After World War II, there is little left in Katje's town of Olst in Holland. Her family must go without everyday things. Then one spring morning the postman pedals his bicycle down Katje's street to deliver a mysterious box – a box from America!
- An American girl has sent the box from Mayfield, Ind. Her package is part of a goodwill effort to help the people of Europe. What's inside so delights Katje that she sends off a letter of thanks – beginning an exchange that will affect the girls, as well as their townspeople.
- **YouTube:** "Kanchan's Story" ELCA World Hunger
- The ELCA has its own YouTube channel where stories of "God's work. Our hands." are shown from around the world. Select one or more to share during Session IV, or in worship or post on the congregation's web site. ELCA YouTube page

WE LIVE Take It Home

- ELCA day of service
- "Generous children: Children's lessons on generosity," Salvation Army
- "How to Create a Narrative Budget," *Living Lutheran*, Grace Duddy, Jan 16, 2013
- Resources for personal and household stewardship, ELCA

LIVE IT OUT!



Creating Centers For Generosity: The HOW

Conversation Goal

Become a center of generosity by creating a household purpose statement and commitment to practice generosity 24–7–365

Conversation #4

Make A Plan

It is time to form a plan around the conversations that have engaged you so far. You have become informed on your household giving patterns where you could pour out care and generosity. Now it is time to take action!

Key Question

How can we begin to fully live a life of intentional generosity in response to God's love for us?

Discussion Prompts

- What is our purpose as a family?
- How does that purpose inform our sharing and generosity?
- What two items from those we brainstormed in Session 3 do you want to commit to our giving? How much of our treasure? Our time? Our talents?
- How can we commit to giving and serving our church and community of faith?

God's Story

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (CEV). "My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia have shown others how kind God is. Although they were going through hard times and were very poor, they were glad to give generously. They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because they wanted to. They even asked and begged us to let them have the joy of giving their money for God's people. And they did more than we had hoped. They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us; just as God wanted them to do…I am not ordering you to do this. I am simply testing how real your love is by comparing it with the concern that others have shown. You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor so that you could become rich."

Affirmation + Blessing

God, use us to respond joyfully to the needs of this world with our acts of generosity.

LIVE IT OUT!

Action 4

Our Household Purpose Statement

Two Places We Choose To Give Generously of our Time, Talents and/or Financial Treasure

1. _____

2. _____

How do these two choices support our household purpose statement?

The Generosity Challenge

How many pairs of socks and undies get washed each week in this household? Count them. What is 10% of that number? What would it mean to purchase new socks and undies – 10% of the number we wear? How hard would this be to do? Who needs socks and undies? To whom or where would we go to donate them?