

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

LESSON

Counting our blessings

KEY VERSE

“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” (Jas. 1:17)

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: What does The Club call the Christmas baskets they made?
A: “Poor baskets”
- Q: Why does the rest of The Club think Gooz is poor?
A: Because Gooz had Christmas baskets on her doorstep when they dropped her off
- Q: What begins showing up on all of the doorsteps in Wildwood?
A: Gift bags
- Q: Who joins Tiffany to discover the identity of the Christmas Bandit?
A: Ned
- Q: Who is the Christmas Gift-Giving Bandit?
A: Gooz

HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: Why did the fact that some mysterious person was giving out gift bags drive Ned and Tiffany nuts?

A: Tiffany could not grasp why someone would freely give to others without trying to get anything in return. She would only consider giving if her name was carved into something in return. On the other hand, Ned is selfish, and he couldn't believe someone would be so generous. But to his credit, once he discovered how corrupt Tiffany's heart was he got a queasy feeling that he had probably made a mistake by choosing to work with her.

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

Q: Scripture tells us that it is better to give than to receive. This seems backward. How could giving possibly be better than receiving?

A: Giving freely is a very godly thing to do. If we give to others humbly, without expecting anything in return, we are exercising an important spiritual muscle that often gets very little use. And as this "muscle" gains strength, those around us are blessed and begin to see God in us, drawing them toward Him. This selfless act also changes us. We become less preoccupied with our needs and wants and more interested in using what we have for a greater purpose—an eternal purpose. This change is both a freeing one and an exciting one to experience. There are indeed deep blessings that we will never experience unless we take the appropriate, sacrificial actions necessary to prepare our hearts for them. In this sense, it really is better to give (Acts 20:35).

"I" CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. Have you ever participated in a program to help those who are in need at Christmastime? Some churches sponsor programs to give gifts to needy children in other countries or make gift baskets to give to families in the neighbourhood. Others schedule trips to sing Christmas carols in local nursing homes. What are some of the things you can do as a family to show God's love to others during this time of year?
2. Gooz expressed how blessed she and her family were. She "overflowed" with God's goodness. That is a wonderful attitude we should have as well. What are some ways that God has blessed you and your family this year? Make a list; then ask other family members to add to your list. On Christmas morning, spend some time reading from the list and thanking God for all of His good gifts to your family this year.

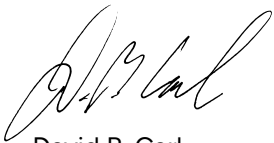
True Riches

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Christ came to set us free. Certainly this means free from hell, but it also means more than that. There are a bunch of things we need to be free from, and greed is one of them. Tiffany has more money and possessions than she will ever need, but she always wants more. Ned has very little, but he wants money and possessions so that he can be powerful and important. Both of these are bad motives. Gooz has even less than Ned, but she is free. She is free of greed, certainly, but she is also free to think of others. She is free to actually enjoy giving to others. Tiffany and others like her are willing to give too, but they want to get something in return such as recognition or control over the ones to whom they give.

Giving through tithes and offerings is a command in Scripture. I have heard these two words used together all of my life, and I had come to think of them as being synonymous. They are not. Tithes are 10 per cent (or more) of your income given to God through your church. Offerings are above and beyond your tithe. It would seem that God has a lot of giving in mind for us. Why would He want us to do all that giving? What's the point?

Giving is one of the classic spiritual disciplines. These are things we can do that will prepare the soil of our soul so that God can come in and grow something new and wonderful. These disciplines do not make God like us more or help us earn our way up the ladder of spiritual success. They are things that, if done well, will bring humility and a greater ability to understand God's Word and His inner promptings. They are a gift to us from God so that we can experience deeper intimacy with Him. Giving is one of those gifts. It is not a demand from God in order to get our money away from us. Giving is a gift from God, which, if done correctly, will help us avoid the traps that come with greed and selfishness. Joyful giving also teaches us about the giving part of God's character. The more we understand about God's character, the more in awe of Him we will become. The command to give is in itself a gift to us.



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