



Children's Resources Facing the Truth

Young children and families

Just What I Wanted!

Parents find and carefully wrap objects and pictures representing things God has given us. (For example, flowers, photos of the family, favorite foods, a clock, a Bible, or money.) Parents place the small wrapped gifts in a larger box and carefully wrap the larger box (in recycled newspaper comics, of course). A tag on the box reads: "To the (name) family from God." Parents surprise the kids and get excited about this package from God. Kids open each present and the family talks about what God gave them.

After emptying the boxes and looking at each photographed item, family members talk about what they can give to someone else. What do people need? What kind of gifts does God want us to give? Kids can find things to wrap and put in the box. Family members can research together the needs of the community and the opportunities for service so they can make their own box tag and give away their gifts.

Lower Elementary

What Gets in the Way?

Demonstrate the power of barriers with these active games.

1. Find advertising in your local papers—Sundays are best—that is targeted at children. Spread ads for toys on the floor in a wide line, and tape them to the floor for safety. Talk with children about the influence advertising might have on their desires for toys and other items. Designate one side of the room “Too Much” and the other side of the room “Enough.” Gather the group on the “Too Much” side of the room. Challenge kids to leap over the ads in order to get to the other side. Make it hard. Remove the ads little by little and see if the jumping gets easier. Talk about the meaning of the game.
2. An obstacle course can demonstrate what gets in the way of going to church on Sunday. (Before embarking on this activity, check with your congregation’s worship leaders regarding the appropriateness of using worship space for this activity.) Set up two identical obstacle courses in a large space—or set up just one course in the center aisle at church. Players race to complete the course and get to church. They pick up a soccer ball and bounce or foot-dribble it; run around a laptop computer ten times; jump over a small television; throw a pillow up in the air and catch it; and pretend to rake something for twenty seconds. Set up a small altar as the goal and ring a hand bell when the first player arrives there. For safety considerations, plan to time children or run the course with a couple of kids at a time. Talk together about “obstacles” to living in Jesus’ way.

Upper Elementary

Pass the Plate

Here's one way to engage the question, "What makes it so hard for us to give more money to God?" Kids divide into two teams, with half of each team on opposite sides of the room. Hand the first person on each team an offering plate filled with play money—plates should have equal amounts of play money. The first player runs across the room with the offering plate. When money flies out, the players can use anything except their hands to retrieve it and return it to the offering plate. Play continues back and forth across the room. At the end, announce that the winner is not the first team player to cross the finish line, but the team that finishes with the most money remaining in their offering plate. Talk about the meaning of offerings, "running-with-money," and generosity.

Give or Pass

Seat the group at a table and present a piece of pie on a plate to the first kid at your side. (Conceal other pieces of pie.) Say, "I'm giving this pie to (name)." Stop there. Wait and see what happens. How do the kids feel? How does the pie person feel?

Now pull out another piece of pie and give it to the person to the other side of you. Say, "Please pass this pie." They will undoubtedly pass it around the circle. If so, pull out another piece of pie and pass it until everyone has pie. Talk about the differences and similarities between passing and giving. Which one was easier? God doesn't only give us blessings. God passes goodness on to us so that we can pass it on to another. God doesn't see just one of us; God sees all of us.

While you're eating, study some pie charts from your congregation's budget or your denominational materials. Ask kids to complete a chart that shows what they think their family does with its money and time. You might also make pie charts that illustrate the numerical ideas behind tithing. Send the charts home with instructions for further discussion.