

GOD IS GENEROUS SO WE CAN BE, TOO

a children's message and activity by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

(Scripture references: Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 9:10)

(Props: one medium-sized flower pot filled with soil; a medium-sized stone; a large heart cut from red construction paper and decorated with many different kinds of seeds.)

Today we are going to think about how our generous God wants us to share generously with hungry people. Look at this stone. (Storyteller holds up the stone.) What do you think it feels like? (Storyteller allows the children to touch the stone and to answer the question.)

You're right. It's hard, and cold, and rough. (Storyteller includes other correct answers the children gave.)

We'll plant the stone in this pot of soil. Who will help me? (Storyteller asks a volunteer to plant the stone.)

Do you think that the stone will grow? Do stones actually grow other stones? (Storyteller allows the children to answer.)

You're right! When you plant a stone, it won't grow and produce other stones. (Storyteller digs the stone out of the flower pot and holds it up.) In the Bible, God told people that sometimes their hearts were like this stone — hard, and cold, and rough — and nothing good could grow from them because they didn't care about God or other people. But then God gave them a promise - to change their hearts to become hearts of flesh. (Storyteller holds up the large red construction paper heart decorated with seeds.)

What do you think about when you see this heart? (Storyteller allows the children to answer.) That's right! When we look at a heart like this, we think about love. (Storyteller takes a seed from off of the heart.) What would happen if I took a seed from this heart of love and planted it in the pot? Would it grow? (Storyteller allows a volunteer to plant the seed and lets the children answer her question.)

Of course it would. One plant would grow. (Storyteller takes several more seeds from the heart.) But what if we were to plant more seeds? (Storyteller allows the children to answer.) More plants would grow, right? If we took all these seeds that are glued to this heart and planted them, they would grow into beans, and corn, and carrots, and lots of other healthy food. Then we could share that food with hungry people.

When all the seeds are taken off of this heart, will new seeds magically reappear? (Storyteller allows the children to answer.) That's right. They won't! But the Bible tells us something really amazing about God. God's heart is so full of love and generosity that we receive everything we need. Then when we are generous and share our seeds, or money, or food with hungry people, God increases the amount of our seeds and other resources so that we can keep on giving. Then people will see how great God is!

(In their Sunday School classes, the children cut out hearts from red construction paper and write "God is Generous" in the centre. Then they glue seeds on the heart. They also plant a seed in potting soil and are given instructions on how to care for it. While the children are working on their craft, the Sunday School teacher can ask several of the following questions — appropriately rephrased according to the understanding of each age group — to ascertain whether or not the children understood the message: What does God want our hearts to be like? When our hearts are full of love for God and other people, will we want to share with others? Do we have to worry about whether God will continue to give us seeds or money or food when we give generously to other people? Who will get the glory when we share with hungry people?)

Copyright Sonya VanderVeen Feddema 2010.