

THE GENEROSITY PROJECT

Growing in God's Grace Generation to Generation

LIVE IT OUT!

A Household Supplement
Connecting Church
and Home



A synod, congregation and household ministry



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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THE GENEROSITY PROJECT

Growing in God's Grace Generation to Generation

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LIVE IT OUT!

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LIVE IT OUT!

Take home conversation starters to nurture the practice of generosity in our households and daily lives.

Live It Out! is a household supplement to The Generosity Project: 5G Sessions and Worship. The Live It Out! conversation starters are intended for households with one or more members, those sharing living space temporarily or permanently; for immediate family, extended family; and friends of all ages and generations. They are intended for those who may experience multiple religious traditions or no faith practices in their daily life.

Each conversation session consists of a theme, a goal, a key question, further discussion prompts and words of affirmation and blessing. Corresponding activity pages help launch conversations into understanding and action.

The goal of the Generosity Challenge is to explore the meaning of tithing and the idea of sharing 10 percent of all we earn or own. It is meant to trigger further conversation – and a generous response.

The six household conversation starters may be used in six days, six weeks, six months or as part of a congregational initiative related to The Generosity Project. Allow plenty of time for these important conversations. May these conversations and activities help shape the practice of generosity now and for many generations to come!

Note: If a household of one, please substitute “me” for “we” and “my” for “our.” Think about those with whom you could have these conversations – extended family members or a small group of friends.

LIVE IT OUT!



Being Generous: The WHY

Conversation Goal

Identify this household's giving patterns and practices

Conversation #1

Our Household Identity and Story

Do your family members know how much you share and give of your financial wealth? With so many methods available to exchange currency, it is easy for the significance of giving to be overlooked and unknown to one another. Research shows children learn sound financial health and generosity when they see parents and significant adults model this as a priority in their lives.

If you do not already have an established pattern of giving, consider a conversation to discuss when and how you as a household might begin.

Key Question

Does each person in this household know how we share and are generous with what we have been given?

Discussion Prompts

- How does this household talk about money? What words do we use?
- Who decides how we distribute our money, especially related to regular giving?
- What is tithing? Do we do it? (Use the internet to look up the word and meaning)
- Do we support a church or institution of faith? Organizations or other causes?
- Do we have an emergency fund? Are we saving for college, vacation, house repairs, retirement, etc.?
- What are our household's essential expenditures for living? Which ones are Wants? Which ones are Needs?
- How much of our spending is influenced by advertising?
- Why do we share? Give?

God's Story Genesis 1:27-31a (CEV). "So, God created humans in God's own image; God made men and women. God gave them a blessing and said: Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth. I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain for you to eat. And I have given the green plants as food for everything else that breathes. These will be food for animals, both wild and tame, and for birds. God looked at all that was created. All of it was very good!"

Affirmation + Blessing

I am created in the image of a generous God. I give because I want to mirror a generous God.

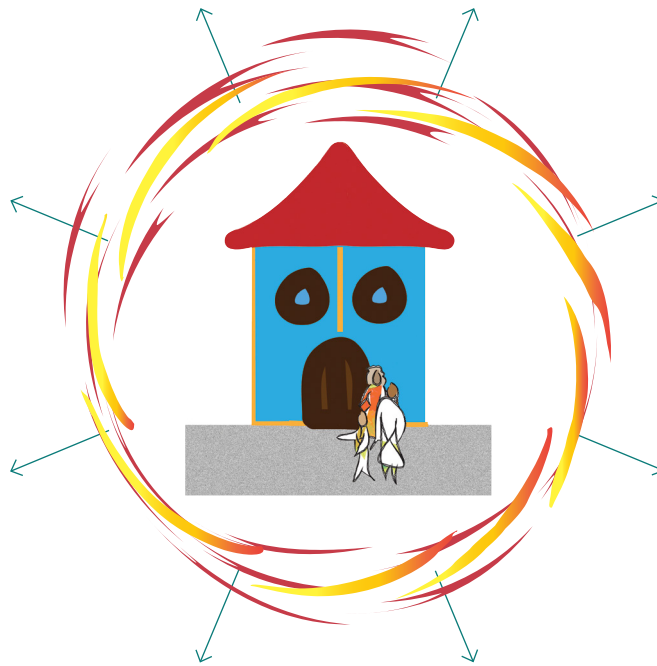


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BEING GENEROUS

Action 1

These are the names or drawings of all the people and places that have been recipients of our generosity.



The Generosity Challenge

How many books do we own? Count them. What would it mean to give away 10 percent or buy that many new books for others? How hard would this be to do? Who needs books? To whom or where would we go to donate them?



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Connecting Generations: Conversation Goal

The WHO

Identify and celebrate the people of all ages who are examples of generosity that surround this household.

Conversation #2

Ripples of Generosity

Who are the models of generosity for you? Have you been the recipients of the generosity of others? Who are the extended family members or friends who have shared their time, talent or wealth with you? Recall and name beloved friends, community members and others whose generosity have shaped your life. Listen to one another's stories. Make a photo collage of people who have impacted your life in big ways and small ways. If living, send them a note expressing your appreciation.

Key Question

Who has given generously to us?

Discussion Prompts

- When have we been recipients of the generosity of others?
- For whose generosity am I most thankful?
- What are the giving patterns over the generations in our family? Do we want to change these patterns in some way?
- Does the giving of others inspire us to be generous?
- Does one's age matter in acting generously?

God's Story John 6:1-14 (CEV). "When Jesus saw the large crowd coming toward him, he asked Philip, 'Where will we get enough food to feed all these people?' He said this to test Philip, since he already knew what he was going to do. Philip answered, 'Don't you know that it would take almost a year's wages just to buy only a little bread for each of these people?' Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the disciples. He spoke up and said, 'There is a boy here who has five small loaves of barley bread, and two fish. But what good is that with all these people?' The ground was covered with grass, and Jesus told his disciples to have everyone sit down. About five thousand men were in the crowd. Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave thanks to God. Then he passed the bread to the people and he did the same with the fish, until everyone had plenty to eat. The people ate all they wanted, and Jesus told his disciples to gather up the leftovers so that nothing would be wasted. The disciples gathered them up and filled twelve large baskets with what was left over from the five barley loaves. After the people had seen Jesus work this miracle, they began saying, 'This must be the Prophet who is come into the world!'"

Affirmation + Blessing

God has blessed us through the abundant generosity of others. We will joyfully share what God has provided us.



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CONNECTING GENERATIONS

Action 2

Our Family Tree of Generosity: These are the names of all those who have shared God's abundant generosity with us.



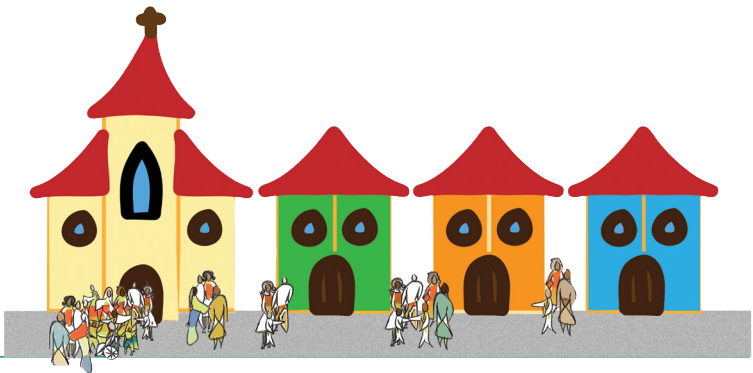
The Generosity Challenge

How many canned goods or jars of food are in our cupboards and pantry? Count them. What is 10% of that number? What would it mean to give away or purchase 10% of the number of canned and jarred items in our cupboards? How hard would this be to do? Who suffers from being hungry? To whom or where would we go to donate these items?



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Equipping Households: The WHERE

Conversation Goal

Identify all the places and ways this household can practice generosity.

Conversation #3

Where Do We Practice Generosity?

One only needs to read or hear the news to know there are many communities of faith, organizations, people, and places that could benefit from acts of generosity. The great needs of the world need attention and heart-felt care. Take some time to identify the places that stir your passion for giving. All ages can find ways and places to share.

Key Question

Where are all the places and what are all the ways we could be generous with our treasure (money), time, and talents?

Discussion Prompts

- What issues or concerns are most important to each of us? This household?
- What or who compels us most deeply to give?
- What are the ways we can support those issues and needs we most care about in addition to our financial gifts? (Ex. recycling)
- What is the difference between charity and generosity? *(Do a web search if unsure.)*
- What do we need to do and know to practice responsible and wise generous giving?

God's Story Acts 2:41-47 (CEV). "On that day about three thousand believed his message and were baptized. They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together. Everyone was amazed by the many miracles and wonders that the apostles worked. All the Lord's followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved."

Affirmation + Blessing

God equips us and has given us many opportunities to give and share at home and away from home.



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EQUIPPING HOUSEHOLDS

Action 3

Our words and drawings illustrate ALL the places and people we can imagine receiving our heart-felt care and generosity.



The Generosity Challenge

How many items do we own that have wheels?
(Ex: vehicles, tricycle, bicycles, lawn mower, toys with wheels etc.) Count them. What would it mean to give away 10% or purchase new that same number? How hard would this be to do? Who is in need of these items? To whom or where would we go to donate one or more?



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Bonus Activity

Generosity: God's promise. Our practice.

Faith5 (R. Melheim), Four Key Faith Practices (D. Anderson) and HomeGrown Faith's Top Ten Faith Practices are reflected in this inventory

Read together Acts 2:42-47 (CEV):⁴² They spent their time **learning** from the apostles, and they were like **family** to each other. They also **broke bread** and **prayed together**.⁴³ Everyone was **amazed** by the many miracles and **wonders** that the apostles worked.⁴⁴ All the Lord's followers often **met together**, and they **shared everything** they had.⁴⁵ They would **sell their property and possessions** and **give the money to whoever needed it**.⁴⁶ Day after day they **met together** in the **temple (church)**. They **broke bread together** in **different homes** and **shared their food** happily and freely,⁴⁷ while **praising God**. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved.

Name all the things people in this household practice. How many hours are involved in practice? Following are 14 faith practices. What habits are **Already** established as a part of my/our personal and household routine? Mark those with an "**A**." Choose one faith practice to start or **Begin**. Write the letter "**B**" by that practice. Discuss when, where and how I/we will make it happen.

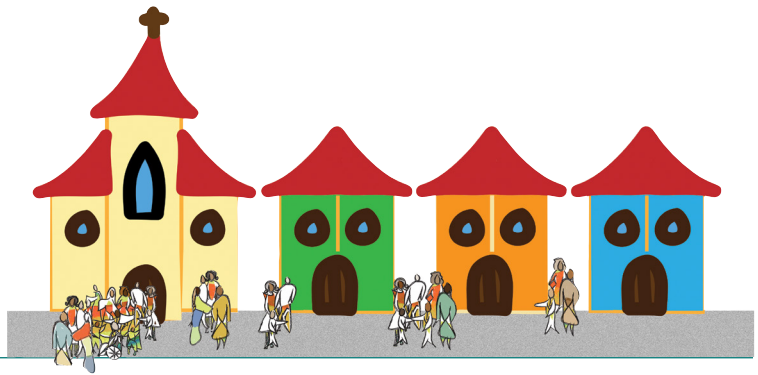
I/we invite the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and household as I/we practice generosity.

- **God's Story:** Regularly read and study the Bible to *personally* learn more about God.
 - **Learn. Teach:** Share God's Story with one another, using age appropriate Bibles, storybooks and technology.
 - **Caring Conversation:** Share highs and lows and find God's Story in one another's stories.
 - **Mealtimes:** Regularly eat meals together – with all "tech" turned off.
 - **Serve:** Joyfully serve one another and regularly host guests for a meal in our home.
 - **Pray:** Pray at mealtime, bedtime, sick time, car time, school time, anytime and anywhere.
 - **Share:** Easily and joyfully share possessions and wealth with those outside this household and family.
 - **Care:** Take deliberate action to care for our neighbor, our community and the earth.
 - **Identity:** Talk and act in ways that reflect our creator God who sent us Jesus to follow.
 - **Cross-Generational Relationships:** Create opportunities for friendships and caring relationships with faith-filled people of all ages.
 - **Worship:** Regularly gather to worship with a community of faith.
 - **Bless:** Practice forgiveness and grace. Affirm and celebrate one another's gifts. Live joyfully and share freely.
 - **Music:** Sing, play or listen to music that praises God and brings joy, peace and healing in our lives.
 - **Amazed and Awed:** Live with a sense of gratefulness every day for God's grace and generosity.
- I covenant with God and one another to become a center for the faith practice of generosity.** Add household signature(s) here:



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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.



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CREATING A HOUSEHOLD CENTER of GENEROSITY

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?

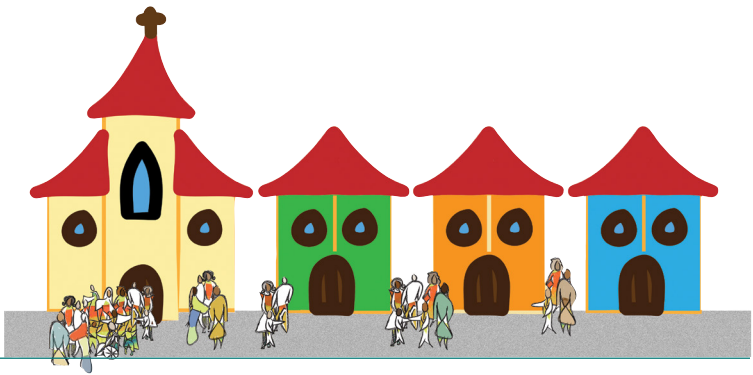
The Generosity Challenge

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?



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Living God's Story: HERE & NOW

Conversation Goal

Discover that my household can respond to God's surprising and unexpected nudges to be generous – and do what may seem impossible.

Conversation #5 When Pigs Fly – Nothing Is Impossible With God!

Sometimes you may be moved to give beyond your planned and intentional giving. A specific situation may move you to give to someone in need. You may feel the desire to help an entire community when tragedy or disaster has occurred. You may feel moved to support a person or organization that helps others and cares for God's creation. Spontaneous giving may be prompted by the Spirit and is another way to grow and nurture generosity in our lives.

Key Question When have we unexpectedly felt motivated to be generous?

Discussion Prompts

- What are some situations or examples where we may want to give of our treasure, time or talent unexpectedly? (Ex.: disasters, someone we personally encounter, or a fundraiser at school)
- How can we be open to giving and sharing unexpectedly?
- Is there a limit to our generosity?
- Do we need to consult with one another before giving and sharing spontaneously?
- How does giving spontaneously fit into our household mission statement?
- Is there a difference between responsible and irresponsible giving?

God's Story Matthew 19:23-30 (CEV). Jesus said to his disciples, "It's terribly hard for rich people to get into the kingdom of heaven! In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly surprised and asked, "How can anyone ever be saved?" Jesus looked straight at them and said, "There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything!" Peter replied, "Remember, we have left everything to be your followers! What will we get?" Jesus answered: "Yes, all of you have become my followers. And so in the future world, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, I promise that you will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. All who have given up home or brothers and sisters or father and mother or children or land for me will be given hundred times as much. They will also have eternal life. But many who are now first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

Affirmation + Blessing God, with you all things are possible. Lead us and help our household grow in generosity and unexpected giving and sharing.



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LIVING GOD'S STORY

Action 5

Our words and drawings illustrate the causes and purposes that we have supported because of unexpected opportunities.



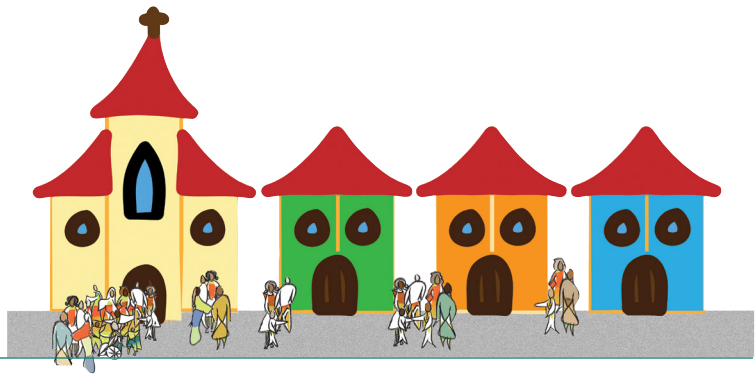
The Generosity Challenge

How many light bulbs are inside and outside our house? Count them. What is 10% of this total? What would it mean to give away or purchase new, 10% of the total number of lightbulbs we use? How hard would this be to do? Who needs lightbulbs? To whom or where would we go to donate them?



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We Celebrate!

Gathering at the table.

Conversation Goal

Celebrate God's generosity in the daily expression and practice of our faith – at home and away from home.

Conversation #6 The Table Is Ready...May God's generosity overflow through us

Let's take the seeds from The Generosity Project: 5G, continue the conversation, and commit to hearing, knowing, living and celebrating God's Story of generosity in and through us.

Ready, set, **GIVE!**

Key Question What wondrous, surprising, joy-filled things might happen because of the generosity of our household?

Discussion Prompts

- What have we learned about generosity? What can we celebrate?
- What do we have yet to learn?
- If we could teach someone else or a household about generosity, what would we share?

God's Story

Of the five stories about God's generosity that we have received, which story, words, or phrase within a story reflects us? Or has shaped us? (See next pages to review Bible stories).

Write it here: _____

The title of our household's story of generosity is: _____

Please sign your individual names anywhere on this Covenant.

Affirmation + Blessing We are catching on...may God's story of grace and generosity become our story.



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GOD'S STORY OF GENEROSITY IN US

As a household discuss and select one of God's stories, words or phrases below that most closely reflects your own story of generosity, or the story you would like to become. Highlight the story or words you chose.

TGP: 5G #1. So, God created humans [in God's image]; [God] made men and women. [God] gave them a blessing and said: Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth. I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain for you to eat. And I have given the green plants as food for everything else that breathes. This will be food for animals, both wild and tame, and for birds. God looked at [all that was created]. All of it was very good! (Genesis 1:27-31a CEV)

TGP: 5G #2. When Jesus saw the large crowd coming toward him, he asked Philip, "Where will we get enough food to feed all these people?"... Philip answered, "Don't you know that it would take almost a year's wages just to buy only a little bread for each of these people?" Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the disciples. He spoke up and said, "There is a boy here who has five small loaves of barley bread and two fish. But what good is that with all these people?" The ground was covered with grass, and Jesus told his disciples to have everyone sit down. About five thousand men were in the crowd. Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave thanks to God. Then he passed the bread to the people, and he did the same with the fish, until everyone had plenty to eat. The people ate all they wanted, and Jesus told his disciples to gather up the leftovers, so that nothing would be wasted. The disciples gathered them up and filled twelve large baskets with what was left over from the five barley loaves." (John 6:5-13 CEV)

TGP: 5G #3. On that day about three thousand believed his message and were baptized. They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together. Everyone was amazed by the many miracles and wonders that the apostles worked. All the Lord's followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. (Acts 2:41-47 CEV)

TGP: 5G #4. 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." (2 Corinthians 8:1-9 CEV)

TGP: 5G #5. Jesus said to his disciples, "It's terribly hard for rich people to get into the kingdom of heaven! In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly surprised and asked, "How can anyone ever be saved?" Jesus looked straight at them and said, "There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything." Peter replied, "Remember, we have left everything to be your followers! What will we get?" Jesus answered: "Yes, all of you have become my followers... But many who are now first will be last, and many who are last will be first. (Matthew 19:23-30 CEV)

WE CELEBRATE

Action 6

Our words and drawings illustrate all the things for which we are grateful. Our household table overflows into our neighborhood, our faith community, and the world.



The Generosity Challenge

We celebrate – Our Household is ready! Let's plan a feast...Who are ten people (family, friends, classmates, neighbors) we can invite to join us in celebrating God's generosity? How about a picnic at a local park, our backyard, apartment, or church? We will invite guests to bring a favorite dish or food item. They can be a part of the generosity story by contributing one of the following: a canned good, book, new socks or undies, something with wheels, or light bulbs – or one of each! We already know where to donate these items! We will encourage everyone to join in naming and celebrating acts of generosity witnessed each and every day:

The guest list includes: _____



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