

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Planting the Seed of Giving

Chris Williams

As a parent, how can you help plant the seed of giving in the lives of your children? I have two small sons, and I look for every opportunity to increase their knowledge of God and of His Word, specifically ways to help them understand the principles behind giving.

Recently I came across an idea that actually made me sit up and take notice. The idea centers on asking your children what ministries they appreciate. My children are exposed to numerous ministries such as our local church, the college where I work, the mission agency under which my brother serves, a structured children's ministry, and a ministry that promotes Bible clubs for children. One night at dinner, I asked my boys which of these ministries means the most to them. After outlining the things we like about each ministry, I asked the boys to choose the one that means the most to them. We then talked about how we could sacrifice as a family to be able to send them a financial gift.

My boys suggested several ways that we could either save or raise money. Some of their ideas were quite humorous in light of our goal. I then told them that we would write a letter to those ministries explaining that we would pray for them for the next month and would include a check that could be used to support the ministry.

Some nights at the dinner table can be hectic when you have young children, yet on that night things were different. Each took a turn giving input and listening to the comments of the other. As we walked through this process, the children became increasingly excited. Our youngest could not understand the significance of the dollar amount until we helped him understand how many trips to the ice cream truck this would mean we would have to miss. Suddenly the amount of the gift made sense, and they were both excited.

Each of my sons chose a different ministry. My oldest son chose to give to my brother who is a missionary in Scotland, because he relates very closely with his cousins via e-mail. He understands their needs in reaching other children in their neighborhoods. My youngest son chose to give to my parents' local church because he said the teacher there was always nice to him and made him feel welcome when he visited.

It amazed me how they each chose a different ministry. Their interests in giving demonstrated further the variances in their own personalities. One child was concerned about the needs of missionaries, while the other was concerned with a church. One child was thinking globally, while the other was seeing the practical needs of a local church. One child was thinking strategically, while the other was demonstrating his appreciation for a job well done.

With their new-found excitement, I gave them the task of writing letters to each of the ministries explaining their desires for the gift and the promise of daily prayer for a month. I know that within a short amount of time each of those ministries will respond with a note of recognition or thanks. When my sons receive a letter, they will think it is the greatest thing in the whole world. Something tells me the boys will want to give again next month.

If you have not tried something like this with your children, I challenge you to give it a try. Maybe you could share this concept with other parents at your church or give this article to a friend. Giving is contagious, so share the idea with others.

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org