

Christian Meditation

Virtue to Live By: Generosity

You notice when someone needs help. You think of others before yourself. You give freely without need of reward. You give more than what is expected. You are willing to make sacrifices for others.

"You should give what you have decided to give, not grudgingly or because you are made to, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Setting the Scene/Focal point on floor or low table:

Purple cloth for Advent time, candles, dimmed lights, spiritual/reflective image on interactive whiteboard or as part of prayer focus, Bible, prayer stones, religious artefacts, plants, shells, advent wreath, objects to link to the theme.

Meditative music/ peaceful/calming hymns quietly playing e.g. Advent music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDACqnjNIRI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru91hoMASQc>

Gathering together – children enter to calm meditative music and sit in a horseshoe around the focal point.

Stillness exercise

Close your eyes, sit comfortably, place your hands on your knees, allow the music to help you relax, take a deep breath in slowly and deeply through your nose, hold your breath for 3-4 seconds and breathe out through your mouth. Continue to take a few deep breaths, allowing the music to help you relax each part of your body from the tips of your toes to the top of your head. Lift your shoulders and then relax, relax your arms, legs, stomach, face, concentrating on your breathing inhale...exhale...inhale...exhale...every part of your body.

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As a Catholic community we try to be generous with our time, gifts and talents. When we are generous, we are helping others because we know there is enough for everyone. We are not afraid of giving what we have as generosity teaches us not to be selfish. Jesus asks us all to give of ourselves.

Let us focus on how we can be generous in sharing our gifts, talents, time and spirit bringing us closer to God... Take a deep breath...inhale and exhale...

Imagine you are with Jesus' disciples at the temple. The temple is cool inside, keeping you shaded from the blazing sun outside. The walls and floor are made of light coloured marble. Feel the coolness of the marble on your legs as you sit with the disciples. The pillars of the temple are made of marble and decorated with gold.

Lots of people are entering the temple, it is the time of Passover. They have come to celebrate this great feast.

You quietly watch people throwing coins into the collection boxes as they enter the temple. Judas and Matthew are sitting next to you and begin to quarrel about how much money people are giving. Matthew, a former tax collector, sees a man dressed in fine clothes and

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comments that he is wealthy and should have given much more money. You look at Jesus to see if he agrees with Matthew, but Jesus is watching a woman walking towards the treasury box. The coins she throws in barely make a sound as they drop into the box. Jesus turns to you and says, "She's a poor widow." Matthew says, "She gave two mites, a penny."

You watch the woman turn and begin to walk away...

Jesus says, "This woman has given more than everyone else who threw money into the treasury... All of them gave more money, but they have more to give...she gave all she had to live on. She gave more to God than all the rich people."

You watch the woman walk away and disappear into the crowd. Jesus turns to you and says, "That was a very courageous and generous thing to do. Her faith and trust in God have grown by being generous."

Think about what this means... Jesus asks you, "What can you do to help others?"

Jesus watches you and smiles as he can see you are thinking and willing to give of your time, gifts and talents to help your family, friends, and neighbours.

Spend a moment talking to Jesus and tell him how you will show generosity in the coming weeks. Tell Jesus how you will help others willingly and selflessly...

It is time to leave Jesus...he is pleased with you. He can see that you will give cheerfully and without expectation of reward. Give Jesus a hug and say goodbye...as you walk away think about how you will be generous in time and spirit. Jesus calls to you saying, "*Freely you have received, freely give.*" (Matthew 10:8)

With Jesus' guidance think of how you can live this virtue of generosity to make a positive difference. It is time to leave Jesus but know that Jesus remains with you and will teach you how to give of yourself to help others.

And now, slowly begin to come back into the room. Be aware of your breathing and of your body. Bring your consciousness back in to the room. As you are breathing in concentrate on the word generosity and as you breathe out, concentrate on the word giving. Take a few breaths, repeating this... opening your eyes, slowly move your fingers and toes and relax. Take a few deep breaths and listen to this prayer.

Closing prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you for my time with Jesus. I know you want me to be generous with my time, gifts, talents and spirit. We are thankful for the opportunities to help others. We pray to you to teach us how to do so selflessly, without expectation of reward. As we make our Advent promises, let us be guided by the virtue of generosity using this time to share what we have to help those who are less fortunate than us. Let us be inspired by Jesus to live the virtue of generosity. We thank you for giving us such a wonderful role model in Christ Jesus as we try each day to be more like Him. Amen.