1

The Great Gift Exchange

Grace in Action

We offer ourselves to Jesus.

POWER TEXTS

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Therefore by [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

KEY REFERENCES

- John 3:16, 17; Luke 1; 2; Matthew 1; 2
- *Steps to Christ*, chap. 8, pp. 67-75
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 17, pp. 167-177
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 95-98; vol. 10, pp. 189-191
- Student lesson on page 22 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 4, The Son

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that Jesus gave them the greatest gift—one that cost His life.
- **Feel** a desire to give their lives to Him.
- **Respond** by choosing to dedicate their lives to God each morning.



When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God sent the most costly gift the universe could imagine when He sent His Son to provide salvation for us. He asks us to respond by accepting this gift and giving ourselves completely as our gift to Him. He takes this humble gift, which we offer daily, and makes us into sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, of Christ.

This is a lesson about grace in action.

Grace provided the gift of salvation. It also provides the gift of transformation as we give ourselves daily to God to be restored into His image.

Teacher Enrichment

"Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.' This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 70).

Have I accepted God's gifts of salvation and transformation? How have I surrendered myself to Him? Why is it important to consecrate myself to God daily?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. My Favorite Gift*	empty wrapped gift box
		B. The Gifts I've Given	empty wrapped gift box
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 17. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks; world map; pushpins; gift box with slit; prayer chain, letter to parents (see p. 144)
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	three copies of *Net Kids* script (p. 152)
		Experiencing the Story	(optional: paper and pencils/handouts) models or pictures of the following: baby doll; house; lamb; appointment book OR calendar; clock; time card or paycheck; cloth bag with gold coins, incense cones or sticks, perfume bottle; box or bag to contain the items listed above
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers or chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*How to Give Your Gift*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*The Great Exchange*	empty gift box from Readiness Activities; one small box for each student, assorted gift wrapping, scissors, tape, gift cards (p. 145)
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments	
		B. Reminder to Parents	
		C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ empty wrapped gift box

My Favorite Gift

Have the students stand or sit in a circle.

Say: **Many of you have given and received gifts this past week. Or if you didn't, you've probably received at least one gift you've really liked for your birthday or some other occasion.** Give one student the gift-wrapped box. Say: **I'm going to ask** [student's name] **to tell everyone about their favorite gift ever. They will answer what their favorite gift was and who gave it to them. Then they will pass the gift box to the person next to them. That person will tell about their favorite gift and who gave it, then pass the box to the next person, and so on, until everyone has had a chance. If you haven't liked any of the gifts you've gotten, tell what you would like to receive and from whom. If you don't feel comfortable talking, just say "Pass" when your turn comes around. Let me give you an example: My favorite gift was _____ (e.g., money from my uncle for a bike).**

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel to talk about your favorite gift? How do you feel about the person who gave it? In what way did you thank the person who gave the gift? What might we as Christians give as a favorite gift? It doesn't have to be something you can see and hold.** (Answers may include: Jesus, salvation, grace.) **How do you feel about the Person who gave it? How might you say thank You?** (Answers may include: giving my life to Him, worshipping Him, obeying Him.) **Let's say our power texts together:**

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Therefore by [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

Say: **Our power point reminds us that**

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ empty wrapped gift box

The Gifts I've Given

Have the students stand or sit in a circle.

Say: **During this past week you have probably given at least one gift. Or, if not this week, you've probably given at least one gift the recipient was happy to receive for a birthday or some other occasion. You may have given money, clothes, a toy, a book, or something else you could see and hold. If you haven't had a chance to give such a gift, tell what gift you would give and to whom you would give it.**

Give one student the gift-wrapped box.

Say: **I'm going to ask** [student's name] **to tell everyone about the best gift they feel they've ever given. They will tell what they gave, to whom they gave it, and why they gave it. Then they will pass the gift box to the person next to them. That person will tell about their best gift, to whom they gave it, and why. The box will be passed to the next person, and so on, until everyone has had a turn. If you don't feel comfortable talking, just say "Pass" when your turn comes. Let me give you an example:** (e.g., My best gift was a vase I made for my mother).

Debriefing

Ask: **What gift should we as Christians be most willing to give to Jesus? It doesn't have to be something you can see and hold.** (Answers may include: ourselves, our worship, our friendship.) **Why should we want to give Him this gift?** (Because He loved us so much that He died for us.)

Let's say our power texts together:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Therefore by [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

Say: **Our power point reminds us that**

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Prayer & Praise

Notes

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Into My Heart" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 152)
"Jesus Loves Me," third verse (*He Is Our Song*, no. 63)
"He Is Lovely" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 70)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins
- ☐ letter to parents (p. 144)

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place. Send a letter to the parents, informing them about the mission offering (see p. 144).

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ gift box

Use the gift box as the offering device.

Say: **Although we put money into the offering box (and even if we don't), we have something else even more valuable to give to Jesus.**

Ask: **Does anyone know what that is?** (Accept any of the following: our time, talents, love, lives, selves.)

Say: **As the offering box comes by, place your money in it and say to Jesus in your head, *Jesus, I give myself to You.***

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ prayer chain

Take verbal prayer requests and assign one each to willing students.

Say: **I hope we can get excited about the greatest gift of all time: salvation. Let's thank Jesus for one thing about salvation we appreciate most as we pray for our prayer requests. I'll start and end.** Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ three copies of *Net Kids* script (p. 152)

Introducing the Bible Story

***The* Net Kids**

(Refer to Lesson 2 for background and setup information.)

Make three copies of the *Net Kids* script found on page 152 of this guide. Distribute as early as possible to the students you have selected. Allow practice time before using this activity.

Present the skit.

Debriefing

Say: **Today we are going to talk about the great gift exchange. As we have learned this month from the story of Christ's birth, Jesus gave us Heaven's greatest gift. He gave us Himself, and with Himself salvation and eternal life. Is there a better gift you could ever wish to receive? If you think about it, all other gifts in this life are rubbish when compared to the great riches that Jesus offered us through His life and death. So what can we give Him in exchange for this amazing Gift that Jesus gave to us? God is pleased when we offer Him our hearts and invite Him to dwell there. Then He could take our lives, our talents, and everything we are and transform them.**

As our power point reminds us:

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

YOU NEED:

- ☐ optional: paper and pencils/handouts
- ☐ models OR pictures of the following:
  - baby doll,
  - house,
  - lamb,
  - appointment book OR calendar,
  - clock,
  - time card OR paycheck,
  - cloth bag with gold coins,
  - incense cones OR sticks,
  - perfume bottle
- ☐ box OR bag to put everything in

Experiencing the Story

Say: **This week we are going to do a review of our last four lessons. First let's do a quick quiz.** (This may be given with paper and pencil or orally.)

1. How did Mary find out she was to be the mother of Jesus? (God sent the angel Gabriel to tell her in person [Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18].)

2. How did Joseph find out that he should not break his engagement to Mary? (An angel of the Lord told him in a dream [Matthew 1:20].)

3. Why did the Magi come to Jerusalem? (They saw the star [Matthew 2:2].) **Why did they not go back to Herod?** (God warned them in a dream not to [verse 12].)

4. How did the shepherds find out about the birth of Jesus? (An angel of the Lord appeared to them [Luke 2:8-12].)

5. How did Simeon and Anna know that Baby Jesus was the Christ? (The Holy Spirit told Simeon, and Anna knew because she opened herself to God's leading [Luke 2:26, 27, 37, 38].)

Ask: **What did all these people have in common?** (God took the initiative, spoke to them.) **What were their responses?** (They accepted what God told them and acted on it.) **What was God's part?** (To inform people, to offer them a chance to participate in salvation.) **What was each person's part?** (To accept the offer, to follow the instructions, to surrender themselves to Him.) **In what way can we do what the people involved in Christ's birth did?** (When God offers to give us life, grace, salvation, we accept it and give ourselves to Him.)

Say: **In this bag (box), I have several gifts that represent what the people we've just talked about gave Jesus. I want you to take one item, think about it a few minutes, and then tell us what the item represents and who may have given it. An item may represent more than one person or have more than one meaning.** Walk around the room with the bag/box of items, allowing everyone to take an item. If you have a large class, divide the students into groups and let each group take an item.

Baby doll

Mary ultimately gave Jesus back to God.

House

Joseph opened his home for Mary and Jesus.

Anna gave up her home to live in the Temple.

The Magi left their home to follow the star.

Lamb

Shepherds left their sheep and went to see Jesus.

Appointment book or calendar

All gave God their time, attention, and plans to follow God's leading.

Clock

All gave their time to follow God's plan.

Time card/paycheck

Everyone gave of their income to follow God's plan.

Joseph left his business for several years to keep Mary and Jesus safe.

The shepherds gave of their flocks.

The Magi left their income-producing investments in their homeland.

Gold coins; incense cones OR sticks; perfume bottle

The Magi brought gifts, which signified their belief and commitment to the Messiah.

The shepherds gave God their priceless worship.

Ask: **In what ways were everyone's lives changed because of accepting Jesus as Messiah?** (Accept all answers. Mary and Joseph lived in another country for a while. Mary eventually had her heart broken by what Judas and others did to Jesus. Simeon and Anna died having the peace that fulfillment of prophecy brings. The shepherds became part of a privileged group of people who welcomed Jesus. The Magi became what would someday be called Christians.)

Say: **As our power point reminds us:**

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
If a written quiz at the opening of this activity would present challenges for one or more students in your class, allow those students to work with a partner who could assist them in the quiz. Alternatively consider doing the quiz orally so that everyone could participate.

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers OR chalk

Exploring the Bible

Write the words "Why" and "How" where all can see. Ask for a student volunteer to list the students' answers on the board.

Ask: **Why should we respond to God's gift of Jesus?**

Say: **Let's look in our Bibles for answers.** Assign the following texts to individuals and/or groups: 1 John 4:9, 10, 19; Romans 5:8, 10. (1 John: We respond because God took the initiative before we even knew we needed to be saved; Romans: We love because He first loved us, and while we were still sinners Christ died for us.)

Ask: **What are some ways we can respond? Let's look at more texts:** Romans 12:1, 2; John 15:4, 7, 12, 26, 27; 16:23, 24; Acts 2:42, 46, 47; 17:11. (Romans: To give ourselves to God as living sacrifices, worship Him, allow Him to change us; John: remain in Christ by reading and meditating on His Word, loving others, receiving the Holy Spirit, testifying about what God has done, asking for things in Christ's name; Acts: having fellowship with other believers, eating, studying, praising, and praying in homes and at church, studying the Bible daily.)

Say: **We give ourselves to Jesus because He took the first step in saving us. Let's repeat the power texts:**

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Therefore by [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

Our power point reminds us that

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
You may wish to prepare in advance a handout listing the Bible references if you have learners with visual impairments or with any other special needs who may benefit from it.

3 APPLYING THE LESSON

How to Give Your Gift

Say: **Last Friday during Week of Prayer Lydia went up front when the Week of Prayer speaker called for those who wanted to give their hearts to Jesus. Sabbath was a good day. She even got to talk with the speaker one-on-one. She stayed in church for most of the day. Sunday she had Pathfinders. Now it's Monday, the Week of Prayer speaker is gone, and Lydia feels lost. Even though she has accepted Jesus' gift of salvation, she doesn't know what to do next.**

Debriefing

Ask: **Based on our Bible exploration, what would you tell Lydia?** (She should pray every day to give her life to Jesus just for that day, asking Him to guide her decision-making, make her weaknesses strong, strengthen her strong points, and change her into the person He wants her to be; offer Him her personality to be used in her own special way to tell others about Him; read the Bible and other devotional books at a specific time daily; continue going to church, Pathfinders, and having fellowship with other believers through Bible study, social events, and service projects.)

Say: **Let's remember to apply the principle we learned from our power point this week:**

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

4 SHARING THE LESSON

The Great Exchange

YOU NEED:

- ☐ empty gift box from Readiness Activities
- ☐ one small box for each student
- ☐ assorted gift wrapping
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ tape
- ☐ gift cards (p. 145)

Ask students to share if they had the opportunity during the past week to make or do something special for someone who was not expecting it. Did anyone share words of encouragement?

Ask: **What is that gift we've been talking about all during class today? It's not something you can see or touch.** (salvation through Jesus Christ)

Say: **You guessed correctly. The unique gift God gave us was Himself in the form of a human being, Jesus. He came to the earth as a baby, lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose again as our Savior! He returned to His Father in heaven and gave us the Holy Spirit to be with us until He comes again.**

Distribute gift paper, small boxes, tape, scissors, and ribbon. Have each student gift-wrap a box in the most attractive way they can, using the supplies. When they are finished, say: **Think of yourself as being the gift.**

Ask: **In what way could you, with your unique talents and personality, give yourself to Jesus?** (Accept all answers—pray, accept His gift of salvation, spend time with Him every day, offer Him my plans and goals, share Him with others.)

Give each student a gift card that you have copied and cut out from page 145. Ask them to attach this card to their uniquely wrapped gift.

Say: **Keep this gift, representing yourself, where you can see it, and repeat the prayer on this gift card in the new year.**

Let's repeat our power point once again:

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **Just as Jesus' parents dedicated Him at the Temple, we can dedicate ourselves to Him each time we worship. As you think about the birth of Jesus, keep in mind our power point:**

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www .juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel =1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jesus was a blessing to all. We can bless others by following His example.**

Notes

Student lesson

The Great Gift Exchange

"What did you get for Christmas?" You've probably heard and asked that question hundreds of times by now. The next time someone asks you, ask yourself, "What did I give?"

What can I give Him, poor as I am?

"'If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

"'If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part.

"'Yet what can I give Him? I will give my heart,'" Cinda read.

"Christmas is over," Jonathan whispered to Sunil.

"Thank you, Cinda," said Mrs. Barnabas, their Bible teacher. "Sunil, Jonathan, did you have a question?"

"No, Mrs. B," said Sunil. "We just wondered about the poem. After all, Christmas is over."

"And that's why I'm sharing it with you," said Mrs. B. "Think about what we learned during the past few weeks. What is this poem saying?"

Cinda raised her hand. "Yes, Cinda."

"The poem is about the birth of Jesus," explained Cinda. "The shepherd in the poem represents the ones who visited Jesus on the night He was born. The Wise Men are the Magi."

"Thank you, Cinda. Can someone tell me about what these visitors brought?"

Cinda raised her hand again. "The Bible doesn't say anything about the shepherds bringing gifts to the Baby Jesus," she remarked.

Jonathan raised his hand. "Everybody knows that the Wise Men brought three gifts," said Jonathan.

Sunil spoke out, "But they still brought the same thing the shepherds did."

"Would you explain?" asked Mrs. B.

"The shepherds responded to the Lord's message and were eager to find the Messiah and worship Him. When the angels told them to go, they went. They had faith that the baby was the Messiah."

"Even though the Wise Men brought gifts that Mary and Joseph could use to take care of Jesus, their real gift was that they worshipped Him," Jonathan said.

"Thank you, Jonathan," beamed Mrs. B. "Now, back to the poem . . ."

Sunil's hand shot up. "I know! Even if we don't have a lot of money and other things, we can still give *ourselves* to Jesus."

"Even if we do have a lot to give to Jesus, we still need to give ourselves," agreed Cinda, nodding.

"Nothing we do is more important than giving ourselves to Jesus," said Sunil. "Remember the message that is at the heart of the Christmas story?"

"That's right," added Cinda. "'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16, NIV). If God didn't hold back anything from us but gave us His Son, Jesus, we have all the reasons to respond to His great love by giving ourselves to Him."

"Sunil and Cinda," said Mrs. B, her eyes shining, "you have just described God's gift of salvation."

Jonathan raised his hand.

"But how can I give myself to Jesus?"

Mrs. B smiled. "First, you accept Jesus as your personal Savior and Friend and invite Him into your life. You share with Him everything that is on your heart through prayer and listen when He speaks to you through His Word. When Jesus becomes your best Friend, you will want to learn from Him. You will want to live for Jesus and to help others come to know Him too. Giving yourself to Jesus isn't just a one-time occurrence. It's something that has to happen daily. Sunil, would you like to pray the prayer on this card?" asked Mrs. B, handing him a card from a stack she held in her hand.

"Sure, Mrs. B," said Sunil. He prayed: *"'Dear Lord, today take me as totally Yours. I give You all my plans. Use me to serve others. Stay with me and show me how to do everything in Your power. Amen.'"*

Mrs. B started passing cards down the rows for those who wanted one.

"That sounds like a good prayer for every day of the new year!" exclaimed Jonathan, taking one.

Jesus is willing to be born in our hearts today. He says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (Revelation 3:20, NIV).

When we invite Jesus into our hearts, a wonderful transformation takes place. He offers us spiritual gifts that we can use to honor God and bless others. It is our privilege to reveal God's love to everyone by using the gifts we received from Him. Thus we can edify the church family and serve others. Let's offer ourselves to Jesus each day and use our spiritual gifts for His glory!

KEY REFERENCES

- John 3:16, 17; Luke 1; 2; Matthew 1; 2
- *Steps to Christ*, chap. 8, pp. 67-75
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 17, pp. 167-177
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 95-98; vol. 10, pp. 189-191
- Our Beliefs, nos. 17, 11, 4

POWER TEXTS

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Therefore by [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

POWER POINT

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we offer Him our hearts.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 18.

Sunday

READ Read John 3:16 and Hebrews 13:15 and this week's lesson, "The Great Gift Exchange."

CREATE Create an acrostic from or make some representation of the word GIFT. Review the power texts.

PRAY Pray this prayer every morning this week: *Dear Lord, today take me as totally Yours. I give You all my plans. Use me to serve others. Stay with me and show me how to do everything in Your power. Amen.*

Monday

READ Read John 3:17.

STUDY According to this verse, what is God's part and what should be our response?

THINK What is the good news about Jesus' birth?

REVIEW Review the power texts.

PRAY Pray the morning prayer from Sunday's section.

Tuesday

READ Read 1 John 4:9, 10, 19.

THINK Who gave the first gift, God or us?

DO Make something special to give to someone.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write about what it means to you to offer something special to someone.

REVIEW Review the power texts.

PRAY Pray the morning prayer from Sunday's section.

Wednesday

READ Read Romans 5:8, 10.

SHARE Think of someone who could use some encouragement and share these texts with that person.

CHANGE Substitute "us" and "we" for the person's name.

REVIEW Review the power texts.

PRAY Pray the morning prayer from Sunday's section.

Thursday

READ Read Romans 12:1, 2.

TRANSFORM On a paper plate, draw a sad face. Turn the plate around with the mouth at the top and add other marks to make a happy face. In what ways can you change your thinking so that you are reflecting Jesus better?

REVIEW Review the power texts.

PRAY Pray the morning prayer from Sunday's section.

Friday

READ Read John 15:4, 7, 12.

SHARE Write out copies of the morning prayer, place each one in gift packaging, and hand them out to your family members during worship.

DISCUSS Discuss ways that you can "remain in Christ."

REPEAT Say the power texts aloud from memory.

PRAY Praise God together for His plans for you.