



Group Leader Guide Instructions

THE BELONG STAGE

Know and Be Known

Everyone has the desire to know others and be known by others. It goes back to the principle of the void. God puts a human-shaped void in everyone that God desires relationships with others to fill.

Know Their Character

Knowing others goes beyond just knowing their names. Knowing people on a deeper level reveals their character.

John 1:47–48 (NLT)

As they approached, Jesus said, “Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity.” “How do you know about me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus was intentional about being relational. He knew that in order to call the first disciples, they had to see that Jesus knew them personally. Jesus proved it by speaking to their character.



Am I Generous? Robert Morris

OVERVIEW

A very important question we all need to ask ourselves is “am I generous?” Selfishness is the enemy of generosity and tries to take the place of God. A generous heart stems from a grateful heart. The most extravagant gift you can give God is yourself. We can be generous toward God once we realize that He is more than generous in His love toward us. God is extravagant, and He rewards those who give generously.

CONNECTION

(You will need a bowl of M&Ms or colored candy for this game.)

The M&M Game: Ask each member of the group to take a handful of M&Ms, but tell them not to eat them yet. For every M&M a member takes, he or she must share one thing about themselves with the group. For structure, use the different colors to represent categories: red for family, blue for pet peeves, green for favorite movies or books, yellow for favorite vacation destinations, brown for past jobs worked, etc.

QUICK RECAP

Key Scriptures: John 12:1–8, Mark 14:8–9

- ***The Enemy of Generosity***

There is an age-old battle of God being generous and Satan being selfish. Selfishness promotes, protects, and provides for self. Selfishness tries to take God’s place in our lives. As followers of Christ we are called to abandon everything and give all we have to the advancement of God’s kingdom. Regarding the issue of money, God is not only testing our hearts to see if we can handle money, He is testing our hearts to see if we can handle true riches.

- ***The Extravagance of Generosity***

In John 12:1–8, Mary gives a generous gift to the Lord by anointing Jesus and pouring one year’s wages on His feet. Mary passed the test of the heart; however, Judas did not. The most extravagant gift we can give God is ourselves. There are three levels of giving: tithes, offerings, and extravagant offerings. If you get to the first level, you will be able to go to the second and third levels because the curse is removed, and

the windows of heaven are opened. A generous heart stems from a grateful heart.

- ***The Reward of Generosity***

Generosity gives not to be rewarded, but God always rewards generosity when we give with the right heart. God rewards extravagantly, and He wants to reward us when we fight through selfishness. One of the extravagant ways God has rewarded us already is the gift of eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ. We become more Christ-like when we are a people of generosity and extravagant giving.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Pastor Robert's message this week was titled, "Am I Generous?" Do you think this is an important question to ask ourselves? Why or why not?
2. What does having a generous heart look like for you? Is it easier to give when we have received, or does it not matter? Explain.
3. What is the most extravagant gift you have ever received? How did you feel about the giver after you received this gift, and how did you respond? Share with the group.
4. What are some of the characteristics of a generous person?
5. What are some of the challenges we face when it comes to being generous?
6. Pastor Robert said the most extravagant gift we can give God is ourselves. Do you agree or disagree? What does this look like for you on a personal day-to-day level?
7. Have you personally given your life to Jesus? If not, would you like to do so now? Take a minute to pray and give an invitation to anyone who wants to give their life to the Lord.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Have everyone divide back into the same small groups of three or four people that they were in last week and discuss this question, "How can we give extravagantly as it relates to time and talent?"

- ***Time & Talent***

This week we are going to combine our conversation about time and talent. Take a moment to think about a talent, gift, or ability that you

have. If you are comfortable, discuss with your group about the area in which you feel God has gifted you. Now consider how you might be able to give your time in this area to bless a person, a ministry, or the church in an extravagant way. For example, if you are a doctor, how could you give of your services in an extravagant way? If you are an accountant, how could you give of your talent and time in an extravagant way to bless a life? Perhaps helping a single mom or a widow with their taxes would be an extravagant way of giving. If you are a stay-at-home mom, perhaps for you extravagant giving would be playing and engaging with your kids in extra special ways. The ideas can be as simple or complex as you want—whatever the case may be, take time to discuss this in your group. Allow for new and creative ideas to be shared and then commit to doing one.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the extravagant gift of everlasting life that You have given us through Jesus Christ. We recognize Your great love for us. Help us to not hold anything back from You. Help us to give of our lives and resources for the advancement of Your kingdom. We pray that we would never hold back out of fear, but we would always be able to trust that You are our promoter, protector, and provider. Thank You for Your great love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tip Of The Week

Give Positive Feedback

As a leader, always give positive feedback, praise, and encouragement to those who share their giving/generosity stories.

Also be sure to ask if anyone else wants to share a testimony or praise report from the past week.

Bless A Life

Share Stories

Each week, continue to have people share their stories of how generosity or giving has impacted them.

To share your group pictures with us, email groups@gatewaypeople.com.

To share stories about tithing, email stories@gatewaypeople.com.