

The Giving Jar

by: Rachel Paxton Giving with a happy heart. If you teach a child to give with a happy heart you will raise a child who will never hesitate to lend a helping hand. Children enjoy helping others, especially if they see their parents doing the same. When a child's basic physical and emotional needs are met, they are willing to share almost anything they have with someone in need. My daughter wanted to help others from the time she was old enough to understand what it was she was doing. Before she was old enough for an allowance she helped me go through her outgrown clothes and toys to give away to charities. At Christmastime we would shop together for needy families (she looked forward to this as much as picking out her own gifts). And this doesn't mean we weren't needy ourselves. When my daughter was young I was a single mom working and going to college, and I was barely able to make ends meet. What little we had left over, however, we used to help others. I am convinced that this act of helping others took my daughter's focus off of our own circumstances and created a passion in her for helping others. She always had food to eat and clothes to wear--she did not sense a lack in her life and so was willing to freely give anything she had. As my daughter got older and started getting an allowance, she started spending her own money. She spent her allowance on family Christmas and birthday presents (however small), started tithing, and started contributing to charities of her choice. My daughter's allowance is relatively small, compared to some of her friends, but that doesn't keep her from making contributions, no matter how small, to people and organizations she wants to help. Now that she's old enough to babysit, she has even more money to decide what to do with. She decides what to spend on herself, what to save, and what to give to others. Our family recently came up with an idea of how we could work together to save up some money to help others. I am forever picking up loose change around the house, on the floor, in the car, and in the bottom of my purse. We decided to start a "Giving Jar" where we could deposit our spare change, and then as the occasion arose, we would use it to help others. We all pooled together our spare change and we already had more than \$15. I placed the jar on the kitchen counter and put a big label on it that says "Giving Jar." It has motivated us all to save more and is also a great conversational piece! Don't think you have to have a lot of money to give others a helping hand. Any amount, no matter how small, develops in your child the gift of a giving heart.

About the Author

Originally published at Suite 101. Rachel Paxton is a freelance writer, mom, and owner of four home and family web sites. For complete resources for the Christian home, visit her web site at <http://www.Christian-Parent.com>.

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