



Conversation Prompts & Practice Activities

Give As We Grow® aims to educate the next generation about giving. These conversation prompts and discussion questions are taken from our [philanthropy curriculum](#). Through our curriculum, children will explore generosity, look for ways to identify needs, and then consider the ways they can share time, treasures, talent, and ties. We hope that this document will function as a quick reference guide for starting conversations throughout your giving journey.

Lesson 1: Elements of Generosity & Ways to Demonstrate It

Name emotions

Discuss the many types of emotions we can feel throughout the day and what they can mean.

"On days when we are feeling _____, what do you think that means?"

- Nervous - being worried or afraid of what might happen
- Disappointed - feeling unhappy because what was hoped for did not happen
- Optimistic - being hopeful that things will work out
- Excited - having a greater amount of energy and eagerness
- Calm - feeling free from excitement, undisturbed

Lesson 1: Elements of Generosity & Ways to Demonstrate It

scenario

Practice empathy

Discuss with your child that it's important to show empathy towards others to build and promote positive well-being. Empathy is when you share another person's feelings and try to help them.

"Think about the scenario where your friend was late to school. I'll give you some options of what you can say to show empathy towards your friend. What would you choose?"

- "Why are you so late?" vs. **"I'm glad you made it to school."**
- **"Don't worry about it, I've been late before too."** vs. "Well somebody forgot to set their alarm last night..."
- **"I hope you have a great rest of your day."** vs. "That's a rough start to the day."
- "Why don't you just go to bed earlier?" vs. **"How have you been sleeping lately?"**

Practice identifying others' emotions

Present the following list of scenarios and have your child select the emotions the person may be feeling and whether or not it impacts their physical or mental well-being.

.....

Your friend slept through their alarm and arrived 45 minutes late to school.

Options: Embarrassed, Calm, Confident

State of Well-being: Positive or Negative

.....

You ran for a student council position but lost in the election.

Options: Disappointed, Nervous, Excited

State of Well-being: Positive or Negative

.....

Your friend finally nailed a skateboarding trick that they have been practicing for weeks.

Options: Excited, Sad, Embarrassed

State of Well-being: Positive or Negative

.....

You are feeling better after a sports injury and can go back to soccer practice this week.

Options: Optimistic, Angry, Regretful

State of Well-being: Positive or Negative

.....

You are a new student and it's your first day going to a new school.

Options: Anxious, Calm, Optimistic

State of Well-being: Positive or Negative

Practice generosity

We can use our time and talents to show generosity towards others. Think about the scenario where it was a student's first day at a new school. I'll give you some options with your time and talents of how you can show generosity and you can select between the two.

.....

Time Options:

1. Sit with the new student at lunch
2. Play with the new student during recess

.....

Talent options:

1. You are strong at math and offer to help the new student after school
2. You are familiar with the school and offer to give the new student a tour after lunch and introduce them to other students

Lesson 2: Identifying Needs Around You

Differentiate physical and mental well-being

Practice daily check-ins to assess your child's physical and mental well-being. Ask them to differentiate between physical and mental needs.

Before a meal:

Parent: "How do you feel?"

Child: "I'm hungry."

Parent: "Is that a physical or mental need?"

When a child is upset:

Child: "I'm (sad/lonely/depressed etc.)"

Parent: "Is that a physical or mental need?"

Child: "Mental."

Parent: "What can we do to improve your mental well-being?"

Lesson 2: Identifying Needs Around You

scenario

Discuss fairness & unmet needs

Share various scenarios to your child that show examples of unfairness, or someone not getting their needs met. Ask how they would respond to the situation.

Imagine: You and your best friend are in line at the cafeteria to buy lunch. While you look at your tray with pizza, juice, an apple, and a cookie for dessert, they realize that they didn't get money from their parents before school and can't buy anything for lunch. What would you do?

Lesson 3: Service

Share a story of your service

In a discussion, define service by sharing detailed accounts of times you have performed an act of service for an organization and/or individual.

After sharing the story ask:

- What service did I perform?
- How did I impact, or affect others?
- How do you think I felt after?
- Do you feel like serving others was a valuable use of my time? Why or why not?

Lesson 3: Service

Verbalize opportunities for service

While out with your child, you may notice an individual or group that is not having their mental or physical needs met. Take a moment to ask: “What does/do ___ need to improve their well-being?” “What type of service do you think could help them?”

Lesson 3: Service

Recognize types of service

Help your child reflect on and identify their specific talents and ties to then choose a social or community cause that they connect with to donate their time to. Take some time to ask the following questions.

- What are your interests?” / “What do you like to do/participate in?
- What are your talents?” / What are some things you feel like you are really good at?
- How can we use our interests and talents to serve those in need?

Lesson 3: Service

Reflect on your impact - prompts

If possible, provide your child with an opportunity to support a real-world cause that aligns with their ties and talents. After their experience, ask the following questions to help them process and reflect.

- How do you feel?
- How do you think your actions impacted, or affected others?
- Do you feel like serving others was a valuable use of your time? Why or why not?

alternative If a hands-on or virtual service opportunity is not an option, present your child with a hypothetical service scenario to discuss:

- “If you could provide service to a cause, which cause would you choose and why?”
- “How would providing your time to this cause impact, or affect others?”
- “Imagine you volunteer with that organization once a week for 8 weeks. How do you think you would feel afterward? Do you think it would be a valuable use of your time? Why or why not?”

Lesson 4: Demonstrating Philanthropy

Identify talents and ties

Help your child reflect on and identify their specific talents and ties to then choose a social or community cause that they connect with to donate their time to.

- What are your interests?“, “What do you like to do/participate in?
- What are your talents?“, “What are some things you feel like you are really good at?
- How can we use our interests and talents to serve those in need?

Lesson 4: Demonstrating Philanthropy

Discuss charitable organizations

Charitable organizations are closely connected to the idea of philanthropy (using our time, talents, treasures, and ties for those in need).

- How can using your time, talent, treasures, and ties benefit people in our community?”
- Can you name some charitable organizations in our community?
- Why do you think these types of philanthropy are important to charitable organizations?
- How do they benefit those in need?

Lesson 5: The Impact of Philanthropy

Outward impact

When your child performs an action that benefits others, you can explicitly state how that action affected them or others.

Examples

- “Thank you for taking out the trash. I appreciate you taking the time to help me.”
- “I bet Johnny is really grateful that you helped him catch up on the work he was missing while he was sick.”
- “When you took the time to plant trees last week at the park, not only did the trees benefit, but humans and animals as well because trees emit oxygen which helps them breathe and they provide shade.”
- “I know the families that you volunteered to help build houses for are very thankful for their improved homes.”

When your child performs an action that benefits themselves, ask and inquire about how that action affected them personally or made them feel.

Examples

- “Thank you for taking out the trash. How does it make you feel knowing that you took the time to really help out around the house?”
- “I noticed you took the time to help Johnny catch up on his missing work when he was sick. How does it make you feel to share your talents in science with others?”
- “You spent quite a while planting trees in the park. I’m sure you feel good about helping the environment, but how do you feel knowing your efforts provide shade for people and animals? Or that your efforts contribute to creating oxygen for us to breathe?”
- “You and some friends used your Saturday to help build houses for others with Habitat for Humanity. How did it make you feel to give your time and social ties to that cause?”

Identify your community

- Who are the people that you spend time with?
- What are the places you spend time in?
- What communities do you consider yourself a part of?
- How can we benefit people in our community?
- What philanthropy and service opportunities can we take part in to help them?

Identify opportunities to care for people

Research to find ways to help your child find philanthropic ways to benefit people in the community.

“How can we benefit people in our community? What philanthropy and service opportunities can we take part in to help them?”

Lesson 5: The Impact of Philanthropy

Identify opportunities to care for the environment

Research to find ways to help your child find philanthropic ways to benefit other aspects of their environment, or a wider scope of their surroundings.

“How can we benefit these wider parts of our environment? What philanthropy and service opportunities can we take part in to help?”

Lesson 6: Caring for School

Ask your child about their interactions with members of their school community.

Examples

- “Which classmates did you spend time with today? How did you spend time with them?”
- “Which teachers did you see today?”
- “Which staff members did you interact with today? How did you interact with them?”

Lesson 6: Caring for School

Ask your child about their learning environment.

Examples

- “What parts of school do you enjoy spending time in the most? Why?”
- “Where do you learn best at school? Why do you think that’s the case?”
- “What’s your favorite room to visit at school? Why?”

Lesson 6: Caring for School

Ask your child about organized ways to give back to the people in their school and local community.

Examples

Starting or supporting the following: school supplies drive, canned food drive, clothing drive, Thanksgiving food drive, holiday toy drive, etc.

Lesson 6: Caring for School

Ask your child about how they have participated in informal acts of service at school.

Examples

- “Have you noticed any classmates that need help or are struggling? How do you think you could help them? Do you have a particular talent that would benefit them?”
- “What do you think your teacher(s) needs help with? How do you think you could use your time to help them?”
- “Which staff members seem like they need help? How do you think you could use your time or talents to help them?”
- “What’s an area at school that you notice is disorganized or could benefit from some time and care? How could you use your time or talents to create a safer/more inviting space?”

Lesson 6: Caring for School

Ask your child about organized ways to give back to the school environment.

Examples

Starting or supporting a: composting program, recycling program, reusable water bottle initiative, or school beautification campaign

Lesson 7: Caring for Community

Optional activity

Identify community

When driving or walking, ask children to identify different community features: “What different types of people do you notice in our community? What are the different places/locations that exist in our community? What animals do you notice or see in our community?”

Activity

Have children make a map of their community to show the people, environmental, and animal features that they interact with most.

Lesson 8: Caring for People

Understanding physical vs emotional needs

STEP 1 Start with a discussion about the difference between the physical (air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing) and emotional needs (security, safety) that a person may generally have and how meeting those needs impacts an individual's well-being.

STEP 2 Then, ask if they have noticed people within the community who have the needs they just identified.

Examples

- Noticing that a home has been severely damaged after a natural disaster and the family has been relocated to a shelter for the time being = physical (shelter) and emotional (safety/security) needs not being met
- Noticing an unhoused person waiting in line at a food pantry or on the street with a sign asking for food = physical (food) and emotional (safety/security) needs not being met

Lesson 8: Caring for People

Understanding direct vs indirect impact

Talk with your child about locations where they could perform acts of service and whether or not that would have a direct or indirect impact on those in need.

Food insecurity (physical need)

Direct impact = Volunteering time and serving food at a food pantry

Indirect impact = Donating food to a food bank

Lack of adequate shelter (physical need)

Direct impact = Volunteering to assist with temporary housing for individuals affected by a natural disaster at a community center

Indirect impact = Helping build or improve a home for a displaced family or raise money to support a displaced family

Feeling disconnected (emotional need)

Direct impact = Reading to seniors at a senior center

Indirect impact = Writing holiday cards that get delivered to seniors at a senior center

Lesson 8: Caring for People

Identify community needs

Ask your child to recall the different needs of people within their local community they previously mentioned. Have them think about where in the community people may go for help when their physical and/or emotional needs are not being met (location, organization/nonprofit).

“What are some physical or emotional needs that are not being met for people within our community?” (child responds) “Thank you for sharing. Now, where might these people go to get help? Which locations or organizations can we go to to help support these people in need?”

Lesson 9: Caring for the Environment

Identify environmental needs

1. What do living things such as plants need to survive?
2. What do living things such as animals need to survive?
3. What do nonliving things such as water need to be healthy and keep the ecosystem balanced?
4. How do nonliving things such as water impact the living things in the environment?

Lesson 9: Caring for the Environment

Understanding impact on environment

STEP 1 Take the time to sit down with your child to discuss the living and nonliving environmental factors that they interact with at home on a daily basis and how their environmental choices at home impact the greater community.

For example:

- Interactions with living factors: other members of the household, indoor plants, outdoor yard/garden, and/or pets
- Interactions with non-living factors: throwing out garbage, making meals and disposing of food waste, using water in many ways to cook and bathe

STEP 2 (optional) If desired, they can make a flow chart of various choices they make and their impact on the environment.

For example: Water conservation, electricity conservation, waste management, recycling, composting, taking care of pets, gardening

- Water conservation → leaves more water for living things in our community
- Waste management → protects the homes of living things within the environment