

**Greed**



# Greed and Selfishness

## Purpose

To look at the effects of greed and selfishness and how people feel good about themselves when they share.

## Entrance of Pupils

*A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of 'Greed and Selfishness' for the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes)*

## Introduction

*The film starts in silence to give the pupils an opportunity to consider the Images.*



## The Stranger and the Stone

The snow had come glimmering, shimmering down,  
The cold wind had wrapped it around and around  
The cottage and farmhouse, the rich house and poor,  
As it tapped with white fingers the window and door.  
And the children were hustled upstairs and to bed  
While the parents discussed how the town could be fed.

For four weeks the snow drifted and fell  
'Til the road from the field, not a farmer could tell,  
Or a path from a stream, or a rock from a hill,  
And the people grew hungry and hungrier still.

Then at last came a day when the sunlight crept through  
And the townsfolk all come to decide what to do.  
But everyone there with a loaf or a bun  
Kept his heart tightly closed least his neighbour had none.

Then a stranger said 'Build me a fire in the square.'  
And for brambles and twigs they ran here and ran there.  
'And place a large pot in the heart of the flame  
And gather around' said the man with no name.



'Neither jewels nor diamonds nor gold do I own  
But my treasure is here in this magical stone.  
If I wait 'til the water grows bubbly and hot  
And I drop in this stone through the mouth of the pot  
It will make this amazing and wonderful stew!  
And the people all shouted 'Oh do sir, please do!'

Then lo and behold , just as quick as a flash  
They saw it soar up and drop down with a splash.  
Then he dipped in the ladle and tasted the stew  
And murmured aloud 'It will do, it will do,  
But a carrot would give it a wonderful taste.'  
And a neighbour ran home in the greatest of haste  
And when he threw in every carrot he had,  
The stranger then tasted and murmured 'Not bad!  
But an onion, an onion, one onion at least  
Would give it a lift from a meal to a feast!'

And away ran another to grab from the shed  
The onion he'd hung there (all safe for himself).  
And each time he tasted, the stranger said 'Good'  
Then away went another, as fast as he could.  
And when each one had brought some and each one had none  
The stranger looked up from the pot and said 'Done!'



Oh they filled up their bowls with the magical stew  
And to empty the pot gave them all they could do.  
And at last they trudged homeward all happy and fed  
And gave thanks for the feast and fell straight into bed.

When the blanket of night rolled away from the day  
The stone and the stranger had gone on their way  
To search in the snow for a village in need  
To make neighbours of strangers, the people agreed.



So do you think that the stone is magical?

Do you think that it makes the delicious stew more delicious?

Or did, perhaps, the stranger persuade all the villagers to be a little less selfish, a bit less greedy and share the few bits of food that they had managed to gather in that terrible cold weather?

After they shared, everybody ate well.

### **What is Greed?**

Perhaps it's keeping everything for yourself and not sharing with others?

Some people also think it's denying other people the things you have and that you want.

If you don't wish to be greedy, can you be prepared to give?



## Generosity

Giving might include giving to charity—for example giving money to some charities can help poor people in other countries— people who, for example, have had their lives badly affected by natural disasters and wars. That would certainly be generous, to help people by giving your own money, your allowance for example.

But there are other ways of being generous, of giving too. Most would agree that it's a very good thing to be able to give to give. There are many things that you can give which won't cost you a penny, which would be very much appreciated.

One way is being generous with your time; by helping your parents for example, at home—maybe doing a household chore (without complaining!)

Another thought— what about being generous with your friend at school by listening carefully to what they have to say, perhaps smiling and laughing with them?

How do you think that would make them feel about you?

....By being generous of spirit by not complaining about people you might find annoying (perhaps someone in your family— maybe a brother or sister) - is that too difficult?

....By being generous with your attention?

....By being supportive and helpful to a classmate who is stuck with some work that you know how to do? They might help the other way round at some point.

These are all good things to do and these positive sorts of actions give us a strong sense of satisfaction.



## The Benefits of Being a Good Person

When people act in an agreeable way, they feel good about themselves—and rightly so. They feel that they are decent, kind people and are trying their best. That creates a strong, warm sense of satisfaction from within and that feeling lasts a long time.

It's great when we have a little money, isn't it, and we can go and buy ourselves a tasty treat like some sweets or something like that. But that feeling doesn't last long. You eat the sweet, you feel good about the sweet, it's gone - the moment passes.

Most people recognize that when we are charitable and generous with our time and our efforts, that good feeling defends us against people who are mean-spirited and people who are hurtful towards us. They want to persuade us that we're not good people. But those acts of charity and self-giving defend us against that. They give us a long serving sense of doing the right thing.



## Heaven and Hell

A man spoke to the Elder about Heaven and Hell.

'I will show you' said the Elder and led the man into a room which had a very large pot of stew in the middle.

The smell was delicious but around the pot sat people who were famished and starving. Each person was holding a spoon with a very long handle tied to their hand. The handle could reach the pot of stew but because the handle was longer than their arms, it was impossible to get the stew into their mouth. Their suffering was terrible.

'Now I will show your Heaven' said the Elder.

They went into an identical room and there was a similar pot of stew. The people all had identical spoons but they were well nourished, talking and happy.

At first, the man did not understand.

'It is simple.' said the Elder 'You see, they have learned to feed each other.'

Isn't it interesting that the place people talk about being such a horrible place, Hell, looks the same as the place people think of as being wonderful, Heaven?

The only difference between the two places in the story is the attitude of the people there.

For a moment, think of someone you know who might be considered to be greedy or selfish.

What do you think about their attitude?

Is it a good attitude?

How does it make you feel about that person?

Do you like that person or does it prevent you from liking them as much as you could?





Can you think of someone who is kind, generous, thoughtful and helpful towards you?

How does that make you feel about them?

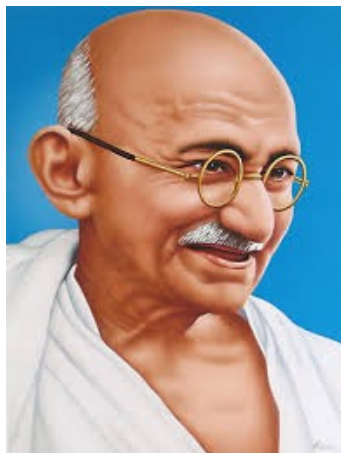
I bet you feel in a very positive way about that person, don't you?

### Quotes

**Mahatma Gandhi was an activist helping the poor of India.**

**He said:**

**'Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs.....  
but not every man's greed.'**



**Lewis Carroll was the famous author of 'Alice in Wonderland'.**

**He said:**

**'One of the deepest secrets of life is that all that is worth  
doing is what we do for others.'**



## The Bible Says:

A rich young man came to see Jesus about how to receive eternal life.

Jesus told him 'Keep the commandments if you want eternal life'.

The rich man replied 'I have obeyed all the commandments. What else do I need to do?'

Jesus said 'Go and sell all that you have and give the money to the poor and you will have riches in Heaven; then come and follow me.'

When the rich man heard this he went away sad because he was very rich. Jesus said to his disciples 'I assure you, it is much harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle'.

**Matthew 19: 16—24**

## Let's Pray

Dear God

We know how hard it is to be selfless both in our giving away of money and possession and also in the giving of time. Help us to always remember that there are many who are much worse off than ourselves and it is our job to, in some small ways, help to balance the wealth and share with others.

Amen

## Putting it into Practice

Research Cafod, Oxfam, Children in Need or another charity that helps those less well off than ourselves

## Exit of Pupils

*A thought provoking slideshow reminding pupils of the key issues raised in the assembly about the theme of 'Greed and Selfishness' for the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes)*



## Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

### Day 2

Dear God

Help us to remember than many people in the world are treated unfairly because of the greed and selfishness of others.

Help us to do something practical to share our resources more fairly.

Amen

Find out about Fairtrade and see if you can persuade your school or family to change to buying some Fairtrade items (coffee and tea are very popular).

### Day 3

Dear God

Although there may be many things that I would like and sometimes I am jealous about what other may have, help me to remember that there are many worse off than myself and let me be grateful for all that I have.

Amen

Think about holding a class collection for your local foodbank.



#### Day 4

Dear God

Thank you for all the toys and clothes that I have. For a safe bed at night and for the food and drink that I receive through the day.

Help me to try to share my things with others less fortunate than myself

Amen

With the permission of whoever looks after you, look for toys or items that you do not use anymore and consider donating them to a local charity shop in your town.

#### Day 5

Dear God

Remind me that I can be generous by doing thoughtful things for others without complaining.

Remind me to try to help others in class today and to do something kind for someone when I get home.

Amen

Discuss the idea of your class getting involved in 'Operation Christmas Child' making shoeboxes full of useful items and toys for children in countries less well off than ourselves.

