

## Activity: Thinning



Teaching Goal: Reduce materialism and give to those in need.

Scriptures: Proverbs 3:27 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

James 2:15-16 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

Materials: Used clothes and toys.

In Advance: If you have younger children, decide ahead of the lesson where you will donate items that you decide to “thin.” With older children, consider allowing them to be part of this process as well and incorporate this into your lesson.

- I. Play Theme Song
- II. Pray
- III. Review last Family Time Lesson
- IV. Lesson and Discussion

☺ Words that are written in **bold** are when the leader is speaking. Feel free to use your own words.

A. This is an excellent activity in the weeks before Christmas. The items being thinned and given away can be a gift for Jesus. **People who live in America are blessed. We live in one of the most affluent countries in the world during one of the most affluent times in the history of mankind. We are blessed. An “affluent” person is someone with access to abundant resources like money, influence and opportunity. The danger of affluence is materialism.**

**Materialism can occur when we start to acquire excess things...things we don’t need or use, and at the same time, ignore or look the other way when people we know or see need help. In its worst form, materialism becomes an idol. People may begin to think, “I don’t need God. I’m doing pretty well on my own and I have everything I need.”**

**“Thinning” is an activity we can all do that helps us recognize and keep materialism in check. When we fill our lives with “things,” we can end up spending more time and money to store and maintain the things we have.**

### FAMILY TIME TRAINING

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Tell a story from your own life experience of how having one item led to another item and still another. A simple example would be buying a home with grass. Now you need a lawnmower. Then you need gas and oil for the lawnmower. Bags for the grass. Maintenance and repairs on the mower. Time and energy each week to mow.

Another example might be a hobby. There is nothing wrong with a hobby unless it starts consuming resources of time and money that God would have us use somewhere else. I used to collect baseball cards. I got in the habit of buying a couple packs of cards each week. Each year I would spend over \$200 on baseball cards. As my collection grew, I started spending money on plastic card covers to protect my good cards. I bought more expensive hard covers for my most expensive cards. Next I bought three-ring notebooks to hold my cards. Then I needed two shelves on a bookcase to hold my notebooks and boxes of cards.

**B. ACTIVITY: We are going to go through our clothes, toys and other stuff and see if there are items we no longer need or use.** Invite a volunteer to read Proverbs 3:27, James 2:15-16 and end with 2 Corinthians 9:7-8. **Giving to others in need is part of what we do as Christians. I also want to tell you a little bit about the people who will be receiving the items we give.** Share what you've learned about the place where you will be donating the items. (Or with older children, discuss where the items can be donated.) If they will be used by families directly then explain what type of families will be receiving the items. If the donations will be used for resale, then explain how the money will be used to help others.

**Let's go through our stuff and pick out items that can be used to help others.** You can do it together. Parents may want to begin and model the process. Have fun talking about memories connected to the items you have. Some items you will keep others you will give away. It is good if kids can learn to give from their hearts instead of being forced.

Some kids are reluctant to get rid of anything they have. The first time you do this activity you may end up talking about why it is so hard to let go...even when items are broken, don't fit or are not used anymore. Over time children begin to understand the thinning process. Resistance can be replaced with joy.

V. Memorize

**Thin and share,  
Shows we care.**

VI. Close in Prayer

VII. Pass It On

Make an extra copy of this lesson and *pass it on* to another family.