

For the Parents



Hey Parents! No one goes around and says they're greedy, right? We might think *other* people are greedy (it's just so easy to spot the sins of others, even from a distance), but it's so difficult to see it in ourselves. But read this definition of *greedy* and tell me if at least a piece of it doesn't own you—or your kids.

Greed is an excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves, especially with respect to material wealth.

So, how do you make sure, as a parent, that you don't inadvertently fuel greed in your family this Christmas?

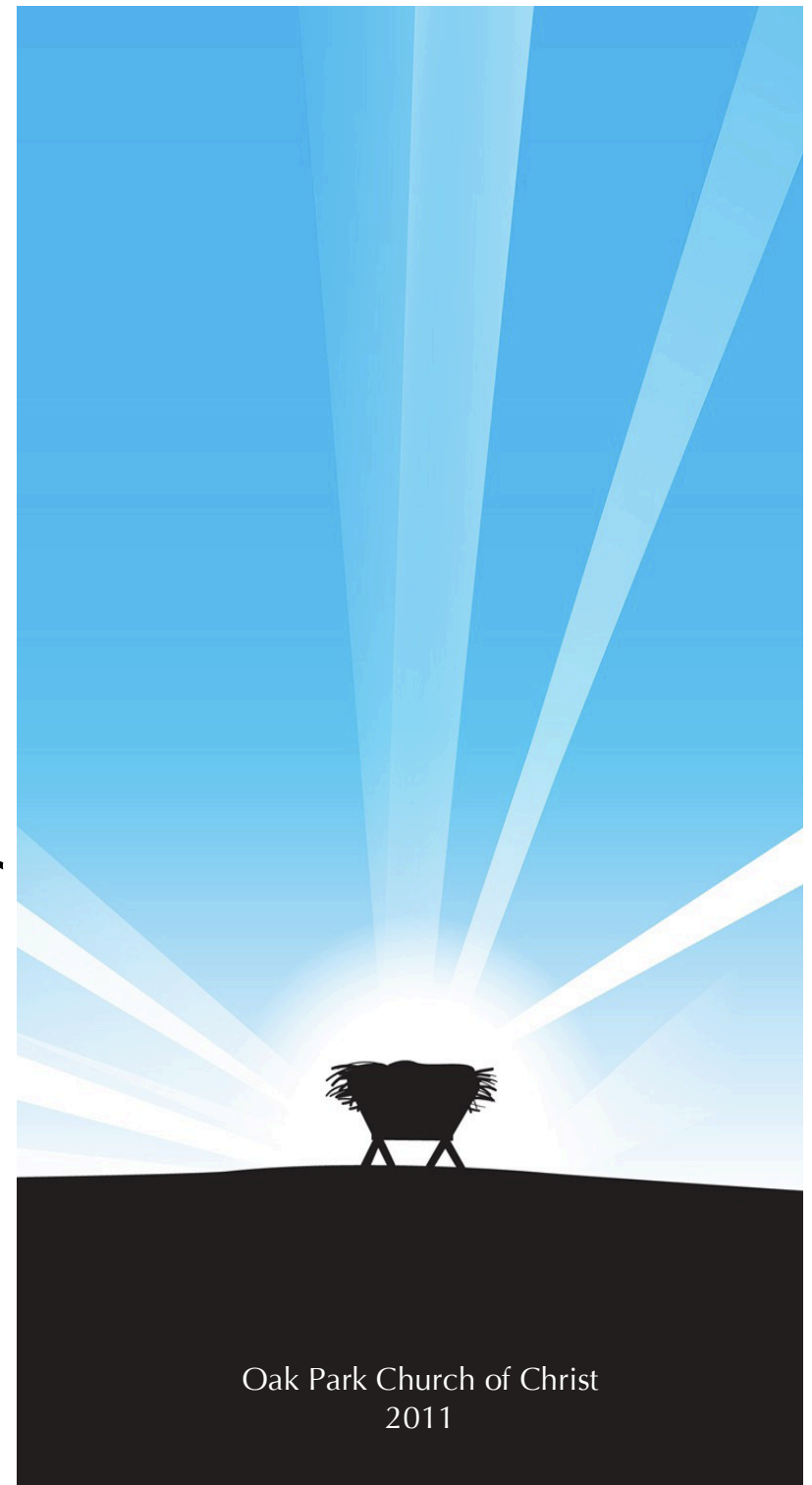
I suppose there are a few options: Don't give presents. Hand out coal. Read from Deuteronomy and pretend it's February. Those are almost certain recipes to kill some of the joy that comes with Christmas.

The very best antidote to greed I've discovered is *generosity*. The more I give, the deeper I cut into the greed that lives inside of me. The more I am willing to take giving to a sacrificial level, the more I am reminded that this life is not about me or about my wants and desire. By far, generous giving is the best antidote to the greed that lives inside of me.

At the heart of it all, I want my children to learn to live with less, so that they can give to others who need their help, and I want them to be grateful for the things that they have. I have to believe that there is a strong tie between the abundance of "stuff" that they get and the tenderness of their heart to the needs of others.

Perhaps your family can have a conversation about the topic of greed vs. generosity and consider what you can give this year. We all want our kids to have a wonderful Christmas, but not at the expense of developing a generous and grateful heart. Take advantage of the opportunity this year to nurture in them a desire to invest their lives and their resources into things that will last forever.

Family Devotional



Oak Park Church of Christ
2011

Merry Christmas from Oak Park Church!

We trust that this guide helps you lead your family into a sweet moment of worship, right in your home.

As a Family, read Matthew 2:1-12 (Each family member can read 2 -3 verses). Discuss the different responses that a person can have toward Jesus. In this passage, there are two very different ways a person can respond to Jesus.

How did King Herod feel about Jesus?

How did the wisemen feel about Jesus?

King Herod says that he wants to worship Jesus, but he is sneaky, and he actually wants to destroy Jesus. Herod was jealous. He wanted the gifts and honor for himself. Have you ever felt that way?

The wisemen had been waiting for Jesus. They were pretty important people. They were allowed to go right to Herod in Jerusalem. But they did not come to worship Herod. They wanted to search for Jesus and honor Him with gifts.

How does our family feel about Jesus?

As a visual of this, if you have a family nativity scene, one member of the family can rearrange the scene to depict how the world views Jesus. The original story has Him as the center of the attention. Others can share how Jesus was the center of attention this year, or how they hope for Him to be this next year.

What is one change that can occur in this home to place more attention on Him?

Wrap it up 1

2-7 years

Parents: Help with this! Share a favorite snack with a friend or family member. To challenge yourself, divide it so that one portion is much bigger than the other. Then wear a big smile while you give the larger treat to the other person. Thank God that He shared with us the whole gift!

Wrap it up 2 For all ages!

Hold a coin as tightly as you can. Challenge someone to try and pry it out of your hand. Read I Timothy 6:17-19. Instead of being 'wrapped up' in stuff, or keeping a tight fist on your stuff, God wants us to loosen our grip and be generous with others. People are more important than gifts. Pray and thank God that He did not hold on to His Son with a tight fist.

Wrap it up 3

8 and up... Grab a box this week and clean out your room and closet, looking for things that are in good shape that you may not need. Consider giving it away or donating it, like to Boomerangs. If everyone gave away some of their stuff, there would be fewer people in need. Pray and thank God that Jesus gave all of Himself for us.

Wrap it Up as A Family Consider what God may be leading your family to do as a response to His love shown. Here are a few options for you family to be a part of in 2012.

- Consider serving a meal at Oak Park's monthly Inn from Cold evening.
- Depending on the ages of your kids, maybe God is calling your family on a short term mission trip.
- Shovel a driveway this winter for an older couple.
- Donate to the Mustard Seed and while you are there, offer some time to help serve food.