**BEFORE THE OFFERING**

As you know we have been having a thought prior to the offering to bring not only an introduction but create a sense of worship of what is to come. Thank you for offering to be a part of this ministry. This is prepared to give you some ideas of how this can be done. Hopefully out of these options you will find something helpful. If it just sparks an idea of something different, that’s fine too. Be assured that I’m here to help as well as Scott and Natalie.

You can find some ideas as well as a booklet on the Generous Culture web site which still has our old name, but we are working on having a new one created to combine both former Eastern and Southern Territories.

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/generouslife/resources/material-for-focused-generosity-teaching-and-pledge/>



The booklet you are looking for is “The Offering Moment”. You’ll see other resources there as well that might help spark ideas.

**INTRODUCTION OPTIONS:**

This should take no more than 3 minutes so you don’t have to prepare a lot. In fact it’s really hard to condense some of our experiences into such a short time but it is really just to set the scene for worship.

Connect your story to the idea of giving. As we give our tithes, this is an act of worship which can be a physical act which reminds us of God’s goodness and our response to Him. It is thanksgiving for God’s abundance to us. It is worship not just taking up a collection (a common term from Sunday School days). It is also good to think about changing our thinking from ***giving*** an offering to ***bringing*** an offering. It really isn’t ours to ***give*** but we ***bring*** to God what is His.

***Your Story or Testimony***: Our stories are powerful. If you have an example of God’s provision for you or your family at a certain time or situation, that would be great. Think of the situation or the need, what was done and what was the result. For example, I remember some very inspiring stories of people who had so little they didn’t have enough for the evening meal. But in faith they sat at the table and gave thanks. What happened next was a true miracle. There was a knock at the door and there was a box of food for them to be able to make the meal. I have heard this type of story and it is often from what we would call ‘the old days’. But these miracles happen today. And if you’ve experienced something like that, then please share.

***Interview***: If you would prefer to be interviewed by someone, that can happen. I’ve done some experimenting and we can even do it in isolation using zoom. Again, drawing on your personal stories is powerful. Do you tithe? If so, why? What has been your experience? Why do you tithe? Has God ever let you down?

***Scripture***: There are over 2000 verses which refer to giving, generosity etc. A majority of the parables Jesus told refer to money or possessions. There is so much to learn from the scriptures so if there is a particular verse or passage or parable that speaks to you, then please share.

***Song***: There are some wonderful songs which speak to us in this area so you may like to refer to some lines from one of those songs and then have it played as the offering is brought. One of my favourites is “Christ is Enough” because it reminds me that I don’t need other things of the world if I have Christ because He is enough. If you are familiar with the song book there are some wonderful songs there which help bring us into this worship time and remind us that we surrender all to Jesus.

***Include Everyone***: As this is a time of worship it is vital that no one is excluded. There are some corps and churches who have not moved away from what was called ‘Seeker Sensitive’ thinking from the 1980’s. They thought that by excluding visitors, for instance, from the offering they would encourage people to be there and not have them thinking you were after their money. Not surprisingly this has been proven to have the opposite outcome.

As with all parts of worship, no one is excluded. As we believe God blesses those who put Him first in all aspects of their lives, why would we want anyone to miss out on blessings and growing closer to God? You may have heard people say something like “If you are a visitor here this morning, please don’t feel compelled to give” or “If you are a visitor here, you don’t need to worry about this. This is something just for us who are a part of this congregation. So you don’t need to take part in this” or variations. Just as we wouldn’t think of excluding people from worship through song or scripture or prayer or the message, why would we exclude people from worship through bringing their tithes and offerings to God? We want to encourage everyone to feel free to be involved. If they choose not to, then that’s their choice, at least we haven’t excluded them.

If you have any questions or would like some assistance is preparing your introduction, please don’t hesitate to contact Scott or Natalie Frame or Christine Dickson.

God bless you and thank you for being involved in this life changing ministry.