

Giving Game Instruction Manual

Summary

1. **Take advantage of our ready-made Giving Game tool and materials.** Our [resource library](#) has comprehensive and well-tested materials, including an online tool, script, and FAQs. Our tool helps with follow-ups and tracking impact.
2. **Know what you're trying to accomplish.** You'll teach core concepts and share resources that participants can use to give more effectively. But you may have other goals related to your specific circumstances. The more explicit you can be in [defining these outcomes](#), the more successful your Giving Game will be.
3. **Tailor your Giving Game to your audience.** For example, if participants are members of a student entrepreneurship club, consider featuring charities promoting economic empowerment.
4. **Request sponsorship if you can't fund the Giving Game yourself.** Giving What We Can is eager to sponsor Giving Games, subject to a few restrictions.
5. **Prepare ahead of time.** [Practice](#) your script and try to anticipate [concerns that participants might raise](#).
6. **Make an "End Game Ask".** Make your Giving Game more effective by asking participants to [take actions](#) that encourage more effective giving. Consider staying and chatting after the game, and inviting participants to an upcoming event.
7. **Treat participants with respect.** You're responsible for making sure that the participants are treated with respect, both by you and by other participants. Encouraging people to challenge their own thinking is fine, but it should be done in a way that isn't hostile or overly confrontational.
8. **Provide helpful handouts.** Pass out copies of our [giving recommendations](#) or [guide to charity evaluation](#). It can also be helpful to have some printed copies of the information you present about the charities available for reference.
9. **Break into smaller groups during discussion periods.** Groups of five work very well, and allow each person to be more engaged in the discussion.
10. **Complete a post-game report.** This report helps us process feedback in a standardised way. If we sponsor your Game, it tells us which donation to make.
11. **Be a good brand ambassador for Giving What We Can.** By facilitating a Giving Game, you commit to representing Giving What We Can's brand accurately and respectfully. This includes being respectful and tasteful in [how you depict people and regions affected by poverty](#).

Funding

Sponsorship from Giving What We Can

Giving What We Can can generally provide sponsorship for Giving Games, as long as they meet the following requirements:

1. All featured charities are [listed on Giving What We Can](#) (with the exception of a “decoy charity” such as Playpumps).
2. You collect feedback and conduct post-game follow-ups:
 - a. **For Giving Game workshops:** Participants complete a post-game survey (2-5 mins).
 - b. **For speed Giving Games:** Solicit email addresses for GWWC’s mailing list (and your group’s mailing list if applicable). You can do this via an [online](#) or [printed](#) form (be sure to print enough copies).
3. We strongly suggest you make one or more other “[end-game asks](#)” to encourage participants to pursue more information about effective giving.
4. You complete a [post-game report](#).
5. You are respectful to the participants and a good ambassador for Giving What We Can and its values.
6. You review the summary of this document which provides a quick overview of best practices.
7. All facilitators join the Giving Game Project’s mailing list, which distributes occasional updates and best practices. You can unsubscribe at any time.

You may request sponsorship from our [Giving Game platform](#) by following these steps:

1. Open up the [admin section of the Giving Game Platform](#)
2. Click *Apply for Giving Game Sponsorship*
3. Complete answers to all the questions

We will then respond by email with confirmation.

Giving What We Can generally provides the following sponsorship rates:

Audience	Sponsorship amount <i>Per person who participates in the vote</i>
Primary school age students	\$1 USD
Secondary school age students	\$5 USD
University or college students	\$10 USD
Professional audiences	\$20 USD

These rates assume a 60+ minute Game; for shorter games we halve the amounts. For primary or secondary school audiences we also recommend considering a [Charity Election](#) instead.

These are just rough guidelines that you can adjust to your particular circumstances. Giving What We Can is willing to provide larger amounts for particularly high value Games, and we strongly encourage other sponsors to do the same.

Sponsoring your own Giving Game

You can sponsor your own Giving Game. You can use money you already planned to donate, so it doesn't have to cost you anything! Your money will still be donated to your favorite charities, but by sponsoring a Giving Game you'll gain the chance to teach each participant about effective giving. Even if you weren't already planning to give, sponsoring a Giving Game offers great reasons to do so: not only will your money go to help effective charities, you'll also be teaching people about better giving!

Other sponsorship options

You can sponsor Giving Games that other people run by [making a donation to Giving What We Can](#). Just forward the receipt to givinggames@givingwhatwecan.org and let us know that you'd like it to be used for Giving Games.

Contact givinggames@givingwhatwecan.org for more sponsorship opportunities.

Game design

We offer comprehensive and well-tested [materials](#) for a “ready to run” Giving Game. Using these materials or tweaking them to suit your needs simplifies the process of designing your Giving Game.

Designing your Giving Game can be an iterative process. As you get more details about your audience and how much time you have, you may need to revisit your ideas about which charities to use or other elements of the design.

Goals

Define what you’re trying to accomplish. The specific takeaways you’ll want participants to get from the experience depend on your particular audience and circumstances. The goals you define will help guide the rest of the design process.

Your goals may include things like:

- Communicate specific ideas to the audience
- Provide an environment for the participants to explore their values
- Specific voting outcomes
- Participants engage in follow-up behavior after the Giving Game

Timeline

As you plan your Giving Game, you'll want to develop a timeline to help you allocate your time budget. You can use the sample timeline below as a template. Remember to allow some buffer throughout the process to account for things like people arriving late.

Here's a sample timeline for a 75 min Giving Game:

- Intro (10 mins)
- Charity Overview (15 mins)
- Group Discussion (35 min)
- Collect Votes and Announce Winner (5 mins)
- Recap, Q&A debrief, and [end-game asks](#) (10 mins)

Participants

Groups or individuals promoting effective giving

You can run a Giving Game with [friends or family](#), groups you're a part of, or reach out to local groups who might be sympathetic to the idea. You can also use a Giving Game as a way to [find members for a new group you're starting](#). You may also consider:

- Your [religious group](#) (e.g. church)
- Your [secular, skeptic, or humanist group](#)¹
- Your book club
- Your employer
- Your local [Unitarian Universalist congregation](#)²

¹ Two umbrella groups, the [Secular Student Alliance](#) (SSA) and the [United Coalition of Reason](#) (COR), recommend Giving Games as an activity for their affiliate groups.

² The Unitarian Universalist Association includes Giving Games as one of the ways their 1,000+ member congregations can engage with questions about giving. You can approach a [local congregation](#) and offer to help run a Giving Game that's customised for UU audiences.

- Local organisations (e.g. Rotary Club, League of Women Voters, etc.)

Student groups

Campuses offer numerous opportunities to find Giving Game participants. You can use the groups below as the sole audience for your Giving Game, or you can use them to help promote a Giving Game that's open to the public. You can also use a Giving Game as a way to [find members for a new group you're starting](#).

- Student organisations sympathetic to doing good (e.g. social justice organisation), that might find the experience interesting (e.g. debate club), or whose members might have an high capacity for future giving (e.g. investment club)
- Student organisations that you're a member of (these don't have to be related to charity — the first ever Giving Game was conducted with a facilitator's a cappella group)
- Greek Life organisations³
- Classes (ask teachers to incorporate a Giving Game into classes on Philosophy, Psychology, Economics, Decision Theory, Health)
- A [campus religious group](#)
- Your [secular, skeptic, or humanist group](#)
- Your local [Unitarian Universalist congregation](#)
- Student Activities Fair (run a Speed Giving Game to stand out from other organisations and attract new members)
- Friends, roommates, or people who live in your dorm

Educators

Giving Games can be incorporated into classes in numerous subject areas including Philosophy, Psychology, Economics, and Health (and we're always open to creative ideas to apply Giving Games in new areas). Giving Games can be used to explore concepts such as:

- Effective Altruism
- Ethics

³ Greek Life organisations often have a long-standing interest in philanthropy. We have [advice](#), [instructions and materials](#) customised for Giving Games with Greek organizations.

- Opportunity cost
- Utilitarianism
- Cognitive biases
- Global health
- Medical ethics
- Optimization
- Public policy
- Decision Theory
- Group dynamics
- Global development

Employers

A [workplace Giving Game](#) is a great way to provide your employees with a fun experience with a positive social impact. Workplace applications include:

- Team building exercises
- CSR workshops
- Activity for a day devoted to charity or social impact
- Allow employees to determine where the company's charitable contributions are given
- Exercise to allow employees to determine where the company's pro bono work should be allocated
- Identify a charity that resonates with employees for long-term relationship
- Unofficial activity for interested co-workers

School administrators

Options for using Giving Games in school programs outside of the classroom include:

- New student orientation programs
- Residential life programs
- Incorporation into lecture or lecture series
- Opportunity for honors students and/or student leadership

Speed Giving Games

To find participants for a Speed Giving Game, set up a table in a high-traffic area and ask passers-by, “Do you want to donate someone else’s money to charity?” Examples of high traffic areas you can use:

- University dining hall
- Student center
- Student activities fair
- Public park

Introducing your game

Start your Giving Game by welcoming the participants and giving a brief introduction to the session. Explain what they’ll be doing (choosing which charity to give to) and why (individuals and society can accomplish more social impact by donating more effectively). You can use [our presentation template](#) which provides basic information about effective giving, and can be adapted to suit your needs.

In general, your introduction should:

- Welcome the participants
- Get people engaged
- Explain the premise of the Giving Game
- Introduce new ideas about charitable giving
- Provide a transition to the discussion of the featured charities

The specifics of your introduction depend on the particulars of your Giving Game. If the participants are hearing about effective giving for the first time, provide some basic background on the topic.

Frame your introduction in language likely to resonate with your specific audience. If the participants are finance students, try framing effective giving as “maximising the return on investment from your giving”. If they’re ethics students, it will probably be more effective to talk about “doing the most good”.

Resources

If you want to create your own introduction, there are a number of materials you may find helpful:

- [Ready-to-run Giving Game materials](#): highly recommended
- [Additional Giving Game presentations/materials](#)
- [Video of a Giving Game](#) (more lecture-based than discussion-based)
- [Students for High Impact Charity](#) has [comprehensive materials for a Giving Game](#) tailored to teenage students.
- [Introduction to Key Topics of Effective Altruism](#) including What is Effective Altruism, Charity Evaluation, and Cause Selection.
- [Materials for Giving Games with religious organisations](#)
- [Materials for Giving Games with Greek Life organisations](#)
- [Audio of a Giving Game](#)

Many people think that donors don't need to inform themselves because they can use common sense and intuition to identify which programs work. A great way to show them how hard this can be is to run [a quick interactive quiz testing people's intuition about which programs work](#) (alternative quiz discussing other interventions [here](#)). [Here's an example](#) of how to run the charity intuition exercise.

You can incorporate videos into your Introduction in a variety of ways. You can have a longer video serve as the bulk of your introduction, or use a shorter video to elaborate a specific point in your own presentation. We've collected a library of video resources covering numerous topics related to effective giving:

- Our charitable giving introduction: [How to maximise your charitable impact](#)
- Peter Singer's TED Talk: [The Why and How of Effective Altruism](#)
- Kat Rosqueta's TEDx Talk: [Amplify the Money You Give](#)
- Dan Palotta's TED Talk: [The Way We Think About Charity is Dead Wrong](#)
- Katherine Fulton's TED Talk: [You are the Future of Philanthropy](#)
- [Expert Philanthropy Insight Videos](#). These short (2-3 mins) videos share philanthropy experts' thoughts on specific issues including Non-Profit Evaluation (Elie Hassenfeld, GiveWell co-founder), Philanthropy and Technology, and Social Entrepreneurship.

Choosing your charities

You're free to feature whichever charities you like in your Giving Game, though as a reminder, there are [some restrictions](#) if GWWC is sponsoring your Giving Game. If you're unsure which charities to use and want to use a choice set that's worked well in a lot of different circumstances, we suggest featuring Against Malaria Foundation vs. GiveDirectly (presentation materials for AMF, Give Directly, and the rest of GWWC's recommended charities are available in our [Giving Game resource library](#)).

Many of the topics the discussion will cover are driven by which charities are featured. So facilitators who want to [highlight certain issues](#) should think carefully about which charities would best do so. When GiveDirectly (which offers unrestricted cash grants to people in extreme poverty) is a featured charity, discussions typically touch what role paternalism should play in giving, as GiveDirectly's programs invariably offer beneficiaries more discretion on how to improve their lives than other charities. Similarly, if [Innovations for Poverty Action](#) (which conducts research into which interventions actually help the poor) is involved, expect to discuss the trade-offs between short vs. long-term help and direct vs. indirect aid.

Presenting your charities

Before participants can start thinking about which charity to choose, they need to learn something about each organisation. This information is typically presented right after the introduction (but can be reviewed beforehand e.g. teachers assigning the material as preparatory reading before a class discussion).

Our [resource library](#) has presentations and accompanying scripts for each of our recommended charities. These can be shortened or supplemented to fit your time and needs. The resource library also contains 1 page "Charity at a Glance" sheets, for use in Speed Giving Games. You can use these materials as a template if you need to create a presentation for another charity. Try to present a similar amount of information about each charity: if you talk for 10 mins about one organization and 1 min talking about another, participants won't view it as a "fair fight".

When giving overviews of the charities, try to strike a balance between providing the information people want to make their decision and not overwhelming people with too much to think about. Providing handouts of the information makes things easier, since people don't have to focus on keeping notes. It can also be helpful to pause and answer questions during or after the overview. If you don't know the answer to someone's question that's okay: just say so.

Voting

We recommend a winner-takes-all or proportional voting structure. Our [Giving Game platform](#) requires one of these voting structures.

Adding a preliminary vote at the outset is a great way to tell if people change their minds over the course of the Giving Game (this does not apply to Speed Giving Games). Note the results of any preliminary votes in the comments of your post-game report.

However you structure the voting, participants are required to decide which charity is their top choice. If you give people the option to split their vote evenly, many will take that option without fully reflecting on their priorities.

Voting can be conducted either privately via paper ballot or publicly via a show of hands. If you're unsure which to use, we suggest using private voting to respect those who may want anonymity.

If you're looking for a particular donation outcome, think carefully about what voting structure is most likely to produce it. As an example, you might run a Game featuring a highly effective charity against a heartwarming but ineffective charity. If you want the effective charity to receive the entire donation and expect most but not all participants will vote for this charity, a winner-take-all system would be better than a preferential or tiered structure.

For a more detailed discussion of these voting structures and others you can consider, check out "[Let the Giving Games Begin!](#)", a blog about structuring Giving Game voting by Aaron Hamlin of the Center for Election Science.

Structure	Pros	Cons
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Winner-take-all	-Drives home point about maximizing impact -Result feels like group decision	-Supporters of losing charities can feel disempowered
Proportional	-Maximizes people's agency -Any charity with support can get \$	-No collective decision -Discussion can be less vigorous

End-game asks

Once the votes have been counted and the winner has been announced, a Giving Game isn't over. Arguably, the most important part lies ahead: the "end-game ask". The idea is simple: don't let the Giving Game end without asking participants to do something that'll encourage them to be better givers!

There's no better time to ask. Participants will be in a positive state of mind; after all, they'll have just given to charity at no personal cost. And they'll hopefully have a heightened awareness of the importance of effective giving. TLYCS has [shown](#) that the Giving Game model dramatically increases people's willingness to accept pro-social requests.

As part of every Giving Game, we suggest doing two things.

1. Invite anyone who'd like to learn more about the topics addressed in the Giving Game to come up and talk afterwards. You can chat with them after the Game and schedule a time to talk further.
2. Give participants a chance to opt into future communications by signing up for one or more mailing lists. Our post-game survey, which invites people to subscribe, is a great way to do this while also collecting participant feedback.
 - a. **For Giving Game workshops:** Administer an online survey at the end of your Giving Game. This option requires that people have a way to access the online survey and 5-10 minutes to complete it.
 - b. **For "speed Giving Games":** Solicit emails for GWWC's mailing list and (if relevant) your groups using an [online](#) or [printed](#) form (be sure to print enough copies).

We also recommend making other requests:

- Ask people to follow [GWWC](#) on social media
- Distribute a [handout with Tips for Better Giving](#) from effective giving experts. This provides helpful takeaways to reinforce important topics about effective giving.
- Ask people to consider donating some of their own money to one or more of the featured charities
- Invite people to upcoming talks, events, or [local groups](#) related to effective giving.
- Encourage people who want to learn more about effective giving to enroll in the [Effective Altruism MOOC](#) or [Giving 2.0 MOOC](#) on Coursera.
- Ask people to take one of Giving What We Can's [giving pledges](#) to donate a percentage of their income to charity. (This is an important but significant request, so think carefully about whether it's appropriate for your audience.)
- Refer anyone interested in high-social-impact careers to [80,000 Hours](#), an organisation that specialises in this area. This can be particularly valuable at universities.

Incorporating these end-game asks (and/or your own ideas) is one of the best ways to improve the efficacy of your Giving Game. You'll be giving the participants the opportunity and the tools they need to form a long-term interest in better giving.

Once you've offered people the chance to engage more deeply, conclude the Giving Game by thanking people for their participation and providing a synthesis of the key issues discussed by the group.

Preparation

Training

To learn how to run a Giving Game we encourage you to watch [our pre-recorded training session](#). If you have any other questions feel free to email us at givinggames@givingwhatwecan.org.

Pre-game checklist

1. Schedule a time and place to hold the Giving Game, and ensure that participants are aware. Show up early to set things up.
2. Plan how you want to spend the time you have allocated for your Giving Game. You can use the [sample timeline](#) as a guide.
3. Practice what you intend to say to the participants (e.g. [an introduction on effective giving](#) or [charity descriptions](#)). If there are multiple facilitators, make sure you're in agreement on who is doing what. A little bit of preparation goes a long way: you'll be much more engaging if you sound natural when presenting the information instead of reading directly from a script or making it up as you go along.
4. Check to be sure the logistics are all in order. If you need a projector and/or WiFi, make sure those will be available. If you're planning on having the participants break into small discussion groups, make sure the seating will accommodate that.
5. Read through our [list of concerns that could get raised during your Giving Game and our suggested responses](#). Think about whether the structure of your Game is likely to elicit any of these concerns and plan accordingly.

Moderating the discussion

Like most aspects of Giving Games, you can tailor your role as moderator to suit your particular needs.

- Your most important responsibility in facilitating the discussion is to treat the participants with respect and to ensure that they are respectful to each other. Everyone is entitled to their opinions.
- If participants break into small discussion groups, you can float between groups and/or have people call you over with questions.
- Make sure everyone who wants to participate in the discussion has a chance. If certain people are dominating the conversation, break in and ask other people what they think.
- You may get asked a question you don't know the answer to — even if you try to anticipate potential questions beforehand. “I don't know” is a perfectly acceptable answer! Consider having a device available to do follow up research on the fly (but remember it's possible the information you're looking for simply doesn't exist).
- In some Giving Games, it's obvious that the facilitator has a clear preference among the charities. For instance, a group dedicated to fighting extreme poverty might run a Giving Game pitting an anti-poverty charity against a [heartwarming but less effective domestic charity](#). It's okay to acknowledge this bias. You can say something like: “You may think it's clear what I think. But this isn't about what I think, it's about what you think. If anyone's talking to you about a charity, there's a good chance they have their own agenda. And if there's one thing you take away from this Giving Game it's that you should think critically about what they say and make your own decisions.”
- You probably won't need to do much to stimulate conversation — the participants generally have plenty to say. If you need to get things started, just ask if anyone has any initial thoughts or impressions on where to give or how to think about the choice.
- If the conversation goes off on a tangent, help steer it back on track. In the unlikely case that the discussion dies down, you can jumpstart it by asking a leading question. The question can either be practical (about the specifics of the featured charities) or conceptual (about the frameworks that should guide this choice).

Concerns that may be raised during the Giving Game

Participants feel like they don't have enough information to make a decision

Don't worry if someone raises this concern — it's a good sign if people are actively seeking more information to guide their giving decisions! You definitely want to encourage this mindset.

Suggested solutions:

- Have devices available so people can conduct further research online
- Emphasise the importance of informed giving and contrasting participants' desire for information with typical donors (most donors do no research)
- Discuss resources donors can use to find high quality information ([Giving What We Can](#), [GiveWell](#), [Centre for Effective Altruism](#), etc.)
- Explain that the data donors want often doesn't exist, but better giving can incentivise charities to create it

Participants feel like they don't have enough time to make a decision

Again, it's a good thing if people want to put *more* time and thought into their giving. Acknowledge that the time constraint in the Giving Game is a practical necessity, and encourage them to take plenty of time in researching and reflecting on their personal giving decisions.

Someone has a principled objection to participating

This doesn't happen often, but it can happen. If for whatever reason someone doesn't want to give to either charity, don't force them — just let them abstain (if relevant, reduce the amount that goes to charity by their share).

Participants don't want to choose

When we surveyed Giving Game participants about what they liked least about the experience, the most common response was "having to choose". This is totally understandable; participants like all the charities and want to help each of them. Acknowledge this, but hold firm that participants choose a favorite. Remind people that nobody can give as much as they want to as many causes as they want — it's important to prioritise. If you feel it's appropriate, you can also encourage people to donate some of their own money to one or all of the charities.

People argue that giving is totally individual, and nobody has a right to comment on anyone else's giving

Remind people that in countries (like the US) where giving is tax-deductible, charitable donations aren't just a matter of personal choice — they're [also a matter of public policy](#). If someone makes a gift to charity, they pay a lower tax bill even if that gift has little or no social impact. Our laws incentivise certain behaviors, and it's up for debate whether those are the behaviors we want our society to incentivize.

Participants want more (or different) charities to be eligible

This could be anything from "I really like Charity X. Why can't we give to them?" to "Why are all the charities doing direct economic empowerment interventions? Why not include an organisation working on systemic change to benefit the same populations?"

You can explain that the Giving Game has this artificial constraint built in to allow for a deeper and focused discussion; there are around a million charities in the US and an open discussion wouldn't be very productive. Emphasise that people are obviously free to consider any charity they want in their own giving, and that the Giving Game structure is not meant to suggest that there are only a handful of good charities out there.

When relevant, you can direct people who show interest in other areas toward additional resources (e.g. referring someone who voices concerns about charitable giving being a

narrow form of doing good to [80,000 hours](#), an organisation that promotes ethical career choice).

After your Giving Game

After the Giving Game is over, there are still a few things left to do.

Post-game report

Submit a post-game report! This is required for Games we sponsor, but please submit a form even if someone else provided sponsorship. Post-game reports allow us to systematically collect standardised data about different Giving Games. This information is our best source of ideas for improving our process and methodology.

Steps:

1. Go to <https://game.givingwhatwecan.org/admin/>
2. Select “Manage an existing game” (if you are not currently logged in)
 - a. Enter your game code and password
3. Select “Complete a post game report”
4. Let us know the details of your game

Donations

Once the participants have decided where the prize will go, whoever sponsored the Game needs to make the appropriate donation(s).

When Giving What We Can sponsors Games, we make the donations once we receive instructions via the post-game report. We typically make the donations in a batch once per year to reduce administrative burden. After the game is completed you can request a certificate acknowledging the donations for you to share it with the participants, just respond to the sponsorship confirmation email to request the certificate.

Follow-ups

Address any follow-ups associated with your post-game ask. If you [collected emails](#) for our newsletter, please send them to givinggames@givingwhatwecan.org. Reach out to anyone who expressed interest in a subsequent chat and schedule a time to get together.

Questions?

Join the [Giving Game Discussion Group](#) on Facebook to share questions and ideas with over a hundred experienced Giving Game facilitators.

Contact givinggames@givingwhatwecan.org if you'd like to get advice from someone on our team.