

## **UU Giving Game Activity Packet**

*This discussion packet was created by [Intentional Insights](http://www.intentionalinsights.org) ([www.intentionalinsights.org](http://www.intentionalinsights.org)), whose president, Dr. Gleb Tsipursky, is a member of the [UU Curriculum and Resource Developers](http://www.uucards.org/glebtsip.php) ([www.uucards.org/glebtsip.php](http://www.uucards.org/glebtsip.php)). It is based on materials from the [Giving Games](#) section of the website of *The Life You Can Save*.*

### **Activity Overview**

As UUs, we care deeply about making the world a better place. We live our values through engaging in social justice work, moved by our hearts to express our spirit of compassion through gifts of our time, energy, and money to serve others around us.

Yet there are so many worthy causes and demands on our time, energy, and money! Doesn't it sometimes feel overwhelming to decide where to spend our limited resources? Perhaps that's why most people don't take the time to evaluate well where they give. Americans donate over \$350 billion a year to charity, but shockingly little thought goes into how and where this money is given: 2/3 of gifts are made without any research at all, and only 3% [compare the effectiveness](#) of charities before they give.

This creates a huge opportunity - by incorporating reason, science, and evidence into our charitable decision-making, we as UUs can dramatically increase the amount of good our gifts accomplish. Channeling the spirit of the 4th Principle, a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, the Giving Game enables us to align our values and our actions, our heads and our hearts, to help our gifts do the most good in the world through applying the scientific method to charitable giving.

Giving Games are workshop-style events well-suited to both large, whole-congregation events, as well as Religious Education classes or Small Group Ministry meetings. In a Giving Game, participants consider a couple of pre-selected charities, have a discussion about their values for giving and the relative merits of the charities, and make a real donation to your favorite. It won't cost you a thing - the money will be provided by a nonprofit called [The Life You Can Save](http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/) (TLYCS) ([www.thelifeyoucansave.org/](http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/)), and the Giving Games are adapted to the needs of UUs by a UU-themed nonprofit organization, Intentional Insights.

### **Giving Game Walkthrough**

During the course of the Giving Game, you will:

- Explore your values, priorities, and motivations
- Learn about different types of evidence you can use to assess whether a charity is making a real impact
- Discuss different ways in which charities can improve the world and ways that donors can use to choose between them
- Learn about thinking errors that lead donors to miss opportunities to do more good with their giving

Before the Giving Game, you should select two or four charities. At least half should be [ones endorsed](#) by TLYCS, and we recommend selecting [GiveDirectly](#) if you want to do two charities, and [Against Malaria Foundation](#) and GiveDirectly if you want to do four. The other one or two

charities can be any social justice-oriented charities you choose, as long as they have 501(c)3 nonprofit status, and are not directly affiliated with your congregation. TLYCS will sponsor the donation, contributing \$10 per participant in the Giving Game.

The outline provided below will give you a sense of how to structure your session. It assumes a 75 minute Giving Game, though you're free to tailor the time to fit your needs. You can do it by yourselves or with the help of a trained facilitator from TLYCS, in-person or by videoconference.

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Group discussion about where to give (20 minutes)
  - o If you have more than ~15 participants, consider splitting into smaller groups of 5-10 people for the discussion period. You can have people form new subgroups once or twice during the session to expose people to more points of view.
  - o Possible discussion topics:
    - What are your values for giving?
    - Are we more obligated to help some people than others? What factors (e.g. Geography, scope of need, ease of helping) play into these obligations?
    - How strong is the evidence supporting each charity?
    - What goals could donors be trying to accomplish with their gifts? Which of these goals seem most important?
    - What metric(s) should donors consider when choosing which charity to give to?
    - How should donors balance a desire to help in targeted ways against a desire to let beneficiaries assess their own needs?
  - o If you had subgroups, leave time for them to share with the broader group about their thoughts
- Learn about the chosen charities (10 minutes)
- Discuss how the chosen charities compare on the metrics (25 minutes)
- Voting (5 minutes)
  - o Voting is typically done via private paper ballots, with a winner-take-all structure. However, if you'd like to make the voting proportional (so that the donation is split with the same percentages as the votes), that's fine too.
- Recap (10 minutes)
  - o Announce results of the voting
  - o Brief group discussion about what people learned from the experience
  - o Circulate [signup sheet](#) for The Life You Can Save and the Intentional Insights newsletters so that participants can stay informed about great giving opportunities and about using science-based strategies to achieve their goals, in effective giving and other life areas. Please take a photo of the sheet and then send it to [info@intentionalinsights.org](mailto:info@intentionalinsights.org) and [givinggames@thelifeyoucansave.org](mailto:givinggames@thelifeyoucansave.org).
  - o Brief discussion about [charitable pledges](#) for those who want to do more

After the Giving Game, please fill out a [post-game report card](#) that will instruct The Life You Can Save on which donations to make. You will receive confirmation of the donations, and you're free to share the confirmations with your group.

## Planning

Begin planning your Giving Game by picking 2-3 people to serve as facilitators who will introduce the session and the charities and help guide the discussion. Then pick a time and place to hold

your Giving Game and notify the members of your group, encouraging them to invite friends. Remember, the more participants the more money will be donated, as each participant adds \$10! Be sure to allow enough time for the facilitators to familiarize themselves with the charities, practice their presentations, and review the resources linked to below. If you're planning to use PowerPoint presentations, make sure to have a projector or another way to display them. If not, you might want to use handouts so that participants can easily access information to help them make their decision. It can be helpful to have a few laptops (and wifi) available so that people can investigate any questions that come up that the facilitators are unable to answer.

### **Resources and links**

- [General information about Giving Games](#)
- [Tips for facilitating a Giving Game](#)
- [Introductory powerpoint, as well as power-points for TLYCS charities](#)
- If you have any questions or would like to talk through your preparations, please email GivingGames[at]thelifyoucansave[dot]org
- You can also pose questions to a [group of experienced Giving Game facilitators](#).
- Check out more information about the movement dedicated to using evidence, science, and reason to make the most impact on improving the world, [Effective Altruism](#).