

## Sermon for Children's Sabbath

TITLE: Open Hearts, Open Hands

Key Text: Romans 12:4-8, 20-21, MSG

### A. God opens our hearts to fill them with His love

*(Hold up a jug and bucket.)* Have you ever tried to pour water into a bucket with a lid on it? What happens? You might get a lot of water all over yourself, but you won't get any in the bucket. You can't fill something unless it's open. That's the way it is with God's love and our hearts.

*(Read Romans 5:5, from a modern version if possible)* God loves us so much that He wants us to be filled with His love. But first we have to open up our hearts to let His love pour in.

### B. God opens our hearts to care about others

If God's love is in our hearts, we'll care about the bad things that happen to other people. *(Read Matthew 25:34-36, 40.)*

Illustration 1: *(Tell about a person in need that you have seen lately.)* We all know that there are people in the world who need help. But we need to do more than just see the need. We have to *care* enough to want to do something.

Illustration 2: It's not just grownups who can help others. Ryan Hreljac (say *RELL-jack*) was a first-grade student in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, who heard his teacher talking about how people in Africa didn't have clean water to drink. The school was going to raise money to help. Ryan thought it was terrible that children could get sick and even die just because they didn't have water, so he worked for four months doing extra jobs around the house to earn \$70 to dig a well in Africa. But it didn't stop there. Ryan continued to raise money and continued to care about the people in Africa who needed fresh water. As he got other people involved in the project,

Ryan raised enough money not only to dig a well near a school in Uganda, but to buy drilling equipment for many more wells. Today, five years later, eleven-year-old Ryan is still raising money and awareness for wells in Africa. He says his goal is for everyone in Africa to have clean water. The organization that started from his dream, Ryan's Well Foundation, has raised nearly a million dollars towards that dream.

God can use anybody--even a 6-year-old--who has an open heart and open hands to see when people are in need and do something about it.

C. God opens our hands to share with others

1. We all have special gifts God can use. (Read Romans 12:4-8.)
2. No two people are the same or have the same gifts--God made us all different and special.
3. God needs everyone to get involved. You might think: "Oh, there's nothing I can do for God," but that's not true. God needs your special gifts--and someone out there needs you too.

Illustration: A story is told of two students who graduated from law school together many years ago. The student who earned the highest grades in the class was a blind man named Mr. Overton. When he got his award, he insisted that the honor should be shared with his friend, Mr. Kaspryzak (say CASS-priss-zack). Mr. Kaspryzak, who had no arms, had one day met blind Mr. Overton on the stairs and helped guide him down the steps. They became good friends. Mr. Overton would carry the books his armless friend couldn't carry, then Mr. Kaspryzak would read them aloud to his blind friend. Though each had a disability that might have slowed him down, together they were able to succeed.

That's the way God uses our gifts. He can use the things you're good at to help in an area where someone else isn't so good, and He can use that

other person to help you, too. None of us is perfect or good at everything, but we all have gifts, and we can all help and serve--boys and girls, men and women.

Tell God you're willing to help others and ask Him to help you find out what your special gifts are.

- D. Closing illustration: The great violinist Paganini (say pah-gah-NEE-nee) left his violin as a legacy to the city of Genoa, Italy. Suppose the city fathers had decided that the violin was so valuable that it should never be played again. Perfectly preserved in its case, the violin would be a reminder of the great musician. However, if a violin is not used, its wood begins to rot and decay. Had it not been played on a regular basis, Paganini's violin would be useless today—except as a piece of history.

God didn't create us to live in showcases. We are not on display. Instead, God wants us in His marching band, playing in the parade of His goodness. We are doing that when we listen to His voice and do what He asks us. Will you open your hearts and hands to Him and march in His parade today?