**Giving Game**

*This discussion packet was created for United COR by* [*Intentional Insights*](http://www.intentionalinsights.org).

The [Giving Game model](http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/Giving-Games) makes it easy to learn about, or teach others about, effective charitable giving. In a Giving Game, participants get the opportunity to discuss what it means give well and make a decision that has real world consequences through making an actual donation without spending a penny! Moreover, you will advance the recognition of the positive impact of reason-oriented people through donating to charity in the name of your group.

**Activity Overview**  
  
Do you want to help improve the world? As reason-oriented people, we don’t hold hope for an eternal afterlife, and know that we are creating the world we want to live in. So it’s up to us to make a better world in the here and now.   
  
But have you really thought deeply about the best ways to do so? Most people do not. Americans give 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!

This creates a huge opportunity - by incorporating reason, science, and evidence into our charitable decision-making, donors can dramatically increase the amount of good their gifts accomplish. As reason-oriented people, we should be at the forefront of making wise decisions on how we spend our money. A Giving Game is an activity that will help you do just that, as you can learn about in [this blog post](http://intentionalinsights.org/saving-lives-using-reason-and-compassion-through-giving-game) about a Giving Game in a reason-oriented group.

In a Giving Game, your group will learn about three or four pre-selected charities, have a reasoned discussion about their relative merits, 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/)

During the course of the Giving Game, your group will:

* Explore your group's 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

**Walkthrough**

During the Giving Game your group will learn about, and choose between, three charities: [Against Malaria Foundation](https://www.againstmalaria.com/), [Give Directly](https://www.givedirectly.org/), or [Nurse Family Partnership](http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/) (your state's affiliate). These charities have been selected to provide a challenging and thought-provoking decision.  Your group can also add another one to this list if someone from the group volunteers to take on the efforts of researching and presenting on it. The Life You Can Save will sponsor the donation, contributing $10 per person participating 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, who can be present in person or via videoconference, provided by either The Life You Can Save, [Intentional Insights](http://www.intentionalinsights.org), or the [Local Effective Altruism Network](http://eahub.org/groups/network).

*1. Introduction (5 minutes)*

*2. Learn about the 3-4 charities (10-15 minutes)*

*3. Group discussion about where to give (40-45 minutes)*

* 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.
* Possible discussion topics include:
  + 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 the good done by each charity per dollar donated to that 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?

*4. Voting (5 minutes)*

* 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.

*5. Recap (10 minutes)*

* Announce results of the voting
* Brief group discussion about what people learned from the experience
* Circulate [signup sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dex4mFGZbu2DsI3EUDV95I0em7jkoT6Fy0DdJjrxpWw/edit) 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).
* Brief discussion about [charitable pledges](http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/Take-the-Pledge) for those who want to do more

After the Giving Game, please fill out a [post-game report card](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1G1TmYuMHq-gEhO7UV9OySQ_Fc4vZPdPMnXazT9t3Az8/viewform) that will instruct The Life You Can Save on which donations to make.  You will receive confirmation of the donations within a couple of weeks, and you're free to share the confirmations with your group. Please make sure to list the name of the group and its role as a Coalition of Reason member to get recognition for reason-oriented as making a positive impact on the world.

**Planning Timeframe**

An activity like this can be put together fairly quickly, if needed. Though we encourage you to plan at least a few weeks in advance.

* 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. If you would like to get well-trained facilitators to help facilitate your local Giving Game, please email [GivingGames[at]thelifeyoucansave[dot]org.](mailto:GivingGames@thelifeyoucansave.org)
* 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 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.
* Please make sure to print out and pass around the [sign-up sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dex4mFGZbu2DsI3EUDV95I0em7jkoT6Fy0DdJjrxpWw/edit).
* It can be helpful to have a few laptops (and Wi-Fi) 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.](http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/Giving-Games)
* [Tips for facilitating a Giving Game.](http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/Giving-Games/Tips)
* [A blog post on Giving Games in secular and skeptic-oriented groups](http://intentionalinsights.org/saving-lives-using-reason-and-compassion-through-giving-game).
* [Introductory PowerPoint, as well as power-points for each of the three charities.](http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/Giving-Games/Resources/SSA)
* If you have any questions or would like to talk through your preparations, please email [GivingGames[at]thelifeyoucansave[dot]org.](mailto:GivingGames@thelifeyoucansave.org)
* You can also pose questions to a [group of experienced Giving Game facilitators](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1113035452044256/).
* 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](http://www.effectivealtruism.org/).