

## SERVING IDEAS THROUGH THE PHASES PRESCHOOL

- **Start praying brave.** Ask God to give you guidance, creativity and energy to make serving a lifestyle. Together with your child, dream up some brave ways you can serve and try one out!
- **Collect loose change** at home together and put it in a fun and noisy container. Use it as a musical instrument on the way to church. Ask God to do great things with the money and put it in the offering. Let your child experience the joy of giving every chance you can get.
- **Take a morning stroll** in your neighborhood on Saturday or Sunday. Let your toddler learn to lend a hand by picking up a neighbor's newspaper and taking it to their front doorstep.
- **Model the language** of kindness and politeness with three simple words: "You Go First." If there's a chance to do something first (like walking into the house or getting out of the car) say it! Use this phrase just as often as "please" and "thank you" and you'll find that it's contagious.
- **Help your child** pick out a birthday present that their friend would like.
- **Draw a picture** or make a homemade card for a friend or relative.
- **Party on a whim!** Celebrate someone for no particular reason—bake a cake, create a video, make up a cheer or have a water balloon fight. No rhyme or reason necessary—except that they're valuable to you and to God!
- **Teach your child to be a joy spreader** by sharing a favorite fun toy with a bummed out friend.
- **Plan some time in the evening** to dream up a breakfast surprise for someone in your family. Then help your child make it a reality in the morning. Love can come in breakfast form!
- **Offer a cold drink** or a re-energizing snack to a work crew in your neighborhood. Before you do, ask your child to pretend they're part of the work crew. Ask your child questions about what they think the crew might need.



## SERVING IDEAS THROUGH THE PHASES ELEMENTARY

- **Get a small bench for your child** and give them a chance to be the chef. Choose an easier meal and let them do most of the work. Then have them plate up their culinary creations and serve the family!
- **Spend a week listening for sirens**—police cars, ambulances, fire trucks. As you hear them, take time to pray together for people who are going through difficult things. (Dear Jesus, please help the people who need that ambulance. Calm their hearts and heal their bodies.)
- **When your child notices** someone is sick or missing from school or practice, make and deliver a “get well soon” basket full of their favorite goodies.
- **Surprise another family** with a special after-dinner dessert delivery. (Think: ice cream and toppings, cookies and milk, trail mix and sodas, popcorn and juice boxes.)
- **Sign up for a weekend service project** or mission experience. Serve at a food kitchen, do volunteer yard work or host a car wash for a cause—get your hands dirty together! It won't be long before they'll be doing these things on their own.
- **Take a walk to a natural water source** (like a stream or river). Have a conversation about the basic human need for clean water. Use a bucket to collect water, then take turns carrying it. Explain that many people around the world have to carry water great distances to their homes every day. As you feel the weight of the water, pray for the people who still have to carry water every day. Go deeper by finding a way to get involved in providing basic needs to kids.
- **Look for opportunities** to support other kids. Sponsor another child by providing a field trip scholarship, packing a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child or giving money at the grocery store for food or school supplies. Involve your kids as much as possible.
- **Meet with a school teacher**, administrator or church leader to talk about how your child can become a host for new students who will need help finding their way.
- **Work together to create artwork** for a grandparent or other special adult. Find out their favorite colors and favorite things and base the creations on them. Then, together, be the delivery service.



## SERVING IDEAS THROUGH THE PHASES MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Have a Marvel movie night.** (Or if action heroes aren't your thing, pick another movie character who lives out heroic qualities.) Watch the movie together and choose a character trait to be your family theme for the year.
- **Together, brainstorm a place** where your middle schooler can sponsor or provide for another kid their age. Then brainstorm a way to make the sponsorship completely anonymous.
- **Connect your kid** with adults who love to serve. Make a list of adults and ask those adults to meet with your kid and share what they do.
- **Talk to a children's pastor** at a local church about volunteer opportunities for your kid's age and encourage your child to volunteer. What are your child's gifts? What do they love to do? Choose an environment where it's safe to learn and grow. You may have to volunteer with them until they're able to serve on their own.
- **Talk to your kid about students** who seem to be left out at school. What are some ways they can serve those who are left out? What are some ways they can make them feel important?
- **Clean out your house and garage together.** Sort through things to be donated and things to be sold. Have a yard sale and invest the money in a worthy cause—something your kid is passionate about.
- **Sponsor the purchase of a farm animal** through an organization that provides them to communities and families in need. What kid wouldn't want to say, "I bought a cow today?"
- **Talk to a local youth pastor** or your teen's small group leader about mission opportunities. Discuss with your child what they would like to do and what it might take to get there.
- **Choose a team** that your teenager isn't a member of and spend a season serving them. Think: snacks after a practice, prayer cards for travel bags, Bible gifts, making a pre-game meal, or even washing the team jerseys for the parents.
- **Make some sack lunches** and take them to a park where people without permanent housing stay. Offer them to people on an afternoon when you have time to learn some names and stories. (It might help to do this together with other people who have done something similar.)



# SERVING IDEAS THROUGH THE PHASES HIGH SCHOOL

- **Adopt a grandparent.** Ask your teenagers to identify an older person who they like talking to. (It could be a person from church, the grocery store.) Send cards, notice them on holidays and listen to their stories. Older folks have lived long enough to have some great stories—and great wisdom!
- **Fundraise for a friend.** Save or raise enough money to pay for a friend to go to summer camp or another event. Try and see if you can do it anonymously!
- **Subscribe to an e-newsletter** that sends updates about humanitarian work being done around the world. Use the updates as conversation starters for your family. Keep the needs alive during the week by praying for them until the next update.
- **When you notice your teen** feeling compassionate toward a cause or a need, help them brainstorm ideas to support it on their own or to find/create ways to get additional support.
- **Find a weekly service opportunity** where your high schooler can commit to a weekly responsibility. A local church is a great place to start—schools are too!
- **Delegate hosting responsibility** to your teenager. Give them a chance to think ahead about what needs to be done and how to respond to the needs of the guests. Help them get ready and serve them as they make the get-together a success.
- **Together with your teenager,** brainstorm a way to support a child during a holiday or a major school event. And then do it!
- **Go on a mission trip.** Let your child get out of the country, get out of their minds and out of their own little worlds. Let your child be stretched and pushed to a place of dependence on God.
- **Look for areas of leadership** at church or in a community organization that need volunteers. Help your senior get involved, even if they feel too busy. Keep putting options out there for them.
- **Mentor a child in elementary school.** Help your senior find ways to get involved in a program that lasts all year. They'll find that while serving and blessing a child, they've been blessed too!

