

# SERVING IDEAS THROUGH THE PHASES



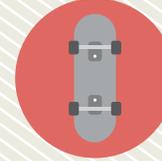
## PRESCHOOL

- **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.
- **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!



## ELEMENTARY

- **Get a small kitchen bench** for your child and give them a chance to be the chef. Prepare ingredients for 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 together as a family, 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 was sick or missing from school or practice, make and deliver a "get well soon" basket full of their favorite fun goodies.
- **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.
- **Work together to create artwork** for grandparents or other adults in your life. Find out their favorite colors and favorite things and base the creations on them. Then, together, be the delivery service. Practice noticing other people—soon your child will do it on their own.



## 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? Activate gifts in environments 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?



## 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!
- **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!
- **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.