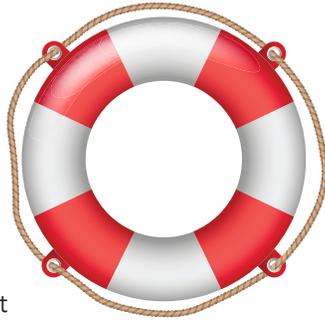


DAY 4

If you were on a boat and you saw someone treading water, shouting, "HELP!" what would you do? **Easy.** You'd toss them a life preserver, bring them up on deck and give them a towel.



It sounds simple when it's really obvious what the person needs. But in real life, that might not be so clear. People don't always go around shouting "HELP!" and telling you what they need.

More than anything, service is an *attitude*. It's deciding that you're not just going to think about yourself. You're going to help the people you see.

That's what service is: lending a hand to help someone else.

Jesus said we should wash each other's feet—but He didn't necessarily mean that we should do that literally. Jesus' point was that we should have an attitude of service. Instead of focusing on ourselves, we should be ready to do whatever it takes for other people.

Decide ahead of time that you're going to serve—not because you'll get something out of it, but because it's the right thing to do. We all need a hand from time to time. *You* can be that helping hand for someone who needs it.



READ JOHN 13:1-17

DAY 1

Have you ever run around barefoot in the backyard after it rained? Or have you ever stepped in a not-so-pleasant surprise when your neighbors forgot to clean up after their dog? That was actually pretty normal back in Jesus' day. Jesus and His friends walked everywhere and they didn't have shoes. As you might imagine, your feet would get absolutely filthy!

Back then, there were foot-washing servants who had the not fun, extremely disgusting job of washing people's feet. This was important because when people would gather to eat a meal, they would sit down on cushions around a low table. That meant their feet were all up in their friends' business, and vice versa. Someone had to wash their feet before they sat down together for dinner.

When Jesus met with His disciples to celebrate the Passover, He knew that His time with them would soon be coming to an end. Before the meal began, He did something that shocked them. He took the place of a foot-washing servant. Jesus, the Son of God, chose to wash all that gross, dirty, yuck off their feet.

Why did He do it?

Because He *loved* them (verse 1). He wanted to do something for them. He wanted to show them an example of what service is all about.

Jesus was willing to serve His friends in a way they would never forget. The question is, can we do that too? Can we follow His example and serve the people around us—even if it gets a little messy?



BRING THIS BACK NEXT WEEK!
Name _____
Parent Signature _____

LIVE FOR GOD



PRETEEN

HEAR FROM GOD

WEEK 1

DAY 2

It's a lot easier to serve when we remember why we're doing it in the first place.

After all, serving isn't always fun. It might mean doing something that's a little gross, or maybe a little uncomfortable.

That's why it's so good to recall how Jesus chose to serve.

He wasn't afraid to wash some dirty feet!

Of course, Jesus did so much more than that. Not long after that Passover meal, He did what He came for. He went to the cross to die for the sins of the world. It was His mission. It was the reason He came—to make a way for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever.

When you're finding it hard to want to serve, when you're feeling selfish and you just don't want to do it, think of Jesus. Think of what He chose to do for you.

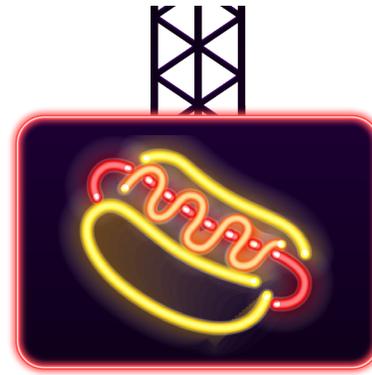
Take some time to talk to God. Be honest with Him. Tell Him about something that you feel like you *should* do for someone but you just can't seem to do it.

Ask Him for help. After all, He knows what it's like. He understands what you're going through.

**HE CAN GIVE YOU THE STRENGTH
YOU NEED TO STEP UP AND SERVE!**



PRAY
TO GOD



DAY 3

Do you know if your mom or dad have ever waited tables before? (Maybe that's what they do for a job now; if so, bonus!)

IF THEY HAVE, ASK THEM WHAT IT WAS LIKE.

Hint: *Waiting on people can be a lot of fun. It can also be exhausting. After all, restaurant servers spend their entire day serving!*

When something goes wrong, it's their job to make it right. They have to make the customer happy—even if they had nothing to do with the problem. They have to be nice to people who aren't always nice to them.

If you think about it, we all have a service job. We're here to help people. We don't get to say, "I don't want to," or "I don't feel like it." It's about others; it's not about us.

We're here to show love to people wherever we go. We're here to put others first. It's as simple (and as difficult) as that!

Pro tip:

The next time you're eating at a restaurant, make sure to make eye contact with your server.

Smile. Say "Thank you."

A little kindness from you can make their day!

TALK
ABOUT GOD

DAY 4

If someone gave you a present, you wouldn't just let it sit there on the table. No way! You'd tear right into that paper, open up the box, and see what's inside.

Remember what Peter said?

EACH OF YOU HAS RECEIVED A GIFT IN ORDER TO SERVE OTHERS. (1 PETER 4:10, NIRV)

"Each of you"—if you've put your faith in Jesus, then that includes you, too!

So what are you going to do with your gift? Are you going to let it sit there, or are you going to open it up and use it? And what, exactly, did Peter mean when he was talking about gifts?

God made you with skills and talents for sure. But there are other gifts from the Spirit, too. Not gymnastics or piano, but gifts like knowledge, encouragement, and faith. Those are gifts that we can use to benefit others—not just ourselves.

There are opportunities to serve all around you, every day. So open up your gift. Don't be afraid to use the way God uniquely made you to give someone else a helping hand.



Name _____
Parent Signature _____

LIVE FOR GOD



DAY 1

READ 1 PETER 4:10-11

When you get up in the morning, what do you do before you leave for school?

- Hit snooze
- Brush your teeth
- Head out the door
- What did we miss? _____

There's something else we tend to do—without even realizing it. We pick up a mirror. Okay, maybe we don't *literally* do that. But we sure do act like it. If we don't pay attention, we can find ourselves looking only at ourselves—at what we want. It's like we're staring into a mirror instead of seeing what's really happening around us.

When Peter wrote 1 Peter (which was originally a letter), he was talking to a group of believers who were going through some tough times. They certainly had their own stuff to deal with. But look at Paul's advice in verse 10. In other words, God has given each of us certain gifts—things that make us unique and special. When we put our faith in Jesus, God's Spirit helps us put those good gifts to use. Our gifts can help us serve people.

It's tough to serve when you're looking at a mirror all day. Instead, let's put the mirror down. Let's look through different lens and be on the lookout for what others might need.



PRETEEN

HEAR FROM GOD

WEEK 2

DAY 2

You know what would make serving a lot easier? If everyone walked around with a sign saying what they needed.

Sometimes it can be obvious—like when you pull up to the house after going to the grocery store, and you know your mom could use a hand bringing the bags inside.

But sometimes it's harder to figure out what you can do to help. The first step in serving someone is knowing what's wrong. But you can't always see what people need on the outside.



What about you?

What would your sign say?

What's underneath the surface?

What do you need that other people might not be able to see?

Talk to God about that. Tell Him what you need. Remember, He's with you always. He can give you the strength and peace you need as you walk through the tough stuff in life. Don't forget to tell someone else, too—so others can see how they might be able to serve you.



PRAY
TO GOD



DAY 3

When you hang out with your friends, what do you talk about?

Do you joke around and try to make each other laugh?

Do you talk about things you both like—whether it's sports or music or movies?

Those are all great things to do with your friends. But what about the more serious stuff? Do you also tell each other when something tough is going on? Hopefully you can be honest and let them in beneath the surface sometimes.

Have you ever tried asking your friend what you could do to help them? This is a great way to serve!

IF IT SEEMS LIKE IT WOULD BE HARD TO COME UP WITH THE WORDS TO DO THAT, HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES.

How are you doing right now? I really want to know.

How are things going with your family?

Are you dealing with anything that's stressing you out?

What can I do to help?

I'm here for you.

You can tell me anything.

I'd love to be able to pray for you.

Read back through those lines and imagine what it would be like if someone else said them to you. How would you feel?

Even just asking the questions can make someone feel so good and so valuable. Maybe just being a friend who's willing to listen could be one of the best ways you could possibly serve them.

TALK
ABOUT GOD

DAY 4

Good question, right? You might be thinking, "What do I have to give? I'm just a kid!" Well, think about the boy who gave up his dinner.

What did the boy have? Bread and fish. Something that probably seemed pretty ordinary. But Jesus took it and did something extraordinary—something we're still talking about today.

YOU CAN GIVE . . .

Your money

Don't just spend it all on stuff you want for yourself. Take some if it and think of a good way to use it to serve others.

You can give money to your church, to support someone's mission trip, or donate to an organization that helps provide food for people in need.

Your talent

Do you like to draw? Make an art project to brighten someone's day. Do you like to sing? Make a video of an encouraging song and text it to someone. Think about what you can do well, and think about how you might be able to serve someone just by letting them know they're on your mind.

Your time

Maybe your time doesn't seem like such an amazing gift. But if you think about, time is one the main things people don't have enough of (especially adults). Your parents are exhausted after a long day of work. You could surprise them by folding laundry or unloading the dishwasher so they don't have to. You've got time. You've got energy. Put it to use and serve them when they least expect it!



Name _____
Parent Signature _____

LIVE FOR GOD

READ JOHN 6:1-13

DAY 1



When you're looking at a big problem, there are really just two ways to deal with it.

- Option A: Focus on the problem
- Option B: Be part of the solution.

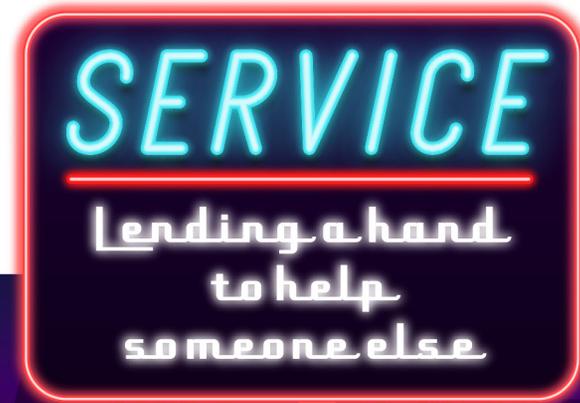
Remember the time when Jesus fed a crowd of thousands with one boy's dinner? When you give the story a closer look, some pretty interesting things stand out. For one, Jesus already knew what He was going to do (John 6:6). He had a plan. Of course, the disciples didn't know His plan. They only saw the problem: lots and lots of hungry people!

Philip did what we often do. He focused on the problem and he got so overwhelmed that he basically gave up. (John 6:7, NIV)

Andrew used his head. He found a boy who at least had something to eat. But still, he figured that it could never feed a crowd. He thought, "What's the point?" (John 6:9, NIV)

Philip or Andrew couldn't see what Jesus had planned. But Andrew was on the right track when he basically said, "Jesus, here's what we have." The truth is, none of us can see what God has planned. We can see just a tiny piece. If we give up like Philip did, we miss out on what God might have planned. But if we offer up what we DO have—like Andrew and the young boy did—we have the chance to be part of the bigger story God is writing.

The ending isn't up to us. Our job is simple: to trust God enough to say, "God, here's what I have. How can you use me today?"



PRETEEN

HEAR FROM GOD

WEEK 3

DAY 2

Can you think of a time when God showed up in a way you never expected?

He prompted somebody to be a friend to you at just the right time. He worked through you as you served someone else—and you never imagined how He could use you in that way.

That's what God does. He can perform miracles that are really obvious, like feeding a crowd of thousands with one boy's bread and fish.

He can also do “everyday miracles” that we might miss if we don't take the time to see them.

One thing about following God is that it's never boring. He might surprise you when you least expect it. We can offer up what we have—the things He's given us—and then let Him do the rest.

Today, find a time to bundle up and take a walk outside. Look around. Thank God for the miracles He's done in your life. Thank Him for the things He's done for you that you never even noticed!



DAY 3

HERE'S A QUESTION FOR YOU ASK YOUR LEADER AT CHURCH:

Why did you become a Small Group Leader?

(You could ask the same question to your Pastor, too.)

Write their answer here.

Wow—aren't you so glad they said “yes” and decided to serve? Leaders definitely don't do it for the money!

Generally speaking, leaders don't sign up to serve because they feel like experts. They sign up to serve because they see an opportunity to come alongside you and your friends and help you navigate the good times and the tough times that come with being a kid.

It's not that leaders have everything together. They just recognize that God can do something big through them when they serve—something that's way *bigger* than them.

They bring what they have. They give their time. They give their energy. They give their creativity. They give their love and friendship.

What does God do with all those things? Way more than they or you or your parents even realize. God connects their story to your story and together, you help each other connect to His story.

Write a note to thank your leader for the way they've invested in you, and plan to give it to them the next time you meet together.

DAY 4

There are lots of ways we measure ourselves in life to see how we're doing. And we feel great when we know we're doing a good job!

Let's think about a few of those "measurements" for a minute.

Obviously, at school you get a report card. Your teacher is paying attention to lots of things—correct answers, for sure—but also how well you interact with others in class, and your attitude toward learning.

What if you never got a report card? Would you still try your best at school?

If you play a sport, you have statistics and scorecards to keep track of your progress. The same thing is true if you're learning dance or a musical instrument. Your coach or teacher wants to see improvement. She wants to see effort, too.

What if no one was in the stands when you played the game? What if you didn't have a recital full of people to play for? Would you still practice just as hard?

Every day, we get the chance to serve others. But like Jesus said, we should serve in order to serve—not so that others will see us doing it. We don't serve to get the credit. We serve because we genuinely want to lend a hand—to live out what Jesus modeled for us as we serve the people around us.



DAY 1

READ MATTHEW 6:1-4

Serving feels good. It feels good to do something for someone. We're happy because we did something to help them out.

Serving also feels good because it makes us feel good about ourselves. That doesn't have to be a bad thing. But it can have a bit of a dark side. If we're not careful, we start to serve because we want other people to see how awesome we are. We might not want to admit it but we like to get the applause.

Serving is supposed to be about the other person. But serving can easily start to be about you. And here's the thing. Service was never supposed to be like that. Jesus made it super-clear:

"Don't do those deeds to be seen by others." (Matthew 6:1, NIV)

Instead . . .

"Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." (Matthew 6:3, NIV)

When we serve, we should be so secretive about it that it's like we can't even see ourselves do it. It's not about being seen lending a hand. It's about lending a hand. Period.

The truth is, people can tell when you're doing something for the applause. They can also tell when you sincerely just want to help. Our challenge is to put aside the desire to be seen as the hero, and just be the hero—no matter who's watching.



BRING THIS BACK NEXT WEEK!
Name _____
Parent Signature _____

LIVE FOR GOD



PRETEEN

HEAR FROM GOD

WEEK 4

DAY 2

So what are we supposed to do with that part of us that wants to be noticed?

Well, it's part of being human. But here's the good news. You always have a safe place and an outlet for your feelings. You can always talk to God about them.

He sees what you do, even if no one else does. He's proud of you for making the wise choice and treating others with love and compassion. He's cheering you on when you choose to serve.

He can also help you "flip the switch."

He can help you turn your focus away from yourself and back where it belongs: on helping others.

Go ahead and write down a few things you've done recently that have helped someone else. It feels good to see them and know that you were a part of what God did in those situations.

Then talk to God about it. Ask Him to help you choose to serve for the right reasons—to help others, and to be a part of the good work He's doing all around you.



DAY 3

Have you ever been to an "always open" kind of diner? A restaurant that's open 24 hours a day?

It's pretty amazing, when you think about it. Every hour of every day—whenever you want waffles or a burger or a vanilla shake—they're open. Ready to serve you.

People have come to expect it. You can be sure that no matter when your craving hits, they'll be there for you. No one really gives their staff team a round of applause or thanks them for being open when they come in at 2 a.m. (although they probably should). It's just what they do.

WE'VE GOT TWO QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

- 1. What's your favorite thing to order at an "always open" diner? and**
- 2. What do you think it would take to be an "always open" kind of person?**

In other words, what's stopping you from being ready to serve, 24/7?

Your parents will be able to tell you, if you're brave enough to ask. Start up a conversation with them and remind them you're talking about service this month. Ask them if they ever see you getting caught up in yourself and not able to see the things others need.

That's something all of us need to know, so you'll be one step ahead of the game if you can ask that honest question.

Actually, why not ask if you can go to an all-night diner to have that conversation together? It'll go much better over a hot fudge sundae!

