

# Developing Children With Servant Hearts

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Children, and some adults, are naturally self-centered. They naturally concern themselves with themselves and have little concern for others. It is this “natural” tendency that God speaks against throughout scripture. It is this self-centered ego that Jesus died for, and the Holy Spirit continues to rebuke and “battle” with in our world today. We must do all we can to develop children with a heart for others.



Awareness of the needs of others can only be “taught” through a consistent, planned process of gradual “tastings” of the deeply pleasing joy of serving others. This is exactly what God prescribes in Deuteronomy 6: 4-9. He challenges parents to expose their children to small “tastes” of honoring God throughout the day.

*“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These words I am commanding you today are to be upon your hearts. And you shall teach them diligently to your children and speak of them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as reminders on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.”*



This process is like “acquiring” a taste for new foods. At first, the taste may be so unusual that it is not desired; but, after a few meals, the flavor is appreciated and valued. For some children, the new experience of serving others may be like tasting brownies for the first time. They may instantly enjoy it and want more!



The process that God describes in Deuteronomy 6 takes planning! It doesn’t happen by itself. Just as parents must plan to expose their own children with delicious “tastes” of serving others, we must also have similar plans in the CM. The CM plans for developing children with servant hearts must include passionate role-models who show the children how to sacrifice for others. The plan must also include many opportunities for the children to become personally involved in service, rather than simply sitting, and watching videos of others serving. The plan must include gradual advancements in service; from the simple (coloring pages), to the complex (short-term mission trips or outreaches).

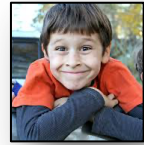
To involve the entire family in the process of developing children with servant hearts is essential. At first, parents may be hesitant to involve themselves, but when they see the impact that simple acts of service have on their children, they will gladly become involved. To offer suggestions for service or outreach projects that the entire family can engage in will assist the parents or grandparents in involving their own children in servant evangelism or missions. The suggestions you give are things that the family can do apart from the church or CM. You may offer events or ideas that the family can do that also include a program or meal presented by the CM, but these events are sporadic.



## Typical Children's Responses To Service Experiences

*"This was fun! Can we do it again?"*

Brett, age 7



*"It feels so good to make other people happy!"*

Selena, age 16

*"I'm a new person! I'm so tired of being so self-centered.*

*This experience has shown me that helping others  
is really the best thing I can do for myself. I love it!"*

Damon, age 22

*"This makes me feel like my life is making a difference!*

*I know God is pleased with what I've done."*

Carolyn, age 53

***"We can do no great things, only small things with great love."***

**Mother Teresa**

## The Biblical Value of Service To Others

The example of Jesus	Luke 22: 26, 27; Philippians 2: 3-8
"Great" people are servants	Matthew 23: 11
Giving will be rewarded	Matthew 10: 42; Luke 6: 38
Do good when you can	Proverbs 3: 27, 28
True "religion" serves others	James 1: 27

**Summary: Those who desire to follow Jesus and become like Him cannot truly do so without sacrificially caring for the needs of others.**

## How To Cultivate a Servant's Heart

1. Being "raised" by people who value / love service to others (parents, teachers, etc.)
2. Given plenty of encouragement and focused compliments when sacrifices are made.
3. Being attracted to an intimate relationship with God.
4. Being taught the value of others and God's desire for humble compassion.
5. Given plenty of opportunities to "taste" the deep joy of service.
6. Given increasingly challenging opportunities of service.
7. Given opportunities to serve alongside others.
8. Being encouraged to lead others as they develop a servant's heart.



## An "Acts 1:8 Service Plan"

"...And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the outermost parts of the world." (Acts 1: 8)

This is an easy way to help children develop a servant's heart. This plan uses the process that Jesus instilled after His resurrection. He told His disciples to begin where they were (Jerusalem), and to expand outward from there. The ultimate goal was to reach the "outermost parts" of their world. This expanding mindset is an easy process for parents to follow as they expand their children's world and deepen their children's interest in serving others.

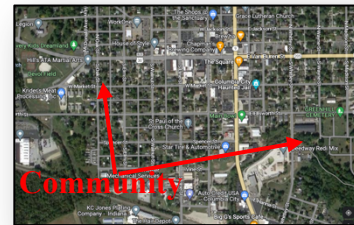
### 1. **Jerusalem** = home

- a. Pray for the family members.
- b. Clean up own messes.
- c. Simple chores (room, toys, animals, etc.).
- d. Assist with other family members' chores.
- e. Voluntarily work ("How can I help?" attitude).



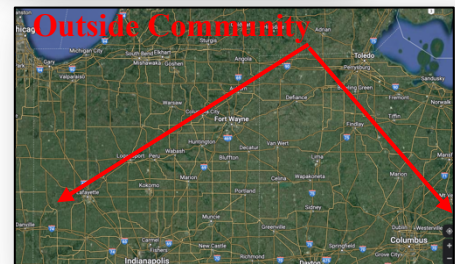
### 2. **Judea** = community

- a. Pray for community leaders (church pastors, mayor, judges, police/fire people, etc.).
- b. Donate food, clothing, toys to needy.
- c. Visit retirement homes.
- d. Write letters, cards to hospitalized children and their parents.
- e. Volunteer at church (events, ministry programs, workdays, etc.).
- f. "Adopt a park" program (pick up trash, etc.).
- g. Be a positive "light" at school by helping others.
- h. Assist shut-ins with house / yard work.
- i. Volunteer time at local Boys & Girls club, etc.
- j. Volunteer at other churches or city events.



### 3. **Samaria** = outside community, within state

- a. Get a copy of a town's newspaper (if possible), pray for news items or people.
- b. Write letters to people in other towns (schools, churches, hospitals, etc.), pray for their needs.
- c. Volunteer at beaches, parks, etc. (clean up trash, repair / paint, build, etc.).
- d. Donate food, clothing, toys to needy of other towns or churches.



### 4. **The outermost parts of the world** = beyond state and worldwide

- a. Contact missionaries, send support and correspondence.
- b. Travel to and assist, a missionary's work.
- c. Sponsor a child through Compassion International.
- d. Send offering money to missions work.



The "Acts 1:8 Service Plan" should be something that continues throughout the year, and throughout a child's life. If the CM gets involved by offering a service project for the families, the service project should be identified as being an event that fits within the "Samaria" area, for example.