

Servant Living



This session is devoted to your group's service activity. Use the devotion to prepare the members of the group for a meaningful and sacred time as they serve others in the name of Christ. You may share this devotion either at the service site or at the designated gathering place. It can be used at the beginning or end of the activity or during the break time. The entire devotion will take approximately 10 minutes without the community building question.

Introduce the session by reading this greeting:

We gather today to serve as Christ's hands and feet and to experience and share in the love of Christ. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

What does the Bible say?

Read the following passage together or ask a member of the group to volunteer to read the passage while the other group members follow along.

Introduce the Bible passage: "In this 'servant song,' Isaiah tells the Israelites in captivity that the Messiah will be a servant, whose obedience to God will result in suffering. This verse is one of many in a tradition that teaches that living for God can leave one open to abuse. We are called to faithful obedience, even though it may not lead to our personal comfort, wealth, or status."

Isaiah 50:4-9

- 4 The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.
- 5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
- 6 I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.
- 7 The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

- ⁸ he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
- ⁹ It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.

Litany for Servants

Introduce the litany by saying: "Let's join in the responsive reading. Please respond by reading the bolded response."

Leader: Lord, thank you for bringing us together in service today. As we prepare to serve, we remember you are the model of serving others. Lord, we ask you to help us put aside thoughts of our own comfort or status in order to focus on the needs of others.

Group: Jesus, Servant Master, help us to joyfully serve others.

Leader: Lord, we admit that we often feel uncomfortable in unfamiliar situations. Help us to forget our discomfort and become focused on you and immersed in serving others as we claim your promise to be among us. Thank you for calling us to be your hands and feet in the world.

Group: Jesus, Servant Master, help us to joyfully serve others.

Leader: We see your hand in our lives and feel your care and abiding presence each day of our lives. Help us to serve joyfully, to see others with your compassionate eyes, and to live each day with a servant heart.

Group: Jesus, Servant Master, help us to joyfully serve others.

Leader: Gracious God, give us your words to sustain the weary who are among us today. Help us to listen fully to the people in this place as they speak. Give us servant ears and hearts to help us learn everything that you want us to take away from this experience.

Group: Jesus, Servant Master, help us to joyfully serve others.

Leader: Lord Jesus, we want to be your agents of justice in a hurting world. Help us to hold nothing back from serving the people here today. As we serve others in your name, help us to be open about praising you and giving you the glory for the actions that we will do in your name.

Group: Jesus, Servant Master, help us to joyfully serve others.

Leader: Take our attention away from ourselves so we can focus on you and on the needs of those we serve. Some of us may be tired or sad today. Be with our group and help us to provide encouragement for each other. Give us your strength so that we can be energetic and enthusiastic in our service.

Group: Jesus, Servant Master, help us to joyfully serve others.

Leader: Lord God, we ask you to bless this community in which we serve.

Group: Jesus, Servant Master, help us to joyfully serve others.

Leader: Lord, we want to be your agents, bringing about a better world for everyone. You have asked us to follow you. We want to journey toward lives of faithfulness and obedience to your will. When our lives don't bring the results that we desire, help us to recognize that it's more important to work toward the results that you desire. Lord, be present with us at this time in this sacred space as we play a small part in helping to bring about your kingdom on earth. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Group: Amen.

Prayer

Pray together before you begin your service project. Be sure to provide information about next month's session, either at this time or before you leave the service site. Thank the small group members for their willingness to serve.

Read the following prayer together.

Gracious God, thank you for speaking to us through the prophets that you called to faith and obedience so many years ago. As we serve today, help us to remember that there are many places and many ways that we can be in service to others. Thanks for calling us to serve these people at this time, in this place. Lord, be present with us today. Open our eyes and ears to opportunities to spread and live the Good News of Jesus Christ. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Community-Building Questions

You may want to use one of the following questions as you gather, during the break or after the event, if a short gathering is planned.

- How does the concept of blessing that Isaiah preaches differ from the concept of blessing that we experience in North America today? How is our experience different from that of millions of Christians around the world?
- How does the passage from Isaiah uphold the notion that our motivation for serving others should be to bring about God's will rather than to feed our own egos?
- By talking about the obedience of the suffering servant, Isaiah clearly implies the disobedience of the Israelites. In what ways may we identify with those identified as disobedient? In what ways might we identify with the servant about whom Isaiah writes in this passage?
- How did you experience God's radical gift of grace as we served today?



What's my response?

Point out to group members that if they would like to learn more about the availability of service opportunities, they can try one or more of the following suggestions

In a world where “high maintenance” people are so often admired and emulated, it’s easy to forget that God calls us to serve others without thought to our own comfort or status. This month, look for opportunities to serve others. Then think about how the life of service that God calls us to is different from the values we are bombarded with every day by the media—those endless messages of “pamper yourself.” The following suggestions and resources may be of help as you explore ways to serve others.

- Think about a person in your life who may be lonely or want to spend a bit more time with you on a regular basis. Call that person and set up a time to get together. You can structure the time around a task that you could do for the person, or you can just spend the time enjoying each other’s company.
- If you have a favorite service project, volunteer to do something with, or for, that group this month. Look for ways to engage people in meaningful conversation.
- Talk with one of the pastors or staff about service opportunities available at your congregation or in the community.
- Check out some of the adult and family mission trip opportunities available through agencies such as Global Volunteers or World Servants.
- Contact the Hands On Twin Cities to use its individualized matching service at (612) 379-4900 or on the Web at www.handsontwincities.org or contact the United Way in your area.
- Look for opportunities to serve in places where you already find yourself each day (e.g., being helpful to your coworkers, etc.).
- Take a few minutes to journal about what inspires or motivates you to serve others.

