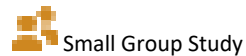




LEARN • VOLUME 6 • SESSION 4

Group Session



Small Group Study

Volume Overview

Why is my church family important?

“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:20)

As Christians, we follow Jesus, but we were never meant to follow Jesus by ourself. God gave us a spiritual family to walk with through the highs and lows of life. That family is called

the Church! Why is the Church important? What role does the Church play in our life, and what role does each of us play in the Church? This volume will explore questions like these as we investigate what the Bible says about the Church.

You Will Need

- **Group Activity Page**, one per team
- Smartphone, stopwatch, watch, or clock for a countdown timer
- Optional: Small prizes for the winning team

Getting Ready

- Print copies of the **Group Activity Page**, one per team.
- First time leading Learn for Youth? Look here for the Facilitator Guide.

To access the Bible Engagement Project library from a computer, visit App.BibleEngagementProject.com.

Engage

Welcome

Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming.

QUESTION

How many of you were able to do at least one personal devotion from our last session in the app? What's one thing that stood out to you from your personal devotions this week?

Opening Prayer

Prayer thoughts: Consider asking a student to lead in prayer. Ask God for His Holy Spirit to help everyone focus and to understand what His Word is saying to each one today.

Introduction

As the Church, God has called each of us to serve others. When we all pitch in and bring the best that we have, we can serve in greater ways. As we talk about serving others today, let's kick things off with a quick activity.

Group Activity

Random Scavenger Hunt

You Will Need

- **Group Activity Page**, one per team
- *Smartphone, stopwatch, watch, or clock for a countdown timer*
- *Optional: Small prizes for the winning team*

Getting Ready

- *Print copies of the **Group Activity Page**, one per team.*

For our activity today, you'll serve together as a team. I'll give each team a list of items. Your team will have three minutes to find as many of those items as you can without leaving the room. The team that finds the most items before time is up wins!

- *Divide the group into teams and give each team a copy of the **Group Activity Page**.*
- *Start the timer and say, "Go." Give periodic updates with how much time is remaining.*
- *When finished, ensure borrowed items are returned to their original owners.*
- *Optional: Give a prize to each member of the winning team.*

QUESTION

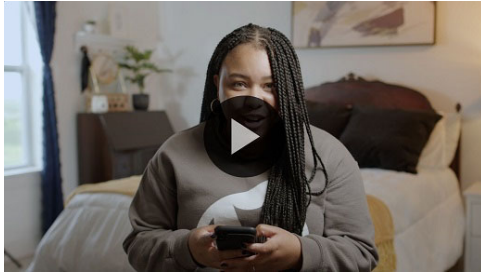
What was the most random item that someone on your team had with them?

QUESTION

How would you have felt if you found out that someone on your team had every single item, but they chose not to give anything to help your team win?

A scavenger hunt like this works best when everyone on the team gives all that they have. Similarly, Jesus calls us to share what we have when we serve others. Today's Bible story focuses on someone who gave what they had, even when it didn't seem like all that much.

Watch



Consider What the Bible Says

Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.

QUESTION

Would someone share a story of a time that someone helped you and expected nothing in return? How did that impact you?

Jesus wants His followers to serve others. We see this in the lives of His first followers, the disciples. As we dive into our passage today, let's listen for the Holy Spirit as He speaks to us and challenges us to serve others better.

Jesus Expects Us to Serve Others

Read John 6:1–7.

It wasn't uncommon for Jesus to have large crowds following Him around. The Gospels paint a picture of Jesus as a very popular religious teacher and worker of the miraculous. Even in times like this when Jesus hopped in a boat to cross a lake, He was followed. I imagine some of us would be annoyed by never being left alone.

QUESTION

What was Jesus' reaction when He saw the huge crowd of people?

Jesus could have easily viewed the crowd as an inconvenience and ignored them or just sent everyone home. Instead, He saw it as an opportunity to serve them.

QUESTION

Why do you think Jesus' testing of Philip says about Him serving as a teacher for His closest followers?

QUESTION

Think of someone in your life who is easy to ignore. What is one way that you can practically serve them this week?

Did You Know?

The concept of following a great teacher around a region or even the country was a relatively common aspect of Judaism. Often teachers would work during the early hours of the day and then go without pay in the afternoon to teach their followers. Similarly, followers also arranged their work schedule in order to listen to their teacher for hours. This was especially prevalent during the high holy days when larger groups of people would sacrifice entire days or even a week or two to learn from a teacher as a means of celebrating the God-given festivals.

Jesus Modeled Serving with a Team

Read John 6:8–11.

Jesus modeled servanthood for His disciples. He could have delivered food from heaven just as God did for the Israelites in the Old Testament (Exodus 16:4). Instead, He engaged His team of disciples.

QUESTION

Why would you guess Jesus chose not to send bread from heaven as God had done before?

Maybe one of the reasons is that He wanted to model serving people together. As His followers, we're all called to serve others. Jesus included both the boy and His disciples in this service. The result was far more than was required. There was enough food for everyone to have as much as they wanted.

QUESTION

What does this story tell us about how much Jesus cares about our physical needs?

Read John 6:12–13.

QUESTION

What message do you think Jesus was giving the disciples by having them collect the leftovers?

QUESTION

How could serving others take faith on your part?

Serving others sometimes requires resources we don't have to meet the needs of those we're serving. When the food was being passed out (which included the disciples handing it out as noted in Matthew 14:19), it probably didn't seem like there would be enough. But that team kept coming back to get and give more. Having enough resources can sometimes require faith that God will provide what we need. If Jesus calls us to serve in a certain way, we can trust that God will provide enough to get the job done.

We Give Our Best to Serve Others

In this story, we often focus on the miracle. Jesus took a little food, blessed it, and fed over five thousand people. Jesus did perform a miracle, but this account also has a lot to say about serving others.

QUESTION

How do you think the young boy felt when he saw his small amount of food meet the needs of over five thousand people?

QUESTION

Has Jesus ever met a need you had through someone else serving you? What happened?

Even if it doesn't seem like much, Jesus can multiply what we give when we surrender it to Him. God wants us to bring our best because when we serve others, we're serving Him. The apostle Paul, in one of his letters, had something to say about our attitude as we serve.

Read Colossians 3:23–24.

QUESTION

As followers of Jesus, why should we work willingly at whatever we do?

QUESTION

How might this passage challenge how you do your own work: schoolwork, chores, your job, etc.?

We should work hard to serve others because our service honors Jesus. And it should further motivate us that God will reward our hard work. Whether we're handing out bread and fish or free water at a school football game, we should do our best because our service of people reflects how serious we are about serving God.

Serving Directs Others to Jesus

Read John 6:14–15.

QUESTION

What was the crowd's reaction to what they saw Jesus do with the boy's lunch?

This amazing miracle left the crowd ready to make Jesus a king! And because the boy and the disciples were available and willing to serve, they got to be a part of this miracle that revealed Jesus' awesomeness.

Though it's likely that most of our service won't include miracles, our kind acts can point people to Jesus, too. Our love and mercy can show the love and mercy of Jesus to people who may never visit a church service. The way we serve others can be a powerful witness without us even saying a single word. God may never use you to multiply bread and fish, but there are many other ways you can point others to Him through serving.

QUESTION

Think about the gifts and the talents that you have. What are some ways you use them to serve others?

Reflect

We Serve Together

As Christians, we're called to share our faith with other people. One of the best ways to do that is to serve them wholeheartedly! Jesus expects us to serve others. He even led the way with His own life (Matthew 20:28). We are most like Jesus when we lay down our own interests and preferences to serve other people.

Listen to God

Let's pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Answering the following questions is completely voluntary. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. However, you may want to share your response with the group, but no one should feel obligated.

- *Optional: Pause for a few moments of silent reflection before asking students if they want to share.*

QUESTION

Do you think it's hardest for you to serve with your time, talent, things, or money? Why?

QUESTION

Who in your life is it hardest for you to serve? Why?

Activate

It's one thing to talk about serving others, but it's another thing to actually do it! Let's take a moment to talk about how we can actually live this out in the next few days.

QUESTION

What is a project we could do as a group to serve others?

- *Collect ideas from the group, decide on something that your group could do in the next week or two, and then make it happen.*

Salvation Opportunity

Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Jesus is the best example of serving because He chose to die on the Cross so others could experience forgiveness. That's good news! You can have a relationship with God today because of what Jesus did. His mercy is big enough to cover all your sins and shortcomings. All He asks is that you follow and place your faith in Him.

Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?

Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as we close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for being the perfect example of serving. Sacrificing Your life is the greatest act of service ever. Help us to take Your command to serve others seriously in our daily life. We want to live like You, and You looked for opportunities to serve others. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

Every one of us has unique opportunities to serve others this week. Even if it seems like it's minor or small, Jesus can turn it into something much bigger than we anticipated just like He did in today's Bible story. Let's make it a point to serve others to the best of our ability!

The personal devotions for this week focus more on how to serve others in your day-to-day life. Don't forget to check those out in the Bible Engagement Project app. I look forward to seeing each of you next time as we continue our journey through God's Word.