



## **SERVING IN THE COMMUNITY**

### **Learning to Serve**

Age four is the “Year of the Talker.” Your preschooler at this time is probably talking non-stop and asking many questions. You will hear the word “Why” so many times you may be ready for ear plugs. This is a great time to teach your child about God’s word because they are eager to learn. During this year you should begin using the Bible more and more as you respond to your child’s questions. Your four-year-old is ready now to take on a little more responsibility and begin to learn the importance of serving. At this stage your child is ready to understand the following spiritual concepts:

- People at church help others
- God planned for people to grow and serve.
- God helps me do many things well
- I can try to be like Jesus
- God wants me to obey my | parents.
- God wants families to love and help each other.
- God can work though me.
- The Bible tells me to love my neighbors and friends and people in other parts of the world.

A new baby comes into this world as a very self-focused and demanding individual; and that is normal during this time of life. Because of the sin nature we are born with, we all have the potential to grow up thinking we are the center of the universe. It is our job as Christian parents and grandparents to help our children develop kind hearts that honor God and to put others ahead of ourselves. Work through the following jumpstarts with your preschooler over the next year and add the next brick to the foundation – a servant’s heart.

### **What are the Benefits?**

Children who learn the value of serving God and serving others, begin to understand that they are part of something larger than themselves. They learn that God has a plan and can work through them, even at this young age.



## Jumpstart 1 Examples from The Bible

There are many parts of the Bible that give us examples of service to God and others. Over the next year, sit down with your child and choose one of the following examples to read and talk about. Because preschoolers will not understand every word you read from the text, paraphrase the lesson in a way that can be easily understood.

1. Daniel Chose to Obey – Daniel 1:1-20 (Daniel and his friends obeyed God and learned to serve well.)
2. Miriam and Moses – Exodus 1:8 thru 2:10 (God wants families to help each other)
3. Four Friends Helped – Mark 2:1-12 (I can help my friends.)
4. David Obeyed His Father - 1 Samuel 17:12-22 (God wants me to obey my parents)
5. Jesus Made People Well – Matthew 8:1-13 (Jesus has a caring heart and wants to help people.)
6. Jesus Fed the People – John 6:1-13 (Jesus wants us to care for hungry people.)
7. The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37 (We should love all people like Jesus did.)
8. Paul Told People About Jesus – Acts 13 (Paul Obeyed Jesus and told others About Him.)

## Jumpstart 2 Serving at Home

The best place for your child to learn about service is at home. By now you have read several accounts from the Bible of people serving God and others. It is time to put these lessons into practice. A four-year-old is ready for a little responsibility and is often eager to help. Sit down with your child and decide on one or two chores that will be his or her responsibility. The chores need to be simple and age appropriate. Remember, this is new territory for preschoolers, so gentle reminders may be needed. Explain to your child that families work together and help each other.

Print this verse phrase and tape it in a prominent location in your home. Refer to it often. *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart because you are working for God and not for men."* Colossians 3:23

Explain to your child that God made all people and wants people to love and help each other. Doing chores at home is a first step in learning to serve God and others.



## **Jumpstart 3 Learning How People Serve at Church**

For this activity you will need your cell phone camera. When at church on a Sunday or Wednesday night, find people who are serving and ask permission to take their picture. You can explain that your child is learning about serving at church. These are some of the people you may see; a preschool teacher, a pastor, an AWANA leader, ushers in church or the people in the blue shirts who keep us safe. After taking the pictures, arrange them as an album on your phone or print the pictures and let your child glue them to a piece of paper. Talk about how the person in each picture is serving. Say to your child, "It is part of God's plan for each of us to serve Him." If you have served at church or in the community before, share that with your child and explain how you helped other people. Contact the preschool director to find out if there is a way you and your child could serve in preschool ministry one week to help out.

Print the Bible phrase: *People at church told others about Jesus. Acts 5:42.* Attach this phrase to the bottom of the paper with the pictures of people serving or post it in a place where it will be seen often.

## **Jumpstart 4 Learning to Serve in the Community**

Now it is time to branch out. We all know people who are going through difficult times and need help or encouragement. Look for an opportunity within your family or your community. Here is a list of possible opportunities:

- Someone who has been sick may need a meal brought to them.
- A family with a parent who lost a job may need a gift card to buy groceries
- Donate food to your local food pantry
- Serve as a family at a soup kitchen
- Make a card with a note of encouragement for a neighbor who lives alone.
- There may be a military family on your block with a parent far away. Ask how you can help.

A child who grows up giving of himself because he loves God and others, will not grow up to be self-focused. Instead, he or she will understand that they are part of God's larger plan.

Print this verse phrase and display it at home: *Help one another in love. Galatians 5:13*