



INVITATION TO SERVE

Early elementary aged children are beginning to think outside themselves. They are developing empathy. It is a great time to capitalize on that by helping them see that they can be generous to those around them. This Milestone Experience includes an opportunity for you to **ENGAGE** with your child to look at what the Bible says about generosity, culminating in a time where your family can serve together. You will also have the opportunity to **AFFIRM** your child by presenting him or her with a symbol of this Milestone Experience which will be a picture of your time serving together and/or a personal letter from the organization your family served.

STEP 1: PREPARE

We want to equip you to maximize this Milestone Experience with your child. First read through the full Milestone Experience Guide so you know what to expect. Then, set aside a special alone time with your child to **ENGAGE** with him or her in a conversation. Remember to have fun and take as much or little time as your child seems interested. It would be ideal to have these conversations outside of the home so you and your child feel like this is a special time between you.

Afer your conversation, you will talk as a family and decide how you would like to serve together. We have included **Service Project Planning Guide** to get you started. Once you pick a date and a time, be sure to have someone take a photo of your family serving together. You will have the opportunity to **AFFIRM** your child by presenting this photo to him or her as a symbol of the Milestone Experience. You may also want to include a personal letter from the organization your family served. We have a sample script to help you give this symbol to your kindergartner. Our hope is that by the end of this time, your child will understand that generosity is a choice.

STEP 2: ENGAGE

ITEMS NEEDED

1. A Bible (or you can use the scriptures printed below)
2. Crayons or colored pencils or a pen
3. "Basket" printout attached to this sheet
4. "Mat" printout attached to this sheet

TALK ABOUT "WHAT DO I HAVE?"

READ AND SHARE: Read together the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew 14:14-21 from your Bible or use the scriptures below:

When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd. He felt deep concern for them. He healed their sick people. When it was almost evening, the disciples came to him. "There is nothing here," they said. "It's already getting late. Send the crowds away. They can go and buy some food in the villages."

Jesus replied, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."

"We have only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

"Bring them here to me," he said. Then Jesus directed the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves into pieces. Then he gave them to the disciples. And the disciples gave them to the people.

All of them ate and were satisfied. The disciples picked up 12 baskets of leftover pieces. The number of men who ate was about 5,000. Women and children also ate.

The boy with the fish and bread gave Jesus what he had, and it was enough. Everything we have is from God.

ASK YOUR CHILD: *What does our family have that others may consider/think of as a blessing (something nice to have)?*

CREATE: *Give your child the "Basket" printout and ask your child to draw pictures of blessings that God has given your family. Parents, make sure to draw a couple of pictures as well. This is meant to be an activity that will help your child recognize that every gift he or she has is from God.*

PRAY: *Pray together, thanking God for all the things He has given your family.*

TALK ABOUT "WHAT CAN I DO?"

READ AND SHARE: Read together the story of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 from your Bible or use the scriptures below.

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers attacked him. They stripped of his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him almost dead. A priest happened to be going down that same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came by. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side, too.

But a Samaritan came to the place where the man was. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. 'Take care of him,' he said. 'When I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.'

Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?"

The authority on the law replied, "The one who felt sorry for him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do as he did."

ASK YOUR CHILD:

How did the Samaritan help the man?

What are you good at?

What do you like to do?

How can you help others?

What is something each person in our family can do that makes us unique/different?

TALK ABOUT "WHO NEEDS HELP AROUND ME?"

READ AND SHARE: Read together the story of Jesus healing a man who couldn't walk from your Bible in Mark 2:1-12 or from the scriptures below:

A few days later, Jesus entered Capernaum again. The people heard that he had come home. So many people gathered that there was no room left. There was not even room outside the door. And Jesus preached the word to them.

Four of those who came were carrying a man who could not walk. But they could not get him close to Jesus because of the crowd. So they made a hole in the roof above Jesus. Then they lowered the man through it on a mat.

Jesus saw their faith. So he said to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Some teachers of the law were sitting there. They were thinking, "Why is this fellow talking like that? He's saying a very evil thing! Only God can forgive sins!"

Right away Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Is it easier to say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven'? Or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

Then Jesus spoke to the man who could not walk. "I tell you," he said, "get up. Take your mat and go home."

The man got up and took his mat. Then he walked away while everyone watched. All the people were amazed. They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!"

ASK YOUR CHILD:

What did the friends do in this story?

What was wrong with their friend?

What are some needs we see around us?

CREATE: Give your child the "Mat" print out and ask your child if he or she knows someone who needs help. Encourage your child to draw a picture of that person(s) and write their name on the picture of the mat.

PRAY: Pray for the person(s) your child listed on the mat.

STEP 3: SERVICE PROJECT

Item Needed: Service Project Planning Guide print out

Now that you have **ENGAGED** with your child in conversation, you can begin talking with your family about ways to serve within your community. This dialogue can take place immediately following your conversation with your child or at another time later that week. This Milestone Experience will be most impactful when the entire family is involved and when it ends with something tangible for your child to keep that reminds your son or daughter of this time. In order to land on a good service project for your family, think through the following questions listed on the [Service Project Planning Guide](#) printout attached below.

STEP 4: AFFIRM

Once your family has completed the service project, you can present your child with the picture and/or letter from your time together. Be sure to celebrate and talk about servanthood when you give your child his or her symbol. You can reference the Milestone Experience Script for this time.

MILESTONE EXPERIENCE INVITATION TO SERVE SCRIPT

"We have enjoyed learning about serving with you. We've read three stories in the Bible to see how others have served. We learned that we can serve by giving out of the blessings God has given us, working out of the way He created us, and clearly seeing all the places we can serve around us.

God has led us to serve together as a family by . . . (Talk about the project you completed.)

While serving, we saw you . . . (List any stories, character traits, etc. that stuck out to you.)

Our desire is that serving others will be part of who we are as a family. Thank you for giving so generously with your time and talents to serve people in our community. We are so proud to see you be generous, and we pray that you will continue to see needs in the people around you and do something about it.

We want you to have this gif as a way to remember us serving together as a family. Hopefully, every time you look at it, you'll remember what it was like to help someone, to set aside time to serve another person."

(Parent hint: You can help make serving a regular part of your family's life by scheduling one day of service per month, participating in Advent challenges like the "Light em Up Challenge" by Courtney DeFoe every December and taking advantage of opportunities like Be Rich, Intersect Projects and Operation Christmas Child boxes each year. Tis is a wonderful way to give our kindergartners an Invitation to Serve!)

INVITATION TO SERVE PLANNING GUIDE

1. What do we have?

2. What can we do?

3. What organizations do we know of in our community that are helping to meet the needs we see as a family?

4. What organizations do we know about that allow help from families?

5. What are our top three choices? (Take a vote and decide which project you like best.)

Here are some suggestions to get your started:

- Serve a meal at the Athens Area Homeless Shelter
- In lieu of birthday presents for your child's birthday, let him or her adopt a cause and have people donate to that
- A young girl can donate her hair to Locks of Love, an organization that makes wigs for children with cancer
- Volunteer your time at The Sparrow's Nest
- Have a yard sale to benefit a family going on a Globalx trip
- Build a relationship with an elderly man or woman at a nursing home
- Hold a neighborhood food drive to donate to The North East Georgia Food Bank
- Collect blankets or coats to donate to a shelter
- Donate seasonal care packages to elderly people in a nursing home
- Clean up trash at a park, your neighborhood, or your child's elementary school
- Plant flowers at a school
- Donate quarters to people at a laundromat and leave them on the machines with a special note
- Take Gatorade to a construction crew working near your home or your child's school
- Find an elderly person or single mom in your neighborhood and pull weeds out of their flower beds
- Collect baby blankets for The Athens Pregnancy Center
- Ask your child's school counselor about a need in your child's school and find a way to meet that need
- Sign up to provide meals and assemble weekend meals for Food For Kids
- Make muffins and deliver to your trash men

6. When will we do our project (day and time)?

7. How will we remember the event? Plan a way to commemorate the time with a picture or letter. Find out if it is okay to take pictures of the people you will be serving. Also learn if a leader of the organization would be willing to write a thank-you letter to be given to your child. Tese items will be presented as a symbol when you choose to **AFFIRM your child once your family has completed their service project.**



