

PARENT/STUDENT SERVING GUIDE

9th Grade Conversation

OBJECTIVE

In a teen's world, it is so easy to be absorbed about their own life, their own issues and their own problems, that they lose sight of looking to the needs of others. Teens tend to focus on themselves and their own little bubbles of life. Take this opportunity to share with your teen about the importance of why God has called us to serve others, in His church and in the community. When serving becomes a part of a teen's life, some dynamic changes take place. Teens become more aware of others and less aware of themselves. They are less likely to follow the crowd, and serving others helps them develop self-confidence. That is powerful.

THE 411

The teen years are often described as the "me first" years of life. In many ways this is natural, because they are self-absorbed and trying to figure out who they are in this confusing culture and world we live in. That does not mean we can just accept that teens are this way and will grow out of it. This is the time when we as parents guide them to understand how God has called us to live, think, and act like Jesus, who did not come to be served but to serve. His life was a life of giving, sacrificing, and being filled with love. He calls us to model that as His ambassadors in this life. What a great opportunity to discuss with our teens the importance of serving and thinking of others before ourselves.

SUGGESTION

Give your teen some advanced warning in this, but pick a day when you and your teen go and serve together. You can call the church to get some ideas. It could be as simple as a neighbor who needs help working in the yard. It could be a local organization that needs help. Try to find a serving opportunity that would pique their interest.

If this serving idea is new to you and your teen, you might get some negative pushback. They are still thinking about themselves. However, your excitement will impact them, so your encouragement will be key. This is the process of getting them to think of others. Go and serve together. Remember, encouragement from you will be key for them throughout the day of serving. If they are struggling on a task, just show them how to do it but don't degrade them.

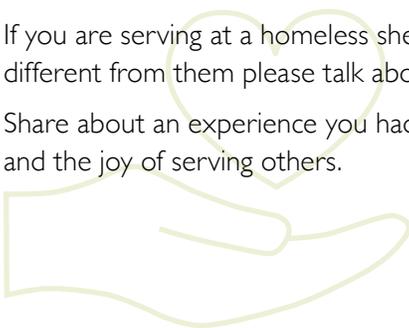
DISCUSSION

Ask a couple of questions on the way to your serving location to get your teen thinking. On the way home in the car have the discussion, or stop and get something to eat and discuss the questions.

ON THE WAY TO THE SERVICE PROJECT

If you are serving at a homeless shelter, soup kitchen or any place they might come in contact with people who are different from them please talk about respecting others and watching their words. You are there to serve.

Share about an experience you had serving someone and how you felt afterward, or a mission trip experience you had and the joy of serving others.



ASK: In the Bible it says that Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Why do you think He came to serve?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: He has given us the example of serving others, and His actions were always thinking about others. Today let's enjoy serving together. Most importantly let's work hard, because we have the joy to serve someone today and represent Christ.

AFTER THE SERVICE PROJECT

Share your serving experiences of the day. Really encourage your teen.

READ: **Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)**

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

ASK: What is selfish-ambition?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Ambition can be a good thing. Ambition drives us to be a better student or a better athlete. However, selfish ambition is not so good. Selfish ambition drives us to achievements meant to satisfy our own wants and desires while forgetting the needs of others.

ASK: How can we be more mindful of others and their needs, even on a daily basis?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: One way we do that is to apply service to our lives, because by nature we can be selfish. I am guilty of that too. I want us to become more thoughtful of others, and the best way is to have a practiced discipline of serving others. What can you and I do to be involved in serving others in a weekly or on a monthly basis? *This doesn't mean that you have to serve together, it just asks where each of you can get involved in serving. A teen can serve in your church or in the afterschool program, or connect with an organization in which you both serve together.*

COME UP WITH A PLAN

Together come up with a plan to apply service to your lives. It could be serving in the church, a service project or at an inner-city church. Here are three steps to help you make up a game plan:

SMALL STEP

Sign up as a family to serve together once a month at a local organization such as a nursing home or a children's ministry, or just to help a neighbor.

MEDIUM STEP

Develop a more consistent serving routine. Serve weekly or bimonthly at church in an area. Serve more consistently at a local organization such as a homeless shelter or inner-city church.

LARGE STEP

Go on a mission trip together as a family, or encourage your teen to go on a mission trip.

