

Lesson 2: The Servant who Suffered

What we want students to learn: That Jesus was the ultimate Servant, modeling service for His followers through giving His life on the cross.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To see service as one of the defining marks of their identities as Christ-followers.

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 53:3-5, Philippians 2:5-8, John 13:1-16, John 15:12-13

Overview:

In Lesson 1, you helped show your students that service is grounded in God's character. In this lesson, you'll take this concept one step further. You'll help show students that Jesus acted as a living example of what it means to sacrificially serve others, even to the point that He went to the cross for the good of humankind. As Christ-followers, your students are called to follow Jesus' example of service. This means that they must be willing to serve at cost to themselves, often venturing out of their comfort zones in order to serve others. But, you'll also help them see that when they serve others, they're clearly reflecting to a watching world a picture of Christ.

Teacher Prep Video

The *elements Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Service Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/service-teacher-prep>
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Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. *The Details* gives you background info for each book, while *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passages are used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **ym360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

The Details

Isaiah

- **Author:** Isaiah, son of Amoz wrote the book of Isaiah.
- **Time frame:** The events of Isaiah occurred between 740 and 681 B.C., though some parts of the book would have been constructed at a later date.

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this book was to call the nation of Judah back to God, to warn of coming judgment, and to tell of God's ultimate salvation through the Messiah.

John

- **Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John, son of Zebedee, a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. John also penned the book of Revelation as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- **Purpose:** John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his Gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

Philippians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Of course we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Philippians was one of the last letters Paul wrote before he was martyred, sometime around A.D 62.
- **Purpose:** Philippians was written to Paul's close friends at the Philippian church, thanking them for their kindness and prayers while he was in prison. And he was encouraging them not to lose their faith because of his persecution.

The Main Point

The passages in this lesson are used to key in on the example that Jesus wants us to follow. Philippians 2:5-8 lays the groundwork for how much Jesus gave up for us. He voluntarily stepped out of heaven and became a man. He is the God of the universe, but He took the form of a servant and died on the cross out of His tremendous love for us. We want your students to understand how much Jesus gave up for us. More than that, though, we should have the same attitude. What we would have to give up to serve others is no match for what Jesus gave up. The Isaiah 53 passage should help to support this point because it lays out in plain language the suffering that Jesus underwent, and it also shows that this was God's plan all along.

The two passages in John come from the night of the last supper, right before Jesus was to die on the cross. First we have the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus, which would have been shocking to them. He did the disgusting job of a lowly servant. He then commanded the disciples to do likewise. This sets the ultimate example for us in that no job is too low when we are showing love to others. The final passage in John 15 tells us that we need to love others so much that we are willing to die for them. If we are willing to do that, then it's easy to merely put their needs ahead of our own.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible study section called *The Main Event*; an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

The Lead In

- **Goal:** To understand that being able to see an example is better than something being read or explained
- **Set up:** You will need some sort of building material. Legos will work, but if that's not available you can use modeling clay, play-doh, or even paper and tape. You'll need to make a "Template" that your students will create copies of. Before your meeting, build a small structure. What you build doesn't matter, just make it something that would be moderately difficult to recreate. While you're building it, create instructions on how you did it. Arrange to have your structure hidden out of sight, preferably in another room.

FIRST, divide your students into three groups. Explain that they will have to recreate the structure that you've created. Now, keep in mind that the model will be in another room. The goal is to be as accurate as possible in the reproduction. The twist is that each group will be presented with a different way to figure out what to build.

- Group one will be given the detailed instructions, and will need to build it from those instructions only.
- Group two will have one person who will be allowed to see the model and come back to describe it. They can come and go as many times as they need to get a good description, but they cannot do anything other than describe it to the group.
- Group three can have their whole group go see the model and then come back and build it. They can all come and go to see the model as many times as necessary.

Make sure each group has enough materials to build the model (and some extra ones besides just to make it fun!) and then let them go. Give them five minutes to build, making sure that the groups can't cheat off of one another.

THEN, once the time is up, bring them all together with their creations. Bring in the original model and compare it to what the groups created. Ask the following questions:

- **Was it easy or hard to build using the method given? Why do you think it was that way?**
- **Which way do you think would be the easiest? Why?**
- **Would you rather have someone give you written instructions, explain it to you, or show you how?**

FINALLY, say something like:

- **It was much easier to see what you were supposed to do, rather than just having to read it or have it explained to you. When we talk about being a servant, this shouldn't be something you just read about in the Bible or have explained to you in a lesson. I want you to realize that Jesus modeled it to us. He gave us the perfect example of what it means to be a servant. Let's look closer.**

The Main Event

- **Goal:** Students will learn that Jesus was the ultimate example for us to follow when we serve others.
- **Set up:** Provide a dry-erase board or some other means to record students' responses on.

FIRST, have your students think for a minute what it would be like to be in charge of the whole world. They can be king, queen, president, grand pooh bah, whatever, but they rule everything. Explore this a little. Ask:

- **Describe your ideal kingdom.**
- **How do you rule the world? Are you a good ruler or a bad ruler?**
- **How does it feel to have this much power?**
 - Answers will vary, but write them down for later.

You can ask other questions, but you want to get your students thinking about how awesome it would be to have ultimate power and authority. Say something like,

- **Yes, if you ruled the world, it would be amazing. You could do anything, have anything, say anything and it would be done. And that's what Jesus had. He is the Son of God. He lived with His Father in Heaven. Everything you guys imagined in having ultimate power, Jesus had! He created the universe. Everything was His. Yet, he did something that is unthinkable, unimaginable...**

THEN, have students find Philippians 2:5-8 in their Bibles. Read or have a student read it. Then, ask:

- **Did you catch that? Our attitude should be the same as Jesus! Why is this remarkable? What did Jesus give up?**
 - *Answer:* Heaven, equality with God, power, authority, etc.
- **What did He become?**
 - *Answer:* Though He was fully God, he was also fully human; a servant; a sacrifice on a cross, etc.
- **Why did He do it?**
 - *Answer:* To save His children, us, from the separation sin causes between God and us.

Explain that Jesus gave up everything for us. To serve us. To die for us. And that was God's plan all along. God had this in mind all the way back when Adam and Eve sinned. He even told how Jesus would die.

NEXT, have your students read Isaiah 53:3-5. Next to your list you wrote down on the board, write down the words of suffering as they read them: despised, rejected, sorrows, suffering, despised, infirmities, sorrows, stricken, smitten, afflicted, pierced, crushed, punishment, wounds. When you're done, just take a step back and let them see the difference. Say:

- **Jesus gave up heaven, and all that came with it, and went through all you see here on this list. He suffered and died, for us. When you see all that Jesus gave up to serve us, how does that make you feel?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Can anything we have to give up to serve others compare to what Jesus gave up for us?**
 - *Answer:* No!
- **Then why do we often resist giving of ourselves to serve others?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **How should we respond?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

THEN, have students turn to John 13. Explain that in John 13, you have Jesus washing the disciples' feet. This passage may or may not be familiar to your students, and the historical context may get confusing to them. Help them understand that Jesus did something beyond shocking in this passage to show His disciples what it really meant to serve others. Explain to your students that Jesus and His disciples were getting ready to eat the Passover meal right before Jesus' death. This would be the last time they would be together before He died on the cross. This would be both a dark and profound time.

Have them read the verses. Once they've read them, ask questions like:

- **Why do you think they needed their feet washed?**
 - *Answer:* They wore sandals, they walked all day, the streets were dirty and would have had places where animal waste was present.
- **How many people do you think would want that job?**
 - *Answer:* No one! Explain that the job of washing feet was supposed to go to a low-ranking service. It was an unpleasant, but necessary, job for the time.
- **Of all the people in the room, Jesus was the one person who shouldn't have had to wash feet. Why did He do it?**
 - *Answer:* To show us an example; because He loved His disciples; He humbled Himself
- **Why does Jesus want us to follow his example in serving on another?**
 - *Answer:* Because He loves others and wants us to show love to them as well; He wants us to be like Him in giving up everything to serve.
- **Jesus commands us to wash one another's feet. We don't live in a culture or a time where our feet need washing. So, what does this mean for us in the 21st century? What are some things similar to washing one another's feet?**
 - Answers will vary, but should all be on the theme of humbling ourselves and taking care of needs even though they may be unpleasant or "below us."

Say something like:

- **Jesus did something that would be shocking and scandalous. Imagine a famous celebrity or your favorite sports star coming to your house to clean your toilets or take out your garbage. This is even crazier than that! Yet this is the example that Jesus wants us to follow.**

FINALLY, have students turn a few pages to John 15:12-13. Remind your students that this is still the last supper, and that Jesus is giving His followers a final bit of wisdom. Have them read the verses, then ask:

- **How does Jesus want us to love one another?**
 - *Answer:* As He loved us.
- **Jesus commands us to lay down our lives. Does He really want us to die for our friends?**
 - *Answer:* Not a literal death, no.
- **What does it mean to lay down our lives for our friends if not to die?**
 - *Answer:* It means to put other's needs first, to be willing to sacrifice for them.
- **Why is there "no greater love than this?"**
 - *Answer:* Love is about sacrifice, not about what we can get.

Read Romans 12:1. Explain that Paul uses an interesting term – a living sacrifice. Paul is encouraging us to give our lives in worship. Say:

- **Why is this an act of worship? Well, we're living our lives as examples of Jesus. We're showing love to God by showing love to others. Jesus wants us to love others by giving up of ourselves. In the story of washing the disciples' feet, Jesus didn't demand the service that He deserved. Instead, He gave to others what they should have been doing for Him. Why? Because He loved them. We need to love others the same way. Jesus doesn't want us to love others theoretically. He wants us to love others by serving them. He gave us an amazing example of what it means to really give up everything because of love. We need to follow that example.**

The Last Word

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about real life ways that they can follow Jesus' example.

- **Set up:** Print the “Lesson_2_Case Studies” PDF. You’ll need to read the case studies from the sheet for the activity.

FIRST, you’re going to read a couple of short narratives to them. Instruct them to listen as you read, then lead them in a discussion using the questions on the sheet.

THEN, ask if these scenarios, or some similar could actually happen in their schools. Ask how often they encounter people who are hurting in similar ways as the people you just discussed.

Make sure they know that even though these are fictional, there are plenty of situations just like these happening around them all the time. Say:

- **These types of scenarios are hard, with no pat answers, but they’re also situations that people you know may very well face. They should push us to really think about what it means to love each other as Christ loved us. I want to challenge you to begin to view those in need through Jesus’ eyes. The call to sacrificially serve those who need you the most is straight from the heart of God. It’s not one we can easily ignore.**

FINALLY, once the discussion has wound down, ask if there are any questions or comments. If there are not, close in prayer

- Don’t forget to distribute the “Service Lesson 2” devotions to your students. If you’re printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you’re texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Consider texting students a couple of times during the week to encourage them to follow through with reading the devotions.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn’t work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.

