

Lesson 3: Living as a Faithful Servant

What we want students to learn: That life as a Christ-follower is marked by service that ultimately serves to share the Gospel with the world.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To commit to defined, doable acts of service that will meet the needs of those around them in the name of Christ.

Scripture Focus: Mark 10:35-45, Matthew 23:11-12, Philippians 2:14-18, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Overview:

As you seek to wrap up your study on service and what it means to be a servant, you're going to pull all of what you've studied together in one final charge to your students. You're going to drive home the point that being a servant is one of the defining calls of Christ-followers. It's a shift in focus that happens when students see other's needs as something important and compelling. Seeking to meet these needs isn't easy. But the goal is that people would see their sacrifice and service and be drawn to Christ. You'll end this lesson with a challenge to students to nail down some very practical, very doable ways of serving those around them, and to take it a step further and identify this service with their love for 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

Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.

- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

Mark

- **Author:** The Gospel of Mark was written by its namesake. Mark, also known as John Mark, is believed to have received most of his information for his Gospel from Peter's firsthand accounts.
- **Time frame:** Mark is thought to have written his Gospel in the mid 50's AD.
- **Purpose:** Mark was writing primarily for a non-Jewish audience. His Gospel explains Jewish customs to non-Jews in an effort to get them to see the big picture of Jesus' identity.

1 Corinthians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
- **Time frame:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus in the spring shortly before Pentecost. We are unsure of what year, but it was likely between 53 AD and 55 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to a divided church to call them to become united for the sake of the Gospel. He was calling the church to lay down the things that divided them in order to fully embrace the one thing that is strong enough to unite them: Christ crucified!

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

Mark 10:35-45 and Matthew 23:11-12 will be used in tandem to help students understand that, in God's Kingdom, the greatest among us shall be a servant. This will contrast with how the world works because the world wants to lord greatness and authority over people. The Mark 10 passage is the main one, with Matthew 23 acting in support.

Philippians 2:14-18 should be used to help students see that Paul gave everything he had because of his love for others, even to the point of death. He also did it joyfully. We want students to understand that we need to give our all for others as well.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 helps to wrap up the study by orienting all we do, including our service, in an effort to win others for Christ. We don't serve to manipulate, but out of love in the hope that they will come to Christ.

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 challenge students' thinking on what it means to "be first."
- **Set Up:** Game equipment as explained below

FIRST, choose some sort of a competition that your group likes to play. It must be a game in which pretty much everyone who wants to can compete. Which game doesn't particularly matter. It depends on the size of your group and the facilities you have available. You want a game that everyone knows without much explanation. The idea is to be able to just divide into teams and say "Go." Something like basketball, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, or dodge ball. Again, if you have a game your group likes to play, go for it.

THEN, when your students arrive, divide them into teams, tell them you are playing this game, and then just let them go. Tell them the winner will win a prize (have some candy or something to offer as a compelling prize). Really hype up the "winning" aspect, but DON'T tell them what it takes to win.

Here's the twist: in most competitive games, the goal is to score more than the opposing team. In this game, the goal is to score fewer points. Because you have not told them this fact, they will be operating on the assumption that the winner needs to have more.

Let them play for long enough for one team to win. Call time. As the team that scored the most points is celebrating their "victory", call them all together. Say something like:

- **What an awesome game! This was a hard fought game. Congratulations to our champions, [Team that scored fewer points]!**

You'll get a few seconds of incredulousness, and maybe some arguments. Explain that you must have forget to explain how to win the game was to score fewer points than the other team.

NEXT, if you survive the backlash, debrief the students by saying something like,

- **Why did you guys assume that the winner was the team that scored the most points?**
- **How did it feel to find out the rules were different than you thought?**
- **Would you have played differently if you knew what it took to be the winner? How so?**

FINALLY, say something like,

- **You guys tried to score more points than the other team because you thought that was what you needed to do to win. It's how society has shaped us. Many of you expressed that you thought it was unfair to not know what it meant to be first in the game, and rightfully so. If I told you how to be first, to be the winner, you would have likely done it differently. Well, today, we're going to talk about how to be first in life. The world tells us one set of rules on how to finish first, but what does the bible say? That's one of the things we're going to look at today.**

The Main Event

- **Goal:** For students to learn that life as a Christ-follower is marked by service that ultimately serves to share the Gospel with the world.

- **Set Up:** You'll need a dry-erase board.

FIRST, remind your students that this is the third lesson in your series on service. Review what you covered the past two weeks and see how much your students remember. Take a few minutes and use the following bulleted points to help facilitate the discussion.

- Lesson 1
 - **People matter to God**
 - **We help others because God loves them**
 - **We bring glory to God by helping others**
- Lesson 2
 - **Jesus gave up heaven for us**
 - **Jesus modeled what it truly means to be a servant**
 - **As Christians we need to love others sacrificially**

THEN, once you've reviewed the previous lessons, explain that this lesson will wrap up the three lesson series and challenge them to find ways to serve others. Have your students turn to Mark 10:35-45. While they're going there, explain a little bit about the book of Mark. Once they've read it, lead the discussion by asking questions like:

- **What did James and John ask for?**
 - *Answer:* To sit at Jesus right and left hand.
- **Why is that important? How did the other disciples respond?**
 - *Answer:* They are seats of honor and power. They got upset.
- **The passage doesn't say why they got upset, but we can guess. Why do you think they get upset?**
 - Answers will vary. Maybe it's because they didn't think to ask it first!

NEXT, once you've given a little context to the passage, you'll want to spend time focusing on the verses 41 – 45. Have the dry-erase board ready with a line down the middle. On one side write "The World" and on the other "Christ-followers." Say something like,

- **Jesus compared the way the Gentiles or the world determine who is great with how the disciples should determine who is great. He lays it out pretty clearly in verses 42-45. Using these verses as a guide, I want you to give me some one-word answers for how both the world and how disciples determine who is "great." Lets start with the world, then move on to the disciples.**
- **What makes you great in the world? What makes you great as a disciple?**
 - Get them to give you one-word answers for each of the two categories.
 - For example, for the world you'd have authority, power, riches, popularity, looks, etc.
 - For disciples, you'd have answers such as service, love, humbleness, etc. Encourage your students to really think about what makes one "great" in the world and in the kingdom of God. You want them to see in clear terms the difference between the two. Once you have a comprehensive list, say something like,
- **How are these two lists different?**
- **Why do you think Jesus says the greatest will be your servant?**

For added emphasis, have your students read Matthew 23:11. Say something like:

- **Jesus is saying in both of these passages that the Kingdom of God does not operate like this world. Those things on the one side of the board (the world side) matter very little to God. It is the things we listed on this other side (the disciple side) that matter. Greatness is being humble. The first will be last. The master is the one who serves.**

THEN, have your students turn to Philippians 2. Remind the students that we read the first part of this chapter last week where we saw what Jesus gave up, and how our attitude should be the same. Have them read verses 14-18 and say something like:

- **Paul wrote these words when he was in chains waiting to be put on trial for his life. Why do you think he could say what he said in verse 14?**
 - Answers should reflect having an attitude of humbleness and sacrifice.
- **When Paul said he was “being poured out like a drink offering,” it literally means he was giving everything to the point of death. What was his attitude in doing this? How is it possible that he could be joyful?**
 - *Answer:* Rejoicing, glad, joyful, and so on. He knew he was serving for Jesus.

Make sure your students understand that service is about giving up ourselves joyfully, and Paul reflected that to the very end. Encourage your students to think about what it would mean for them to be poured out like a drink offering.

NEXT, tell your students to turn to 1 Corinthians 9, starting in verse 19. Explain to them the context of this book from the Bible Background. This passage explores how we do everything for the sake of the Good News. We want to bring others to Christ, the ultimate act of love and service. Ask questions like:

- **In this passage, Paul talks about “winning” people. What does he mean by that?**
- **Answer:** Bringing people to Christ
- **What does Paul do to win others?**
 - *Answer:* Students will likely give specifics. After they do that, bring all the answers together to get an answer such as “Doing anything possible.”
- **What do service and bringing people to Christ have to do with one another?**
 - *Answer:* We serve because we love, we bring people to Jesus because we love them.
- **What need do we help when we serve? When we share the gospel?**
 - *Answer:* We need both physical help to make it through, and spiritual help to know how to lead out.
- **How should this impact our service?**
 - Answers will vary, but you should hear something along the lines of we do everything we can to help others; we should serve with an eternal perspective in mind; we want to bring others to Christ through loving them, and so on.

FINALLY, wrap it all up and bring it to a time of application by saying:

- **Service is more than doing nice things for people. It’s an attitude, a way of life. It’s about putting others before ourselves and pouring ourselves out for them because we love them. Its not always easy, but we are reflecting Jesus when we do it. In this final activity, we’re going to look at some practical ways to live a life of service.**

The Last Word

- **Goal:** To get students to commit to doing a few practical actions in living a life of service.
- **Set up:** Buy enough candles (thick, short ones) so that everyone can have one. Have matches and something to etch words into the candles. It can be something as simple as a toothpick. But you may want to test on one candle beforehand to make sure.

FIRST, turn out the lights. Grab a match, and say something like:

- **In Matthew 5, Jesus called us to be the light of the world. What do you think He meant by that?**

- Answers may vary, but should include shine a light in dark places, make a difference, etc.
- **How does serving others bring light to this world?**
 - Answers will vary, but should include that it shows God’s love to others, helps those in need, brings a bit of God’s kingdom here to earth, etc.

THEN, explain that by serving, we are shining a light into a dark world. Yet, too often our acts of service are limited to special projects and trips. At this point, light the match. While it’s burning, explain that when we only serve in special circumstances, we bring light for a short time, but then its gone. Once the match burns out, ask:

- **Is this what Jesus wants? Why or why not?**
 - *Answer:* No, because He wants us to serve with our whole lives.
- **What happens when the service stops?**
 - *Answer:* We stop shining our light, we’re not making a difference, we’re not loving others, etc.

At this point, light a candle. Say something like:

- **We want our light to shine not for a moment, but for the rest of our lives. We want to show love to others and serve others in big ways and small ways. But it starts with small ways.**

FINALLY, explain that you are giving them each a candle as a reminder that they are to shine their light into the world by serving others. On the candle, you want them to inscribe at least one practical thing they can do in their everyday lives to serve others. Encourage them to think of small, even unnoticeable things that they can do.

Give them a few minutes to think and ponder, and then let them inscribe it on the candle. After they’re done, discuss what they chose to do. Shape this discussion in such a way that inspires more things they can do, or refines the ones they’ve got. Encourage your students to put this candle in a place they can always look at so it will remind them how to be lights to the world.

Close by saying:

- **We serve because God loves us. We serve because God loves others. We serve because Christ served us. We serve because it’s not just something we do, its who we are as Christ-followers.**
- Don’t forget to distribute the “Service Lesson 3” 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.

