

Advance Activities

USE ONE OR MORE OF THESE FAMILY ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A SERVANT...

I SPY: Take the family to a sit-down restaurant. Tell the children that they are spies who must identify the best servant. Help them to notice the clues to a servant's attitude found in the waiter/waitress (listening well, taking care of the needs of others, etc.).

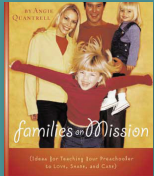
READ TOGETHER: Read and discuss the following Scriptures.

Mark 10:43-45 (Jesus described servants as "great.")

Philippians 2:5-7 (Jesus modeled humility and service.)

James 1:27 (Christians are to care for the needy.)

REFLECTION: Take time to reflect together about the spiritual discipline of service. In addition to the activities above, you may want to use one of the books described below.

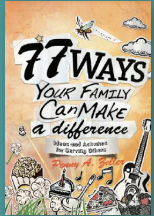


Going Further Resources

Additional resources are available at the Palm Vista Connection Center and www.palmvista.com.

Families on Mission by Angie Quantrell

Ideal for families with younger children trying to instill the value of serving others



77 Ways Your Family Can Make a Difference by Penny Zeller

Practical tips and ideas for serving together as a family

Family Times Service Virtue Pack

Materials for use with children ages 5-12 at mealtime, bedtime, drive time and family time



The Community Connection

A listing of West Valley social service organizations, perfect for identifying service projects (available at the Palm Vista Connection Center and www.palmvista.com)

SERVING TOGETHER

Creating Meaningful Family Service Experiences




Palm Vista

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Why serve together?

A great way for your family to grow closer to God and one another is by doing simple acts of service together. The benefits include...

- The joy of making a difference
- An opportunity to emphasize virtues like generosity and humility with our children
- Increasing a child's sense of gratitude through exposure to those less fortunate
- The closeness that comes through shared experiences together

Further, serving with your spouse...

- Helps create intimacy
- Allows you to learn more about one another
- Provides opportunities for greater communication
- Models meaningful partnership to your children

Why don't we serve together?

Which obstacles apply to you?

- Never considered serving together with the family
- Our schedule is too filled with "us" focused activities
- The ages of our kids make it challenging
- Have not found the right opportunity for our family

Before Serving Together

SOME THINGS TO DO IN PREPARATION.

FIND A SHARED PASSION: Spend some time talking with your kids about the things that interest and concern them. It will be more meaningful if your whole family shares a passion for a particular area of service. (Examples: If your family is especially concerned about poverty, find a place to feed the homeless. You may have a teenager that loves children and would enjoy serving in an orphanage or at the church in the children's ministry.)

FIND A GOOD FIT: It is important that the whole family share in the selection process. Share a short list of pre-screened opportunities with them and ask each to make a case for which they would like to do and why. If you can't select just one, schedule several over the coming months. Think through each of the following questions as you consider service options:

- Skills: What are the skills, strengths and talents of each family member that might influence your choice of where you serve?
- Learning: What kinds of things would your family like to learn from volunteering?
- Logistics: What are the best times and locations for your family to volunteer?

SET EXPECTATIONS: Put your child more at ease by explaining what to expect. If visiting a nursing home, for example, explain that they may encounter odd sights, sounds and smells. If feeding the homeless, share why some people may not be able to take regular baths but we love them anyway. If helping children with special needs, explain

why some can't respond "normally" to conversations, etc. You may also want to coach them on manners and explain what they will likely do while serving. Set the tone for a great time together!

While Serving Together

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND DURING YOUR FAMILY SERVICE PROJECT.

BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIPS: Serving together is an ideal time to get to know each other better. Take note of what different family members do well. Intentionally encourage them and tell them you are proud of how they demonstrated a great attitude or area of strength.

GO DEEPER: Work as a family to really invest in others' lives. Spend some time learning the names of those you serve and find out their interests and life stories. Allow those you serve to learn about your family. This will allow your children to see those you are serving as valued individuals and possibly similar to your own family.

BE SAFE: While it is great to serve together and try new things, it's just as important to make sure that you are not putting anyone in your family into a risky situation. Keep a close eye on one another, especially children and teenagers. You might want to make sure that you are working directly with each other or that you can see your child at all times.

After Serving Together

SOME THINGS TO DO AFTERWARDS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE.

TALK ABOUT IT: Take time right after you finish serving to talk about your family volunteer experiences. By reflecting and talking about it, the experience will have a greater impact and allow family members to share what really meant a lot to them, moved or challenged them. This is a great way to get to know each other better.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: The following questions may be helpful to guide conversation when you finish your time of service:

WHAT? What kind of difference did we make together? Allow each member to share any stories about the experience. They can be sad, silly, frustrating, funny or serious and touching stories.

WHY? Why was it important to do this project together as a family? How did it fit with the values and beliefs that are important to your family? How did it impact you?

NOW WHAT? Is there anything that you will do differently as a family as a result of your time serving together? How did it impact your entire family? What kinds of activities do you want to do in the future?

PRAY FOR THOSE SERVED: Take a few minutes to pray as a family asking God to bless those you served by using your act of service to bring hope, healing and grace into their lives.