



2023 Bible Studies

What it Means to Be a Servant

Impact Mission Camps gives youth, adult leaders, and crew leaders an opportunity to serve in God's kingdom work. We read scriptures, discuss their meanings, roll up our sleeves, and go out to make a difference in the community where God has sent us. It is a privilege to serve God by serving others.

These studies are designed to help youth and their leaders discuss the attributes of servanthood. You will explore several passages that show where Jesus taught and exemplified what we know now as Christian service. Included are several questions designed to enhance a dialogue. These conversations should help your youth grow in knowledge about servanthood and have the right mindset going into your Camp week.

May God's abundant grace be with you as you prepare your team to be part of the incredible kingdom work of Impact Mission Camps!

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All Scripture References are from The New Living Translation

Lesson One: A Servant's Mindset Giving Your All

Game

SUPPLIES

- Timer
- Ball

GAME PREP

Divide students into two teams of equal size and have them form single file lines (or circles for smaller groups).

Have a copy of this on hand: **ZYXWVUTSRQPONMLKJIHGFEDCBA**

You will need a timer or stopwatch to use throughout the game.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Say: Raise your hand if you have learned your alphabet.

Great! You should have no problem playing this game.

This is one of those games that sounds much easier to play than it actually is.

I will choose one of your teams to go first and give the first person in line a ball.

The goal of this game is to say the alphabet as fast as you can while passing the ball to the person standing behind you.

So, you will say a letter, pass the ball backwards, then the next person will say a letter, and pass the ball backwards, and on and on.

When the person at the end of the line receives the ball, he or she will turn around and so will everyone else on their team.

Now, the last person is the first person, the ball will begin to be passed backwards again, and the alphabet will continue.

Your teams will play one-at-a-time because we are going to time each team to see who is able to complete the alphabet the fastest.

If, at any point, someone on your team drops the ball, you will return the ball to the beginning of your line and start over—while the timer is still going.

When you have explained the rules, you will choose a team to start, and the game will begin.

After both teams have taken a turn, announce which team was the fastest and who won the game.

Say: Great job!

I know you're wondering why I thought that was going to be a difficult game because it was pretty easy.

I forgot to mention... that was just the practice round.

Now, we will play the actual game.

We're going to do the same thing we just did, but here's the twist: you're going to say the alphabet **backwards!**

Trust me. It's much harder than it sounds.

The first person in line will start with "Z," the next person will say "Y," and so on.

Do you think it will take your team the same amount of time to complete the alphabet this time?

We will see!

You can play the game best two out of three, or as many times as you would like as long as the students are interested.

You can also mix the students up in their lines so that their letter changes for every round of the game you play.

TEACH

Say: This game might have been easier if it had been played individually. However, for anyone who is going to have a servant's mindset, it is very important to be a team player. This means we need to be humble and not selfish. God accomplishes more through us when we work together.

Lesson

Scripture: Philippians 2:3-5, "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had."

Truth: Jesus thought nothing of giving his all!

It has been 40 years since I played organized basketball. Don't laugh too hard. We had lights and uniforms and played indoors with an electronic scoreboard and a round ball with air in it back then too!

My team had a player, John, who was easily the most talented on the team. He was always our high scorer and rebounder and was highly admired. He was also extremely selfish. On one particular play at the end of a tight game, he made a steal and saw me wide open under the opponent's basket while he crossed midcourt. He was ahead of the defense and simply had to toss it my way for an easy layup to win the game. Instead, he drove to the bucket himself. After the game, he told me he wasn't sure if he trusted me to make the wide-open layup, even though he told other players he wanted the points and the credit for the win.

Our passage talks against selfishness and compares our thinking with that of Jesus. Now there's a challenge! Think just like Jesus and you'll be good. But it is the attitude that Paul is talking about. Jesus was the complete opposite of selfish.

Discuss:

- What would have happened in your team if one player tried to do everything and take all the credit?
- How did Jesus show that he was not selfish?
- What other examples in the Bible remind you of someone acting selflessly?

Jesus is the ultimate example of having a servant's mindset as we will discover in these studies. Knowing his position in the Trinity, he knew that he had to do whatever it took to show the world what God's love looked like. It cost him his own life. He paid that price even though he knew it was best. He even told his disciples, "There is no **greater love** than to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13. This is the greatest example of a sacrificial, servant's mindset, in all human history.

People who have a servant's mindset put others first. They are awesome team players. They think more about what is best for everybody than what is best for themselves. They are usually not the ones who make the headlines or are the most popular. They tend to blend into their surroundings and do a great job of supporting whatever it is they are involved in.

Discuss:

- Who do you know personally that has a servant's mindset and is not selfish?

- What is it about them that you admire the most?
- How would your life be changed if you were less selfish?
- Who would be impacted if this change really happened?

Mic Drop: *Putting others first will always make you a winner in God's eyes.*

Lesson Two: A Servant's Heart

Do you *Want to* Serve Others?

Game

SUPPLIES

- 2 Handheld mirrors
- List of expressions (listed below)
- Paper and pencil

GAME PREP

Divide students into two teams of equal size and have them form straight lines.

Have a leader stand up front with the list of expressions.

Choose someone to keep score throughout the game.

LIST OF EXPRESSIONS

- Sad turtle
- Angry baby
- Surprised cat
- Embarrassed rabbit
- Exhausted cow
- Confused frog
- Bored fish
- Confident chicken
- Happy grandma
- Frightened monkey
- Guilty teenager
- Suspicious bear

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Say: We're about to play a fun game that's all about expressions.

As we start our game, I'm going to ask one person from each team to come forward.

I will give each person a mirror to hold in front of their face.

Next, I will read an expression for you to display.

For example, I might say, "funny bird."

You will look into your mirror and practice making a "funny bird" face.

Then, I will count "3-2-1," and you will pull your mirror down from in front of your face and look directly at each other.

The goal is to be the last person to break from your expression and earn a point from your team.

If you laugh or change your expression, then the other team will earn a point.

After everyone has taken a turn, we will tally the points and find out which team has the most points.

After the game, have the students return to their seats.

TEACH

Say: You definitely demonstrated your ability to show expression... some of you are real characters!

Being a character is different than *having* character.

Ask: What does it mean when someone has "bad" character?

What does "good" character look like?

Allow a few responses from students.

Your "character" is who you are on the inside - your morals, and the qualities that guide the decisions you make and your behaviors.

It's easy to observe each other's facial expressions, but it's also easy to recognize someone's character. Your character shows others whether or not you have a servant's heart.

Lesson

Scripture: Matthew 25:35-6, "For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me."

Truth: A servant's heart is ready to serve at a moment's notice no matter what kind of need is present.

Say: In addition to a servant's mindset, a servant's heart is essential for serving others in God's kingdom work. This goes beyond the mind and digs deeper to the levels of desire to help others. It is the "want to" of servanthood. This is about your character.

One thing to notice in today's passage is that there is no indication that the help provided was asked for. It simply states, "I was hungry, and you fed me."

People in today's society rarely ask for help. This can be caused by pride or embarrassment or any number of reasons.

Beggars in Jesus' time were common. There was a tremendous difference in cultural classes, and many were relegated to begging. This was especially true for those who were sick or had debilitating health conditions such as blindness, being lame, etc. They would gather at the gates of cities in hopes that good Jewish people would do their part and give them alms to live by for the day.

What Jesus talks about is far more than giving alms. It is more than just helping someone with the symptoms of their ailment. It is offering something even more tangible to help with their situation. Inviting a homeless person into your home or offering care for a sick person is a big deal!

Discuss:

- You probably know somebody who goes "above and beyond" in caring for others. In your own words, what would you say that person is like?
- What needs do you know about in your own community that you and your youth group could help meet?
- Chances are, these people would never ask for help. How do you suppose they would feel if your group went out of your way to help them?
- How would that make you feel?
- A servant's heart is a heart that **wants to** help others, even if they don't ask. How can God develop this kind of heart in you?

Bonus Project:

Discuss as a group a mission project you can do for your community. Plan it. Prepare for it. Do it before your next gathering.

Mic Drop: *Serving God with your heart helps you want to do good things for others.*

Lesson Three: A Servant's Posture

Washing Feet

**Note – if you plan to do the foot washing bonus, let your kids know in advance so they can wear proper footwear and be mentally prepared.

Game

SUPPLIES

- Table
- 2 Serving trays (similar to what a waiter would use)
- 5 of each of the following items:
 - Plastic forks
 - Plastic spoons
 - Plastic knives
 - Styrofoam cups
 - Styrofoam bowls
 - Styrofoam plates
 - Napkins
- 2 sets of salt and pepper shakers
- Clipboard with paper and pen

GAME PREP

Set up a long table at the front of your game play space.

Add the items listed above to the table at the front – spread them out.

Divide students into two teams of equal size and have them form two straight lines at the opposite end of where the table has been placed.

Give each team a serving tray.

Hand the clipboard to a leader who will keep score throughout the game.

Have the person with the “Order Up! List” stand in the middle between the teams and the table.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Say: Today, we're talking about serving others.

One of the things that immediately comes to mind when I think of serving is – servers.

Waiters and waitresses make a living by serving others and sometimes their job can be difficult depending on how great their customers are acting.

I'm always impressed by those that can remember an entire table's worth of orders without writing anything down – that's definitely a skill.

So, that is the inspiration for our game.

When the game begins, one person from each team will grab their team's serving tray, run to me (*if you are the person holding the "Order Up! List."*), and I will give you an "order" that you have to fulfill.

Then, I will quickly read a list of items that you will fetch from the items on the table and then say "Order Up!"

You can't write the order down and I won't read it again – you will just have to do your best to remember what I said.

You want to be the first person to return to me with the correct items in order to win a point for your team.

Now, if you see the other team make it back before you finish getting the items, still try!

If the other team is incorrect, you will still have the opportunity to win a point.

But once a team is correct, that round is over.

You will return the items to the table and go back to your team with your tray.

Then, the next round will begin.

When everyone has taken a turn, we will tally the points and see which team is the winner.

You can repeat the list of items as much as needed until everyone has had a turn in the game.

ORDER UP! LIST

- 2 forks, 1 napkin, a salt shaker, and a spoon – ORDER UP!
- 1 plate, a bowl, a knife, and 2 cups – ORDER UP!
- 2 spoons, a pepper shaker, 2 forks, 1 plate, and a napkin – ORDER UP!
- 2 knives, a plate, a salt shaker, a pepper shaker, and a cup – ORDER UP!
- A cup, a plate, a bowl, a spoon, a napkin, and a fork – ORDER UP!
- 2 napkins, a plate, a knife, and a cup – ORDER UP!
- 2 plates, 2 cups, 2 spoons, a salt shaker, and a knife – ORDER UP!
- A pepper shaker, a spoon, a bowl, and a cup – ORDER UP!
- 2 bowls, 2 napkins, 2 forks, 2 napkins – ORDER UP!

- A fork, a spoon, a knife, a napkin, a bowl, a cup, a plate, and a salt and pepper shaker - ORDER UP!

TEACH

Say: Wow! That was awesome.

You are able to remember things really well.

Let me ask you this...

Ask: Do you remember the last time someone went out of their way to do something for you?

I'm talking about something that was over and above what they had to do – and they did it just to be nice.

Allow a few responses from students.

Follow-up question: What do you think was the motive behind what they did?

Allow a few more responses from students.

In our world, it's often uncommon for people to be kind or do something for someone else.

But in the Bible, we see a standard of serving others that goes beyond just being “nice” and instead, reflects the heart of God.

Lesson

Scripture: John 13:12, “After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, ‘Do you understand what I was doing?’”

Truth: A servant does not consider being “lowly” as a bad thing.

Earlier in this biblical scene, Peter objected to Jesus washing his feet. This was the job of a lowly servant, usually a person who worked for the owner of the house who would clean the feet of guests.

Jesus responded to Peter's protest by saying that if he did not wash him, he would not belong to Jesus.

House servants did everything under the authority of owners. It was a form of slavery but was not always the same. In many instances, the owners would appreciate

their servants and develop good relationships with them, even though they still gave instructions on what to do and how they wanted it done.

The servant was often working to buy their way out of slavery in this role.

Discuss:

- What forms of slavery still exist today?
- How can God use us to combat it?

Jesus did something that was unheard of. A guest? Putting on a servant's apron and washing the feet of the other guests? This was an insult to the owner and the owner's slaves. Guests were always treated with dignity and great service. What was wrong with Jesus?

A servant's posture is what Jesus exemplified. He put on the apron which may or may not have been cleaned from the last person's foot washing. He went around the table, likely on his knees, and one by one served everyone present. He always lowered himself before them to show who was the most important person in that moment. He washed their dirty, likely stinky, feet with gentle care and attention to detail. What mattered most to him in that moment was that their feet would be completely clean.

Discuss:

- How can serving others be messy?
- What are some reasons people give for not serving others?
- What does God desire our attitude to be while serving?

Bonus Worship Activity

Have a foot-washing service with the youth group. Have soft music playing in the background and demonstrate on another leader or a youth member how to do so. You'll want warm water that has a bit of bleach in it (check for allergies!) and a towel for each participant.

Ask: What was it like to wash someone else's feet?

Ask: What was it like to have your feet washed?

Mic Drop: In the Lord's Prayer, we ask for God's kingdom to come and will be done on earth at is it in heaven. *When you serve others, this is exactly what is happening!*

Lesson Four: A Servant's Temptation

Taking God's Credit

Game

Mine Field

It works best if you have a large area, indoor or outdoor. Setup a series of obstacles (chairs, tables, balls, etc).

Ask the group to pair off - one person is blind folded and must make their way through the 'mine field' by listening to their partner. Their partner verbally talks them through but cannot enter the mine field. If the person hits a 'mine' they must return to the start. After everyone has gone through, swap roles.

Ask: How do you think you would have navigated the mine field without the help of your partner?

Ask: If you were complimented on making it to the other side of the mine field, would you take credit for yourself or give your partner the love?

Ask: How do you suppose your partner would feel if you took the credit for yourself?

Say: In all we do in life, God is the one leading us. He deserves all of the credit for what he does in us and through us.

Lesson

Scripture: Matthew 15:15-16, "No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."

Truth: Doing good deeds is kingdom work. Giving God the credit is critical.

My dad was a silly soul. He would often put words into situations that were never truly present. We once had a chicken who would do her clucking in a certain cadence whenever she laid an egg. If you're a musician, it was quarter note, sixteenth note, whole note, whole note (very much like a rooster's crow). But my imaginative father used words to mimic her by laughing, "Look what I did" to that same beat. He said it was her way of showing off so the other hens could be jealous. The other chickens didn't seem amused. Neither were my sister and I at my Dad's pathetic joke.

Discuss:

- Think of someone you know who is a show off (do not mention names).
- What is it about that person that annoys you?
- When is it appropriate to take credit for things you have done?

The temptation Christians face is to do “good deeds” for the world to see WITHOUT giving God honor, glory, and credit.

- Have you ever seen examples of this? Describe them. (Again, no names and NOT someone else in your group)

It is easy to accept pats on the back and accolades of others. But to turn the attention to the One who really deserves the credit at appropriate times is always the right thing to do.

- What are some ways you can give God credit when you do good things?
- How is this an act of humility?
- What does it look like if you over-do it and never take any credit for yourself?

Mic Drop: *Giving God the credit for your good deeds is a form of worship!*

Lesson Five: A Servant's Reward That First/Last Thing

Game

SUPPLIES

Paint stir sticks (or over-sized popsicle sticks) – enough for each student

Heavy-duty paper plates for each student

Staplers, Tape or Glue (to attach plates to sticks)

4 Trash Cans

10 Red and 10 Blue Balloons

Some form of special prize for the winning team(s)

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Give every student a paint stir-stick or an oversized popsicle stick, and a heavy-duty paper plate.

Instruct students to staple, tape, or glue the paper plate to the stick leaving enough of the stick out for a handle. This will be their “paddle.”

For the game setup, place 4 trash cans around the room—one in the middle of each wall. Inflate 5-10 red balloons and 5-10 blue balloons for the game. Be sure to have some extra in case a balloon pops.

Divide students into two teams—Red Team and Blue Team.

When the game begins, each team will use their “paddles” to try and hit their team’s balloon into one of the 4 trash cans.

Place an adult at each trash can to award 1 team point for each balloon that is hit into the can.

After the point is counted, the balloon can be tossed back into the game. It cannot be immediately hit into the same can.

Allow students to play in 5-minute rounds.

You may change the game up by making students lock arms with a teammate.

Another variation may be to have one team on offense and half of the other team be on defense during a round.

This will provide more opportunities for scoring, as the defense will be outnumbered.

Just be sure to give each team an equal number of rounds.

After each round, be sure to award the prize to the winning team.

After the game, say:

This game was all about getting to the goal, right?

Once you had a balloon near your paddle, you stayed focused until you got it into the can!

There were lots of others trying to hit the balloon—and sometimes they stole it—but you were determined to get to the goal! The goal was to win the game and get the prize, right?

We need to have this same passion and determination in our walk with Jesus! The prize we are pursuing is eternal life with him in heaven. When we serve others, we are not competing to see who will be first in line to get into heaven. We are serving others to show them what God's love looks like. The gates of heaven are open wide. It doesn't matter who gets in first or last. Or does it?

Lesson

Scripture: Mark 9:35 (this year's theme verse), "He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, 'Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.'"

Truth: Seeking rewards for your acts of service should never be your goal.

This is where it gets tricky. If you have any aspirations of getting to the front of the line, then your mind, heart, and posture are all out of whack, even though, technically speaking, this is exactly what Jesus said.

How do you react when someone pushes their way to the front of the line (whatever line that comes to mind)?

What are the benefits of wanting to be first or best or the greatest?

Jesus' disciples struggled with this idea. There was a customary saying in Jesus' time that went like this, "May you be covered in the dust of your Rabbi." What that meant was you were hoping to be as close to your teacher as possible. The closer you got to him, the more you got to hear and learn. You were envied by your peers. So, they jockeyed for position.

With Jesus, the disciples want to go even further than that. They wanted to push their way to the front of the line so that they could be seated beside him when he came in

his kingdom. That would be considered the highest honor they could achieve—to be seated next to the Savior.

Would you want one of those seats?

Jesus, of course, turns this into a lesson of humility. He says that the only way to be considered one of the best requires you to become one of the lowliest. This would mean to toss all thoughts of pomp and circumstance aside and *want to* serve others, all others.

Discuss:

- What does it mean to have all other thoughts pushed aside to create a life of servanthood?
- What would be different in your life if this was your attitude?
- What would it look like if everyone in your youth group had this attitude?
- How do you suppose your church would respond?
- What about those you serve? How would they respond?

Mic Drop: The reward of a servant is not a reason to serve. This is an eternal reward. *The reward of a servant is knowing you are doing something that pleases God and builds up your neighbor.* It is what happens before you hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”