



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 8: Serves

Suggested Week of Use: October 22, 2023

Core Passage: Mark 10:32-45

News Story Summary

It's easy to affirm the idea of volunteering or community service. After all, most people want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and volunteering is one way to make that happen. But research reveals that community service can do more than simply make the world a better place. It also provides at least three important personal benefits for the individuals who are investing their time to help others. First, volunteering can improve one's physical and mental health. Helping others often keeps a body moving while also engaging the brain. This reduces stress, depression, and anxiety, all of which also support physical health. Second, volunteering provides a sense of purpose. Volunteers gain a renewed sense of satisfaction as they try new things, test new skills, and serve people in need. Finally, volunteering builds relationships. Some of these relationships will involve strangers people serve or serve with, but volunteers can also create stronger connections with people they already know. Interactions based on shared purpose and common interests can tear down walls and strengthen bonds.

For more about this story, search "Benefits of volunteering."

Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, ask: *What are some ways you volunteer in our community? What motivates you to serve that way?* Allow a few adults to share their responses. Read the story about the various benefits of volunteering. Lead a brief discussion about which of the three benefits identified in the research is experienced most by adults as they serve others. Point out that as believers, our reasons for serving should be filtered through our relationship with Jesus. Explain that today's session examines what it means to follow the example of Jesus and to sacrificially serve others the way He served them.

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, remind adults about the benefits of volunteer work. Encourage the group to work in pairs to identify more ways they can serve others—either through the church or through other organizations. After a few minutes, allow the pairs to share their ideas and record them on the board. Challenge adults to pick one activity that they could do as a group service project. Enlist someone to start planning this activity and to recruit others to help. Encourage individuals to identify two or three other options that they could carry out on their own. Remind adults that Christ followers are called to serve instead of being served because that's the example Jesus set for us. Say: *And He backed it up by dying for our sins on the cross.*