



# THE ULTIMATE SERVANT

Life & Ministry of Jesus • U4#3 1st-3rd Grade • Oct.8, 2023

## Concept

Jesus came to serve mankind.

## Goal

Students will learn what it means to serve like Jesus served people.

## Passage

Matthew 20:20-28

Key Verse: "Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve others." Matthew 20:28

## Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<b>Activity Stations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Tell Me the Story, Max Lucado</i></li></ul>	<b>Activity Station:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3-4 large paper napkins (for aprons)</li><li><i>Small towel</i></li><li><i>Piece of paper for "orders" (optional: clipboard)</i></li><li>Pencils</li><li>Cookies, 1/student</li><li>Cups, 1/student</li><li><i>Pitcher for water</i></li><li>Printed page w/fill-in blanks key verse, 1/student</li><li>Markers</li><li>Scissors</li></ul>

### \*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

# Background Information/Teacher Helps

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"Imagine—Sovereign of the universe—a Servant! What a peerless paradox! What consummate condescension! From what exalted heights to what unspeakable depths the Lord of the universe came to be the Saviour of mankind! . . .

"This title of Christ (Servant) is one of the most eloquent expressions of the love of God. That He would divest Himself of His infinite splendor and take on Himself our limitations, our poverty, our suffering—to be a Servant—loftily testifies to the unspeakable and incalculable love of God for man."[1]

As we focus on the servanthood of Jesus in this lesson, we are reminded again of His amazing love. John records Jesus explaining that "greater love than this has no man than to lay down his life for his friends" (John. 15:13). In Romans 5 (vs.6-8, NIV), Paul says that Jesus went even farther than that. "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." He came to serve mankind by giving His life for us. His entire life and ministry was for the benefit of others.

As fallen people our desire is to be served rather than to serve. Christian servanthood means willingly submitting to the will of God and sacrificially serving others. The servant is one who is willing to endure discomfort for the sake of others. This goes beyond the point of our own natural will or desire. Service becomes sacrificial when we have reached the line beyond which we don't want or don't think we can go, but choose by faith to go anyway. If anyone deserved to be served, it was Jesus; but when He came, it was not to be served, but to serve. Jesus became our greatest role model of servanthood by humbling Himself in service to others culminating in His death on the cross. According to Jesus, humble service of others is the way to greatness. In the Kingdom of God, the way up is down.

[1] Garipey, Henry, "Portrait Thirty-Seven: Servant," 100 Portraits of Christ, Victor Books, 1987.

## Incorporation Lg. Group

### Activity Stations

- **Role Play**
  - **Instructions:** Create a simple restaurant atmosphere at the Oasis Mirage Restaurant. Have the first three to six students who come in help you by playing the roles of hostess, waiters and waitresses. The hostess should seat students as they arrive. The waiters, with aprons on and towels draped over their arms, should take orders for cookies and/or drinks and serve them to the other students. LEAVE THE RESTAURANT TRASH LAYING OUT for object lesson.
- **Story**
  - **Read "Into His Presence" from Tell Me the Story, Max Lucado,** pages 24-29 and talk about the difference between the child who wanted to serve the king and those who wanted to impress the king.
- **Craft – Key Verse**
  - **Instructions:** Have the students fill in the blank words then draw a picture of what it looks like when they serve someone and/or when someone serves them. As they work, discuss the benefits of serving.

## Introduction Lg. Group

In the Oasis Mirage Restaurant, what was the job of the employees? (It was serving customers.) Would you rather serve cookies or eat cookies? Why? (Allow for answers.) All of us want to be served by others. Would you say an important person like the president is usually the server or the one who is served? Why do you think we want to be served? (Allow for responses—we want to be thought of as important and special.) Today we will learn that Jesus came to earth to serve. He came to serve us not as a waiter, but as our Savior, by dying on the cross as payment for our sins. We'll learn what it means to be a servant like Jesus.

## Transition

It was true in Jesus' day, too, that people wanted to be important and to have others serve them. Let's watch our skit.

## Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

### Drama

**Skit: "Are You Being Served?" performed by Drama Team**

### Debrief:

When the restaurant manager saw he had an unhappy customer, he was gracious and tried to serve him even though he was nasty and ungrateful. He probably did not feel at all like being kind to this man, but he chose to have a servant attitude.

## Transition

Let's look at a story about two of Jesus' disciples who wanted to be important in God's kingdom.

## Lesson Lg. Group

We are going to read Matthew 20:20-29. The mother of James and John, two of Jesus' disciples, asked Jesus to give her two sons very important positions in His kingdom in heaven. She wanted them to sit on either side of Jesus. In Jesus' day if you sat next to the king it showed that you were important in the kingdom. James and John wanted to be important and powerful. They wanted people to look up to them and serve them. If James and John sat next to Jesus everyone would know that these two were Jesus' most important disciples. But Jesus told them they didn't know what they were asking. In fact, if they wanted to be important and great leaders for God they would suffer and serve for the good of others, even if the others were nasty and ungrateful. Jesus made this very clear when He said to them, "I did not come to be served, but to serve others" (Matthew 20:28). The Bible tells us that Jesus came to earth to serve us and show us His great love.

### **Object Lesson -- Volunteering to Serve**

**Instructions:** After students are finished with the object lesson have them sit on the floor for the debrief.

Whoops! We can't play a game because there is still a mess left from our Oasis Mirage Restaurant. Let's get the tables cleaned up before we play our game. First, before anyone moves, I need some volunteers to clean up the cookie crumbs and throw the trash away. I will need one person to be in charge of the trash can.

### **Debrief: [After clean-up is done]**

Some of you were very eager to help clean up the tables and some of you weren't interested at all in helping. Why do you think that is? There are many reasons why some people serve and some people don't serve. Most of us serve because we expect some sort of reward—like a cookie, praise, to look good to other people, or to feel good about ourselves. Sometimes people aren't interested in serving because they don't care about rewards, are lazy, or are afraid they'll fail. However, Jesus always served because He loves God and people. The goal of His life was to serve so He chose to put the needs of others ahead of His own. Remember, "Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve others" (Matthew 20:28). He was selfless rather than selfish.

### **Good News**

James and John wanted to be important, but Jesus explained to them that the way to importance is through unselfishly serving others. Because we are all selfish we find it very difficult to serve unless we get something in return. We want to have our own way and there are times when we all say, "NO WAY will I serve that person!" But Jesus always served for the good of others, rather than Himself. Why did Jesus do this?

## Lesson Continued

Jesus loves all people so much that He was willing to suffer terribly and die to pay for our sins. He served by dying for the pretty nice people and for the very mean people, too. He even died for the soldiers who put Him to death on the cross! Isn't that amazing? If the soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross accepted Jesus' death as payment for their wrong choices, they were forgiven and are with Him now. Jesus offered Himself to pay the penalty we deserve for all of our sins so we can be forgiven. Jesus never did anything wrong. When He died on the cross, God poured all His anger for our sins on Jesus. We can choose to tell Jesus we want His death on the cross to pay for our sins. The moment we do, God forgives us and we become His children. We are then Christians. All of this is possible because Jesus chose to serve us by dying for our sins. That's selfless love!

### Transition

Let's play a game that illustrates serving in a silly way.

### Learning Activity# 2 Lg. Group

#### Game - Cinderella [1]

**Instructions:** Pair up. One player will be Prince Charming and the other will be Cinderella. Prince Charming will kneel in front of Cinderella, remove her shoes and hold them in his hand. The leader calls for the shoes and they are thrown to the middle of the circle. The leader rearranges and mixes the shoes. On a signal all the Prince Charmings crawl to the circle and attempt to find their Cinderella's shoes. The Cinderellas can help only verbally, shouting out instructions to their partner. After finding the shoes, the "princes" crawl back to their partner. They place the shoes on the partner. The game continues until the last contestant succeeds.

[1] Adapted from Games, the Ideas Library, © 1997 by Youth Specialties, Inc., Zondervan Publishing House, p. 72.

### Transition

Jesus came to earth to serve us out of love. Our key verse says, "Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve others" (Matthew 20:28). Jesus served so selflessly that he died to pay for our sins. Let's get into small groups to talk about it and pray.

### Learning Activity# 3 Sm. Groups

#### Discussion [1]

**Instructions:** Read the following paragraph and discuss the questions.

**Generous** describes disciples in this way: they're more than doers – they're givers. And it's more than mere words and knowledge that disciples give each other. Disciples give themselves to others. Disciples serve each other by listening, supporting, encouraging, affirming, confronting, helping, loving, empathizing, and being there. Disciples are generous with their time and energy, imitating the One who knew how to serve.

## **Learning Activity#3 Continued**

As servants, disciples learn how to be sensitive, to know when they are needed and when they are not needed. They can feel pain in others and know when to step in and help. True servanthood is very difficult, yet very important because it is the one unmistakable way people recognize Jesus in us (Matthew 25:34-46).

### **Disciples are generous servants.**

What do you think it means for you to be a generous servant?

### **Serving others is a choice.**

When was the last time you chose to serve someone?

### **Serving others is embarrassing and hard.**

What is "embarrassing and hard" about service?

### **Jesus himself chose to serve.**

What does it look like to serve like Jesus?

**Mission Prayer:** Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

Let's take some time to pray. Let's thank Jesus that His love was so selfless that He was willing to take the punishment we deserve by dying on the cross for our sins. Pray that we will understand that love so we will be motivated to love others the way Jesus does.

[1] Adapted from <http://www.gospelcom.net/ys/mall/browse/student/tnljournalsmpl.html>.

## Are You Being Served?

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:27, 28

**Cast:** Waiter, Manager, Customer

**Set / Props:** Table, chair, dinnerware, water glass, centerpiece

*(Customer enters)*

**MD:** Good evening, sir. Do you have a reservation?

**Customer:** (Gruffly) Do I have a reservation? Of course I have a reservation. Do I look like a simpleton to you? My name is Dover. Ben (or Ilene) Dover.

**MD:** Of course not, sir. (Checking the list) I don't see you on our list. Are you sure you made a reservation?

**Customer:** (Angry and gritting teeth) Yes I made a reservation! Obviously you don't know who I am! If you don't seat me immediately, I'll make sure everyone in town hears about it!

**MD:** (In a reassuring tone) That's quite all right, sir. (Checking the list with pencil) I'll just change these seating arrangements... and... there. If you'll follow me, sir.

*(Maitre D' leads customer to table and seats him.)*

**MD:** Your waiter will be here shortly. (Exits)

**Waiter:** (Enters) Hello. Here's your menu. I can come back or I can take your order now.

**Customer:** It's about time. (Without looking the menu over) I want a ribeye steak. Medium well. Roasted russet potatoes with just the right amount of spices. Green beans with almonds. Red wine. For dessert I want Baked Alaska and coffee.

**Waiter:** (Who has been trying to interject a comment) But sir, we don't have any of that on the menu.

**Customer:** Don't give me that! I'm paying good money to eat here.

**Waiter:** (Hesitantly) I'll see what I can do. Perhaps there are some things we can adapt from the menu. (Exits)

**Customer:** (After only seconds, calls loudly) Waiter! Waiter! (Waiter comes over) You call this service?!

**Waiter:** Yes sir, what can I do for you?

**Customer:** I want my meal NOW!

**Waiter:** Yes, sir. I understand, sir. But we have to cook your meal.

**Customer:** Don't give me your lip. I want to speak with the Maitre D'!

**Waiter:** (Hesitantly) Okay... (Exits)

**Customer:** (Grumbling) Talk to me like that. We'll see about that.

**MD:** Can I help you, sir?

**Customer:** I've had the worst service here than in any other restaurant. I haven't received my dinner yet. I've received nothing but complaints from your staff. I want satisfaction!

**MD:** I'm very sorry you feel that way, sir. Our desire is to serve you.

**Customer:** I want my meal free and I want my next one free as well.  
(*Maitre D' opens mouth and tries to get a word in*)

**Customer:** Wait, I'm not through. I also want a free meal for my family as well. And a free car wash.

**MD:** A car wash? But, sir, we're a restaurant, not a car wash.

**Customer:** I want a car wash! (Standing and in a huff) Never mind! See if I ever come here again. (Exits)

**MD:** WOW, I've never seen anyone so demanding!!!! bet he's one miserable dude. Sure hope he learns someday how rewarding it is to serve rather than demand. (Using appropriate hand motion, cleans off the table and exits)