



# SERVING IN YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

“This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God” (2 COR. 9:12, NIV).



## Welcome to the team!

As a youth leader you are joining others who understand that their faith in Christ is to be shared both through loving words and caring actions.

Begin by asking, “Why do we want to do this?” Take time for prayer and Bible study about the role of being a servant to help you determine your answer. You can start by reading **John 13:1–17**, **Matt. 25:31–46** and **Phil. 2:1–18**. Continue to pray for God’s guidance and direction for yourself and others who will join you in serving.

Then begin to review your options. Service opportunities provide participants the opportunity to serve and be served in the way Christ served us! The experience of **working** with others, **learning** in an unfamiliar environment and **adapting** to new surroundings forces us to **examine** ourselves spiritually, **articulate** our faith and **strengthen** our trust in the Lord!

As you consider your service options, ask these questions:

- What people or projects in your church or community could benefit from a service opportunity?
- Are there agencies in the community that need support on a specific project?
- What needs could be met by your service that might not otherwise be met: needs of participants or of the community?
- How could the community be involved in the service opportunities?
- What service could volunteers do that will not deprive local people of jobs?
- How many servants will be needed for the project?
- Who could serve as key service opportunity leaders?
- What is the best time to offer an event?
- How long would it take to complete the project? One day? One weekend? One week? Weekly or monthly service?

## Ideas to Get You Started

These service ideas focus on the needs of your church, school and/or community and can help you get started. They can be done at any time as a family or in a group setting. Consider sharing these ideas with your youth and their families and inviting them to join together in service.

## Homebound Hellos

Every church has homebound members. Get a list of these people from your pastor or church office. Gather your group to design and make a collection of seasonal greeting cards for each one. Provide construction paper, makers, crayons, scissors, sequins, ribbons and other items for decorating the cards. Include favorite Scripture verses. Each youth member may wish to adopt one of these members and become a once-a-month pen pal with that person, sending reminders of Jesus’ love throughout the year.

## Building Maintenance

Contact the person(s) who coordinate the maintenance of your church and/or school facilities. Create a list of areas in the building(s) or grounds which could use extra attention. Plan a service day to complete the items on the list. If your church already sponsors a work day, provide refreshment stations or lunch for those workers who participate.

## Play Dough for Preschoolers

Anyone who works with young children in your church, school or community can benefit from this servant activity. Gather the following supplies and your group in the church kitchen to make several batches of play dough to give to those in your church who share Jesus’ love with young children. A collection of Christian-shaped cookie cutters (such as crosses and hearts) can be included.

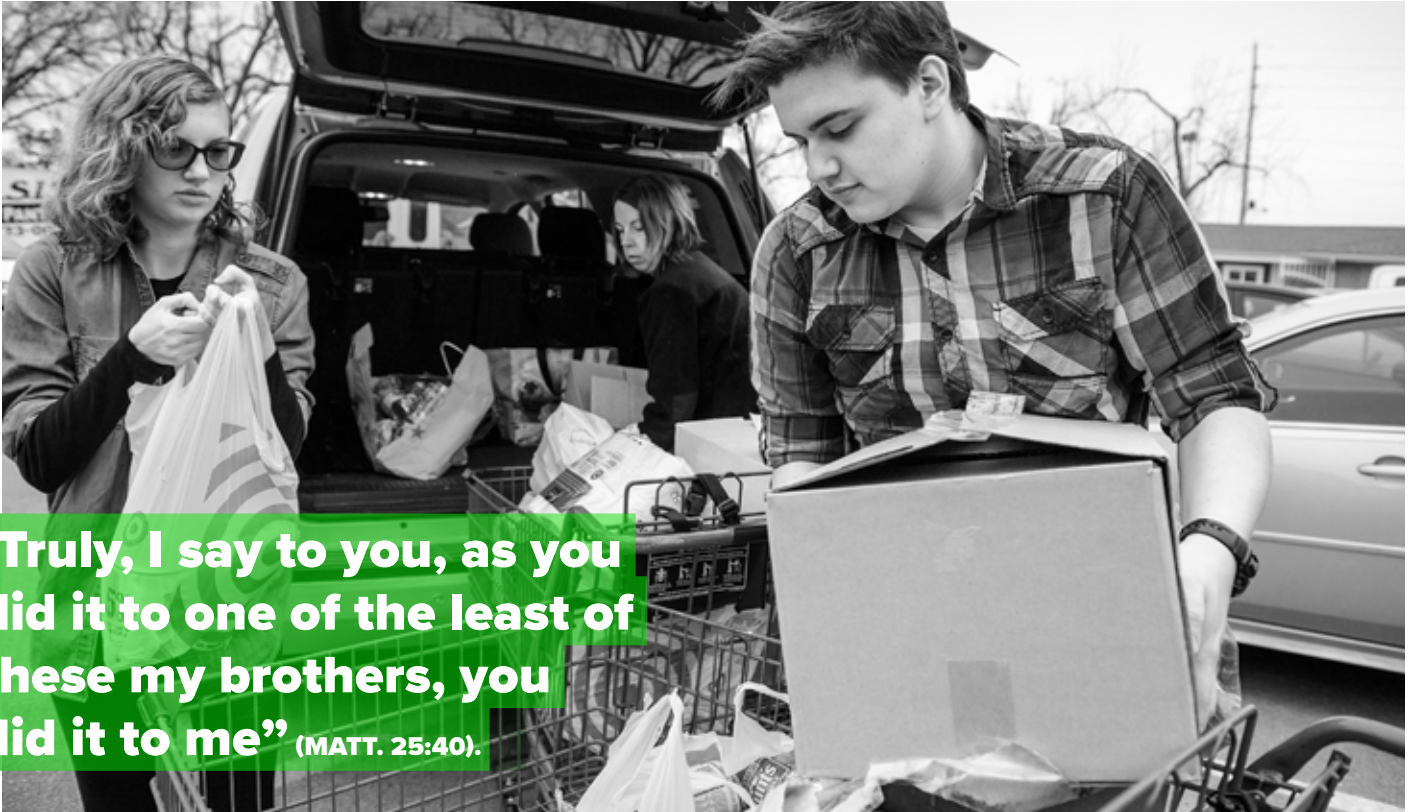
Traditional Play Dough Recipe:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon oil
- ¼ cup salt
- food coloring

Mix all ingredients, adding food coloring last. Stir over medium heat until smooth. Remove from pan and knead until blended smooth. Place in plastic bag or airtight container when cooled. Dough will last for a long time.

## College Student Care Packages

Develop a list of college students from your church. Some may be at college out of town and others may be living at home or in your community. Once you have



**“Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (MATT. 25:40).**

gathered the addresses, collect items for care packages to share with the students. These can be small packages of snacks, microwave popcorn, gum, gift cards and other treats. Include a recent copy of your local newspaper, church bulletin and/or newsletter. Write short notes to the students. Carefully package the items and address the boxes. Packages for local students may be personally delivered. Involve members of the congregation by asking them to mail one of the boxes at the post office.

### **Just Say Thanks**

Use candy and snack treats to create thank you messages for essential workers who serve in your church, school and/or community. Example: “Thanks for your KING-SIZED help” (include a king-size candy bar). “You were MINT to serve our church/school/community” (include mint candies). Google “candy bar messages” for other ideas.

### **Tray Cards for Nursing Homes**

Fold blank 5” x 7” index cards lengthwise to create a tray card. Look for Scripture verses that provide words of encouragement and thanksgiving. Print the verses onto the cards using a fine tip marker. Add other decorations to the cards using crayons, markers, sequins, ribbons, etc. Deliver the cards to the staff of a local nursing home to place on meal trays being delivered to residents’ rooms.

### **Food Pantry Collection**

Food pantries often experience low inventory during certain times of the year. Plan a food drive within your congregation for a local food pantry. Gather an assortment of empty plastic grocery bags to distribute with a suggested shopping list attached. Give these to members two Sundays prior to the official close of your food drive. Arrange your collected food in a high-traffic area of your church with a large thank you note printed on poster board and a tally of what has been collected. If appropriate, the group could deliver the items to the food pantry and volunteer to stay and help stock the shelves with the food items you have donated.

### **School Supplies**

Invite youth group members to collect a variety of school supplies including notebooks, pencils, pens, crayons, etc. You may want to contact a local school to determine what school supplies they might need and provide them with your school supply donation once your project is completed.

There are many more ways to serve your church and community. Feel free to brainstorm further ideas on the back of this folder and share them with us. We’d love to hear them!

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