



CELEBRATE THE SEASON BY ENCOURAGING SERVANTHOOD

Community service is now a graduation requirement at many U.S. high schools. That may be one reason volunteerism is on the rise among young people today. But another is that teenagers are recognizing the value and joy of helping to meet other people's needs.

Youth ministry researcher Laura Widstrom summarizes the power of service:

- Service offers kids many opportunities for taking on significant responsibilities.
- It leverages deep and meaningful relationships.
- Service is a powerful catalyst for community.
- Service-related struggles expand teenagers' capacity for overcoming hardship.
- Service offers kids a context and process for "owning" their faith.
- Service-learning makes a profound connection between our hearts and minds.

This Christmas, as you celebrate the birth of our Servant-Savior, help your kids follow Jesus' example by looking beyond themselves to serve other people in his name.

THE VIEW

Group Magazine surveyed more than 23,000 Christian kids who attended a summer workcamp. Here's how they completed the line: "Service to others has..."

- Made me feel closer to God. (82%)
- Made me feel better about who I am. (80%)
- Created new and valuable friendships in my life. (74%)
- Increased my compassion for people in need. (70%)
- Made me more likely to serve others in everyday life. (69%)

TIPS >>>

At SimplyYouthMinistry.com, youth leader **Tim Kurth** offers even more benefits when kids step up to the plate and serve:

- **Service encourages young people to be salt and light.** Kids share their Christian faith with people by demonstrating God's love in practical, tangible ways.
- **Service takes kids out of their comfort zones.** This forces teenagers to rely more directly on God—and helps them grow closer to him in the process.
- **Service makes people in need become real and human.** Teenagers gain a greater sense of value for every life, as well as sensitivity to how God can use them to touch others with his love.
- **Service becomes a habit.** When teenagers help others, they establish a lifestyle of service that often carries over into adulthood.
- **Service makes kids appreciate how fortunate they are.** Helping others in need puts life into perspective and makes kids count their many blessings.
- **Service builds a wide range of life skills.** Teenagers learn tolerance, accountability, good citizenship, compassion, friendliness, acceptance, self-control, determination, endurance, and dependability.
- **Service creates a hunger for God.** Kids who serve realize they're also serving God in the process and often desire to get to know him better.

PONDER THIS

- What are your views about serving others and volunteering?
- What joys or benefits do you gain from helping other people?
- How might your family work together on a service project in your church or community?





GOING DEEPER

Expert Insights for Parents of Teenagers

By Doug Franklin

Doug Franklin, president and founder of LeaderTreks, shares how to unlock young people's hearts for service. His comments from LeaderTreks.com are reprinted with permission at SimplyYouthMinistry.com:

The best way to connect kids to a life of service for God is to show them how they are uniquely made for an important role in God's kingdom. First, we need to challenge their world view and expose them to realities that less-fortunate people face. Once kids ask, "What role do I play?" we have an open door to teach them about how God has made them for a unique mission.

Second, we must help young people understand that God's plan for them can be known. I use this formula to explain how to discover your mission:

Burden + Passion + Vision = Mission

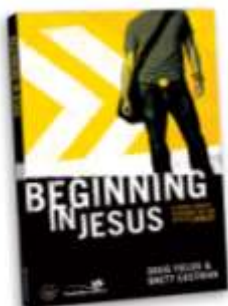
When kids discover these three things, they'll have a road map to the mission God has for them. **Burden** is what breaks your heart, **Passion** is what you love to do, and **Vision** is God's calling for your life. God will give you a vision when you get your eyes off yourself and on him. Vision comes only through prayer. When young people put burden, passion, and

vision together, they'll not only discover their mission but also joy.

Consider Nehemiah, whose heart broke for the people left in Jerusalem. Because Nehemiah had a passion for administration, the King of Persia had put him in charge of his household and made him cup bearer. God gave him the vision to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls. Nehemiah's love for his people brought him home. His skill as an organizer allowed them to finish the wall in 52 days, and his willingness to follow God brought God glory.

God has given your kids everything they need to accomplish the task. Let's help them understand and prepare for the mission. After all, that's our mission.

RESOURCE



In *Beginning in Jesus*, the first book in the small-group curriculum series "Experiencing Christ Together" (Simply Youth Ministry), Doug Fields explores Jesus' character qualities. One session explores why servanthood is so important to Jesus.

BIBLE FOCUS

"Since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you."

John 13:14-15

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

MAINSTREAM MUSIC



TOBY KEITH

Background: This country singer and actor has had several multi-platinum albums, and 19 of his songs have gone to #1 on the Billboard charts. He supports both conservative and liberal political candidates while maintaining patriotic views. Keith sings about alcohol a lot. He also supports Ally's House, an Oklahoma charity that helps kids with cancer.

Albums: *Clancy's Tavern* (2011), *Big Dog Daddy* (2007), *Honkytonk University* (2005)

What Keith Says: After winning a military award, Keith says, "Spending time with our soldiers around the world is something I've always regarded as a privilege and honor. I'm certainly happy to accept this award, but I won't forget for a second who's really doing the heavy lifting to keep this country safe."

Explore: You can check out some songs on Keith's Myspace page at www.myspace.com/tobykeith. Or stream his new album on Spotify.

CHRISTIAN MUSIC



EVANESCENCE

Background: This "gothic" metal band sold 17 million copies of its debut album and has won two Grammy Awards. Members created controversy by asking to be distanced from the "Christian band" label. Some people saw this as turning their back on faith to sell records, while others thought the band wanted to expand their influence. Some band members say they're Christians, while the language of others would indicate they aren't. Listen and decide for yourself.

Albums: *Evanescence* (2011), *The Open Door* (2006), *Fallen* (2003)

What Evanescence Says: Singer Amy Lee says, "I am a Christian, and I'm proud of being a Christian, but this has never been a 'Christian band.'"

Explore: Watch the band perform here: www.metacafe.com/watch/hl-40051057/jimmy_kimmel_live_evanescence_what_you_want_season_9/. Or listen to the new album on Spotify.

MOVIES

Movie: *Mission: Impossible: Ghost Protocol*

Genre: Action, Adventure, Thriller

Rating: PG-13

Synopsis: When the director of the covert IMF division is killed, agents have to go deep, deep undercover to clear their names.

Our Take: Director Brad Bird was behind the amazing movies *The Iron Giant* and *The Incredibles*. This gives us great hope for a good thriller—maybe with some unexpected heart.

Movie: *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*

Genre: Comedy, Family

Rating: PG-13

Synopsis: The brilliant detective meets his intellectual match in the equally brilliant—and completely nihilistic—Professor Moriarty.

Our Take: Although the first movie was beautifully shot and directed, the story was seriously lacking. Robert Downey Jr. still has the charisma to draw in viewers, though, so expect this film to be another hit.

For more media discussions and ideas, go to www.MinistryandMedia.com.

VIDEO GAMES



The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword—Despite financial troubles, Nintendo still has some franchises that are guaranteed to be big hits. "Zelda" is one of them. This family-friendly adventure is enormous, with an art style that manages to look great despite the Wii's limited power. Adventure fans should check out this game.

Assassins Creed: Revelations—The "Assassin's Creed" series keeps cranking out sequels. In addition to the blood and gore, this game takes some cheap shots against Christianity and has weird Templar stuff. It's the same sort of "da Vinci Code" nonsense you don't want floating around as fact for impressionable young minds.