

INVITATION TO

GENEROSITY

KINDERGARTEN

Crossroads Families
A ministry of Crossroads Church

Have you thought about what you are going to get your child for Christmas this year? Your child is now five or six, and I am betting that it's getting harder and harder to think of something they really need. Most kids after 5 or 6 Christmas mornings, Easter baskets, and birthday bashes have so much stuff they rarely have time to play with it all. Most of the time they forget what they do have in pursuit of the latest commercial they saw on TV.

You are also facing the fact that your little baby is growing up and experiencing school for the first time in Kindergarten. We work so hard to make sure everything goes well that first year of school, that many times our kids begin to believe they are the center of the universe. Many times they become the center of ours as well.

This year we are inviting you to help your child experience generosity in a season of life where they have a teachable heart. Our kids can become so focused on what they are doing at school, and what the next holiday will bring that they often forget they were made to be givers not just consumers. Yes, your kindergartener was shaped to make a difference in the world around them and contribute. At school, at home, and with friends your child can embrace generosity and begin to give back and not just take.

Our Family Experience this year is called "Invitation to Generosity" and will include a family service project.

Our first step in this Family Experience is to give you 3 Kick-starters that will help you build a foundation.

They will have questions and activities for you to do with your child that set up the Family Experience. We will then be able to lay a foundation that will enable us to carry out this ceremony. The Kick-starters will cover the questions "What do I have?", "What can I do?", and "Who needs help around me?" These three Kick-starters will fit together to help your child learn what it means to be a giver and not just a taker.

Your next step is to plan your Family Experience by planning a family service project. Our Parent Planning Guide will help you do just that. You might adopt a Compassion International or World Vision child that your family can sponsor. You may volunteer to serve at a local food bank together. You may have a garage sale and raise money to support cancer research. The options are limitless, and you can craft the experience around your family.

Once you choose your serving project, set a date for your family, and make it a reality. Keep it simple and have fun during the process. This is an experience that will shape your kindergartener's heart!

An Invitation To Generosity

Kids in kindergarten are beginning to think outside themselves. They are developing empathy, and it's a great time to capitalize on that by helping them see that they can be generous to those around them. We want to help families carve out three moments to look at what the Bible says about generosity, culminating a Family Experience where a family can SERVE together.

Kickstarter 1: What Do I Have?

Read Matthew 14:14-21 below or use a kids' Bible and read the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000.

When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd. He felt deep concern for them. He healed their sick people. When it was almost evening, the disciples came to him. "There is nothing here," they said. "It's already getting late. Send the crowds away. They can go and buy some food in the villages." Jesus replied, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat." "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said. Then Jesus directed the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves into pieces. Then he gave them to the disciples. And the disciples gave them to the people. All of them ate and were satisfied. The disciples picked up 12 baskets of leftover pieces. The number of men who ate was about 5,000. Women and children also ate.

This boy with the fish and bread gave Jesus what he had, and it was enough. Everything we have is from God.

Draw a picture(s) of things that God has given you. Parents, make sure to draw a couple of pictures as well. This is meant to be a family activity that will help your child see that we all recognize that every gift we have is from God. Pray together, thanking God for all the things He has given you.

Kickstarter 2: What Can I Do?

Read the story of the good Samaritan from a kids' Bible or read the following verses, Luke 10:30-37:

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers attacked him. They stripped off his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him almost dead. A priest happened to be going down that same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other

side. A Levite also came by. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side, too. But a Samaritan came to the place where the man was. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. 'Take care of him,' he said. 'When I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?" The authority on the law replied, "The one who felt sorry for him." Jesus told him, "Go and do as he did."

Ask: What made the Samaritan good? Get some Band-Aids, ask your child the following questions, and write the answers on the Band-Aids. Then place the Band-Aids on a doll or action figure. What are you good at? What do you like to do? How can you help others?

Kickstarter 3: Who Needs Help Around Me?

Read the story of Jesus healing a man who couldn't walk, either from a kids' Bible or directly from Mark 2:1-12.

A few days later, Jesus entered Capernaum again. The people heard that he had come home. So many people gathered that there was no room left. There was not even room outside the door. And Jesus preached the word to them. Four of those who came were carrying a man who could not walk. But they could not get him close to Jesus because of the crowd. So they made a hole in the roof above Jesus. Then they lowered the man through it on a mat. Jesus saw their faith. So he said to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Some teachers of the law were sitting there. They were thinking, "Why is this fellow talking like that? He's saying a very evil thing! Only God can forgive sins!" Right away Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Is it easier to say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven'? Or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus spoke to the man who could not walk. "I tell you," he said, "get up. Take your mat and go home." The man got up and took his mat. Then he walked away while everyone watched. All the people were amazed. They praised God and said,

"We have never seen anything like this!"

Then ask: What did the friends do in this story? What was wrong with their friend? Do you know someone who needs help? Write that person's/people's name(s) down and pray for them.

Invitation to Generosity

There are tons of ways to serve within your community. This Serving Project Family Experience will be most impactful when the entire family is involved and when it ends with something tangible for your child to keep that reminds them of this time. You can use all the information you gathered through the Kickstarters as a frame of reference. In order to land on a good serving project for your family, go through the following questions together, writing down the answers on the provided worksheet. You can also check out the Serving Project Ideas List.

1. Referencing Kick-starter 1, “What does our family have that others may consider/think of as a blessing?”
2. Referencing Kick-starter 2, “What is something each of us can do that makes us unique/different?”
3. Referencing Kick-starter 3, “What are the needs we see around us?”
4. What organizations do we know of in our community that are helping to meet the needs we see as a family?
5. Which of these organizations allows help from families? (Find out if they allow minors to help.)
6. Choose three ideas from your list and hold a family vote to land on a specific project.
7. Mark your serving project on the calendar.
8. Plan a way to commemorate the time with a picture or letter. Find out if it is okay to take pictures of the people you will be serving. Find out if a leader of the organization would be willing to write a thank-you letter to be given to your child.

Once your family has completed the serving project, you can present your child with the picture or letter. Be sure to epitomize the moment when you give your child the picture, letter, etc. You can reference the Serving Family Experience Script for this time.

Remind them that generosity is a choice and that you are proud of them for thinking of others.

SERVING PROJECT WORKSHEET

1. What do we have?
2. What can we do?
3. What are the needs we see?
4. What organizations do we know about?
5. Which organizations would allow us to help?
6. What are our top three choices? (List them, then vote and circle the one you decide on.)
7. When will we do our project?
8. How will we remember the event?

SERVING FAMILY EXPERIENCE SCRIPT

We have enjoyed learning about serving with you. We learned that we can serve by giving out of the things God has given us, working out of the way He created us, and clearly seeing all the places we can serve around us.

God has led us to serve together as a family by . . .
(Talk about the project you completed.)

While serving, we saw you . . . (List any stories, character traits, etc. that stuck out to you.)
Our desire is that serving others will be part of who we are as a family. Thank you for giving so generously with your time and talents. We are so proud to see you be generous, and we pray that you will continue to see needs in the people around you.

We want you to have this gift as a way to remember us serving together as a family.

Hopefully, every time you look at it, you'll remember what it was like to help someone, to set aside time to serve another person.

Children in kindergarten are fairly self-sufficient. Whether your child is at half-day or all-day kindergarten or is homeschooled, they are going to be spending some amount of time away from you for the first time. This can be both scary and exciting for parents. But rest assured--your child is ready for this change.

Here are some of the developmental changes they are experiencing right now.

Physical

- Perform locomotor skills, including running, jumping, leaping, sliding, and skipping
- Engage in one to two minutes of moderate to intense physical activities, leading to increased heart rate, breathing, and perspiration
- Possess strength to lift and support their own body weight for a variety of activities (hopping, jumping, hanging)
- Show left- or right-handed dominance
- Can perform self-care tasks with fine motor dexterity (zipping, buttoning, etc.).

Social and Emotional

- Understand the difference between right and wrong
- Can verbalize feelings appropriately
- Can play independently and also with peers without constant supervision
- Want to make decisions for themselves
- Are willing to take “safe” risks

Relational

- Enjoy playing with friends
- Can play cooperatively with peers
- Will encourage others
- Respect authority figures
- Recognize that others have feelings

Spiritual

- Begin to understand what they see/hear (This is a great time to begin reading the Bible to your child.)
- May ask questions about spirituality because of their desire for learning
- May instinctively begin to calm themselves down and correct their own behavior because of their new ability to manage feelings
- Have very close relationships with mom and dad, who have a great deal of influence at this stage

Our hope is that during the past year, you have shared a family service project and learned to be more generous.

In order to encourage other parents, we would love to hear about your family service project and how that experience has impacted your relationship with God and your family.

Feel free to send us an email, make a video, or send us a copy of your story, Bible verse, song, or prayer so that we can better encourage other parents. Thank you for taking this journey with us and we pray that God continues to work in your life and the life of your child.

SEND RESPONSES TO:

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KINDERGARTEN SERVING PROJECT IDEA LIST

- Serve a meal at the Salvation Army
- Sponsor a child through Compassion International, World Vision, etc.
- In lieu of birthday presents for your child's birthday, let him/her adopt a cause and have people donate to that
- A young girl can donate her hair to Locks of Love, an organization that makes wigs for children with cancer
- Look up local food pantries/soup kitchens and volunteer your time there
- Have a yard sale to benefit particular cause
- Build a relationship with an elderly man or woman at a nursing home
- Hold a neighborhood food drive to donate to a food bank
- Collect blankets or coats to donate to a shelter
- Donate tissues or socks to elderly people in a nursing home
- Clean up trash at a park
- Plant flowers at a school
- Donate quarters to people at a laundry mat
- Take water to a construction crew working near your home or your child's school
- Find an elderly person or couple in your neighborhood and pull weeds out of their flower beds
- Collect baby blankets for a local pregnancy center
- Ask your child's school counselor about the biggest need in your child's school and find a way to meet that need

