

Lessons for Kindergarten through 6th Grade

Day 1: Serving God and serving others

Introduction: Welcome to Bible Expedition!

As you may know, Paul wrote a letter to the Christians at Philippi. That letter is now known as the book of Philippians. Today we are going to talk about servants mentioned in the book of Philippians.

So, I have a question for you. What do you think of when you hear the word servant?

Answers: maid, butler, worker. You might think of a maid or butler, who is paid to do things like clean a house or cook food for another person.

A servant is someone who helps others. In the bible it can also mean “one who is obedient and faithful to God.” (for Teacher: doulos-Greek, ebhedh-Hebrew; meanings can be “Slave”, “attendant”, the position of someone in relation to a king, a term of humility)

Servants at Philippi

We first hear the word servant in the first verse, Philippians 1:1 (NIV), where says, “Paul and Timothy, Servants of Christ Jesus.” This word Servant used here can also be translated “Slave.” Paul and Timothy were completely devoted to Christ. They would do whatever God asked them to do.

Paul was in Prison when he wrote the letter to the Philippians. He gave up everything to serve Jesus.

He wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:11-13 (NIV), “To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.”

Timothy was a young man who helped Paul. He was trustworthy and faithful. From Timothy we learn that we can serve God at any age. Paul instructed Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV), “Don’t let anyone look down on you because

you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

Epaphroditus is also mentioned. He was willing to sacrifice everything to serve Jesus. In Philippians we learn that Epaphroditus almost died trying to help Paul.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV) says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Being a servant involves sacrifice and giving up what you want to help someone else.

So, I have a question: How many of you like video games? Let’s say you wake up on a Saturday morning and you want to play video games. But you realize the house is messy. There are toys everywhere and your mom is busy working.

Ask: What do you think a Servant would do?

Answer: Help clean the house.

A servant would willingly give up what they want to do (play video games) and instead help someone else.

Group Question #1: What are ways that you can serve others, whether at home or at school or at church?

Doing chores, being obedient to parents, not complaining, giving to missionaries, showing kindness to others, etc.

Group Question #2. Discuss a time you helped someone. What was their response? How did that make you feel?

Christ the greatest servant- The book of Philippians tells us of the greatest Servant, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the best example we have of a servant.

Let’s Read Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV) “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the

highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Humbled himself -- Jesus, the Creator of the universe, became a man. Think about that for a second, the King of Kings left heaven and the perfect communion with the Father to come to earth as a servant.

Humility means that you think of others more than you think of yourself.

Think of the yuckiest chore in your house. Perhaps, cleaning toilets?

Some of you would say, “Yuck, I would never clean a toilet.”

A humble servant is willing to do the chores no one else wants to do.

Jesus is our example of humility. He showed this when He washed the disciple’s feet. Think how stinky, smelly and gross the disciple’s feet must have been. They walked around all day in sandals on dirt roads. They walked behind donkeys, horses and camels. Would you have wanted to wash their feet? Jesus did not think He was too important. He came as a lowly servant.

How about you? Do you think of others as important? Do you serve others? Do you do your chores with a good attitude? Let’s say your teammate scores the winning shot on a basketball team. Are you happy for them or are you sad because you didn’t make the shot? Humility allows you to be happy when others do well.

Philippians 2:3 (NLT) says “Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.”

Obedient to death-- This passage says Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death. Jesus obeyed His Father even when it was hard.

How about you? Do you obey people in authority such as your parents? Do you get upset or frustrated when your parents tell you to do things? A humble person is an obedient person.

Ephesians 6:1 (ESV) says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Jesus, the King of Kings, obeyed His parents. When Jesus became an adult, Jesus obeyed God by dying on the cross for us. Living in humility will allow you to obey those God has placed in authority.

Rewarded for His obedience: Lastly, we learn that Jesus was rewarded for His obedience. God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave Him a name that is above every other name. One day everyone will know and profess that Jesus is the King of Kings.

Group Question #3: List some reasons why we should serve God

Ex. Because God loves us, thankfulness for what God has done, God tells us to, God rewards us, it pleases God, etc.

3 Reasons to serve God:

1. **Thankfulness** for God's love and sacrifice:

God loves you and gives you the opportunity to believe in Him and have eternal life. He loved you enough to die for you.

Philippians 2:1-2 (NIV) "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."

If God's love brings you comfort, be like-minded and share that same love with others.

Christ gave Himself for us. We should give ourselves for others.

2. **Rewards:** Those who serve God will have great rewards in heaven

Matthew 25:21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.'"

Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Treasure you have on earth will one day be gone, but the treasure you put in heaven will last forever.

3. **To please God:** How many of you want to please God with your life?

Being a Servant pleases God.

Romans 12:1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship”

To become a servant, you have to surrender yourself to God. You have to be willing to sacrifice your desires and to let God give you better desires that will honor and bring glory to Him.

Each of you has been given many talents and abilities from God. Our hope is that you would use those gifts and talents for good: to serve God and to serve others.

Let’s pray.

Day 2: Unity in Christ

Unity Overview: Today we are going to discuss unity

Can someone tell me what unity means?

Answers: oneness, having the same goals/purpose (example team sports)

Ask: Let's say you are all playing soccer together. What would happen if one person tries to score all the points and he takes the ball from his own players?

Answer: the whole team will lose.

Ask: What would happen in a war if every soldier decided they would fight the enemy all by themselves?

Answer: the enemy would win.

The same is true for Christians. When you become a Christian, you become part of God's team. God desires that you work together with other Christians to share the great news about Jesus. Other Christians can help protect you against attacks from the enemy, Satan.

Philippians 1:27 says, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel."

"Standing firm in one spirit" means you are getting along and have a good attitude.

"Striving together as one" means you are working together in unity.

So what causes disunity and why is unity so difficult?

The church of Philippi had people from various walks of life. Lydia was a business owner. In the book of Acts we learn about a Philippian Jailer and a slave girl. These people had to work together, even though they were different. This wasn't always easy. Paul had to ask Euodia and Syntyche to get along and be of the same mind. Paul also had to write a letter to the Corinthian church encouraging them to get along.

Group Question #1: Why do you think Unity, getting along with others, is so hard sometimes?

Group Question #2: Describe a time you experienced disunity (arguments, fighting, and disagreements). What was the cause?

The bible tells us what causes disunity in James 4:1-4

James 4:1-4: "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

Selfishness: The root cause of disunity (not getting along with others) is selfishness.

Selfishness means you are seeking good for yourself without considering others.

Can someone give me an example of selfishness?

Not sharing your toys, arguing with your family members, and disobedience to parents are all examples of selfishness.

[Share a personal example]

I remember selfishness in the church when I was a child. I remember kids in the church not wanting to sit with me or play with me. I remember adults looking down on me and seeing me as a nuisance. That made me feel rejected and like I didn't belong there.

I have seen selfishness even in this church. Some of you don't welcome visitors. Some of you will be friends only with people you like. Some of you have even been unkind to others. That is sin and an offense to God.

Selfishness should never be part of a church. If like me you have ever felt like people didn't like you in church, you can remember that God says, "I will never leave you or forsake you." If you are a child of God, He will always love you and accept you. God is never selfish.

God encourages us to have unity. Philippians 2:1-5 "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but

each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”

We are united with Christ. Jesus accepted us with all of our faults and failures and calls us to live for Him. He demonstrated His love and acceptance by dying on the cross for us. We should show the same love for others.

Benefits of Unity:

Group Question 3#: What are benefits of seeking unity (sharing, working together and loving others)?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 is a passage that explains some of the benefits of working in unity.

“Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:
If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

So, when you are working in unity you can accomplish more work. You can also receive help when you need it. If you fall down, someone can help you up. You can defend yourself against the schemes of Satan.

Example of Unity: Show a picture of a prairie dog.

[Share a personal example related to prairie dogs...even if it's referencing a nature show]

I remember when I was a young kid I went to South Dakota and saw prairie dogs for the first time.

Prairie dogs by themselves are pretty helpless against predators. A lot of animals like to eat prairie dogs, such as coyotes, foxes, snakes, hawks, and eagles. But prairie dogs have learned to survive in the grasslands and even the desert, one of

the harshest environments on the planet. They do so by working in unity. They dig tunnels underground to stay safe and keep cool in the summer heat. They will also post a sentinel to watch for predators while other prairie dogs search for food.

In the same way, Christians working in unity can survive in this world and are better protected against Satan's schemes.

How can we seek Unity?

So, we know that it is good for us to work together in unity. We also know that selfishness works against unity. So how can we work toward unity? What can we do that will help us become more unified?

Answer: Love: Instead of being selfish, love one another.

1 Corinthian 13:4-8 tells us what love is. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

So instead of being selfish, seek to please God by being kind to everyone. Share your toys. Be kind to others. Obey your parents. Greet visitors in the church. Find ways to make people feel welcome. If you have acted wrongly to someone, apologize and ask God to help you love them better.

We can seek unity through Love.

Let's Pray and ask God to help us not be selfish and to seek unity through love.

Day 3: Freedom through Faith in Christ

What is Freedom?

We have discussed service and unity. Today we are going to discuss how Jesus can make us free.

[Ask the Kids] So what does it mean to be free?

Answer: the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved.

Examples:

Slaves must do everything their owners tell them to do.

Prisoners are restricted from leaving and making their own choices.

Four ways that Jesus makes us free:

1. Freedom from the Power of Sin:

Philippians 1:10-11 says, “so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ”

When we believe in Jesus, He gives us a desire to please Him, the ability to be pure and the power to overcome temptation.

How many of you have ever been tempted to do something wrong? For example, how many of you have ever been tempted to take something that wasn't yours? We all have.

Jesus can give us power over the temptation to sin.

1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “**No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.**”

2. Freedom from Fear:

How many of you have ever been afraid?

Ask: What are some things you have been afraid of?

Examples of things we might be afraid of: fear of the dark, fear of monsters, fear of dying.

[Share a personal example about when you were afraid and God helped you]

I remember when I was a teenager I got lost in a swamp called the Florida everglades. I took a wrong turn on a trail as it was getting dark. I ended up in knee deep water shared with alligators. I was afraid. I didn't know if I would make it out. But God was watching out for me. There happened to be one other person in the swamp that night. I saw his flashlight in the distance and ran toward him. He helped guide me out of the swamp to safety. In the same way, God will help guide us when we are afraid.

In Philippians we learn we don't have to be afraid. **Philippians 4:6** says **“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”**.

When we believe in Jesus, we no longer have to be controlled by fear or anxiety.

The bible teaches us that God loves us and watches over us. Nothing can happen to us that He doesn't know about. **“All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose.”** Even though we will have trials and hard times, we can know that they are temporary. We also have the hope of heaven where there will be no sickness, pain or suffering.

3. Freedom from being held captive by “earthly” things:

When referring to God's enemies, **Philippians 3:19-20** says **“...Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ”**

So, what are earthly things? Earthly things are things on earth you want that you think will bring you happiness or satisfaction. They can be stuff, like video games, toys, go carts. It can even be something like popularity. You might want everyone to like you and be your friend.

God gives us these things as gifts for us to glorify Him, but earthly things will never truly satisfy. No matter how much stuff you have that stuff will never give you contentment. Only God can give you contentment.

In Philippians we learn that only God can satisfy us. **Philippians 4:11** says, “**I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.**” Paul learned that the secret to having contentment is to have Jesus. Only Jesus can give us true contentment.

4. Freedom from the Penalty of Sin:

For the remainder of the time I am going to talk about how Jesus can save each of us from the penalty of sin.

But first, we need to know some things.

Can anyone tell me what sin is?

Sin is disobedience to God or breaking God’s rules. For instance, how many of you have ever heard of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? God told Adam and Eve to not eat the fruit from one specific tree. What did Adam and Eve do? Adam and Eve broke God’s rule by eating the fruit. Adam and Eve sinned.

Because of their disobedience, everyone is born with a sin nature. Without God’s help, we are unable to obey all of God’s rules. For instance, God tells us that we should never lie. God also tells us to obey our parents.

Group Question #1: How many of you have ever lied or disobeyed your parents? How many of you are sinners?

Answer: All of us have lied or disobeyed our parents. All of us are sinners.

The bible puts it this way. **Romans 3:23** says, “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**” **Romans 3:10** says, “**There is no one righteous, no not one.**”

We are all guilty of breaking God’s rules. We are all Sinners.

What happens when you break the rules at home or at school? Let’s say you cheat on a test or punch someone?

Answer: There is a penalty or punishment such as a time out or a spanking.

Well here's the bad news: God has made a punishment for everyone who is a sinner. Since we are all sinners, we all deserve the punishment.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death."

That verse means the punishment for breaking God's rules is death. That death is not just a physical death, but a spiritual death, an eternal separation from God in a place called hell.

Since we are all sinners, all of us deserve the punishment of hell. **James 2:10** says, **"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."** We have all broken God's perfect law.

But today I have good news to share. That good news is Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

The good news is Jesus loves us so much that He took our punishment. Jesus paid the price of our punishment by dying on the cross. Three days after He died, do you know what else? He rose from the grave! He now lives and gives the gift of salvation to everyone who believes in Him. Everyone who trusts in Jesus becomes a child of God and will not have to receive the punishment of hell. God gives them the gift of eternal life in heaven with Jesus.

Not everyone who says they know Jesus will be allowed in heaven. It's not enough just to know about Jesus, you have to believe in Jesus and all that He said. Only those who truly believe and trust in God through His son Jesus Christ will be given the gift of eternal life.

For instance, imagine you are on an airplane that is crashing and you are offered a parachute. What must you do with that parachute to be saved from the crashing plane?

Answer: You must put on the parachute.

Only those who receive the parachute, and put it on will be saved from the plane crash.

What happens if you reject the parachute?

You will crash and be killed.

In the same way, those who reject Jesus and don't believe in Him will not be saved. Only those who believe in Him and trust in Him alone will be saved.

Romans 6:23 says, "**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.**"

Acts 16:31 says, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved**"

Romans 10:9 says, "**that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**"

Once you understand what Jesus has done, you can believe and receive the gift of salvation. You can believe in Him today and be set free from the penalty of your sin.

Let's pray.

Dear Father, thank You for each boy and girl here. Thank You that You care about each one of us and that You want us to be free from the punishment of sin. I ask that You work in the hearts of these children and that You draw them to Yourself. Help them to be obedient. Help them to be like Jesus and serve You with all their heart. Thank You that through Jesus we can be forgiven of our sins.

Is there anyone here that feels God is working in your heart to believe in Jesus today and you want to give Jesus control of your life?

[For those who respond] Praise God. We would like to discuss this more with you. We have servants who would like to talk about this with you.

[Those who respond will go with the designated persons to a separate room where they can discuss salvation and what it means in greater detail]

[For those who remain] We would also like to know how God is working in your life. Perhaps God has used Bible Expedition to encourage you in your faith. Please share with your leaders and your parents what God has done this weekend.

Thank you for coming to Bible Expedition!