

# Serving

THROUGH

the PHASES

BY BROOKLYN  
LINDSEY

helping

KIDS

DISCOVER

THEIR PLACE

IN A

bigger

STORY

SERVING THROUGH THE PHASES  
Published by Orange  
a division of The reThink Group, Inc.  
5870 Charlotte Lane, Suite 300  
Cumming, GA 30040 U.S.A.

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First Edition 2015

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10/3/2015

# SERVING THROUGH THE PHASES

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Helping Kids Discover Their Place in a Bigger Story

BROOKLYN LINDSEY

**“We had no idea how opportunities to serve  
would change our faith as a family.”**

—Patty (Emily’s Mom)

I met Emily when she was nine. Two years later, she joined my middle school youth group. At the beginning of seventh grade, she signed up for a local mission trip, and as mission trips do, it stretched, challenged and rocked her faith. Emily put hands and feet into serving, and all of a sudden, ideas that had been mere talking points—ideas like brokenness, suffering and loving others—slid into reality for her.

For the first time she saw herself affirmed in her gifts, connecting with the broken and joining with her church to do something about the suffering around her. Her faith collided with reality and the result was awesome! The experience transformed the way Emily saw the world, herself, God and the church. Emily was a changed girl—she was more like Jesus, and more like, well, herself.

After her trip, with her heart on fire, Emily felt compelled to keep serving. She started a little operation called “Birds of Hope,” a hard-working craft business to raise funds for clean water. Her parents supported and encouraged her to connect with me, her youth pastor. During that year, right before my eyes, I witnessed another awesome transformation. I saw her wrestle with her faith and it strengthened through the wrestling. I saw her love for God soar. I saw her lead others. I saw her emotions shift on days when she felt like she wasn’t enough. And I saw her bravery when she showed up and served anyway.

Emily—one of the most compassionate people I know—began her freshman year in college with a history rich with serving others. Her faith was active, alive—real! As her youth leader, I had a front row seat to see how her parents and church worked together to provide places and opportunities to serve through each phase of her life.

## INVITE KIDS INTO A BIGGER STORY

**Why am I here?** That’s the heart-question all kids are asking. And that’s where service comes in. Giving kids places and opportunities to serve through the phases helps them answer that question. It gives them purpose and helps them understand where they fit in a bigger story.

Since every kid is made in the image of God, every kid is on a life-long journey of discovering what that means. Science tells us no two people are genetically alike. That means that every person—every single one!—reveals a part of God that no one else who has ever lived can.

GIVING KIDS PLACES  
AND OPPORTUNITIES  
TO SERVE THROUGH  
THE PHASES HELPS THEM  
ANSWER THE QUESTION:  
**WHY AM I HERE?**

Culture may tell our kids that they need to be like everyone else to make a difference. But that's a lie. God made each kid unique because each one has a role to play in His story. And each kid's role is different than anyone else's. That means that each kid is needed—if their uniqueness is missing, we miss out on the unique aspect of God they show off! Kids need to be exposed to a story that invites them to participate in their own way, with the passions that God wired into them and only them.

This is where we come in. As leaders, we can make it a priority to give kids and teenagers opportunities to serve and participate in something that's bigger than themselves. God has made it so that serving increases the potential that children and students in your ministries feel embraced, engaged, affirmed and mobilized in their abilities. By His design, serving will lead them deeper into the story He has for them.

Serving others radically changes the course of a kid's life, because it gives them a bigger—or more complete—picture of themselves, God, church and the world. (Just like it did with Emily!)

Here's how that plays out in each area of a kid's life:

**THEMSELVES:** As kids serve, they begin to discover their gifts and their individuality, and they begin to find a purpose. Somehow through serving, God begins to whisper to each student's heart: "This is what I made you to do."

**GOD:** Serving makes it so that kids come face to face with the merciful, restorative, compassionate love of God. As they see more of God, they begin to reflect more of Him. (Can you imagine how awesome it would be to have multiple unique reflections of God's heart in your ministry?)

**CHURCH:** As kids serve, they experience what it means to be the church by participating with others who have different gifts and passions.

**THE WORLD:** Through serving, kids connect with a world that's bigger than just their neighborhood. They become more aware of the needs of others. As their faith deepens, their empathy and compassion deepens too.

This is rich, priceless stuff.

So how do we go about encouraging kids to serve? In other words, how can we help students step into their role in God's big story?

It doesn't just start in the seventh grade, or on a single missions trip. Serving at every phase of a kid's life provides a new backdrop for kids to encounter God differently and experience what it means to participate in His mission.

As ministry leaders with a heart to impact the next generation, we're all in this together—along with parents and small group leaders of every age—to help these kids grow into who they were meant to be with a deeper faith in the One who created them.

To help put a story around the tips I share, let me use Emily's story as a guide. Let's take a broad look at each phase in Emily's life to see how her experiences worked together to deepen her relationship with God and launch her into a lifetime of serving.

## SHOW PARENTS AND KIDS HOW TO SERVE THROUGH THE PHASES

As we dive into Emily's journey, let's camp out on the "HOW?" question.

### ***How do you show parents and kids how to serve?***

And, here we go, starting with preschool:

### **SERVING IN PRESCHOOL**

EMBRACE A PRESCHOOLER'S NEEDS WHILE TEACHING THEM TO SERVE.

When Emily was in preschool, her family showed up at church, and they trusted a few safe and loving adults to invest in her—to teach her how to be kind, share, be a helper and that God loves her forever.

This was the beginning of serving for Emily and a great place for every child to start.

Service on the preschool level may sound too abstract, but when we break it down to their unique propensity to ask "why" (And we all know that preschoolers can ask multiple "whys" in a moment—hundreds of "whys" in one single week!) you'll see that this one question is the solid gold that you're looking for.

SERVING AT EVERY  
PHASE OF A KID'S LIFE PROVIDES  
**A NEW BACKDROP FOR  
KIDS TO ENCOUNTER GOD**  
DIFFERENTLY AND EXPERIENCE  
WHAT IT MEANS TO PARTICIPATE  
IN HIS MISSION.



Their heart is open when they wonder why God loves them and this world so much. This question can lead you to teach them the why behind sharing and helping. Why do we help? their hearts will wonder. Because God is love. God loves you. God wants us to love others too.

As leaders, you can help embrace a preschooler's needs and teach them to serve by . . .

**reinforcing** the love of God for every child.  
**encouraging** WONDER and question-asking.  
**giving** parents ideas for prompting their children to share and help.  
**talking** about God's biggest SHARE (Jesus).

## HOW TO SERVE IN PRESCHOOL:

### CLEAN UP.

Clean up, Clean up, everybody, everywhere. (Sorry if you're not able to continue reading without singing! This pre-school jingle doesn't play favorites. I'll wait for you while you finish the song . . .)

A great place to begin teaching kids to serve is by coaching parents and SGLs to help kids notice their own messes. Parents can help kids notice their messes at home by talking about the mess together. This can be tough—especially when most preschool kids are still oblivious to the mess they create in their own diapers. (How can such cute things create something so disgusting? But I digress . . .) But once preschoolers notice their messes, parents can encourage them to help clean up. And let parents know that the small efforts their preschoolers make will make a big difference later on—even if would just be easier (and quicker!) to do the cleaning up themselves.

Cleaning up after themselves is a concept preschoolers can grasp. And it's the beginning of teaching our kids to think of others first—in other words, to think of their exhausted mom, dad, caretaker or SGL who will have to pick up the messes they leave behind.

### LEARN TO SHARE.

Besides learning to say the word, "NO!" over and over again, sharing is one of the earliest lessons we learn in life. And if anything is proof that thinking of others first doesn't come naturally, it's the image of two three-year-old girls and one princess dress.

For a preschooler, sharing something precious might be the biggest “learn” in the preschool phase. When a parent or SGL encourages preschoolers to share, they learn to momentarily put their own needs aside for the benefit of someone else, and they begin to learn more about the God they were created to be like.

#### TALK ABOUT IT.

One of the most important parts of service isn’t necessarily what you do or how you serve—it’s what you talk about before and after you serve. Maybe you’ve set up a place in the church for preschoolers to help wrap gifts during the holidays or deliver meals with their parents to elderly friends who are home-bound. Talking to preschoolers throughout the process can help them connect the dots, and they’ll certainly have some pretty interesting questions to keep the conversation going.

So talk, talk, talk about sharing. At home and at small group. Talk about the places you get to share and how you’re sharing. For a preschooler, this could simply mean pointing out how sharing that toy made someone feel or asking how they’d feel if they couldn’t eat dinner tonight. Talking to kids helps them develop empathy and the ability to focus on the needs of others—even if it’s just for a fleeting moment.

## SERVING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ENGAGE THEIR INTERESTS WHILE SERVING TOGETHER.

I met Emily when she was nine. She had two older sisters who were active in the youth group. I watched how her parents included her in some of the events for her sisters, but they also engaged Emily with a lot of one-on-one time. Our church was involved in cleaning up schools, and her mom and dad were a part of that. So, they invited Emily to help too. They soon discovered she was interested in teaching, so they wisely matched her heart for school with ways to serve in schools.

I saw how strategic they were in doing this with all three of their kids and thought to myself: I want to parent like that. I want to be able to identify the abilities and passions God has placed in my kids’ hearts and then connect them with opportunities to use them to serve in our community.

That's the focus of these elementary years—to move kids from not only serving in their homes, but engaging with a kids' interests to serve others in their community. As leaders, we can do this by . . .

- **giving** parents easy and accessible tools and ideas for serving together as family.
- **increasing** responsibility of older kids as they grow up your ministry.
- **listening** to a kid's ideas about how they can serve others or help change a problem.
- **giving** kids in your ministry practical ways to follow up on their ideas.

### ELEMENTARY SERVING IDEAS:

#### HELP OTHERS.

Most kindergarteners aren't able to ride their bike in a straight line, much less operate a lawn mower or a washing machine. (Although the chores at my house would get done much more quickly if they could! I'm kidding.) So these might be later elementary goals. But the principle is the same. Whether it's mowing a lawn, watering plants, walking a dog or playing a game of UNO with elderly neighbors, kids in elementary school are able to see the needs of those in their community and do something about them.

- A kindergartener can help a family with a loved one in the hospital by going to feed their goldfish twice a day.
- A second-grader can offer to water a neighbor's plants while a family goes on vacation.
- A fifth-grader can spend a few hours a month playing board games with a lonely grandparent or neighbor or in a special-needs room.
- A kid with an interest in soccer or music can serve a team or a group by showing up with water bottles or snacks for them.

By encouraging parents and SGLs to notice the most basic needs in your community, you can foster a sense of ownership, creativity, empathy and agency in the hearts of the elementary kids in your ministry.

#### SERVE AT CHURCH.

Don't let something as small as child labor laws stop you from putting those first-graders to work in your ministry. (I'm joking. You should definitely pay attention to child labor laws!)

But what there isn't a law against is this: encouraging your SGLs to delegate responsibility to their few. And there's not much a kindergartener loves more than passing out papers, pencils or supplies. And that's just the beginning. The easiest and most accessible way for a child, student or family to serve others is (and should be) the local church.

Remind SGLs that they're the ones leading their groups, and they can always be looking for ways to allow kids to serve each other. They're the consistent adult in the lives of these kids every week, and they'll know if Peyton is great at helping others find a verse in the Bible, or if Sam is the best person to show a first-time guest the ropes. The SGLs will find that the more they empower their few to help and serve each other, the more they'll begin to do so on their own!

One of the best ways to engage elementary kids is by setting up opportunities for them to serve with their parents. Encourage them to serve together with their parents in your preschool ministry. Fourth-graders are really great at getting toddlers to engage—they're fantastic at stirring up fun. And second-graders are just as good as the next guy when it comes to filling up Dixie cups with goldfish.

### OPEN A BUSINESS.

Search Google for "kids making a difference" and you'll find dozens of articles about kids who are raising money for various charities, volunteering large chunks of their time with local non-profits or making blankets for orphanages. And what do the majority of these kids have in common? Many of them are elementary age and have support from parents and friends.

Emily was passionately learning to how to sew at the age of 9. She had started her business at 12. Her parents noticed her enthusiasm and interest and helped her direct that passion to helping others. At the time, they had no clue that they were doing this. They weren't that intentional. They were simply trying to grow Emily's God-given ability and passion. As a church leader, you can help cue parents and SGLs to notice a kid's interests and engage them with a bigger story.

When she learned how to sew, Emily wasn't thinking of how her abilities could help change the water crisis for families in Zambia. But when her parents and leaders engaged her interests and encouraged her to develop them, she got a clearer vision and gained confidence to do even bigger things.

### TALK ABOUT IT.

Serving others has the potential to change kids while they're serving, but talking through it and processing it together is as crucial as the service project itself.

First of all, stepping out to serve can be kind of scary—for parents and kids. Having a conversation together to decide who to serve, how to serve and when to serve will help calm everybody's fears. It's probably not a good idea to start with sending a second grader into unfamiliar streets alone. But going to pick up trash in their own neighborhood once a month is a great place to start.

Once you're done with the service project, debrief. Spend some time talking about how you made a difference together. How did it feel? What did the child, family or small group like most about serving? What did they like least? And then plan your next act of service based on this follow up conversation.

## SERVING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

AFFIRM THEIR GIFTS WHILE HELPING THEM TO SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY.

Service can be a significant tool in the life of a middle schooler—a powerful tool that too often gets overlooked. Because when you give a middle schooler the opportunity to serve, you're helping them to answer the most terrifying questions they're facing. And those questions are:

**Where do I fit in?** *(Where we all fit in—helping others and showing God's love.)*

**What can I offer?** *(You can offer a warm meal, a friendship, a reprieve.)*

**Why do I matter?** *(Because you're making a difference in the world and you show off God's heart like no one else does.)*

Service forces a middle schooler to look through a window instead of a mirror. It gives them a break from the all-consuming woes of their own life (and to a middle schooler, they are all-consuming!) to focus on someone else—on a world much bigger than the halls of their middle school.

BECAUSE WHEN YOU  
**GIVE A MIDDLE SCHOOLER  
THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
SERVE**, YOU ARE HELPING  
THEM TO ANSWER THE MOST  
TERRIFYING QUESTIONS  
THEY ARE FACING.

It was in middle school when Emily participated in that local missions camp. And that's when her faith became personal. She felt God's love in a way that affirmed who she was and gave her confidence. I remember the day she came to me with her idea to practice her passion. She had prayed, "God, what can I do?" And God gently nudged her to think of her sewing skills and how her gifts could work to create good. When Emily heard there was a desperate need for clean water in Zambia, she enlisted her gifts to serve together with her church and family.

Emily taught me to position kids to see and hear stories where their story can intersect and interact. As a leader, you can affirm a kid's gifts and help them see the world differently by . . .

**using** small groups, big groups and church environments to tell stories.

**giving** parents places to have conversations with their kids about how their lives could intersect with the lives in their community and world.

**encouraging** small group leaders and parents to affirm each kid's gifts by noticing them and talking about how they could use them more to serve others.

**enlisting** your kids to serve strategically together with the adults in their lives.

## HOW TO SERVE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL:

### LEARN THE STORIES.

Somewhere in the middle of figuring out how to balance their emotions and growing out of their jeans (again!), a middle school student will begin to see the world around them. They'll begin to notice others and their compassion will have a chance to grow. This is the solid gold moment of middle school—it's the perfect time to dive in.

Introduce families and SGLs to community issues or global problems by telling stories. Give kids your ear when they notice something isn't right in the world. Affirm their interest if you sense they want to get involved, and leverage their support system by involving the parents and SGLs in the conversation.

Let them lead you. This can feel scary because they're not going to have it all together. But that's the most beautiful part—walking through the process together with their parents and their SGLs. It's the most life-giving spot to be in! You'll be watching someone's mind and heart connect and become passionate about something they care about! That's incredible to witness.

SERVICE FORCES  
A MIDDLE SCHOOLER  
**TO LOOK THROUGH  
A WINDOW INSTEAD  
OF A MIRROR.**



### IDENTIFY TALENTS AND INTERESTS.

Maybe a student already has clearly defined interests and talents. Maybe they change on a weekly (sometimes hourly!) basis. Maybe a student has no clue what they're interested in. But a crazy thing happens when a middle schooler takes the first step into service. It causes them to fully examine their talents and the gifts God has given them.

Maybe she's no Rachael Ray and cooking meals for the homeless isn't her thing. But she's unbelievable at making bracelets to raise money. Maybe he has a black thumb and isn't so great at planting a community garden. But he's the most efficient bunk bed builder that anyone has seen—and that's exactly what the new shelter needs. Discovering God-given interests, talents and purpose is one of the biggest reasons service is so crucial in these adolescent years.

Give parents and SGLs ideas for how to engage kids' interests. The easiest way is by asking kids directly. Parents and SGLs can ask them:

*"What do you love to do?"*

*"What's your favorite thing to learn about?"*

*"What hobby interests you most?"*

Then teach parents and SGLs to ask questions about the needs that their middle schoolers see.

*"What needs do you see in your school?"*

*"What needs do you see in your community?"*

*"Is there a story that breaks your heart?"*

Sometimes a kid will need a worthy cause to ignite their passion and motivate them to use their interests and abilities. For Emily, learning about the global water crisis was a trigger for her to dive deeper into her gifts and interests. And then she was off to the races!

### GIVE THEM CONSISTENCY—STICK TO SOMETHING.

When it comes to service projects for middle schoolers, there's another important idea to keep in mind—especially since their lives are going in a million different directions in this phase (sports, dance lessons, and all kinds of other extracurricular activities, not to mention an increased school workload). And that's this: consistency.

There's no one-size-fits-all service project for small groups. Everyone has different interests and skills, so help your SGLs be mindful of that. What an SGL can do is look at the makeup of their group and pick something that might interest the majority. Help them to find something that works for them and then to stick to it. Help their group feel invested in the project beyond one day.

You can pick an area of need locally or an area of need globally.

Local Focus:

Local Homelessness  
Pet Rescue/SPCA  
Adopt a school  
Kindness (Anti-bullying)

Global Focus:

Clean Water  
Hunger  
Immigration  
Equality

Decide on one or two of these things. Learn about them together—through video, prayer and activities.

Support parents and SGLs by communicating stories behind the causes consistently and giving them ideas weekly to touch on the story while affirming the interests of kids in your group.

**TAKE A FOCUSED TRIP.**

A middle schooler doesn't have to experience a 15-hour flight to another country to experience life in another culture, share the burden of humanity or enter into another person's life experiences and troubles. Those things can be taught and modeled consistently in their own backyard! But middle school is an incredibly pivotal time in a student's life—a time perfect for his or her mind to be exposed to all of these things on a focused trip. Focused trips give vision to think beyond their own needs by showing the contrast between their lives and the lives of others and helping them to find similarities.

It's important to involve parents, SGLs or other significant adults in that trip. From a long weekend serving in an inner city to a two-week service trip to Argentina, these experiences have the potential to expand a student's mind, deepen their faith, and connect them with a personal passion as their interests begin to line up with specific ways to serve.

FOCUSED TRIPS GIVE  
**VISION TO THINK BEYOND  
THEIR OWN NEEDS**  
BY SHOWING THE CONTRAST  
AND HELPING THEM  
TO FIND SIMILARITIES.

And process, process, process. Don't forget the value and importance of processing the whole experience before, during, and after. Here are some ways you can you're your middle schoolers process:

**Talk** about the value of the people you met.

**Think** about value the people you met bring to the world.

**Wonder** about how your life intersects with their lives.

**Listen** to the insights of your kids and ask follow-up questions.

**Encourage** inclusivity and compassion.

**Move** your kids from an "us" and "them" approach to storytelling.

**Move** your students toward talking about how everyone's lives are shaped when we serve each other.

### GROW A BUSINESS.

Emily started Birds of Hope at the age of twelve. By thirteen, she'd already raised over \$25,000 for clean water solutions. (How cool is that?!?) By fourteen, I was working for her as a member of her non-profit board of directors. (And she was a fabulous boss.)

And you can replicate this! You can support parents and SGLs to let kids exercise their agency, "free ranging" on the terrain of serving others. What I mean by that is this: Parents and SGLs can encourage kids to explore, solve problems on their own, stand up for things they're passionate about, and when it's time, give them some a space where they can lead others. And there's only one big "no" in this whole process: never limit a kid's ideas for how big their service could be.

## SERVING IN HIGH SCHOOL

MOBILIZE POTENTIAL AS THEY DISCOVER THEIR PERSONAL MISSION.

Teens are especially compelled by the idea of serving and making a difference. In fact, at **Orange** we talk about three dials that you're constantly turning as you work with kids and teenagers: wonder, discovery, and passion. While the "passion" dial is always turning at every age, it gets cranked way up in middle school and especially in high school, because high school students have an innate desire to serve. God has hard-wired it into their hearts.

A survey of high school seniors conducted by Fuller Youth Institute showed students wish their time in youth ministry were more focused on three things:

1. Meaningful Conversation
2. Serving
3. Mission Trips

Students are already passionate about actively bettering their communities, responding to needs and focusing on local and global crises. So, lean in. Whether they've been serving together with their family since birth or stepping in for the first time, lean in.

When Emily hit high school, we were all just trying to keep up! She was changing the world—one handmade bird at a time. She'd simply tell her story, and thousands of kids her age would be inspired to discover their own personal mission.

Emily's family continued to mobilize her potential through high school as they helped her make decisions with her Birds of Hope project. They walked with her through a season when she needed time off. They supported her when she felt led to volunteer in a classroom in her community. They gave her space to solve problems, explore and lead while deciding on what would be next for her.

As a leader, you can mobilize a high school student's potential by . . .

**following** their lead and helping them solve problems.  
**recruiting** them to be involved in serving somewhere weekly inside and outside the church.  
**giving** them your support while they're still discovering what's next.

## HOW TO SERVE IN HIGH SCHOOL:

### SERVE AT CHURCH.

One of your goals as a leader is to help a student become the church before they leave the church. And the only way you can do that is by giving them opportunities to serve in your ministries. If you structure your organization in a way that allows high school students to volunteer as small group leaders, video producers, sound technicians, you're winning on all sides.

So, give your high school students something significant to do. They'll feel the weight and importance of it. They'll be stretched and grown through the experience in a way you can't make happen in your times with them. And yes, it will be scary to let them take over something bigger. But that's a beautiful part of the process—you'll all be stretched. So, like gutter guard bowling, set up boundaries for your high school students in the areas where you've allowing them to serve. But within those boundaries, give them freedom. And watch what God does with you all.

### STRETCH THEIR FAITH.

This aspect of serving in high school is a bit less concrete. In high school, a student's brain has developed in a way where they're able to think more abstractly. That means that they're asking deeper, more nuanced and tension-filled questions about faith. Questions like, "How can a good God allow evil?" This is the solid gold moment of development in high school. Students are asking more tension-filled questions about serving, too.

So, offer group studies on topics that stretch a student's faith—including serving. For example, take discussion questions from books like *When Helping Hurts* or from *Foreign to Familiar*, and help students wrestle with the tensions found in the way ideas are formed and shaped. Help them think about what serving means to those receiving help and how walking in solidarity with other people changes things.

Give parents and SGLs stories about people who make serving a way of life. Look at Mother Teresa or a kid in your community who is changing the world. Think about what made their lives unique and powerful. Get them talking about it and making observations and connections.

Also, share stories about people who serve in humble, everyday ways. There is deep beauty in the mundane! Help give your students eyes to see the weight of little, daily acts of service. Like how a school janitor is faithfully creating an environment where students can have the opportunity to learn successfully. Like how parents who cook dinner several nights a week are creating a space for their families to connect, bond and thrive. Help students see the truth that these smaller acts of service are tremendous in the eyes of God.

And then, once students have eyes to see the importance of small service, cue parents and SGLs to challenge their students to serve small too. Help students recognize that when their hearts identify a need, that's the only prompt they need to do something about what they see.

We want service to become a part of everyday living for our students—service doesn't have to be big to matter to God. In fact, He tells us in the Bible that it's the smaller acts that mean the most to Him.

### GO GLOBAL.

High school is a great time to give students space to learn and grow on their own. It may feel counter-intuitive to let a person with a brain that is still forming leave the state or country without at least five qualified adults to lead and guide them, but this is the time for them to begin

making decisions, solving problems, learning to exercise compassion and common sense on their own.

Provide opportunities to serve where leaders give freedom to students to choose how they will serve, where they will serve, and when. Give SGLs a date and a small budget (if you can spare one) to plan a serving trip together. Give them the leadership (forms and communication) to have an incredible trip. Resource them with things like [Sticky Faith Serving](#) guides or other materials that can help their group win! And then watch God as He uses the service opportunity to shape and stretch and grow each student to look more like Him.

### TALK ABOUT IT.

You're probably getting the picture by now. Just like in preschool, elementary school, and middle school, having a meaningful conversation helps a student process their growing relationship with God and the way it's coming to life in how they serve.

Give parents and SGLs cues every week to talk about what they anticipate before they serve, how they're processing things while they're serving, and what insights and ideas they're having after they've served.

## SERVING THROUGH EVERY PHASE

As Emily walks into college, now a freshman preparing for a degree in education for the deaf, I can see how God used serving at every phase in her life to help her become more like Him and more like Emily.

I could tell similar stories across the board in my ministry experience, and my friends in ministry could tell even more.

We know that partnering with parents and SGLs to give kids opportunities to serve at every phase changes lives. Serving at every phase or at any phase helps kids . . .

**discover** who they are,  
**become** the church,  
**connect** with a bigger world,  
**and develop** a deeper faith.

The awesome thing about serving is that God has planted the desire to serve in all of our hearts! That means that families are looking for ways to serve. Life gets busy and distracting, yes, but families are looking for an opportunity to do something meaningful, they just don't know where to start. You can help make service more accessible! For more ideas to hand to parents at every age, download [SERVING IDEAS](#) on Weekly.

You have the most incredible of opportunities. You have the chance to set students up for the rich, priceless stuff that God will do in their hearts when they serve. God has allowed you to be a part of the process of Him shaping the members of the next generation to be more themselves. More like Him.

So, be strategic. Be intentional. Set up your ministry so that the kids you shepherd can serve through the phases. And then sit back and watch the awesome life-changing, world-changing things that God will do.