



SERVE TO LOVE



DAY 1 - LOVED
DAY 2 - AWARE
DAY 3 - COURAGEOUS
DAY 4 - COMPASSIONATE
DAY 5 - DEDICATED



2010 BIBLE STUDY

A SERVANT IS...

RAINBOW TRAIL LUTHERAN CAMP

JOSHUA 24:15

...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!



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Loved To Serve – Serve To Love

At the heart of the Christian faith is the experience of being loved by God, just as we are. The Apostle Paul put it this way: “God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” [Romans 5:8] Without deserving it, without earning it, God’s love comes to us as a gracious gift. This love of God is so powerful and so profound, that it has the capacity to transform our lives. God’s transforming love (Loved to serve), can inspire us to a life of serving others as way to express our love of God and others (serve to love). Each day of the “Loved to Serve, Serve to Love” will identify and explore a different aspects of a servant life and challenge campers to respond to God’s love by serving others.

A Servant is **Loved**

Young people often struggle with feeling loved. Many do not experience love at school, in the neighborhood, in the marketplace – or even at home. Many young people carry with them the sometimes well-hidden (sometimes not) conviction that nobody loves them. Worse yet, many understand themselves as profoundly unlovable. Because of this many young people are resistant to believing that anyone (even God) truly loves them. During this first day, we will explore what it means to be loved by God, with the hopes of experiencing it ourselves.

A Servant is **Aware**

The first thing that my parents teach me is "I am loved." The second thing they teach me is "no" - it's not all about me. They begin to teach me about being aware of others, not an easy thing to learn. Both nature and nurture work against this process. It is important though to learn to step outside yourself and be other-focused, to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of, and attentive to the needs of others. In doing so you begin to care for other, take time for them, and desire to see others succeed.

A Servant is **Compassionate**

What would it be like to live someone else’s life for a week? Reality TV shows like MTV’s “World’s Strictest Parents” give us a glimpse of what people experience when they walk a mile in someone else’s shoes. When you enter into relationship with another person then you can begin to experience life with them, you can begin to feel with them. Once you have entered that relationship and nurtured that relationship you will find that you have first hand experience with what this person needs or wants. In relationship and through compassion you can begin to serve that person in meaningful ways.

A Servant is **Courageous**

Being “other-centered” is certainly not an easy thing for anyone to do perhaps especially a young person who is constantly bombarded with external messages that suggest they should be #1...on top...the best...the most important...the most beautiful...and the most successful. Sometimes to achieve such self-importance one has to climb over others and ignore the needs of people who are hurting. While many people are able to do this in good conscience, a Christian cannot. If we follow the example of Jesus we will learn to live a servant life that focuses on the needs of others.

A Servant is **Dedicated**

We often mistake living a life of service with completing a project of service. Being dedicated to service goes way beyond the project, to how we live out our daily lives. Service is making a decision to be dedicated to our neighbor on a daily basis, not because it feels good, but because of the love that God has given us.

Morning watch will continue to be a part of our day. We will continue to use monologues as the central part of this time. We will continue to provide time for journaling as well. We hope that this discipline of quiet time and journaling is one that many will take home with them as they seek daily time with God.

I am very excited about this study. This study focuses on the heart of the Christian lifestyle – service to others just as Christ would. We want campers to understand the joy of serving others and the witness that becomes to the world. I hope this study will also help you to continue to grow in your own faith journey. Thank you for the opportunity to be partners with you as we serve the youth, adults, and families of the Rocky Mountain Synod.

In Christ!

Dave Jarvis
Executive Director

2010 BIBLE STUDY

Loved to Serve, Serve to Love

DAY 1 – A SERVANT IS LOVED

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

- * God's love transforms us (Loved to serve), and inspires us to a life of serving others as a way to express our love of God and others (serve to love).
- * At the heart of the Christian faith is the experience of being loved by God, just as we are. The Apostle Paul put it this way: "God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us." [Romans 5:8] Without deserving it, without earning it, God's love comes to us as a gracious gift. This love of God is so powerful and so profound, that it has the capacity to transform our lives
- * Young people often struggle with feeling loved. Many do not experience love at school, in the neighborhood, in the marketplace – and even at home. Many young people carry with them the sometimes well-hidden (sometimes not) conviction that nobody loves them. Worse yet, many understand themselves as profoundly unlovable.
- * Guiding young people to experience the fullness of God's love can be challenging. On the one hand, being fully known and fully loved can have a profoundly positive impact. Yet many young people are resistant to believing that anyone (even God) truly loves them.
- * Martin Luther wrote: "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." (from "The Freedom of a Christian" – Luther's works, vol. 31: *Career of the Reformer I*) The tension between these two statements illustrates the life of one who is "Loved to serve [and who] serves to love." As Lutherans, we believe that the life of faith begins with a profound experience of God's love – and that redeemed and transformed by this love, we respond by returning our lives as servants of God.
- * During this first day, we will explore what it means to be loved by God, with the hopes of experiencing it ourselves. During the rest of the week, we will consider what it means to offer ourselves as servants, in response to the love that God has first shown us.

B. OBJECTIVES FOR THIS DAY OF THE STUDY

- * The goal of this study is to break through the resistance that some young people have to thinking of themselves as "beloved" – people whom God loves.
- * Campers will be provided with an opportunity to have a first-hand experience of what it means to be loved by God.
- * They will experience this through:
 - identifying with Saint Peter (a disciple of Jesus)
 - reflecting on the life of theologian and composer John Newton
 - considering God's love for them
 - tangible expressions of love between one another

C. MORNING WATCH

- * Monologue:

After the group is assembled, a staff member stands up in front, and presents this monologue. It does not need to be memorized, or spoken word-for-word. But it should not be read from the page. It should seem as though the speaker is telling his or her own story.

I didn't grow up as a Christian. When I was your age, I never went to church. I never spent a week at church camp. I knew nothing about Jesus. My parents weren't actually atheists. They just weren't interested enough in God to talk about it with us. And so I grew up with no awareness of what it means to have God in your life. I had a general sense of the difference between right and wrong. And I knew that if people were active and supportive in their community, then life was generally better for everyone. But that was about it.

As I grew older, I met a number of Christians. Some of them seemed like genuinely good people. They were kind, and helpful, and seemed to want to make a positive difference. Others, though, seemed phony to me. They talked a lot about their faith, but it didn't seem to translate into actions. I guess you

could call them hypocrites. And honestly, they kind of turned me off to the faith. If that was what Christianity was all about, I really wasn't interested.

Life was pretty easy for me. School came naturally, and I got good grades without having to try all that hard. I got a decent job, and married my High School sweetheart. We moved into an apartment together, and had dreams of raising a family and growing old together.

But somewhere along the way, things just started falling apart. I wasn't getting as much out of my job as I did when I first started working at it. Neither of us were making much money. My wife and I were having trouble starting a family. And besides, we had kind of started to drift apart a bit. We just didn't feel as close as when we were dating.

Things got worse and worse, until she finally moved out. My industry went through some significant changes, and our company didn't respond to them very well. I ended up being laid off when sales dropped. I started drinking a lot on my own. And then I was in this automobile accident. I was hurt pretty badly. I wasn't going to die or anything, but I was in a lot of pain. I had lost my health insurance when I was laid off, so for an entire week I was in a hospital bed, consumed with pain, focused only on when my next pain pill was supposed to show up, and wondering how I was going to pay for it all when I got out.

I honestly didn't think I was going to make it through. I thought many times about how I'd like to just give up. I wasn't going to kill myself or anything, but I was thinking that I'd be better off dead than alive.

It was then that this hospital chaplain started coming by to talk with me. At first we just talked about the weather, and football (I used to play in High School) and stuff like that. He was a nice guy, and seemed really interesting. Eventually he started asking me about myself. I don't know why I did it, but I started telling him about how hard my life had become, and how unhappy I was. He wasn't pushy or anything. He just sort of quietly shared with me how his life had been kind of hard too, but that his faith helped him through the toughest parts.

That was a turning point for me. For the first time in my life, I found myself wishing that I had the kind of faith that he had. He shared the story of Jesus with me. And he told me God loved me. Me! Can you believe it? I didn't think anyone loved me, much less God. But this chaplain taught me how God loves everyone, and wants to be in our lives.

I'll have to tell you, when he talked to me about that, I had this strange feeling. To think that God, who knows every bad thing I've ever thought or said or done, still loves me enough to die for me: that really blew me away. Something powerful happened in that hospital bed. I never thought it could happen to me, but I began to believe in God. And what's even more important, I began to believe that God loves me, and is ready to make a difference in my life.

I've been out of the hospital for about a month now, and I can tell you that something is definitely different. I am still in some physical pain, but the cloud has lifted over me. I am feeling some hope for the first time in my life. I mean, if God can love a person like me... [*actor pauses and looks down, as if becoming too emotional to talk*]

I don't know where this thing is going, but I think some pretty big changes are coming my way. And do you know what? For the first time, I'm not scared. I know that God is involved somehow. And if God really does love me, well, then I guess I've got nothing to be afraid of.

The actor leaves the room, and campers are invited to go outside for some quiet time.

* Questions for Reflection

- What did the character in this morning's watch think about Christianity before his accident?
- How do you think his job or his marriage or his injury would have been different if he was a person of faith?
- Why do you think the fact that God loves him made such a strong impression on him?
- What kind of changes do you think are coming in his life?

D. SCRIPTURE STUDY

* The primary text for this day's study involves Saint Peter, the Apostle whom Jesus chose to serve as a leader among leaders in the early church. As a leader, Peter was a man of faith and courage. But Peter was also very human – very imperfect. In the stories of his time with Jesus we see him as a real person – someone we can identify with. The low point of Peter's time with Jesus took place during Holy Week. Despite his own good intentions, and his bold claim that he would never abandon Jesus ("I will lay down my life for you." [St. John 13:37b]). Peter doesn't end up being as faithful as he imagined himself to be. As Jesus predicts, Peter denies him three times.

^{13:36} Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times. [St. John 13:36-38]

^{18:15} Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” ¹⁸ Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. [St. John 18:15-18]

^{18:25} Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶ One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed. [St. John 18:25-26]

* Peter was understandably devastated. St. Luke tells a bit more of the story, highlighting the impact this three-fold denial had on Peter:

^{22:55} When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶ Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, “This man also was with him.” ⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” ⁵⁸ A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not!” ⁵⁹ Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, “Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about!” At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly. [St. Luke 22:55-62]

* Peter has many high and low moments in his time with Jesus. But the most profound experience of his life is yet to come. After the resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples a number of times. St. John tells the story of one of those appearances:

^{21:1} After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³ Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” ⁶ He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will

fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.”¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.” [St. John 21:15-19] Peter has every reason to believe that Jesus might give up on him because of Peter’s failure to stand with him in his time of trial. But far from rejecting him, Jesus does exactly the opposite. He loves Peter enough to give him three opportunities to make the confession he was unable to make on those three occasions during the night Jesus was arrested.

The love that Peter experiences from Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias is so unexpected, so undeserved, so shocking, that it completely transforms Peter. He will no longer live in fear of what others might think or what others might do because of his belief in Jesus. He will no longer think first about how faithfulness might affect him, or what it might cost him. He becomes the dependable, steadfast, courageous leader of the church, who stops at nothing to live in a way that is faithful to Jesus.

Loved and transformed by Jesus, Peter spends the rest of his life serving him. He does so at great cost, and with great risk. Early sources (Tertullian, Origen and “The Apocryphal Acts of Peter”) testify that Peter even dies for the faith – crucified for his role in promoting the Christianity (although they hold that Peter felt unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as Jesus was, so at Peter’s own request, he was nailed to a cross upside down).

- * Tradition has it that Saint Peter wrote two letters to the leaders of the churches in Asia Minor. While recent scholarship casts some doubt as to whether Peter was actually the author of these letters (they may have been written as late as AD 97-117), the letters are written in the spirit and the teaching of Peter, the leader of the early church. The first of these letters includes the following paragraph:

^{4:8} Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰ Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. ¹¹ Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. [First Peter 4:8-11]

Peter knows better than anyone what it means to be fully loved by Jesus. It changes his life forever. And it convinces him to encourage other early leaders in the church to respond to God’s by living as servants of Christ. For Peter, that means to maintain constant love for one another, be hospitable to one another, and serve one another with whatever gift each has received.

- * During this study, we will also consider the life story of John Newton, who was transformed by God’s love, and who lived for the rest of his life as a servant of Christ.

John Newton grew up without any form of religious background, and ended up working in the slave trade. As the story goes, one night a terrible storm battered his vessel so severely that he became frightened enough to call out to God for mercy. He became a Christian, gave up slave trading, and went on to study theology. He eventually composed the highly popular folk hymn “Amazing Grace,” which was written to illustrate a sermon on New Year’s Day of 1773.

- * What follows is a description of how someone might lead a small group Bible study with a focus on St. John 21:15-19.

* **Open with Prayer**

Dear God, we thank you for the gift of this new week. Thank you for Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, and the ministries that take place here. Thank you for new friends that we’ll meet, new experiences that we’ll have, and new understanding that you will give us about your love for us, and our opportunity to serve you. Bless this small group. Help us learn to love one another, and to trust each other as we live together in your presence. Watch over this conversation we are about to have, that through our study and conversation, you might open up our eyes to your word and your presence in our lives. We pray this in the name of Jesus, the Christ, whose death and resurrection give us life and hope. Amen.

* **Warming Up**

We’re going to be spending time together each day studying the Bible. It will be important for us to learn to trust one another, and to take each other seriously as we do this. So let’s start by getting to know one another a bit better. Let’s go around the circle, and give each person a minute or two to answer three brief questions.

- What is your name?
- Who lives with you in your family?
- If you belong to a church, which one is it? Or if you came to camp with a friend, who is that friend?

Now let's answer a couple of questions about what we might be thinking or believing. (Go once around the circle for each question, having each participant answer one question each round.)

- Finish this sentence: "I'm glad that I'm here because..."
- Who or what makes you laugh more than anything?
- What is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for you?

*** Introduce the Bible Passage**

Each day this week, we are going to get to know one character from the Bible. Today, we'll meet Simon Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus. Peter, along with James and John, formed the inner circle of Jesus' followers. He eventually was chosen by Jesus to be the leader of the disciples, and of the early church.

- How many of you have heard of Peter?
- What do you know about him? What stories have you heard? (*give them time to think of what they have heard, and share it with the group*)
- What do your stories tell us about Peter? (*reflect on what each camper has shared, and draw some conclusions about what it has to say about Peter*)

One thing about Peter is that he is far from perfect. Even though he is one of Jesus' closest followers, there are many times when he gets things wrong.

- When Jesus calls Peter to walk across the water to him, Peter actually does pretty well for a few steps. He stays focused on Jesus and actually does it. But as soon as he looks around at the wind and the waves, he loses his faith, and begins to sink.
- At the Transfiguration (when Jesus appears on the top of a mountain with Moses and Elijah), Peter blurts out that they should build some booths and stay there to worship. Jesus reprimands him, and reminds him that there is ministry to do down in the valley.
- When Jesus tells the disciples that he would be persecuted and killed in Jerusalem, Peter argues with him, saying that he would never let that happen. Again, Jesus reprimands him – even calls him "Satan" – and says that he is working against God's plan, not for it.

Peter messes up a lot. And today, we're going to take a look at one of the times when he really blows it. Open your Bibles to St. John 13. We call him Peter, but his name is really Simon. Peter is the Greek word for rock – and everyone starts calling him Peter after Jesus says he is the "rock" on which the church will be built (if that happened today, we might be calling him "Rocky" instead of "Peter"). By the time we get to this part of the story, Peter is acting like a leader of the disciples, and really wanting to do well. So he is speaking with Jesus at the Last Supper, and here is what he says.

Would someone be willing to read us verses 36 to 38?

- What does Peter promise to Jesus? (*he says he will do anything to follow Jesus; he claims that he will even lay down his life, if that's what it takes*)
- Does Jesus believe him? (*no*)
- What does Jesus say Peter will do instead? (*he predicts that before the cock crows – before morning comes the next day – Peter will deny Jesus three times*)

Do you remember the story? Later that night, three different people ask Peter if he is a follower of Jesus. Three times Peter denies it, just as Jesus predicted he would. That part of the story is told in John 18, but to let you know how Peter feels about what he did, let's take a look at St. Luke, who tells us a little more about this story. Turn with me to St. Luke 22.

Could someone please read verses 55 to 62?

- What do you notice in this story? (*three people ask Jesus if he belongs to Jesus' group; three times he insists that he is not; while Peter is still speaking, the cock crows, and Jesus turns and looks at Peter*)
- What happens as Peter denies Jesus the third time? (*Jesus looks at Peter from where he is being detained in the High Priest's house*)
- As Jesus was being interrogated, Peter is out in the courtyard claiming that he never knew Jesus. How must that have felt for Peter as his eyes met the eyes of Jesus? (*terrible, ashamed, humiliated...*)
- What does Peter do after Jesus looks at him? (*he goes out and weeps bitterly*)
- Now here's the important question: What would you guess Peter thinks about his relationship with Jesus? Is he worried that it is over? Is he wondering if Jesus is mad at him? Does he think Jesus will ever forgive him for being untrue to Jesus? (*he has to be concerned that Jesus is disappointed, angry, upset, thinking about getting rid of Peter and replacing him with one of the other disciples...*)

Let's take a look at one more passage, and we'll find out how Jesus deals with Peter. Turn with me to John 21. This takes place a few days later. After Jesus is crucified. After Jesus rises from the dead. After Jesus speaks

with Mary outside the tomb. After Jesus appears to the disciples twice in an upper room in Jerusalem. Finally, he meets the disciples at the sea.

Can someone read verses 15 to 19?

- What is going on here? What is Jesus doing? (*it seems like Jesus is giving Peter a test; he asks three times because he is making sure that Peter is telling the truth; maybe he doubts that Peter really means it*)
- How is Peter reacting to Jesus? Does he seem glad to see him, or irritated that he is asking him over and over if he loves him? (*Peter felt hurt; maybe he thought that Jesus didn't trust him, or didn't believe him*)

Jesus is actually doing something very important here. On Thursday night, Peter got it all wrong. Three times he failed to let others know that he was a follower of Jesus. But now Jesus is giving Peter three chances to get it right. "Do you love me?" "Do you love me?" "Do you love me?"

Now three times Peter provides the same answer. Three times he calls Jesus "Lord." Three times he declares, "You know that I love you."

Look at how Jesus responds to him. Each time Peter declares his love for Jesus, Jesus calls him to a life of service. "Feed my lambs." "Tend my sheep." "Feed my sheep." It is as if Jesus is saying, "Take care of my followers. You are their leader now. They will look to you. I love you, Peter, and I trust you with what is most important to me: my followers."

This is the most important moment of Peter's life.

Peter must have wondered if Jesus would even love him any more after what he did. But Jesus loves him and more: he trusts him; he calls him to continue his role as a leader in the church; he loves him.

Jesus' love, in this moment, changes Peter's life. He will never be the same again. From that day on, all he wants to do is feed his Lord's lambs, tend his Lord's sheep, feed his Lord's sheep. We know enough about Peter to know that his leadership probably isn't perfect. There are undoubtedly times when he still messes up. And he probably grows as a leader over time, struggling more early on, and then doing better once he becomes wiser and more experienced.

But the bottom line is this: when Peter realizes how much Jesus loves him, it makes all the difference in the world. He will live the rest of his life responding to that love, and striving to be a servant of God.

* **Introduce John Newton**

That is what happened with Saint Peter – a man that most of you probably all know. I want to tell you about another man, who lived much more recently – someone you may not know. So put your Bibles away for a minute, and let me tell you a story about John Newton, who lived a very interesting life.

(Share this summary of John Newton's life, not necessarily reading this long piece, but highlighting some of the more important aspects of his story.)

John Newton was born in the seventeen hundreds, at the high tide of slavery, yet there was something very different about this man - he experienced amazing grace. Newton had a rough early life. His mother died at an early age, although not without first imprinting on his young mind many important lessons from the Bible. At the age of 11 after abandoning his rudimentary education, Newton headed out to sea with his father. Here he was greatly influenced for the worse. Newton had a reputation for profanity, coarseness, and debauchery which even shocked many sailors.

He was a sailor on a British Man of War. But he hated it, and ran away - only to be captured, publicly flogged, and demoted. Finally at his own request he was pressed into service on a slave ship. He became a servant of a slave trader, he experienced what it was like to trade slaves. Newton got out of that situation and obtained his own ship which he used in the slave trade. It is curious to note that he didn't have conscience enough to bother him about treating others as he had been treated.

On one of his trips, Newton's ship was caught in a furious storm. As he was desperately trying to steer his ship through the storm, he began to think about his life. Old verses covered in cobwebs that he had learned from his mother began to come back to him. One in particular from Proverbs hit him square in the heart with despair.

"Because I have called and you refused... you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you, when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer." [Proverbs 1:24-28]

Newton was convinced that he had been far too wicked for God to even consider forgiving him. Yet in desperation Newton still cried for God's mercy, and he made it through the storm. He started reading the Bible and realized that he had been greatly mistaken. Nobody, not even the most wicked and hard-

hearted slave trader was beyond God's forgiveness. That day was the first day that John Newton experienced grace in its true form.

Newton's life took a radical turn. No longer was he known as the blasphemer who laughed at anything religious, he had become a devoted Bible reader who lived out his convictions with great earnestness. Newton continued in the slave business for a short while although he treated the slaves very humanely, but his marriage and a serious illness turned him from that life pursuit. He studied theology in England. Newton composed many hymns, the most famous, Amazing Grace, was a prayer of deep gratitude poured from his heart to God for having saved his life and his soul.

In his old age he preached to an audience that included William Wilberforce, the man who would make his most profound mark on history by pushing Parliament to outlaw slavery. Newton's letters to Wilberforce encouraged him to act on his moral convictions against slavery. Newton died at the age of eighty two, but before he died, he wrote a short statement to some friends that could perhaps sum up his life. "My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior." This was John Newton, a man who lived in a time of moral disgrace, but experienced such amazing grace that he influenced the global cessation of slavery.

adapted from <http://www.hyperhistory.net>

* Reflecting on the Life and Faith of John Newton

There are some people, whose lives take a dramatic turn, and John Newton is one of them. Think for a moment about the first portion of his life.

- How is he described in this brief biography? (*rough, profane, coarse, involved in debauchery, shocking, indifferent to the plight of slaves*)
- What captures Newton's attention? (*a furious storm at sea caused him to consider the end of his life, and he became afraid of his standing before God; he worried that God might not forgive him*)
- What experience sends Newton's life in a new direction? (*the temptation is to think that it is the storm at sea; but actually, it is his study of the Bible that convinced him of God's love, and motivated him to spend the rest of his life serving God*)
- How does Newton's life change, once he experiences God's love? (*he becomes at peace with God, not worried that God is angry with him; he enters the ministry, and works at encouraging the faith of other people*)
- What do Newton and Saint Peter have in common? (*they both have every reason to worry that God is displeased with them, and are surprised to find that God's love runs deeper than they imagine; once they experience God's love, they are changed, and live in a much different way than before: they are excited to discover how they might live in way that serves God's interests instead of just their own*)

* What does this mean for us?

These two men have interesting stories, don't they? Stories like these are helpful for us as Christians today. We remember them, not just because they are fun to listen to, and not just because we are supposed to know something about history. But we remember them to learn. So there are two questions I want to ask you about these stories: what do they teach us about God, and what do they teach us about ourselves. What do you think?

- What do these two stories teach us about God? (*that God is a God of love; that God makes new beginnings in people's lives; that there is no limit to God's forgiveness; that when people experience God's love it can change them; that God wants to make a difference in how we live; that God is pleased when we live in faithful ways...*)
- What do these two stories teach us about ourselves? (*sometimes it is hard to believe that anyone loves us; even when others might not love us, God does; when we experience love, we naturally respond by trying to please the one who loves us; love makes us feel different about ourselves – and about the person who loves us; love can give us the motivation or the capacity to love other people*)
- What do these stories teach us about love? (*the kind of love we're talking about is not a feeling, it is a decision – God decides to love us; love is not just a noun, it is also a verb – it is something that God does – something that we can do too; love has an impact on people – it changes them; love is not diminished or used up when it is shared – it is multiplied*)

* Group Covenant

One of our jobs as a small group is to help each other connect with these daily themes. We do that by studying together, like we're doing now. But we can also do that by living out these lessons when we're together.

- How might we express unconditional acceptance in our small group this week? What could we do to make sure that every group member is loved and accepted by the rest of the group? (*we could set*

rules for our group that help us honor each other: no interrupting, no laughing at someone's comments, no showing up late; no leaving early; everyone participates; everyone brings a Bible and a Morning Watch booklet...) Some groups make a covenant with each other, and I'd like us to do that today. Inside the front cover of your Morning Watch booklet, you will see a page where we can record what our group covenant is. Which of the ideas we just mentioned do we want to commit ourselves to follow? Let's decide on that, and each of us write down our group covenant inside the cover of the booklet.

- How will we be vehicles of God's love for each other throughout the course of this week? (*we can notice when someone is down, and be kind to them; we can establish a group practice of greeting each other with a hand-shake or fist-bump, and saying "God loves you" or "the peace of the Lord" or "peace out" or let the group come up with a special phrase that they think is cool and is suggestive of God's love; we can take time to share "highs and lows" with each other at least once every day...*)

* **Servant Wrist Bands**

Today's theme is: "A Servant Is... Loved." One thing we want each of you to take away from this day, is that you are loved.

Did you know that when each of you were baptized, God spoke your name? The words may have come out of the mouth of your Pastor, or whoever baptized you, but it was God who was speaking. Water was poured over your head, and some form of these words were spoken: " (name of one camper present) , I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." And then the sign of the cross was made on your forehead. (*Go to each camper, make the sign of the cross on their forehead, and say, "Child of God, you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the sign of the cross forever."*) This is one of the ways that God says to each one of us, "I love you." Even in those moments when you wonder if anyone else loves you, God loves you. Fully. Unconditionally. Eternally.

Peter realized how much God loved him when Jesus forgave him for his denials. John Newton realized how much God loved him when his time of Bible study taught him that there was no end to God's forgiveness. And each of you: I want you to know that God loves you too.

So I have a gift I want to give to you today. I have two wristbands for each of you. I'd like you to place one around your right wrist and one around your left wrist. And I want you to wear these wristbands all day long for the next day or so. Every time you look at you wrist bands, I want you to remember that God loves you. And every time you see wrist bands on someone else, I want you to remember that God loves that person too.

* **Closing Prayer**

We thank you, God, that you have loved us so deeply and so fully. Help us to live every day, mindful of your love. Allow your love to touch our hearts and shape our lives. And strengthened by your love, give us a heart to serve you always. May our every word, our every action, our every thought, our every desire be an effort to offer ourselves in service of others, in gratitude for all that you have done for us. Be with us this week, God, as we consider what it means to live in this world as a servant. Bless us and watch over us, as we explore what it might mean for us to live our entire lives for you. We pray this in the name on the One who gave everything to serve us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

E. ADDITIONAL STUDY IDEAS

* There are a variety of Biblical characters whose lives are transformed by God's love, and who respond by serving God, including:

- **King David**, forgiven by God for adultery and murder, goes on to be Israel's greatest king (2nd Samuel 11 & 12)
- **Simon's Mother-in-law**, healed by Jesus, immediately gets up and begins to serve everyone in her house (St. Mark 1:29-31)
- **A Leper**, cleansed, begins to proclaim it to everyone (St. Mark 1:40-45)
- **The Gerasene Demoniac**, Jesus casts out his demons, and he goes around telling everybody about Jesus (St. Mark 5:1-20 or St. Luke 8:26-39)
- **The Paralyzed Man** who is let down through the roof and is healed by Jesus leaves, "glorifying God" (St. Luke 5:17-25)
- **Levi** leaves his tax booth, follows Jesus, and gives a great banquet for him (St. Luke 5:27-29)
- **Zacchaeus** meets Jesus, then gives half of his possessions to the poor, and repays those whom he had cheated (St. Luke 19:1-10)

- **Nicodemus** is afraid to be seen with Jesus, but eventually becomes brave enough to ask Pilate for Jesus' body so it can be properly buried (St. John 3:1-13 and St. John 19:38-42)
- **The Woman at the Well** tells everyone, "Come and see..." (St. John 4:7-30)
- **The Man Lame from Birth** is healed by Peter, and then praises God (Acts 3:1-8)
- **The Apostle Paul** persecutes the church; but after meeting Jesus, he promotes it (Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-20)

* There are also a variety of current-day and historical characters whose lives are transformed by God's love, and who respond by serving God, including:

- **Augustine of Hippo** – the fourth century man who followed his father's pagan ways during the early years of his life (resisting his mother's pleas that he become a Christian), but who eventually converted to Christianity, served as a bishop, and became one of the most important leaders in the development of Christianity.
- **Michael Oher** – the real-life All American football star portrayed by Quinton Aaron in the Warner Bros. movie "The Blind Side," who was transformed by the love of a family (especially the mother) who adopted him from the streets, and helped him develop as a football player and a human being.
- **Richie Furay** (www.richiefuray.com) is the only Colorado resident who is a member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. He spent years completely consumed with making a name in the rock world, but a fellow musician turned him on to Christ, and he has spent the rest of his life sharing the Gospel through his music and his pastoral ministry in Broomfield / Boulder.
- **Kirk Cameron** – former star of "Growing Pains," had everything most people want: fame, money, looks, and success. None of that compared to the joy he later found in knowing Christ, being forgiven, and being in a right relationship with God.
- **Other** – perhaps you know of other people whose stories might inspire campers.

To keep the study alive throughout the summer, the Bible study leader may want to consider one or two of these additional stories, do some personal research about what happened in that person's life, and talk with campers about what can be learned from them, in addition to what we can learn from the stories of Saint Peter and John Newton

F. IDEAS TO INCORPORATE THEME THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- * Wrist bands are distributed during Bible study on day one. Each participant receives two – one for each wrist, and they are asked to wear them day and night. A second wrist band is given to each camper at evening worship on Monday. A third wrist band is distributed in the cabins during evening devotions (or, if the counselor prefers, placed on the campers' pillows when they go to the shower house to clean up for bed). A fourth wrist band is at each table setting for breakfast on Tuesday. A fifth wrist band is included in the hike lunch, and given to the hikers as they stop to eat. By Tuesday evening, every camper and staff member is wearing five wrist bands.
- * Groups might consider meeting with another group and comparing group covenants. What ideas can we share with each other that might help us to do a better job of making sure that every group member experiences God's love this week at camp? What can we do to be the presence of God to one another?
- * One of the most painful aspects of life for many early teens is being mistreated by classmates and neighbors. Perhaps your group might want to develop a system with which they can help each other not do to this. Maybe every time you are tempted to do so, you make the sign of the cross on your forehead instead. Maybe you find another group member and say, "Help me." and the other responds, "God loves you." Maybe, in the evening, you admit to how many times you were tempted (and how many times you fell to temptation), and then have confession and forgiveness.

G. OTHER SONGS, STORIES THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

* Songs

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Pass It On | • The Rock |
| • Fill My Cup | • Awesome God |
| • Lord I Lift Your Name on High | • Shout to the Lord |
| • Psalm 27 | • Jesus, Lover of My Soul |
| • Psalm 121 | • Give Thanks |
| • Breathe | • Psalm 25 |
| • The Wonderful Cross | • Great Is He |

* Stories

- Ragman (Walt Wangerin)

* Suggestions

- Play a game of “Compliment” to experience what it means to be loved and appreciated. Put a chair in the middle and let the group form a circle around it. Take turns of letting each person sit on the chair. When they sit on the chair, each person in the circle must say something that they admire in that person. When each person has said something, the next person gets to sit on the chair and the process continues.
- Play a game of “Truth, Truth, Lie” to get to know (and appreciate) one another a bit better. Each person has to tell at least one lie and two truths about him or herself. Then the group has to guess which statement is a lie.
- Make a poster with illustrations of people experiencing God’s love (through Bible study, acts of compassion, baptism, communion...). Request permission to display your poster(s) in the dining hall.

H. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY DOWN FOR JUNIORS

* How big is God’s love? Tell your campers that God’s love is bigger than anything, and can’t be contained. Blow up a balloon as you speak. Say a few words, and then give two or three puffs into the balloon. Have plenty ready to say about God’s love – you will be surprised at how big a balloon can become before it breaks. Continue to blow up the balloon until it bursts in your face – this usually produces a fairly strong reaction from young campers. Then remind them that God’s love us so big, that nothing can contain it.

I. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY UP FOR SR HIGHS

* We have talked about Peter’s conversation with Jesus at the Sea of Tiberius as being one of the most important moments of his life – perhaps the most important moment. It is when he experiences the depths of God’s love most profoundly. But there is an even deeper level of what is going on here that we haven’t addressed yet. In this passage, Jesus is giving Peter three chances to get it right. ”Do you love me?” ”Do you love me?” ”Do you love me?” In the chart below you will see a summary of their conversation in English, and in the original Greek language of the New Testament.

Σίμων □ωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με πλέον τούτων; κύριε, σ□ ο□□δας □τι φιλω □ σε. βόσκει τ□ □ρνία μου.	Jesus: “Simon Peter, do you love me more than these?” Peter: “Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus: “Feed my lambs.”
Σίμων □ωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με; κύριε, σ□ ο□□δας □τι φιλω □ σε. ποίμαινε τ□ πρόβατα μου.	Jesus: “Simon Peter, do you love me?” Peter: “Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus: “Tend my sheep.”
Σίμων □ωάννου, φιλεῖς με; κύριε... σ□ γινώσκεις □τι φιλω □ σε. βόσκει τ□ πρόβατα μου.	Jesus: “Simon Peter, do you love me?” Peter: “Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus: “Feed my sheep.”

Three times Peter provides the same answer. Three times he calls Jesus “Lord.” Three times he declares, “Lord, you know that I love you.” But in the box above, take a close look at the Greek. Do you notice a difference? The highlighted words are the words St. John uses for love. In the Greek language there are three different words for love: agape, phileo and eros. Eros is romantic love; that word isn’t used here. Phileo is the kind of love that two close friends enjoy. It is the root of our English words philosophy (the love of wisdom), Philadelphia (the love of a brother) and philanthropy (the love of people). But agape is a much stronger word for love. It is passionate love. It is love that overcomes all barriers. It is love that stops at nothing, to be there for the beloved. Twice, Jesus asks Peter if his love is of this stronger nature (agape). Twice, Peter responds by saying he loves Jesus like a dear friend (phileo). Finally, Jesus backs it down a step and asks Peter if he loves him like a dear friend. In this third and final series, Peter’s response matches Jesus’ question for the first time.

- Why does Peter answer with a different word than Jesus uses the first two times? (*he is uncomfortable with the stronger word for love; he is distracted and doesn’t really understand what Jesus is asking of him; he is just a dumb fisherman and doesn’t know any better; John just wasn’t paying attention when he wrote the story down...*)
- Why does Jesus finally use the milder word? (*he is lowering his expectations to meet Peter’s limited capacity; he is fully accepting Peter just as he is, and tailoring his call to Peter so that it matches his ability*)
- Does Jesus’ attempt to adjust his call to Peter demonstrate an even deeper love? An even stronger grace? Would this cause Peter to respond in an even stronger way? (*quite possibly, yes*)

- * Incarnation is a key theological term. It means to have something take bodily form. The birth of Jesus is referred to as “The Incarnation” – in other words, God taking bodily form. We have an incarnational faith. God often moves in our lives, embodied in the words or actions of other people.
 - When has God moved through me to share love with someone else? (*invite campers to share*)
 - When has God loved me through someone else’s words or actions? (*invite campers to share*)
 - What is the difference between when someone loves another person and when God loves another person through someone? Or is there a difference? Is all love initially a gift from God? Or does some of it originate in our own will? (*there are no obvious or “right or wrong” answers here – invite the campers to have some conversation*)

- * What must I do to be saved? This is a question that Christians have asked for years. Have your small group write out their understanding of how someone becomes right with God. Let them brainstorm for a time (no answer is “wrong” in brainstorming) before you begin evaluating their suggestions. Stress that any statement reading, “In order to be saved, you must first…” puts all the focus on our response. Truth is, we can’t save ourselves. The harder we try, the farther we fall from being sure that we’ve made it (because it depends on our efforts, and our efforts are always flawed). The only true experience of salvation comes when we receive it as a gift from God. Gerhard Forde (Professor of Systematics, Luther Seminary) used to ask two questions of his students. The first question is: “What do you need to do to be saved?” (*The only correct answer to this question was “Nothing. There is nothing you can do to be saved.”*) The second, equally important, question was: “Now that you know you don’t have to do anything, what are you going to do?” Help your campers to realize that our lives of service are not what save us. Our lives of service are a response to the amazing, free, transforming gift of being put right by God through Jesus Christ. We are put right with God because God loves us, not because we earned it. That’s what is so amazing about grace.

J. PARENT DEVOTIONAL

- * Scripture
St. John 21:15-19

- * Reflection
Today’s study sets the stage for the week to come. The theme for the day is: “A Servant is… Loved.” When someone experiences the depth of God’s love, it is a life-changing experience. God’s love is so deep, so unconditional, so freely given, that it touches and changes the heart of the one who receives it. Saint Peter, who denied Jesus three times, experienced this after the resurrection when Jesus continued to be glad to have him as leader in the early church. Theologian and composer John Newton experienced this when he learned that God was willing to forgive his slave-trading past. And we experience it when we realize that God loves us no matter what. Even in those moments when we wonder if anyone else loves us, God loves us. Fully. Unconditionally. Eternally.

- * Family Activity
Tell each child in your household the story of their baptism. How old were they? Where did it take place? Who presided? Who was there with you? What special family activities took place that weekend? Then remind each child that all this took place so that they could be reminded of how much God loves them.

- * Servant Activity
Think of a family friend or acquaintance who is in a time of need. Perhaps there has been the loss of a job, or an illness, or a divorce, or a death in the family. As a family, do something to remind that person that they are loved. Bring them some freshly baked cookies. Send them a card. Offer to have them over for a meal, or to meet them at a coffee shop for conversation. Help to take care of a chore or a maintenance need in their home. Accompany your effort with a note that says, “We love you, and are thinking of you.”

- * Closing prayer
God, we thank you that you have loved us so deeply, so profoundly, so graciously. Help us to always remember this. And help us to thank you for your love, by sharing it with others in our lives. Amen.

2010 BIBLE STUDY

Loved to Serve, Serve to Love

DAY 2 – A SERVANT IS AWARE

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

When we are born our awareness is solely limited to self. Any awareness that I have of others is limited to and understood in terms of how it affects and relates to me. As far as I am concerned, the whole world is *there only for me, my needs, and my desires*.

- when I am hungry – I cry until someone comes and feeds me
- when I am tired - I cry until someone rocks me or puts me to bed
- when I am messy – I cry until someone comes and changes me
- when I am frightened – I cry until someone comes and comforts me
- when I am lonely – I cry until someone comes and pays attention to me

When I am born, its all about me and the whole world exists for me.

The first thing that my parents teach me is "I am loved" [day 1]. The second thing they teach me is "no" - it's not all about me. I can't have it my way all the time. We live in community, with others, and the needs of others or the community itself take precedence at times. So they begin to teach me about being aware of others.

But awareness of others is not an easy thing to learn. Both nature and nurture work against this process. Many areas of the brain alter dramatically during adolescence. One area in development well beyond the teenage years is the medial prefrontal cortex, a large region at the front of the brain associated with higher-level thinking, empathy, guilt and understanding other people's situations and motivations. Scientists have now found that, when making decisions about what action to take [awareness of others], the medial prefrontal cortex is under-used by teenagers. Instead, a posterior area of the brain, involved in perceiving and imagining actions, takes over.

In addition, teenagers are dealing with massive hormonal shifts. Their bodies are changing. Emotions are raging. It is difficult enough for them to figure out themselves, let alone be aware of others and figure out what others are going through. These changes do not happen gradually and steadily between the ages of 0–18. They come on in great spurts and puberty is one of the most dramatic developmental stages that a person goes through.

At the same time our culture is trying to convince us that it is "all about me" as life is defined in terms of winners and losers.

- Advertising:
 - Burger King - "have it your way"
 - "Snickers really satisfies me"
 - Visa - "It's everywhere you want to be"
 - Microsoft - "Where do you want to ?"
- Music:
 - Nickelback - *Rockstar*
 - Toby Keith - *I Want to Talk about Me*
- Movies:
 - Cars
 - Doc Holliday
- TV:
 - Survivor
 - American Idol
- Peer pressure: it's all about being:
 - cool
 - popular
 - number one
- Sports - winning is everything at all costs

So as we enter this topic of being aware of others, we are entering an uphill battle that is counter-cultural. Our tools for battle include:

- the life of Christ
- the gospel
- the witness of saints - past and present.

B. OBJECTIVES FOR THIS DAY OF THE STUDY

To encourage the campers:

- to step outside themselves and be other-focused
- to have and show knowledge, understanding, realization and perception of those around them
- to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of, and attentive to the needs of others

And in so doing:

- take time for others
- care about others
- desire to see others succeed
- want others at their best
- empower others

C. MORNING WATCH

Read the story of Mona and then reflect and answer the questions following questions.

Mona's Story by E.R.Glover

"How about her for the clumsiest girl? There must be a category for that!"

I don't know who said it, but we all looked at the girl who was walking toward the lunch area.

"She isn't that bad!" I offered.

"Well, Tim, she sure won't make the most graceful girl in the class," the first voice continued.

Someone else added, "Or even 288th out of 300!"

Mona - that was her name - couldn't have heard the remarks, but it almost seemed as if she had. Or maybe our thoughts showed on our faces. Anyway, just as she got in front of us, Mona glanced our way and gave a sort of shy smile.

She had just murmured, "Hi," when her books began to slip. For one crazy second she juggled all her stuff in midair. And then they fell - purse, books and papers - bouncing and skittering all over the cement at our feet.

Somebody laughed. Mon's face got red, and she dropped to her knees and began to gather up her belongings. It looked like her fingers trembled, and I began to feel a little sorry for the poor kid and wished she'd hurry and get out of there.

But when she was on her feet again, her face shiny with perspiration, her hair a mess, and her papers a jumble, a mocking voice stopped her as she turned to leave. It was Josh, athletic, popular Josh, sure to be voted the best looking guy in school. "Hey," he drawled, "you missed one." And his toe, in its big Reebok, nudged a sheet of notebook paper that had floated under the table where he and 11 other kids sat.

The paper had sums figured neatly all over it. There was silence, I mean total silence, as we watched to see what Mona would do.

I think a few of us, me included, felt sort of ashamed by this time. But not enough to say, "Knock it off, Josh!" [As I said, Josh is popular. Very popular. Big too.] Nobody offered to help, not even so much as to give the paper a shove, although 24 feet were planted beside it. Then someone deliberately put a foot down, smack on the paper. Mona hesitated, obviously wondering whether to forget the paper, turn and run, or crawl in humiliation under the legs of the guys and girls at the table to get it. As we all sat, sort of dumb like, wondering how she would get herself out of the miserable situation, a movement at a nearby table caught our attention.

Without saying a word, Brittany Kimber slid off the bench, walked across the lunch area, got down on her knees, bent her gorgeous head, and crawled under the table.

Everyone froze. We sat there like statues. Mona's face was white by this time and looking sort of sick, like she might cry at any moment. Josh's mouth was hanging open in a funny way. A ring of gawking faces circled each table. Brittany [did I say she was gorgeous?], popular Brittany - always dressed great and looking terrific - hunched under the table surrounded by shoes of all sizes and shapes [and smelly, no doubt]. Her hair fell across her gorgeous eyes and she reached for that silly paper.

No one moved. No one blinked an eye as Brittany backed out, got to her feet, walked over and tucked the paper into the stuff in Mona's arms. Mona mumbled, "Thank you," and scurried away. Brittany walked back to her table, slid into place, picked up an apple and took a bite. *Crunch!* It sounded like Mount Vesuvius blew its top.

I guess that broke the spell. Suddenly lots of chatter and noise broke out, and with a lot of shoving and joking we trooped back to class, and the day went ahead as usual.

Questions for reflection:

1. How did you feel about the story?
2. What was Mona's feeling/ awareness?
3. What was Jim's awareness/focus?
4. What was Josh's awareness/focus?
5. What was Brittany's awareness/focus?
6. What do you think motivated Brittany?
7. What kept Tim from helping Mona?
8. What would any of the kids watching this scene have to lose if they tried to intervene in what Josh was doing?
9. What would you have done if you were there?
10. Which character do you most relate to in the story?
11. What does this story say to you?

D. SCRIPTURE STUDY

Context

This is the second day of Bible Study - Hike Day. Bible Study is in the evening. What effect does that have on the study? Some possibilities:

- campers may be tired from the hike and energy levels will probably be low
 - campers may be looking past the study to the rest of the evening plans
 - campers are still getting to know you and each other - still forming impressions
 - trust has not yet been established
 - campers are questioning:
 - if the study is a safe place to be involved
 - if the study is going to be interesting, relevant, and worth their time
 - if you as leader know and believe what you are teaching
 - if you as leader have control of the study and the group
- as a result, they will probably be cautious to get involved or, if involved, involved on a deep level

SOOOOO...be ready, be prepared, be engaged. Make sure that you spend your own time in prayer (as short as that time may be) asking for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Setting

THIS IS IMPORTANT. Gather campers into a **close** circle so that you can have good eye contact with each one of them and so that you can touch them on a foot or arm to bring them back into the study. Physically mirror the "intimacy" that you hope to create over the next days. Also, eliminate distractions.

Prayer

Rather than asking for a volunteer for opening with prayer, ask one of the campers to pray for the whole group. If you ask a different camper to pray at the beginning and end of each study you will be able to have everyone pray at least once during the week. If the camper asked says he/she doesn't know what to pray for, use that as an opportunity to teach how to pray.

Scripture Luke 10:25-37 Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Study

Say: **To start our study today, I want everyone to close their eyes. Eyes closed? OK, when I call your name, I want you to describe to us what you are wearing. Understand what we are doing? OK, let's start with _____ . Describe to us what you are wearing right now, and be specific because the rest of the group has their eyes closed, so give us colors, shapes, logos, designs, and so on.** [Help them be specific and make sure the rest keep their eyes closed during this exercise. After each person is finished with their description, you can invite the rest of the group to ask any specific questions, ie. "is your shirt dark blue or light blue?"

After everyone has described what they are wearing, then say: **Now we are going to mix it up. Still with your eyes closed, I will ask you to describe what someone else in our group is wearing. OK, let's start with _____ , what is _____ wearing?** [Again, help them be specific]

After you have gone around the group continue with: **OK, open your eyes. Look at the person you described. How did you do? Were you even close?** Solicit brief reflection and conversation.

Then say: **Today our focus is being AWARE of others. A servant is aware of those around him or her. So, what does it mean to you to be aware of others? Give me some definitions.** You are looking for something like:

- other focused...
- to have and show knowledge, understanding, realization and perception of those around...
- to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of, and attentive to the needs of others...

Say: **If that is our definition, what did this exercise tell us about our awareness of others?** Solicit answers

Continue: **So why do you think you are aware, or, why do you think you are not aware of those around you?** Solicit answers. Aware - it's important to me to be aware. Not aware - it's not important to me to be aware.

Say: **Let's keep going and go deeper. What really gets in the way of us/of you not being aware, or focused on others, or noticing them?** Solicit answers. Looking for: They are not really important to me. I'm more concerned about myself than I am about others.

If no one gives those then say: **Could it be that there are a lot of people who are just not important enough to us to be aware of? Or, could it be that we can be so concerned and so focused on ourselves, that we just don't, or feel we can't be focused on others?**

In the story of Mona in the morning watch this morning, which person did you relate to the most? Those of you who relate:

- with Jim, the story teller - sit over here
- with Mona - sit over here
- with Josh - sit over here
- with Brittany - sit over here

Why are you sitting where you are sitting? Why do you relate with that particular person? Solicit answers

Which person did you wish to be like? Why? What keeps you from being like that person?

Turn to Luke 10:25-37 and let's read the story of the Good Samaritan. Have them take turns reading so that they stay involved.

After reading: **Who are the characters in the parable itself?** Beaten man, priest, Levite, Samaritan, inn keeper.

_____ you are the beaten man what is your awareness? - I am beaten and desperately in need of some-

one's help

_____ you are the priest what is your awareness? - I am aware of the beaten man's needs

_____ you are the Levite what is your awareness? - I am aware of the beaten man's needs

_____ you are the Samaritan what is your awareness? - I am aware of the beaten man's needs

_____ you are the innkeeper what is your awareness? - I am aware of the beaten man's needs and the Samaritan who helped him

As your character, where did your awareness/focus lead you?

- **beaten man** - to those passing by and hoping for help from them
- **priest** - passed by on the other side [away from the man - I didn't want to get involved]
- **Levite** - passed by on the other side [away from the man - I didn't want to get involved]
- **Samaritan** - helped him [toward the man - I wanted to get involved]
- **innkeeper** - took care of the beaten man at my inn [toward the man - willing to get involved]

Why does Jesus tell this story? Wait for a moment. **The answer is in verse 27.** _____ **read it for us again. The way we love God is to love others. And by definition to love others, means that we first are aware and focused on them.**

If we think back to yesterday's study, we remember that God loves us Fully. Unconditionally. Eternally. God, aware of what was going on in our lives, became totally focused on us and became one of us in Jesus, who lived and died and rose for us. And the wristbands that you are wearing, remind you of that amazing grace and love. God loves you fully, unconditionally, and eternally. And as you feel and experience that love, as God's love fills you up, it spills over into the lives of others. And you begin to focus on others and become aware of their need, you as you have been loved by God. Unconditionally. Fully.

So, what does that look like in everyday life? Solicit answers:

- Brittany, aware of Mona, stands up to the crowd for her
- seeing others as Jesus sees them - loved unconditionally, fully, and eternally
- taking time for others
- caring about others
- desiring to see others succeed
- wanting others at their best
- empowering others
- encouraging others

Is that easy? Solicit answers.

You're right. It's not always easy focusing on others and being aware of them. It takes work. It takes time. It means life is not only about you. It takes compassion and courage and dedication - things that we will be talking about the rest of the week.

But in the mean time, here are a couple of things to help us.

First: To help us encourage each other to love others as we have been loved by God, we are going to change the emphasis of the wristbands. For the first two days of camp the wristbands have reminded us of God's love for us. Tonight and for the rest of the week here at camp, the wristbands are going to be ways we focus on others and encourage each other to love as God loves us.

Each time we notices an act of loving service, we will honor it by presenting the individual with one of our wrist bands.

For instance, earlier today I noticed that _____ did _____ to/for _____. He/she may not even have been aware of it at the time, but you were focused on him/her and your awareness of his/her need led you into an act of love, and act of service. I believe that you performed that act of love because of God's love in your life. You have experienced God's love, and it spilled into his/her life by your action. And so I acknowledge your act of awareness by presenting one of my wrist bands to you. I want you to wear it, until you see someone, aware of someone else, perform an act of loving service for them. When that happens, take that person aside, and share your bracelet with them.

Have any of you noticed someone else in our group who has performed an act of loving service? If you have, would you like to acknowledge it with one of your wristbands? Let campers do that.

Again, we'll be doing this for the rest of the week, as a way of acknowledging the love of God that spills through us. It will be a reminder that when our hearts are transformed by God's love, serving is not just something we do once in a while, like when our youth group gets together for a service project. But it is something we do day after day, at school, at home, in our neighborhoods, at the mall, on the ball field, wherever we are.

And the second thing to help us is this bookmark. Pass out a bookmark to the campers and say: **It lists some other ways to help be aware of others and focused on them.** Read them together if time allows.

Tips On Being Other Focused

- *Listen and ask questions.* When in conversation with others, spend as much time listening and asking questions of them as you do talking. Notice the urge to jump in with your own story and instead re-focus on what the other is saying.
- *Question your motives.* When you are about to share a story or complain about a situation, ask yourself "why?" – is it for their benefit or yours? Is it to receive attention, vent, or to add something useful to the conversation. Is it appropriate at the time or not?
- *Diminish drama.* Look at problems and difficult situations from various perspectives. Instead of viewing a problem as a catastrophe, look at it in relation to everything else in your life and in the world. Can it be viewed from a humorous or lighthearted perspective? Also, look at problems and difficult situations as opportunities in which God can teach and grow you. Resolve problems, not only by sharing them with others but also with God for a change.
- *Practice empathy.* When upset with another person, instead of judging them and telling others about the situation, be empathetic by imagining what the situation looks and feels like from the other's viewpoint. Look at them through the eyes and love of Jesus.
- *Bring awareness outside yourself.* Notice what is going on with others in the world. Show interest in friends, family and classmates. Think of how you can be of service to others. Volunteer to worthy causes. Feel gratitude for everything that is in your life by giving thanks to God for the source of food, utilities, clothes, and so on – where they come from, how they get to you, how many others are involved in contributing to the creation and process of bringing these useful items into your life.
- *Pray for others.* Focus on others and pray for the things that will make their life better.

Any last thoughts or concerns?

Let's close with prayer. _____ **please close us with prayer.**

E. ADDITIONAL STUDY IDEAS

Another angle would be the story of Joseph and Mary from Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Who are the characters?

- Mary
- Joseph
- angel/God

What is their awareness?

- Mary - she is pregnant, it is not Joseph's child, she could be stoned for adultery, why would Joseph believe her?
- Joseph - it is not his child, Mary has had an affair, if he stays with her it means that he had premarital sex with her [not acceptable in his day] and he is scorned, if he publicly pleads his case she is guilty of adultery and she can be stoned, his best option for the both of them is to quietly dismiss her
- angel/God - if Joseph dismisses her Jesus' status is up for grabs

Lessons?

- our awareness of others leads us to focus on them [Joseph and Mary]
- our awareness needs to be directed and shaped by God [Joseph]
- our awareness can be uncomfortable for us [Joseph and Mary]

F. IDEAS TO INCORPORATE THEME THROUGHOUT THE DAY

It's hike day so we can be more publicly aware of how people are doing. [Especially on Eagle]

- "How's everyone doing?"
- Encouraging those who are sharing backpacks to be more conscious of sharing the carrying

Table tents at dinner that encourage sharing. Possible questions could be:

- How was your hike?
- What was the best part of it?
- What was the worst part of it?
- If on Eagle: Did you make the top? How did you feel about that?
- What are some of the ways that you experienced the support of others?
- What are some of the ways that you supported others?

All camp: back rubs, foot rubs:

Pass out wristbands

- on the plates at breakfast as reminders of God's love
- passed out during lunch on hike as reminders of God's love
- staff has extra wristbands to pass out after Bible Study as acknowledgement of campers doing acts of loving service

G. OTHER SONGS, STORIES THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Songs:

- *They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love*
- *Those Who Wait On the Lord* [verse 2]
- *Friends*
- *Fill My Cup*
- *There's a Place*
- *Here I Am*
- *Walkin' In the Light*
- *Messiah*
- *Love Round*
- *I Love You*
- *Casual Christian*
- *Because You Are*

Additional Scripture:

- Philippians 2:4
- James 2:14-26

H. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY DOWN FOR JUNIORS* Ideas to try with Junior Age (4-6 grade)

To help the younger campers understand what it means to focus on others, the study leader could ask the campers, "What's going on in the life of your parents? What kinds of things are they worried about? What things are they always talking about?" And then the leader can help them pray for those particular things.

I. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY UP FOR SR HIGHS * Ideas to try with Sr High (9-12 grade)

This group could do more in depth conversation about the difficulty and the risks of being other focused.

- Why do I hesitate being other focused?
 - Rejection?
 - Misunderstood?
 - I am hurting too much myself to focus on the issues and needs of others.

- I have been hurt when I did it before, so I am not going to go there again.

K. PARENT DEVOTIONAL

One of the things that you have been teaching your child is to be aware of those around them - to be "other" focused and not always "self" focused. Unfortunately, there are a number of things working against you.

- the culture that proclaims that it is "all about me"
- their dealing with massive hormonal shifts
- their bodies are changing
- emotions are raging
- it is difficult enough for them to figure out themselves, let alone be aware of others and figure out what others are going through.

Today's study seeks to encourage and help your child to understand that because God loves us and is focused on us, we can in turn begin to focus on others and love them as God loves us. Today's specific goals for your child are to encourage him/her:

- to step outside him/herself and be other-focused
- to have and show knowledge, understanding, realization and perception of those around him/her
- to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of, and attentive to the needs of others

And in so doing:

- take time for others
- care about others
- desire to see others succeed
- want others at their best
- empower others

Because we learn best through modeling it is important for you to display this in your family life, as difficult as that might be with all the demands of time and energy of contemporary life. So we encourage you to do the same. One specific way to accomplish that would be to daily [mealtime?] pray for each other. Ask your child for what he/she would like you to pray for him/her. And then pray together. Then share with your child what you would like him/her to pray for in your life, and then let him/her pray for you.

2010 BIBLE STUDY

Loved to Serve, Serve to Love

DAY 3: A SERVANT IS COURAGEOUS

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

Being “other-centered” is certainly not an easy thing for anyone to do perhaps especially a young person who is constantly bombarded with external messages that suggest they should be #1...on top...the best...the most important...the most beautiful...and the most successful. Sometimes to achieve such self-importance one has to climb over others and ignore the needs of people who are hurting. While many people are able to do this in good conscience, a Christian cannot. If we follow the example of Jesus we will learn to live a servant life that focuses on the needs of others.

It takes courage to put others before oneself and to serve others rather than satisfy only one’s own selfish desires. Self preservation is part of our human nature. Kathleen Fischer suggests that: “Courage enables us to brave dangers and move through obstacles, endure suffering or lift ourselves out of it. It may benefit self, or save another from peril or even death. Although we admire physical courage – extreme sports, athletic feats, daring adventures—what we most want for ourselves is that quality of spirit called moral courage, the virtue by which we act with integrity in spite of fear. Moral courage reveals us at our best, and it calls to those depths in us desirous of such graced humanity.”

The word courage means the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc. without fear; bravery. Another definition for courage: having the courage of one's convictions to act in accordance with ones beliefs, especially in spite of criticism.

Courage takes the ability to be vulnerable. It must seem odd to you to begin a study on courage with a term that connotes weakness. But courage isn’t the absence of fear. David, when facing the giant Goliath, was most likely shaking in his sandals. Moses probably stuttered profusely when he faced the Pharaoh asking him to let God’s people go. By ourselves we are never impervious or resistant to a threat. Standing up for what is right always includes the risk of failure if we go it alone. For a Christian however, the strength of the holy One stands with us. Even though the odds of David against Goliath or Daniel confronted by the flesh-eating lion were against them, they persevered and prevailed. The probability of failure is real but the guarantee of success for one who walks with God is a promise fulfilled. Not always will a courageous act bring about the success we long for. Sometimes the success comes differently than we imagine. But for those who wait for the Lord, as God promises through the prophet Isaiah, they shall renew their strength; they shall run and not grow weary; they shall walk and not faint. Growth comes through the mistakes we make or the courageous act gone awry.

Interestingly, inside the word courage lies “*cor*,” the Latin designation for heart. A courageous servant honors the commitment they have made to God and lives from conviction, even if they are afraid. Fischer continues: “Each time we refuse to betray our most important values, each time we face down a fear that tell us we cannot do what we must, strength grows.”

I think everyone who is loved must ask themselves “What does love ask of me?” If God loves me, must I not respond in some way with a life that blesses others? Again, such love takes courage.

The Scriptures are teeming with stories of courageous characters whose lives exemplified their faith in God, their love for others and their ability to trust the power of God’s Spirit. I’ve already shared a few with you. Some others might be: Joshua who fought with the Amalekites under Moses, charged Israel to conquer Canaan, conquered Jericho and defeated Ai; or how about Jonah who preached to Nineveh but first, ran from God; or Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice his only Son to please God; or Nathan, who confronted David, his boss, about David’s infidelity; or, the Samaritan Woman at the well who spoke with Jesus and heard from him all the facts about her steamy life; or finally, Stephen, who lost his life for the sake of the Gospel. These stories speak to human failure, vulnerability, love for God and others and ultimately courage born out of both success and defeat.

There are other stories, too, that have touched our lives reminding us that courage is a virtue many possess and many others long for. Martin Luther King, Jr., with courage born out of his faith in God, fought for civil rights and served tirelessly until he died, for the freedom and respect of African American people.

Also, Archbishop Oscar Romero witnessed ongoing violations of human rights against the people of El Salvador. Romero initiated and gave his status to a group which spoke out on behalf of the poor and the victims of the Salvadoran civil war. In many ways Romero was closely associated with Liberation Theology and openly condemned both Marxism and

Capitalism. In 1980, as he finished giving his homily during Mass, Romero was assassinated by a group headed by former major Roberto D'Aubuisson. He died giving his life for the sake of others.

There are more courageous giants in the faith that have impacted the world by serving to love and to make a difference in the world. Include them in this study if you have personal knowledge of them. In the meantime, however, let's begin by looking at the objectives for this special study and day.

B. OBJECTIVES FOR THIS DAY OF THE STUDY

To help the campers:

- Understand that servant courage involves vulnerability and the possibility of failure
- Understand how powerful Christians can be when they rely on God for courage
- Learn about biblical and contemporary characters who served with courage and succeeded
- Know how difficult it is to be courageous and that God forgives when we fail
- Realize that even the greatest and most courageous biblical characters blundered but were still able to serve God.

C. MORNING WATCH

A Dramatic Reading in two parts on a Courageous Biblical Figure:

Courage that is born out of faith defines many familiar biblical figures. The prophet Jeremiah was one such character. Please do this dramatic presentation in two parts/voices if possible before the campers head off to pray and reflect on Jeremiah's story.

JEREMIAH SPEAKING TO THE CAMPERS: Man, oh man, I had a monumental...I mean gargantuan sense of inadequacy. Mine may be one of the most public, out there, and problematic cases of performance anxiety you will ever see. Here's how things shook out...

GOD: Hey Jeremiah, let me tell you something...before I formed you in your mama's womb, I knew you, and even before you were born, I made you holy...set you apart for some special assignment. While you were hanging out in your mother's belly, I already appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.

JEREMIAH: Hey God, are you sure you have the right person? Are you mistaking me for someone else...someone grown up...someone more confident...someone not so mousey...but courageous? I'm pleading with you God...Oh Lord God...I don't know how to speak, for I'm only a boy. Remember me...I'm in middle school...a bit snotty...I burp and pass gas out loud...I'm hormonal...self-centered...and not very brave. That's me, Jeremiah, remember? I have no gifts for public speaking and yet you are telling me to deliver your word that nobody wants to hear in the first place! This has failure written all over it and besides that, I'm scared to death.

...Can't do it, God...nope...not today, tomorrow or next week. You've got the wrong kid. I'd advise you to get someone else...

GOD: I will be with you, Jeremiah. I'll give you the words you need. It's obvious to me that I believe in you more than you believe in yourself...maybe I even know you better than you know yourself. I see potential, Jeremiah. I see talent written all over you...but I also see fear. I can tell you are afraid to be vulnerable...maybe even afraid you will fail.

JEREMIAH: God, you know I love you. Your word burns in my heart and I want to be a courageous person and serve you. But you know how depressed the people of Israel are. They are gripped by fear...they are hopeless and afraid. They are hurting...I am hurting, too, God.

GOD: I know your pain, Jeremiah. I have heard the cries of my people. On your own you will never have the courage it takes to make a difference in your world. But with my help, you will be able to offer a message to the people...you'll be able to challenge them and also bring them comfort.

JEREMIAH: I'm tuning in to you, God. I guess what I need to learn about courage is that it comes to us...to me...when I need it. I know you are with me and always will be...I guess your grace and power create a sort of highway through situations that appear impassable. It's a little like climbing Eagle or hiking Upper Rainbow. It's because of your strength that I forge ahead...climb, hike, and raft, share my faith...you know, accomplish those kinds of things, too.

Well, I'll do my best being your prophet even if I'm just a kid. I'll be vulnerable...but hey, only because you promise to give me the power, strength and courage to do what you want me to do.

JEREMIAH AGAIN TO THE CAMPERS: Frankly, after being pushed, nudged by God, I soared. I soared and scored and did a really good job honoring God. The words came to me when I needed them and at times I couldn't believe how courageous and eloquent I was. I felt the Spirit of God speaking through me. This is what God told me to say and I said it like a pro: "This is the deal Israel...the promise I am making with the house of Israel. I will put my law within you...I will write it on your hearts and I will be your God...I mean...like always...and your part of the deal is...you will be my people even when you mess up..."

Questions to help you process Jeremiah's story:

1. **When have you been challenged to speak for God or against something you considered wrong?**
2. **How did you handle the situation?**
3. **If you struggle to live your faith in your everyday life, what's the reason for that?**
4. **Can you think of anyone that has lived in the last 100 years that you admire for their courage? Who are they and what did they do to gain your admiration?**
5. **Have you ever experienced a situation like Jeremiah's where God gave you the words, the strength and the courage to speak up for someone or something you believed in?**

C. SCRIPTURE STUDY

*** Your Attitude**

You set the tone for the entire hour of study. By your own energy level and confidence around studying the word you either encourage enthusiasm or discourage it. On a day when courage is the theme, you yourself must be bold and strong in proclaiming the Word and facilitating a good discussion of it. Pray for the Spirit's presence and for the Spirit of Christ to fill you with wisdom to lead this day.

*** The Setting**

You've already spent two days studying the word. You know the importance of picking a place where there are few distractions and where the campers can sit close to each other and to you.

*** Open with Prayer**

Gracious God, we thank you for another day at camp. We sense your presence and your goodness here and are grateful for the safety and Spirit of this place. Be with us this morning and throughout the day. As we study together help us to focus, be honest, listen and respect each other. Give us your wisdom and teach us through the study of your Holy Word about courageous living. Make us bold...make us strong. We pray this in Jesus holy name. Amen.

*** Warming Up**

Use the camper's personal experiences to speak to the issue of courage. Young people are often faced with events that relate to making courageous, bold decisions. Many of them have had an opportunity to either defend their faith or defend another human being who is unjustly tormented by their peers. The campers themselves may have been ostracized or belittled for what they believe or for who they are. There is no doubt they are confronted weekly, sometimes daily, with choices for good or evil...for the sake of self or for the sake of another in need or for the sake of the world.

Take some time to discuss what it means to live courageously. **Use the following quotes to stimulate discussion:**

Courage is imperial. It underlies true achievement. Unless we have moral nerve to live out our convictions, they are of small account. - Anonymous

True courage is to do without witnesses everything that one is capable of doing before the entire world. - Duc de la Rochefoucauld

God will come in at the deepest part of the stream to lend you a hand. - Samuel Rutherford

The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it. Skillful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests. - Epicurus

Physical bravery is an animal instinct; moral bravery is a much higher and truer courage. - Wendell Phillips

Moral courage is a virtue of higher cast and nobler origin than physical. It springs from a consciousness of virtue, and renders a man (woman), in the pursuit or defense of right, superior to the fear of reproach, opposition, or contempt. - Samuel Griswold Goodrich

What's the difference between moral courage and physical courage? Ask the campers if they feel they possess either? How would moral courage manifest itself in the camper's life? How about physical courage? Do the campers know people or historical characters that possessed either or both?

* Introduce the Bible Passage

David and Goliath

One of the best known characters of Bible History is David, who as a lowly shepherd boy, defeated the mighty Philistine warrior Goliath, and then grew up to be King David of Israel - and human ancestor of Jesus Christ.

David was the eighth and youngest son of Jesse, from Bethlehem. He was a strong, healthy lad, apparently with an uncommon characteristic among his people of the time - red hair. He was a Shepherd from an early age, and developed his courage and fighting skills by defending the flocks from the wild animals, including lions and bears, that preyed upon them. The free time that being a shepherd provided also allowed him to develop two other skills, that of music and poetry. David was a warrior, and a writer of psalms.

The incident with Goliath the Philistine is probably one of the most told "Bible stories" of the Old Testament. When the Israelites were at war with the Philistines, the two armies faced each other from opposite hills with the Valley of Elah between them. Every morning for forty days, the mighty Goliath (he may have stood over 9 feet tall) challenged the Israelites for someone to come out and fight him, but none would go out. One day, David, who was actually then too young for the army, arrived with some deliveries for his older brothers. He heard Goliath and immediately volunteered to fight him.

When David explained to King Saul that he had been fighting fierce animals all his life, he convinced the king that he could defeat the Philistine. Perhaps by then the king was willing to try anything to get out of the embarrassing situation, and even if David were not successful the Israelites could always belittle his lack of success with the excuse that David was "just a kid."

After turning down an offer of the king's own armor, which was too big for him, David went down to the creek and got five suitable stones (five, not just one, as any prudent marksman would do when facing a very formidable opponent - although some interpret David's taking five stones in order to be able to fight Goliath's "four brothers" at the same time, the Holy Scriptures plainly state that *only* Goliath, and his armor bearer, stood upon the field of battle; if Goliath did have four brothers there, they obviously weren't much of anything because *all* of the Philistines turned and ran away like cowards after David slew Goliath) for his sling. The rest of the story is famous. He killed Goliath with a single, perfectly-accurate shot, perhaps with a little help from an angel - the stone didn't just rebound off the giant man's thick skull as would naturally be expected, but actually penetrated with the power of a modern high-velocity bullet. Upon seeing their hero defeated, the Philistine army made a disorderly retreat (i.e. they just dropped everything and ran), giving the Israelites then in hot pursuit, the victory. The entire story can be found in 1 Samuel 17:1-58.

The success made David very popular in Israel, and when Saul's erratic and unwise character ruined him as Israel's ruler, the Lord had David appointed king. David's monarchy was of course, planned and decided, long before as part of the human ancestry of Jesus Christ.

Despite all of the many difficulties and shortcomings that David experienced, politically and even in his own family during his reign, David's rule over Israel was a time of great advancement for the nation. Jerusalem was taken from the Canaanites and made the capital, and a vast amount of territory was gained in all directions. He established Israel as a force to be reckoned with in that part of the world. Ultimately, he set the stage for his son Solomon to take Israel to the highest point in its history.

* Digging Deeper and Questions for Reflection

PART I - READ 1 Samuel 17 and the first verses from chapter 18 from The Message

¹⁻³ The Philistines drew up their troops for battle. They deployed them at Socoh in Judah, and set up camp between Socoh and Azekah at Ephes Dammim. Saul and the Israelites came together, camped at Oak Valley, and spread out their troops in battle readiness for the Philistines. The Philistines were on one hill, the Israelites on the opposing hill, with the valley between them.

⁴⁻⁷ A giant nearly ten feet tall stepped out from the Philistine line into the open, Goliath from Gath. He had a bronze helmet on his head and was dressed in armor—126 pounds of it! He wore bronze shin guards and carried a bronze sword. His spear was like a fence rail—the spear tip alone weighed over fifteen pounds. His shield bearer walked ahead of him. ⁸⁻¹⁰ Goliath stood there and called out to the Israelite troops, "Why bother using your whole army? Am I not Philistine enough for you? And you're all committed to Saul, aren't you? So pick your best fighter and pit him against me. If he gets the upper hand

and kills me, the Philistines will all become your slaves. But if I get the upper hand and kill him, you'll all become our slaves and serve us. I challenge the troops of Israel this day. Give me a man. Let us fight it out together!"

¹¹ When Saul and his troops heard the Philistine's challenge, they were terrified and lost all hope.

¹²⁻¹⁵ Enter David. He was the son of Jesse the Ephrathite from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse, the father of eight sons, was himself too old to join Saul's army. Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to war. The names of the three sons who had joined up with Saul were Eliab, the firstborn; next, Abinadab; and third, Shammah. David was the youngest son. While his three oldest brothers went to war with Saul, David went back and forth from attending to Saul to tending his father's sheep in Bethlehem.

¹⁶ Each morning and evening for forty days, Goliath took his stand and made his speech. ¹⁷⁻¹⁹ One day, Jesse told David his son, "Take this sack of cracked wheat and these ten loaves of bread and run them down to your brothers in the camp. And take these ten wedges of cheese to the captain of their division. Check in on your brothers to see whether they are getting along all right, and let me know how they're doing—Saul and your brothers, and all the Israelites in their war with the Philistines in the Oak Valley."

- **Why did they wait forty days to begin the battle?**

SOME COMMENTARY: *Probably for several reasons. Everyone was afraid of Goliath. He seemed invincible. Not even King Saul, the tallest man in Israel, had stepped out to fight. Also, the sides of the valley were very steep. Whoever made the first move would have a strong disadvantage and probably suffer great loss. Both sides were waiting for the other to attack first.*

²⁰⁻²³ David was up at the crack of dawn and, having arranged for someone to tend his flock, took the food and was on his way just as Jesse had directed him. He arrived at the camp just as the army was moving into battle formation, shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines moved into position, facing each other, battle-ready. David left his bundles of food in the care of a sentry, ran to the troops who were deployed, and greeted his brothers. While they were talking together, the Philistine champion, Goliath of Gath, stepped out from the front lines of the Philistines, and gave his usual challenge. David heard him.

²⁴⁻²⁵ The Israelites, to a man, fell back the moment they saw the giant—totally frightened. The talk among the troops was, "Have you ever seen anything like this, this man openly and defiantly challenging Israel? The man who kills the giant will have it made. The king will give him a huge reward, offer his daughter as a bride, and give his entire family a free ride."

Five Smooth Stones

²⁶ David, who was talking to the men standing around him, asked, "What's in it for the man who kills that Philistine and gets rid of this ugly blot on Israel's honor? Who does he think he is, anyway, this uncircumcised Philistine, taunting the armies of God?"

- **How did David respond to Goliath's threats?**
- **How did the Israelite army respond to his threats?**
- **Why were the responses so different?**
- **Imagine being face to face with Goliath—would your response to his presence be like David's or the rest of the Israelite army?**

²⁷ They told him what everyone was saying about what the king would do for the man who killed the Philistine. ²⁸ Eliab, his older brother, heard David fraternizing with the men and lost his temper: "What are you doing here! Why aren't you minding your own business, tending that scrawny flock of sheep? I know what you're up to. You've come down here to see the sights, hoping for a ringside seat at a bloody battle!"

²⁹⁻³⁰ "What is it with you?" replied David. "All I did was ask a question." Ignoring his brother, he turned to someone else, asked the same question, and got the same answer as before.

- **What did David's older brothers think about his attitude?**
- **What was the source of David's confidence?**

³¹ The things David was saying were picked up and reported to Saul. Saul sent for him. ³² "Master," said David, "don't give up hope. I'm ready to go and fight this Philistine." ³³ Saul answered David, "You can't go and fight this Philistine. You're too young and inexperienced—and he's been at this fighting business since before you were born."

³⁴⁻³⁷ David said, "I've been a shepherd, tending sheep for my father. Whenever a lion or bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I'd go after it, knock it down, and rescue the lamb. If it turned on me, I'd grab it by the throat, wring its neck, and kill it. Lion or bear, it made no difference—I killed it. And I'll do the same to this Philistine pig who is taunting the troops of God-Alive. GOD, who delivered me from the teeth of the lion and the claws of the bear, will deliver me from this Philistine." Saul said, "Go. And GOD help you!"

³⁸⁻³⁹ Then Saul outfitted David as a soldier in armor. He put his bronze helmet on his head and belted his sword on him over the armor. David tried to walk but he could hardly budge. David told Saul, "I can't even move with all this stuff on me. I'm not used to this." And he took it all off.

- **What did King Saul want David to take into battle against Goliath?**
- **Why did David refuse to use the armor of Saul?**

SOME COMMENTARY: David chose not to wear the King's armor because it felt cumbersome and unfamiliar. David was comfortable with his simple slingshot, a weapon he was skilled at using. God will use the unique skills he's already placed in your hands so don't worry about "wearing the King's armor." Just be yourself and use the familiar gifts and talents God has given you. He will work miracles through you.

⁴⁰ Then David took his shepherd's staff, selected five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the pocket of his shepherd's pack, and with his sling in his hand approached Goliath.

- **What did David take into battle with him?**
- **Why do you think David took five stones instead of just one?**

⁴¹⁻⁴² As the Philistine paced back and forth, his shield bearer in front of him, he noticed David. He took one look down on him and sneered—a mere youngster, apple-cheeked and peach-fuzzed. ⁴³ The Philistine ridiculed David. "Am I a dog that you come after me with a stick?" And he cursed him by his gods.

⁴⁴ "Come on," said the Philistine. "I'll make road kill of you for the buzzards. I'll turn you into a tasty morsel for the field mice."

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷ David answered, "You come at me with sword and spear and battle-ax. I come at you in the name of GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies, the God of Israel's troops, whom you curse and mock. This very day GOD is handing you over to me. I'm about to kill you, cut off your head, and serve up your body and the bodies of your Philistine buddies to the crows and coyotes. The whole earth will know that there's an extraordinary God in Israel. And everyone gathered here will learn that GOD doesn't save by means of sword or spear. The battle belongs to GOD—he's handing you to us on a platter!"

⁴⁸⁻⁴⁹ That roused the Philistine, and he started toward David. David took off from the front line, running toward the Philistine. David reached into his pocket for a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine hard in the forehead, embedding the stone deeply. The Philistine crashed, face-down in the dirt. ⁵⁰ That's how David beat the Philistine—with a sling and a stone. He hit him and killed him. No sword for David!

⁵¹ Then David ran up to the Philistine and stood over him, pulled the giant's sword from its sheath, and finished the job by cutting off his head. When the Philistines saw that their great champion was dead, they scattered, running for their lives.

- **What previous experiences did David have that caused him to believe in God?**
- **What are some things you have experienced in your life that cause you to believe in God?**

⁵²⁻⁵⁴ The men of Israel and Judah were up on their feet, shouting! They chased the Philistines all the way to the outskirts of Gath and the gates of Ekron. Wounded Philistines were strewn along the Shaaraim road all the way to Gath and Ekron.

- **What was at stake in the battle between David and Goliath?**
- **Describe the fight scene that took place between these two men.**
- **What happened to the Philistines after David killed Goliath?**
- **Where did David find the courage to face the giant, Goliath?**
- **Who was really responsible for David's amazing victory over Goliath?**
- **Ask them to share a giant (struggle/problem/temptation) that they are currently facing in their lives.**
- **What can we learn from David about overcoming these giants we face in our lives?**

***ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY:** David's faith in God caused him to look at the giant from a different perspective. Goliath was merely a mortal man defying an all-powerful God. David looked at the battle from God's point of view. If we look at giant problems and impossible situations from God's perspective, we realize that God will fight for us and with us. When we put things in proper perspective, we see more clearly and we can fight more effectively. When the giant criticized, insulted and threatened, David didn't stop or even waver. Everyone else cowered in fear, but David ran to the battle. He knew that action needed to be taken. David did the right thing in spite of discouraging insults and fearful threats. Only God's opinion mattered to David.*

After chasing the Philistines, the Israelites came back and looted their camp. David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem. But the giant's weapons he placed in his own tent. ⁵⁵ When Saul saw David go out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, "Tell me about this young man's family." Abner said, "For the life of me, O King, I don't know." ⁵⁶ The king said, "Well, find out the lineage of this raw youth." ⁵⁷ As soon as David came back from killing

the Philistine, Abner brought him, the Philistine's head still in his hand, straight to Saul. ⁵⁸ Saul asked him, "Young man, whose son are you?" "I'm the son of your servant Jesse," said David, "the one who lives in Bethlehem."

1 Samuel 18 - Jonathan (Saul's Son) and David—Soul Friends

¹ By the time David had finished reporting to Saul, Jonathan was deeply impressed with David—an immediate bond was forged between them. He became totally committed to David. From that point on he would be David's number-one advocate and friend. ² Saul received David into his own household that day, no more to return to the home of his father. ³⁻⁴ Jonathan, out of his deep love for David, made a covenant with him. He formalized it with solemn gifts: his own royal robe and weapons—armor, sword, bow, and belt. ⁵ Whatever Saul gave David to do; he did it—and did it well. So well that Saul put him in charge of his military operations. Everybody, both the people in general and Saul's servants, approved of and admired David's leadership.

CONCLUSION OF PART I

While still in his youth David rose swiftly from obscurity to great fame in Israel, but because of King Saul's jealousy he soon found himself a hunted exile in danger of his life. This swift reversal of fortunes must have given David good cause to wonder about the meaning of his anointing by Samuel in I Samuel 16. David's faith in God and his desire to see the Lord's people victorious is what enabled him to face Goliath and even under the pressure of Saul's jealousy it is noted that "In everything David did he had great success, because the LORD was with him." (I Sam. 18:14)

PART II - King David was first a Shepherd boy, giant slayer, fugitive, true companion, musician, lover, husband, warrior, and finally king. In the 13 chapter of I Samuel the Scriptures suggest that "the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people." There is not a more heroic, and yet more human character in all of literature.

We just studied about David slaying Goliath. David's courage comes from faith in God, and not a desire for glory. This incident very well characterizes David's early life when he was a boy about the age of our campers. He was full of courage because he was full of faith.

The latter half of David's life can be characterized by one incident as well. Enter...Bathsheba. In a moment that predates internet pornography by millennia, David finds himself unable to turn away from the site of a rooftop bathing beauty named Bathsheba. His obsession turns to passion, lust and murder. Driven by an unrelenting desire to have the woman, David, now King of Israel, sends for her and has relations with her, though she is the wife of another man. Upon the woman becoming pregnant, David schemes to have her husband Uriah, come home from battle and sleep with her. But Uriah, a righteous man, could not allow himself to sleep with his wife while his fellow soldiers were sleeping out of doors. David's plan backfired. So, he arranges for Uriah to be put on the front battle lines and abandoned to die, which is exactly what happens. David marries Bathsheba and they have a son, and although he repents, his son dies.

These instances are merely two chapters in a very long life of the Bible character David. But they are profound because rarely are such extreme human qualities found in the same individual. These qualities make David a human character we can all identify with and draw strength from. We also learn much from the way he was treated by God in each instance.

David showed uncommon courage against all odds as a young boy, only later to show incredible weakness as a mighty king. The latter part of his life is a little like a soap opera. He messed up big time. However, through these two life challenges and many in between, David always displayed incredible faith in God. So, while he was not spared the consequences of his actions, he received mercy and forgiveness as his spoils.

David and Bathsheba – THE ABBREVIATED VERSION

According to II Samuel 11(KJV) the Bible states that a king named David and his kingdom, Israel (meaning God reserves and contends), were at war with the Ammonites. David remained at his palace while the men of the city went out for war.

One day while looking out his window on his balcony, David observed a beautiful girl bathing in the garden below him. Her name was Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah. David becomes intrigued with the gorgeous woman sends a message for her to come to me. Bathsheba complies with her king and lies with him. Later when she returned home she sent a message back to David saying that she was with child.

So David sends word to his army commander, Joab, to send the Uriah to see him. When Uriah comes, David sends him home to rest and lie with his wife. So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. David being slightly irritated questions the man about not returning home. Uriah replies that if all the other men of the kingdom are at war, he should not be privilege to go home and rest.

As Uriah leaves, David sends a letter to Joab that instructs him to put Uriah in the front of the army line during the bloodiest battle. Then David instructs them to retreat and leave him to die. When David received confirmation Uriah and several others died in battle, he called Bathsheba to his house and made her his wife.

God saw all that happened and was very displeased. He sends a prophet, Nathan (meaning God has given) to David to speak a message for him. Nathan starts with a parable—a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson— about a rich man who has everything who decides to take a poor man's last and most precious lamb.

When David hears this, he becomes enraged. He exclaims that the man shall die surely and pay four times the price for the lamb. Then Nathan says that David is the man. He prophesies that the baby whom Bathsheba bears will die and that he must pay for his sins. David repented and fasted for seven days, yet the son still died.

David was grieved, but soon after he and Bathsheba gave birth to a second son, names Solomon. God loved this child and renamed him as Jedidiah, meaning beloved of the Lord. Solomon grows to be the wisest King of Israel.

- **How does David happen to get involved with Bathsheba?**
- **Where should David have been?**
- **What do you think of someone who was so courageous as a boy and even as a man who makes such a devastating mistake?**
- **What do you think caused David to fall so hard into temptation and sin?**
- **In his younger years, David totally depended on God for strength and courage. How does his behavior as an adult show that this is no longer the case?**
- **Are you like David...full of courage some days and lacking commitment and courage the next? When has that happened to you and how did you make it right with God?**
- **How can a man guilty of adultery, murder and scandal also be called a man after God's own heart?**

*** Closing Prayer**

Gracious God...your forgiveness is such an incredible gift to us and your love for us is amazing. Please help us to be courageous, bold and strong in our walk with you. By your power we know we can stand up for what we believe and do the right thing when we are confronted with the challenges of our young lives. We also know that we will fail you. When we do forgive us and help us to forgive ourselves, too. We pray this in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

E. ADDITIONAL STUDY IDEAS

*** There are a variety of Biblical characters whose lives exemplified great courage in the midst of adversity. Use their examples in your study to embellish and challenge the campers to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a courageous servant. Those characters are:**

ESTHER...Here is a list of verses where we read of Esther's courage in going to the king to save her people. Esther 4:8; Esther 4:16; Esther 5, 6, & 7.

Esther was a young Jewish woman who married in exile to the King of Persia which is modern day Iran. Eventually she became Queen Esther and she was a strong pivotal character in Biblical history that saved Persian Jews from annihilation during the reign of King Xerxes (Ahasuerus). She is a picture of courage and hope to all Christians. Her love and loyalty inspired her to courageously offer her life for the safety of her people. She did so with grace; never stepping out of the role that her lot in life required.

The story of Esther is told in one of the shortest books in the Bible's Old Testament. It reads like a Cinderella story – born in poverty and obscurity she becomes queen over one of the most powerful empires in history. She was born into a Jewish family and became an orphan at a young age. Her Jewish name, Hadassah, was changed to the Babylonian name Esther to protect her identity and heritage. Esther's uncle, Mordecai, raised her after the death of her parents.

In a twist of events, Queen Vashti was summoned to appear before her husband and his ministers at a banquet. The Bible says that she disobeyed her husband because he was drunk and wanted to parade her around inappropriately in front of everyone. Xerxes grew angry over her refusal to obey him and embarrassing him in front of his court. He turns the matter over to his advisors and they fall back on the laws of Persia. Xerxes is forced to decree that Vashti isn't his queen anymore and that begins a search for a new queen.

Beautiful young virgins are gathered up from all over the land and brought to the palace. Esther is one of these girls. They are trained and prepared for months before they are ready to appear for their one night with the king. Xerxes is supposed to make a choice whom his next queen will be.

The Bible's Esther is faced with difficult choices but never loses her trust in the Lord God of Israel. She is put into a position where she can save her own people from the evil plans of Haman, the minister to King Xerxes, who hates the Jews. Most of all he detests Mordecai because he won't bow down to Haman.

Haman manipulates the King and the laws to call for total annihilation of the Jews still living in the empire. Mordecai appeals to Esther to use her power and position to save her people. She must decide and begins three days of fasting and praying for guidance. Esther realizes that all that has happened in her life has prepared her for this moment in history.

Appearing before the King without being summoned could mean certain death for her. She will have to reveal her heritage and appeal for deliverance for her people in a hostile court. Trusting in God, she asks her husband, King Xerxes, and Haman to a series of three private banquets and then petitions Xerxes. She reveals the truth about Haman and is successful in her plea.

The lessons that we can learn from Esther are faithfulness, trust in God, and a willingness to follow God's will whether we are afraid or not. Esther's act on behalf of the Jews is a picture of sacrifice. Her story is a partial illustration of what the Savior, Jesus Christ, would do 500 years later. Esther – Hadassah – was willing to sacrifice herself to save her people.

NICODEMUS...John 3:1-21

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and a teacher of Israel whose secret visit to our Lord was the occasion of the discourse recorded only by St. John. In Nicodemus a noble candor and a simple love of truth shine out in the midst of hesitation and fear of man. He finally became a follower of Christ, and came with Joseph of Arimathea to take down and embalm the body of Jesus.

Nic at night was a man who had the courage to search for the truth. He had the courage to think outside the box and had come talk to Jesus despite the fact that the religious authorities essentially threatened people who would do such a thing. Nicodemus was a man after the truth, more than popularity or conformity.

JOSHUA...Joshua 1: 5-9

This is a central passage in the Scriptures for courage and risk taking. God encourages Joshua before the conquest of the Promised Land and God repeatedly gives Joshua this word of comfort and encouragement to be strong and courageous. This has to do with the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua.

Notice some things that God gives Joshua when he is on the verge of entering the Promised Land. Joshua and God's people are on the verge of conquering fortified cities and armies. These are people who were not really well equipped. They were a people who were nomadic shepherds and for them to go against this kind of opposition would require an enormous amount of courage. God promised Joshua three things in this text.

God reminded Joshua of God's faithfulness to keep all God's promises. God reminds Joshua how God had been faithful in keeping the covenant and in keeping the promises God made with the Israelites from the very beginning. God said "I've pledged to give this land to my people and I'm going to fulfill that pledge." Yet God suggested to Joshua that his success would not rest on a military strategy or even on a well-trained army but rest on the faithfulness of God's promises.

Secondly, God commands to meditate on God's word. It is difficult to muster your own courage apart from the study of God's word and intentional prayer life. To obey God means that we will go against the current of the culture. It is often counter cultural, counter intuitive, for us to follow these things that He commands us to do for our good. Unless we study and pray, we'll end up buckling under the pressure and give way to the world. Being conformed to Christ will bless us with the kind of courage, greatness, and dignity to which we've been called.

Finally, God promised to be personally present with Joshua. In that promise God says; I, Myself, will go with you. God doesn't just send us out into the world on our own. God is with us. That's the only way we can be really bold.

*** There is also a variety of current-day and historical characters whose lives exemplified great courage in the midst of adversity. Use their examples in your study to embellish and challenge the campers to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a courageous servant. Those characters are:**

Gandhi's Salt March to Dandi

Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March to Dandi in 1930 alerted the world to the burgeoning Indian independence movement. Gandhi's defiant act was the first campaign against British imperialism since the National Congress' declaration of independence earlier that same year. A pioneer in mass non-violent protest ever since his expulsion from South Africa as a young man, Gandhi chose to defy the British salt laws by organizing a 248 mile trek to a coastal town to illegally make salt from the sea. By the time he and his thousands of followers reached the sea, word had spread across the country and millions of impoverished and malcontented Indians took up the civil disobedience by disregarding the salt laws. While Gandhi's march did not directly bring about national independence, it was vital in turning world opinion against British policies in India. For his life-long struggle for freedom, Gandhi is immortalized as the nation's founding father and remains one of the world's most beloved figures.

Rosa Parks' Sit Down for Civil Rights

Popularly remembered as the woman who quietly refused to give up her seat for a white passenger on a segregated bus, thereby launching the Civil Rights Movement, Rosa Parks was already steeped in black politics long before her iconic arrest. A secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP since 1943, she was well aware of the group's attempts to challenge the Jim Crow laws on public transportation and supported their plans to instigate a bus boycott. Rosa Parks repudiated the common myth that her unwillingness to get up was due to aching feet. "No" she said, "the only tired I was, was tired of giving in." Although instrumental to the Civil Rights movement, Parks went on to live in anonymity after the protests, working as a seamstress for almost a decade and not receiving national recognition until later in life.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" Speech

One of the finest orators and civil rights leaders of the 20th century, Martin Luther King, Jr. did much to change the United States' policy on racial discrimination. After helping to launch the Civil Rights Movement by heading the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, King founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a black religious organization that directed nonviolent protests against segregationist authorities throughout the 1960s. The zenith of Dr. King's career came on August 28, 1963 with his "I Have A Dream" speech, given at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. On the symbolic steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King spoke to 200,000-300,000 dissidents and millions of television viewers, rallying for a world free of prejudice in which people would not be "judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Dr. King's historic speech was a major deciding factor in the passage of the National Voting Act and Civil Rights Act. For his part in advocating racial harmony and equality through nonviolent means, King became the youngest ever recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Although an assassin lamentably cut his momentous career short in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. and his words continue to inspire the oppressed everywhere.

Nelson Mandela's Dedication To Justice

An anti-apartheid activist and leader of the African National Congress in his early political career, Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years for political agitation against the South African government. Yet his struggles only galvanized the cause for racial equality, and he endured to become the nation's first black president, a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and an international symbol of freedom. At first committed to passive resistance, Mandela played a major role in the ANC's many demonstrations and conferences of the 1950s. However, after the Treason Trial of 1956-1961, when 156 dissidents, including Mandela, were arrested, tried, and eventually acquitted, for a communist conspiracy to overthrow the government, the rebellion took a more violent turn. Mandela became head of the ANC's militia, the Umkhonto we Sizwe.

After committing sabotage against several military and government installations, Mandela was arrested and this time found guilty. He spent nearly three decades in prison before mounting international pressure forced his release in 1990, when he made a speech addressed directly to the nation. Despite the years of hard labor and harsh conditions he had suffered, Mandela publicly took up the cause of armed struggle again if political negotiations to end apartheid were not initiated. Because of his courage, commitment and leadership, the country went on to hold its first multi-racial elections in 1994 and dismantle racial segregation.

F. IDEAS TO INCORPORATE THEME THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Wizard of Oz theme – Cowardly Lion and his new-found Courage

G. OTHER SONGS, STORIES THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

* Songs

- Pharaoh, Pharaoh
- Go!
- Thy Word
- The Rock
- Blessed Be
- Those Who Wait on the Lord
- Here I Am Lord

- Awesome God
- Humble Thyself
- I Believe, I Do Believe
- Be Bold
- Days of Elijah
- Shout to the Lord
- He's my Rock, my Sword, my Shield
- Psalm 27
- Isaiah 43
- History Maker
- Lions

H. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY DOWN FOR JUNIORS

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe + Four children journey from London during World War II to stay at an unusual house in the countryside. Through a forgotten wardrobe filled with musty coats, the children find the enchanted land of Narnia. A secret world of magic and danger, Narnia is ruthlessly ruled by the White Witch, who has cast the land into eternal winter. In Narnia the children join up with Aslan, the true King of Narnia, to go to battle and eventually defeat the White Witch who has put a spell on Narnia. Only the return of the Great Lion, Aslan, can break the Witch's evil spell. And a rumor is spreading: Aslan is on his way back. It is at this turbulent moment that four children stumble through the wardrobe and find themselves centre stage in the battle for the control of Narnia.

- Can you remember some character traits of each of the four children: Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy?
- How do they change over the course of the story?
- Compare and contrast the characters of the Lion and the Witch (for example, what kinds of powers they have, how they exercise power, how they treat others and get what they want).
- What do you think is the most courageous act shown in this book? Explain.
- Why do you think Edmund lies about having been to Narnia? How does lying affect him?
- How does Edmund justify his choice to go to the White Witch? Why do you think people make up excuses for doing something that deep inside they know is wrong?
- Why do you think Aslan chooses not to resist as he is dragged and bound by the White Witch's creatures, even though "one of those paws could have been the death of them all"?
- What do you think of the Professor's advice to the children at the end of the book?
- How does this story speak to your life and encourage you to be bold and strong in the face of trouble?

I. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY UP FOR SR HIGHS

We're called to live our lives in a way that displays real courage. C.S. Lewis wrote, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues of our lives but the form of every virtue at the testing point." That means that when push comes to shove, we are still faithful...still merciful...still honest though faced with incredible peer pressure/worldly pressure to succumb to morals and values that are less than what we know God would have us subscribe to.

Pilate was merciful until it became risky. Peter was faithful until he was confronted on the night of Jesus' betrayal and was threatened with death. The fact is courage is a powerful quality that animates all the other virtues in your life because to have the courage of your convictions and to follow through requires then a measure of risk in this world.

- What do courageous people do?
- What sometimes keeps you from being a person of courage?
- When have you witnessed someone's courage to stand up for what they believed and in being courageous, made a difference in someone else's life?
- What events in your life show God's unconditional providential care?
- What is one encouraging thing you see in the biblical/contemporary stories of people of courage that can be applied to your own life?
- How can we gain courage?
- How can we be bold for Christ?

J. PARENT DEVOTIONAL

* Scripture

Joshua 1:5-9 (New Living Translation)

⁵ No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. ⁶ “Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸ Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. ⁹ This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

*** Reflection**

Before Moses died, Joshua had been appointed by God to take Moses’ place (see references above). After Moses died, God spoke to Joshua and gave him the charge to lead Israel into the land. He promised the whole land to Israel, just as it had been promised to Moses and as far back as Abraham.

The area is here described as extending from the wilderness and Lebanon to the Euphrates River, including all the land of the Hittites, then to the Great Sea (Mediterranean) on the west. Joshua may, at this time, have been standing on an elevated place viewing the land as Moses had done before he died. Lebanon was the area along the Mediterranean directly north of Israel. The Euphrates was further north but to the east from there. The Hittites lived throughout much of this region. Of the nations who lived in the area, sometimes one or the other is named specifically as though referring to the whole area. Perhaps the Hittites were the dominant tribe at that time west of Jordan. Or perhaps they just stood as representative of all the tribes.

In any case, God’s promise is clearly that Israel will eventually control all this territory. They did not control this full extent in Joshua’s lifetime. Only in the kingdoms of David and Solomon did Israel control the full extent of territory God predicted.

God promised that He would be with Joshua as He had been with Moses. He would not leave nor forsake him. The result would be that no one would be able to stand before him throughout his whole life – i.e., no one could withstand or successfully oppose him in the work he did for the Lord. Because of God’s protection and provision, Joshua would succeed in bringing Israel into the Promised Land. God gave him this task and assured him it could be done. This would fulfill the promise to Abraham and the fathers to give this land to them.

However, the promise was conditional. There were things Joshua would need to do to be successful. Remember, Israel had attempted to do this once before but failed because of *fear* [Num. 13:31, 33; 14:6-9]. So three times God told Joshua to “*be strong and of good courage*” (v 6, 7 and 9).

God’s people have always had great responsibilities to work for Him. We do not have the same challenges or charge that God gave Joshua. But we do have a charge from God to live our faith and we will face challenges in trying to do so. We all get discouraged and fearful, thinking we cannot succeed. Nothing should be of greater encouragement, when we face these responsibilities, than the assurance that God will help us accomplish them.

*** Family Activity**

Speak of what it means to be a person of courage. How would you define it? Who has been an example of courage for you?

Be honest with your children about your own ability or inability to be courageous for the sake of the Gospel. Perhaps share a time with you caved into peer pressure and didn’t stand up for your faith. But don’t stop there. Share a time when you were bold and blessed because of your courage.

*** Servant Activity**

Make a commitment to each other to live your faith in the coming weeks. Make a phone call to a local shelter and find out how you, as a family, can serve the poor, oppressed, needy, hungry and homeless people of your area. Do it together...do it boldly and then take time to write of your experience for your church’s newsletter thereby challenging others to join you. Be the example of courage and faith you would like your children to become.

*** Closing prayer**

Most Holy God, we thank you for the gift of this time together as a family. We thank you also for your gifts of faith, love and grace that our family experiences every day. We pray for the gift of courage, too. When we are challenged by peer pressure and the pressure to live a culture that is not pleasing to you, make us strong. When we are full of fear to do the right thing, fill us with a boldness that only comes through you. We pray your blessing on the people of this world that are hurting this day. Make us aware of their need and then make us a faithful family of servants who respond in love. This we pray in Jesus’ holy name. Amen.

2010 BIBLE STUDY

Loved to Serve, Serve to Love

DAY 4 - A SERVANT IS... COMPASSIONATE

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

If we truly, deeply understand how much God loves us we can be fully transformed by that love. This transformation is powerful and it takes us from:

Selfish	TO	Selfless
Inwardly focused	TO	Outwardly focused
Self centered	TO	Being aware of others needs
Fearful	TO	Bold
Complacent	TO	Compassionate

When you make that shift to being a selfless, outwardly focused, bold and compassionate person who is aware of other people's needs you have made the shift from being someone who does service projects to being someone who lives a servant life.

Compassion means: *to feel with*

To have compassion means to come along side another person and to feel along with them the joy, the struggle, the need that they are experiencing. In other words- it's traveling a mile in their shoes.

For this Bible study to be effective it is essential that the message of Monday's study has been heard loud and clear. It is the message of God's transforming love that sets the stage and prepares the heart for compassion. It is the transforming love of Jesus that whispers softly: "*you can let go of your insecurities, I've got your back.*" Or, "*go ahead and walk into that lunch room, I promise that no one will eat you.*" And then finally, "*put yourself out there for the sake of another, I won't let go of you.*"

Before you can feel compassion you have to become aware of the other and so it is also essential that Tuesday's study has been heard loud and clear. Think of how many times you have made a judgment or decision about a person or a person's behavior only to find out later that there was a story there that you didn't know that helps you to understand that person or their behavior. The knowledge or awareness of the story helps you to understand that person, to walk beside that person, to travel a mile in their shoes.

What would it be like to live someone else's life for a week? TV shows like wife swap and MTV world's strictest parents give us a glimpse of what people experience when they walk a mile in someone else's shoes. How do those shows end? There is usually some relief at being able to escape the others life and return to their own life. There is also usually some enlightenment as to a different way of living that they may or may not choose to adopt when they return home. These shows are actually examples of people experiencing a transformation through compassion- they are feeling with another person what life is like in that setting.

The question is this: What must it be like to walk in her shoes? The answer can range from: "I wish I could walk in her shoes" to, "that must be a really tough way to live". But the truth is that you can't know the answer until you are in relationship with that person. When you enter into relationship with another person then you can begin to experience life with them, you can begin to feel with them. Once you have entered that relationship and nurtured that relationship you will find that you have first hand experience with what this person needs or wants. In relationship and through compassion you can begin to serve that person in meaningful ways.

For some teenagers compassion is already a way of life but compassion does not come easy for everyone. Consider anyone who has grown up in a family where you have to compete for attention or love; anyone who has learned that if you don't look out for your self then no one will; anyone who has taken a risk and put themselves out there in a compassionate act and been somehow burned by that act- for these brothers and sisters compassion does not come naturally and it can even be counter intuitive.

American teenagers exist in a world of desperation and competition. Have you stepped into a middle school lunch room lately? It is a vicious and scary place. It is killed or be killed. When that is the reality you wake up to every day it can be difficult to figure out where compassion fits in. Being a servant, being a compassionate servant, is counter cultural. For a teen to take seriously the servant life means having to lay aside deeply held fears and insecurities it means being courageous and so it is also important that the study from Day 4 is understood. It is not uncommon for Christian teens to dabble in compassion. They may try it on for size now and then and what better place to try it on than at camp? Wherever your teens are in their transformation, this study is designed to take a look at compassion first as we see it demonstrated in scripture and then to dig into their own life and experiences.

B. OBJECTIVES FOR THIS DAY OF THE STUDY

- The goal for this study is to lead campers to discover:
 - Compassion defined as: to feel with someone.
 - Compassionate service defined as: being in relationship with someone in order to feel with them the joy, sorrow, celebrations and struggles in life in order to serve in a meaningful way.
 - Let's move from service projects to servant life.
 - "I can be a compassionate person"

C. MORNING WATCH

- John Nelly Nelson story by video or John Rowbotham's personal testimony article. (Attached as a PDF)
- Video Clip: <http://www.viddler.com/explore/tbuegler/videos/29/>
 - Try using the clip beginning at 18:41 minutes "I was blessed because I had true friends"
 - The clip will need someone to provide an intro regarding Mitchell Dietz- he was the PLU football player who traveled with Nellie to this speaking event.
- Edit the article as needed but be sure to include the paragraph that begins: "One day John asked me if I would like to go get something to eat with him, to get a chance to know each other"

D. SCRIPTURE STUDY

Road Trip- A formula for leading Bible Study.

- Put the Holy Spirit in the driver seat! Open with prayer. (1 minute)
 - **Good and gracious God we give thanks to you today for the gift it is to be alive in your creation. We thank you that you have helped to make us aware of those around us who are suffering or in need. Please send your Holy Spirit to be with us as we explore the compassion of a servant. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.**
- Buckle up! Review covenant. (1 minute)
 - Take a moment to pull out the covenant that you made with your Bible study group at the beginning of the week. Quickly read through the covenant and check to make sure everyone is still on board with it. More than anything this is a reminder of "how" you will be together as a Bible study community.
- Check the A/C (All Comfortable)! Highs and lows. (5 minutes)
 - Invite everyone to share one high and one low from today (or yesterday). This brief exercise will help you to get a temperature reading on the group. In other words are they all tired and sore from yesterday. Is anybody home sick? Do you have anyone who needs your attention during the study or after the study?
 - Be sure to only have each person share one high and one low so you don't get stuck on this part.
 - Encourage everyone to share a low first and a high second so you can "end on a high note" this helps to keep everyone positive and allows you to avoid awkward transitions between people.
 - An alternative could be to share your "God moment" from the day before. This is an excellent way to encourage youth to open their eyes to the way the Holy Spirit is moving in and through their camp experience.
- Look at the map! Theme review. (1 minute)
 - Review where you have been (themes for past days) and where you are going (the theme for the day)
 - This is a good time to check and see if everyone understands or "gets" the theme to VOD chose. If they don't, take a minute to explain.
- Green Lights-GO!: Go to scripture. (15 minutes)

CALLED TO THE SERVANT LIFE

ASK: What is the difference between being a servant and doing service projects?

An alternative here would be to make two lists together one list of service projects and another of people you know who are servants. Then compare the lists and ask “Would you call someone who does service projects a “servant” why or why not?” OR “Can you be a servant and not do any service projects? Why or why not?”

SHARE: This week we are focusing on living a servantlife. BEING a servant instead of doing service projects. This is what God calls us to. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your might and love your neighbor as yourself. Not just for one week out of the year or for one Saturday afternoon in October but all the time. We are called to the servantlife. We are loved to serve and we serve to love.

DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING COMPASSION

- **ASK: How would you define the word compassion?** The definition is to feel with someone- to experience what someone else is experiencing so that you understand their pain, suffering and need.
- **ASK: Is it possible to have compassion for someone without having ever met them?** Yes it is possible since we know that all humans are God’s creation and therefore our brothers and sisters in Christ that may be enough for us to feel compassion for them. On the other hand if we have a relationship with someone we are more likely to “feel with them” and understand their needs and therefore serve them in a more meaningful way.
- **ASK: What does it look like when someone is “showing compassion”? What might they be doing?**
- A servant who is compassionate is also selfless instead of selfish. We are going to each take a turn finishing this sentence:
 - A selfish person always... (takes the last cookie, pushes to the front of the line, etc.)Now try this one:
 - A selfless person always... (thinks of others first, shares, etc.)
- Those are insightful comments on compassion. Now let’s open up our Bibles and take a look at examples of compassion in scripture.

JESUS IS AN EXAMPLE OF COMPASSION: PHILLIPIANS 2:1-11

Background information on this passage:

The book of Philippians was written by Paul when he was in prison, or house arrest in A.D. 62. He writes the letter to the Christians in the church of Philippi. Paul founded this church in A.D. 50 with Silas and Timothy during his second missionary journey. As the founder of the church Paul feels a fatherly love towards the people he is writing to. Paul loves the people of this church very much and he is concerned that pride and quarrels are spoiling the Christian fellowship at Philippi. In the letter Paul offers encouragement and direction, most notably he urges them to become the servant and slave of all following the example of Jesus. He begs them to be humble in their attitude toward one another and united in faith.

- **SHARE:** Jesus was the ultimate example for us of what it means to be a compassionate servant. Jesus was human but he was also divine- meaning He was God in the flesh. None of us will

ever be able to live like he did but Jesus did show us the way that God intends for us to live as servants.

- **SHARE: In this passage from Phillipians, Paul encourages the people of the church at Phillipi to adopt the same kind of attitude that Christ had.**
- **READ: Let's open up to Phillipians 2:1-11. Would someone like to read Phillipians 2:1-4. And maybe someone else could read for us verse 5-11.**
- **ASK: Based on this passage what are some adjectives you would choose to describe a Servant? OR How does this passage help you understand what a Christian servant looks like?**
- **SHARE: Jesus knows (relationship) each of us better than anyone else knows us. He understood (even before we were born!) that what we would need more than anything else was forgiveness. It was out of God's great love for us, out of the profound awareness of our need for forgiveness and out of God's compassion, or ability to feel with us, that He sent His son to die for us. This is compassion!**
- **SHARE: Parents, coaches and teachers can talk a lot about attitude. Having the right attitude, needing an attitude adjustment or checking your attitude. This passage in Philippians gives us a better understanding of what it means to have a "Christ-like" attitude. How would adopting this attitude help you to live a servant life?**

COMPASSION IN COMMUNITY (THE FIRST CHURCH): ACTS 2:42-45 AND ACTS 4:32-35

Background information on these passages:

The book of Acts is really a continuation of the story of Luke. It describes the events of the early church and what happened with the believers in the time after Jesus ascended to heaven. The book focuses on the experiences of Peter and Paul. The excerpts that are used here describe the nature of the early church in Jerusalem. These believers banded together tightly in the face of persecution. There was no room for council debates or petty bickering of the church ladies in this church. They were fervently devoted to loving each other as Jesus had commanded them and spreading the good news of Jesus far and wide. The lifestyle they chose as a community was probably a necessity more than a choice but it was a successful model for being the church and more importantly it was true to the way Jesus taught us to live.

- **SHARE: The early church is another example of compassion. The people in the community were in close relationship with one another so they were aware of the needs of each person and they were able to make sure that somehow all of those needs were met.**
- **READ: Let's have a couple of you open your Bible to Acts 2:42-45. Would the rest of you open your Bible to Acts 4:32-35. Let's start with Acts 2, who would like to read that passage for us out loud? Now is there someone who would be willing to read Acts 4?**
- **ASK: How would your life be different if you lived in a community where you did not have to worry about anything because all of your needs were taken care of by your neighbors?**
- **ASK: Can you think of any kind of community where that happens today? (camp can be like this sometimes- people take care of each other by cleaning the shower house for one another and doing KP for each other. some congregations may live like this helping members pay bills or supplying food or assisting with hospital bills, etc)**
- **ASK: Do you suppose that there was ever someone in the community of the early church who did not want to share their land or money or property to help those in need? Why do you think some people chose to give and share and others did not? (If you have time you could look up Acts 4:36-Acts 5:1-4 that shows examples of people obeying and disobeying the shared property rule)**

- **ASK: Everyone is capable of feeling compassion (the desire to help others). Can you tell a story from your own life of someone you know who chose to show compassion? Would you consider that person a servant? Why or why not**
- **ASK: As Christians how can we practice compassion in the communities we live in (school, home, teams, church, etc)?**

COMPASSION FOR YOUR FRIENDS: MARK 2:1-12

Background information on this passage:

Mark is thought to be the first of the four gospels . It is also the shortest. Mark is writing this to the Jewish Christians in Rome. This gospel follows Jesus around the towns and villages of Galilee as excitement stirs about whether or not He is the long awaited Messiah. Mark writes about the large crowds that gather around Jesus wherever He goes to teach or heal. Some of the masses seek to learn, some seek to mock and others are just curious but there is no doubt that there is something about the Jesus in Mark's gospel that draws people to him absolutely.

Ultimately Mark understands his book to be about a Holy war between God and satan. It is important to understand the theology of Mark, his audience, Jesus, and the theology of the men in the story is very different from our theology today. They believed that all suffering, tragedy, illness and death was a result of your sin or the sin of your family. So in the gospel of Mark when you see Jesus healing people often times it will be an exorcism. In this particular passage we as readers might expect that the man who is paralyzed would come to see Jesus to have his body healed. But the man, his friends and everyone else gathered would know and agree that what the man needed most was to be forgiven. This is exactly what Jesus will do for him.

The religious authorities are very hostile towards Jesus. They are annoyed and indignant when Jesus heals the man of his sin because they believe that only God can forgive sins. They do not know or realize or accept Jesus to be the son of God.

- Read this story: **Imagine your best friend is in an accident and their back is broken. They can't play with you anymore- at least not like you used to. Now imagine that you are at the grocery store and you hear a couple of people talking in line. They are talking about a world famous back surgeon. There is no back that he can't heal. And he's in town for the next two days fixing patient's backs for free! Would you take your friend to see the surgeon? How would you get him or her to the clinic? What if you couldn't use motorized transportation at all, would you still take your friend? How would you transport your friend? Would you need other friends to help or could you do it on your own? How long would it take you? Now imagine that you arrive at the clinic and there is a huge line of people waiting. It is doubtful that you will ever get in to see the surgeon before the clinic closes. What would you do then?**
- **READ: Let's look at a story just like this that actually did happen. It is a story in the book of Mark about a group of friends who were desperately trying to get their friend in to see the "healer" that we know as Jesus. Let's look up Mark 2:1-12. Would someone be willing to read Mark 2: 1-5 and would someone else read Mark 2:6-12?**
- **ASK: The man who was healed had been paralyzed which means he had been unable to care for himself, dress himself, bathe himself or feed himself. Who do you think cared for him? Why would they do that? What would life be like for that man if he did not have anyone to help him?**
- **ASK: Can you imagine anyone you know spending that much of their time or life caring for someone like that? What would a friend have to sacrifice or give up in their own life to do that?**

- **ASK: What were these friends feeling when they started digging through the roof? They were filled with compassion and their compassion overwhelmed them to a point where they destroyed a man's house in order to help their friend.**
 - **ASK: These friends went above and beyond what many people might do to help out a friend. Is there a situation you can think of in your own life experience where someone went through a lot of trouble to help someone else?**
 - **SHARE: Being a servant does not always require extraordinary acts of compassion. Most of the time being a compassionate servant is just about being in relationship with other people so that you can feel with them and be AWARE of the needs of those around you then doing what you can to help.**
 - **ASK: Name some examples of very simple but meaningful ways that you have seen people show compassion at school, at home or even here at camp.**
- Put on the parking brake! Wrap up any unfinished business and close in prayer.

E. ADDITIONAL STUDY IDEAS

1. When we talk about discovering and trying to meet the “needs” of people through compassion, it is important to understand the difference between needs that you can help to meet and needs that you are unable to meet. Have everyone stand up and draw a line in the dirt. Tell everyone to stand on the right side if you name a need they could meet or the left if it is a need they can't meet. After each one, ask people to explain why they chose that side of the line. (The truth is that there is something that can be done to “serve” compassionately in all of these situations but instead of meeting the immediate need it may be praying for the need or offering encouragement)
*NOTE: Some of these are more appropriate for older youth only.

Your little brother needs help with math

Your friend does not have enough money to go to the movies

The new kid at school can't find the locker room

*Your mom was laid off

A neighbor kid that you don't know fell off his bike outside of your house

*A guy on your soccer team is smoking and skipping practice

A 6th grader at church that you have never talked to needs a mentor for Lent

Your friend is sick and has to go to the hospital for treatment

Dad has to work this weekend and can't mow the lawn

*Your girlfriend/boyfriend is being neglected by his/her parents

2. Where do you see opportunities to live out your servant life through compassion:

In daily life...

In the community you live in...

Across the globe...

3. Try using the Vasteras Method for reading scripture with your middle school or senior high youth. This is an invaluable tool that you can teach and practice with your youth during a week at camp so they can take it down the mountain to read and study scripture at home. (This was included in the day 4 study in 2009 so some youth may know it already.)

An adaptation of The Vasteras Method taken from page #25 Way to Live, Christian Practices for Teens

This method was developed in Sweden for small groups, this method needs no leader and teens can do it on their own! Ideally, once they've read and marked their passage, the teen will connect in person, by phone or email with someone else who's marked the same passage in the same way to discuss their markings together.

- First read the passage through beginning to end.

- Go back to the beginning of the passage with a pencil, pen or Bible marker and read through it again pausing and making the marks as you go.
- When a word or phrase challenges you, inspires you, puzzles you or gives you new insight. Use the following symbols to mark your Bible:
 Draw an ! exclamation point next to words or phrases that gives you new insight.
 Draw an ^ next to words or phrases that tell you about Good News that inspires you and lifts you UP.
 Draw an v next to words or phrases that point out a need you have or a challenge you need to face.
 Draw a ? by anything you don't understand.

ADVANCED IDEAS

1. Read the following quote and invite everyone to respond with their own thoughts on building servants and inspiring compassion: "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to go to the forest to gather wood, saw it, and nail the planks together. Instead teach them the desire for the sea." Antione de Saint-Exupery
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer pondered some of these questions about compassion:
(Questions have been rephrased for use with youth in this study)
 - As a Christian servant, what am I responsible for and what am I not responsible for? (Relationship with and compassion for those in my house, in my city, in my country, in the neighboring countries, across the ocean?)
 - What is the limit of my responsibility?
 - As a compassionate Christian servant, am I responsible for everything that happens in the world or can I stand by and watch problems unfold in other parts of the world so long as I am doing a little something in my part of the world?

F. IDEAS TO INCORPORATE THEME THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- Theme ideas:
 - At your service (waiters, wait staff, aware of needs, meeting the needs of others)
 - I got a feeling... (Black eyed peas- compassion is to "feel" with someone the good and the bad)
 - Dex knows (There are a lot of things that Dex knows, if you knew as much about people as Dex knows about stuff you could be a great resource and a compassionate servant, or Dex knows what it takes to be a compassionate servant)
 - There's an App for that (What would the I-phone application for compassionate servants look like?)
 - RTLC-S (Rainbow Trail Lutheran Compassionate Servants)
 - MyFace (A social networking tool that doesn't require electronics. Being in relationship with someone face to face and spending time with them. The best way to show compassion)
 - Friendville (Instead of inviting people to be your farming neighbor, invite them to be your friend)
 - Target practice (cocentric circles with family and friends in the middle, my community next and the global community as the largest circle. Focus on how we are compassionate servants in these areas, use the archery range for all camp or worship)
 - House (playing off of the tv show, invite people to diagnose solutions and meet the needs that they see or become aware of. Instead of being a diagnostic doctor we are compassionate servants)
 - LOL (Loving out loud. As compassionate servants we look to meet the needs of others and love them through service)
 - I just became a fan of... Compassion!
 - Lean on me
 - CSI: Compassionate Servant Investigators (investigate acts of compassionate service at RTLC)
 - Get carried away
 - Know it all
 - iKnow (I am in a relationship with you so I know you and I am aware of how you feel and I can feel with you and show you compassion by sharing in your struggles)
 - Can you dig it? (70's costumes- be compassionate dig through a roof for your friends)
 - Use the buddy system

Meal Ideas:

- Tie the wrists of two youth together and invite them to eat a meal side by side (Each person will experience lunch and “feel with” the other person as they use their napkin, take a drink, get a refill etc)
- At lunch have partners go through the line for one another and prepare a plate of lunch for the other person. Hopefully they know what their partner wants and likes!

Activity Ideas:

- Friendship Bracelets
- Make prayer boards for each camper to take home. These boards could be small decorated bulletin boards, or chalk boards or a simple table tent with sticky notes. The prayer board will be placed on their bedroom night stand so they can keep a list of people they are praying for. The board will help remind them of who they are praying for and why they are praying for them.
- Kristkins in villages
- Prayer partners for the day
- At the beginning of the day have each person put their name, village and one prayer request on a piece of paper then fold into paper airplanes and throw around for two minutes. Then have everyone grab a plane and keep it with them to try and find that person during the day then talk about what it’s like to live in “my shoes”. At all camp invite a few people up to introduce their new friend.

All Camp Ideas:

- Send groups through camp in search of “aid” for their friend. Put one camper in a sleeping bag and challenge the group to figure out “how” to get their friend to see Jesus.
- Blob tag
- Do a giant game of compassion BINGO. Use 8 ½ x 11 sheets of papers with squares all over. In each square write an experience someone might have: Never broken a bone. Get teased at school for being too smart. Friends with my brothers and sisters. Don’t do my homework. Afraid of spiders. (Anything that would reveal information about another person that could lead to compassion) Send teams out to try and get a BLACKOUT BINGO by filling in every square and having someone sign each square. Once you have a winner have teams gather and discuss which squares they signed and “what is it like to walk in your shoes” AS someone who does not do their homework, as someone who gets teased at school, etc.

Worship Ideas:

- Give every person a card with an item on it (money, food, wisdom, leadership, shelter,)and during an offering pass the plates and have each person put their card in as a symbol of the early church idea that everyone has something to offer the community. At evening worship do the same but invite everyone to write the “gift” that they have to offer the community and put that in the offering plate.

G. OTHER SONGS, STORIES, THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Every Move I Make #76

Father Make Us One #33

Friends #19

Go Where I Send Thee #17

Here I am Lord #23

Hey Everybody #67

I Don’t Know What You Came To Do # 35

Let us Break Bread Together #21

Lord Listen To Your Children Praying #61

They’ll Know We Are Christians #29

We Are The Family Of God #10

You Are Special by Max Lucado- Usually used as a story about unconditional love, this is also a story of Lucia who comes along side Punchinello and out of compassion helps him to find Eli.

H. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY DOWN FOR JUNIORS* Ideas to try with Junior Age (4-6 grade)

1. If Juniors seem to struggle with the term “compassion” try using the term or phrase: A servant is helpful. Work with the youth to help them understand that when you become “aware” of someone who needs help then being compassionate means that you are providing help for that person.
2. When you come to Jesus Is an Example of Compassion, try using the story of Jesus calling the children to come to him. Luke 18:15-17. Talk with Juniors about how Jesus shows compassion because the children want to spend time with Jesus but the disciples keep them away. Jesus becomes AWARE of the children then shows COMPASSION by calling them to come to him anyways.
3. When discussing the Compassion In Community encourage Juniors to think about their family and how they practice compassion with their siblings or how their parents practice compassion for them.
4. Try to do the Compassion For Your Friends story as a traveling melodrama.

I. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY UP FOR SR HIGHS * Ideas to try with Sr High (9-12 grade)

1. **Have you been part of a service project or a mission trip where you felt like you didn’t actually “do” anything? Is it possible to serve meaningfully when you don’t build something, clean something, fix something, etc? Why or why not?**
2. **Often times senior high youth are encouraged to be a servant for one week during the summer on a mission trip or for one day when there is an opportunity for a service project at a soup kitchen or food bank. How can you make the shift from being a Christian who does service projects to being a compassionate Christian servant? What would it take for you to build meaningful relationships with those you seek to serve?**
3. **As a church we have centered our service projects around helping those in need. Usually we name those in need as people we’ve never met who are poor, lower class, and minority. We then travel to “downtown” or poor countries to do our service work to do what we think needs to be done. What are a few ways we could change this model to better reflect a compassionate servant life? (establish relationship and true compassion for those we are serving. Don’t assume that we know what their needs are before we have asked and spent time building relationships with them. Quit choosing service projects over leading a servant life. Try to get rid of the notion that white middle class people have everything and that “those poor people” have nothing. Remember that middle or upper class people with money are in need of Christian service also. We don’t have to travel out of our own community to do meaningful service work or to live a servant life in relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.)**

J. PARENT DEVOTIONAL

Scripture: Mark 2: 1-12

Reflection: Compassion means: *to feel with*. To have compassion means to come along side another person and to feel along with them the joy, the struggle, or the need that they are experiencing. In other words- it’s traveling a mile in their shoes. This devotion will challenge you to understand another person a little bit better so that you can offer them help or encouragement when needed.

Activity:

Begin by reading the scripture. This is a story about friends who cared deeply about their friend. They were so filled with compassion that they did something outrageous to get their friend healed by Jesus.

Pull out an old blanket or a sleeping bag. Designate a part of your house as the place where Jesus heals. Choose someone from the family to lay down on the sleeping bag and see if the rest of the family can maneuver that person to the place where Jesus heals. Maybe even upstairs? Be safe!

When you safely arrive in another part of the house discuss these questions:

What was it like for us as a family to walk in the shoes of the men in the story? Does this experience of “walking in their shoes” help us to understand the story any better?

What would it be like for us as a family to understand each other a little better?

What is one thing that you wish the rest of the family understood about you?

Service:

Let’s think about our community and the needs we are aware of here. Is there anyone in our community that we can think of who might need our help? What can we do to help him or her?

Consider helping a family in your neighborhood, church community or school. Check with your pastor to see if there is a family in your congregation who has recently had a baby or is dealing with illness. They might need a meal prepared and delivered for them. Or there may be a single mom or dad in the community who could use a babysitter to get a night off from the kids.

See if there is a service opportunity that you can participate in together as a family!

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for all the people in our lives who show us compassion. Please help us to show our compassion for one another and for the community as we seek to live a servant life. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

2010 BIBLE STUDY

Loved to Serve, Serve to Love

DAY 5 - A SERVANT IS DEDICATED

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

Day's Theme: Dedicated - Service as a way of life

We often mistake living a life of service with completing a project of service. Being dedicated to service goes way beyond the project, to how we live out our daily lives. Service is making a decision to be dedicated to our neighbor on a daily basis, not because it feels good, but because of the love that God has given us.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION: Today's study will help show us that we must be dedicated to serving as away of life.

Service is dedicating ourselves to a way of life, not a project that we "do".

Service is a dedication to loving God and acting on that love.

Service is a dedication we make on a daily basis to our neighbor.

Service is a dedication to answer God's call on your life.

Service is a dedication to show others that God cares for them.

B. OBJECTIVES FOR THIS DAY OF THE STUDY

- Expand our thinking about service
- Campers should understand that service can be a lifestyle not just an event
Examples – Mary mother of Jesus and Mother Teresa
- Teach the campers what three area of our life God asks us to dedicate to God in order to serve God and Others
 1. Heart
 2. Soul
 3. Might/Strength

C. MORNING WATCH

I was 20 years old. I'd been working in the film business 3 months. Up until that point I'd only been on small stages in regular size places moving a wall or two doing construction on sets. Learning. This WAS My first big job. I arrive at the Bedford Armory. It's HUGE. If you live in NYC you've definitely seen the Armories - Marcy(in Williamsburg), Kingsbridge (in BX), Bedford (in Crown Heights) and there is one on Park Ave uptown in Manhattan. They look like castles. I think there are more but they are all National Guard buildings that as far as I know since 2003 they've been rented out for major film/tv productions. I've read that they want to make the Kingsbridge Armory (which is a place that will get a post of it's own) into a shopping plaza. There's a rumor that they're all connected by underground tunnels. But that's another story for another day.

I walk into the big bay doors in the middle of Union St. Here I am. In awe. A kid in the middle of all of this, I couldn't keep my mouth shut. Picture Calvin & Hobbes. Gawking. Look at this huge production. I wish I had a camera then. My job was to clean the construction shop. Vacuum the saws. Sweep. Put away lumber. Keep things organized. Make sure no one trips on debris. Give the carpenters a hand when they needed to move something. Simple things. I didn't mind, I was a kid and I was learning. Happy just to be there making some money and watching it come together. It wasn't easy.. there are no comfort controls in the massive armories. No A/C. We were starting at 6AM and sweating by 6:17. In the winter it was freezing cold no matter what you did. Here I am, I'm in the middle of 8 table saws going. Dust everywhere. It was filthy. But from all this filth the set started to come together. The floor. Then the walls started rising. Then the carpenters added detail. Then the set dressers came in. The electricians lit it and the rigging crew had everything set. And then the shooting crew arrived. The cast. The extras. Craft service. Catering. Where did the star of the movie park their BIGGEST-EVER bus size trailer? INSIDE the armory right next to our carpentry shop. The armory, this HUGE armory, was EMPTY when I got there. By the time I had left we filled every inch three times over. We'd built sets, knocked them down, and built new ones,

new floors on top of old, at the end of the job the floor we put down was 10 layers of wood and we used 2 forklifts to break it into huge chunks. At the end it was empty and cleaner than when we'd found it. And I saw it all.

One of the first mornings I was there, probably looking confused, "hair in my eyes", a carpenter who knew I was new to the business said to me "C'mere kid I wanna show you something". He turned me around and said "This is the first rule of the business" and pointed at the wall of our tool room – on it in huge letters was:

“SEE THE BIG PICTURE”

Sweeping is not just sweeping. If the floors don't get swept the movie doesn't get made. I applied that lesson to everything. I learned a lot from that carpenter.

Matthew 17:20-21

“...For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there”, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

Just about every Christian dreams of doing something big with his or her life. We want to change the world. We want to do something powerful for God. This sort of optimistic goal-setting is OK, as long as you don't miss out on the small things God plans for you along the way.

Maybe that means, as it did for the shop worker, sweeping up the dust off of the floor . Maybe it means volunteering in the nursery at your church, providing a lap for a toddler to sit in. Maybe it means spending time at a nursing home, where you can be a listening ear for a lonely resident who longs for conversation. Maybe it means doing the dishes at your next family gathering, just so your mom or grandmother can sit and relax after the meal.

These might seem like small actions that, like yeast or a mustard seed, God will expand into something big. Which, to be honest, would be wonderful and fulfilling.

But we also need to remember that small acts of service occasionally remain, well, small. There can be amazing results.

The everyday kingdom of God is built on small moments of servanthood, thoughtfulness and kindness. Let's not overlook them. Don't let a sense of your own importance — or a desire for greatness — keep you from experiencing what God has in store for you today.

Reflection Questions

1. What are some small things that others have done for you that made a difference in your life?
2. What are some small things that you can do today, and everyday, that can make a difference for someone else?
3. If the “Big Picture” is living a life of service, list some small things you need to do in order to get to the “Big Picture”.

Prayer

Lord, I see your sun come up. I know each time the sun rises, it's a new chance for me to live the way you want me to live. I know I have made mistakes, Lord. It's so easy to stray from the path you put me on. Your love is like the day. No matter how many times I wander off in the dark, you take me back again and again, repeating like the sunrise. You have given me another chance. Stay with me throughout this day. Help me love others as you love me. Take this new day, and make me your servant. Teach me. Mold me. Hold me without letting go. Remind me that I walk into this new day with you at my side. Amen

D. SCRIPTURE STUDY

The scriptural basis for this study is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. This passage is about dedicating our daily lives to Christ. We will also visit the life of Mary the mother of Jesus and Mother Teresa as an example of what it may look like to be dedicated to a life of service.

Opening Prayer

Lord, help us be dedicated to serving and loving you. We know that you love us more than we can understand. Help us to live with an awareness of the needs of those around us. Help us to act with compassion when we see others in need, and

give us the courage to serve you in all situations. Lord, help us to dedicate ourselves to your service. Help us to be the ones that others look to when they want to see you. Amen.

Warm Up

Game – Seven Eleven

Come up with a category such as "counselor's names". The campers must come up with the names of 7 counselors in 11 seconds. The campers can also come up with categories to make it more fun for them.

Example categories:

- a. Foods we have eaten this week
 - b. Bible characters
 - c. Friends they have met this week
 - d. Ways they have seen others serve this week
 - e. Ways they have served this week
 - f. Things in their life they are dedicated to. (***end with this one***)
1. What does the word dedicated mean to you?
(*to devote or commit yourself completely to a purpose*)
 2. What are some examples in your own life of things you are dedicated to?
(*boy/girl scouts, sports teams, school work, obeying your parents, being a good friend...*)
 3. What does it mean to be dedicated to God?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 tells us how we can be completely dedicated to God.

Have a camper read aloud Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (below are two versions of the passage)

4 Attention, Israel! God, our God! God the one and only! **5** Love God, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! **6** Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you **7** and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. **8** Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; **9** inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates. (*The Message*)

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. **6** Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. **7** Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. **8** Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, **9** and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (*New Revised Standard*)

Scriptural Background and Reference

This story is set in the context of Moses leading the people of Israel through the wilderness. God has given Moses the job of delivering God's wishes for God's people to the Israelites. This passage tells us about God and God's relationship with us and the world. God's commandment to us to love God with all our being, it is not a selfish commandment, but rather one to help us commit ourselves to serving God and others.

Reflection Questions

1. What three ways does this passage say we need to love God?
2. What would it look like for you to love God with all your heart, soul and might?
3. Verse 7 says that loving God with all our heart, soul, and might should be included in every part of our day. Why might this be hard to do?
4. Verses 8-9 ask us to give ourselves visual reminders that we should be committed to loving and serving God. What are some ways that you can constantly remind yourself to be dedicated to serving God?
(have the campers notice that on the door frame of their cabin is mounted a small cross to help remind them whether they are coming or going they are to love and serve the Lord.)

Transition Questions

1. Can you think of someone who loves God with all their heart, soul, and might?
2. What are some ways that person has showed their love for God?

A look At The Life Of Mary The Mother Of Jesus

As we look at the life of Mary we can see a woman that dedicated herself to serving God and others. Her life is a model of what serving as a way of life might look like.

Mary of Nazareth was a Jewish peasant girl. She lived in a world in which about 70% of people were peasant farmers. She worked hard at a range of tasks, and she loved and looked after her family. The small, conservative town of Nazareth had a population of no more than 400.

Mary probably knew everyone in the town, especially the women with whom she worked and lived. Mary and other women in her family had the responsibility of farming any land that the family owned.

Mary would have known the Jewish Scriptures, especially the stories and prayers in them, and been aware of the women in these stories, many of them favorite role models. Mary probably knew the stories and prayers by heart, rather than by reading them.

There were three main social levels in Mary's world: the rich, who were usually landowners and/or entrepreneurs; the poor, who worked on the land or at a variety of trades; and the destitute, who had neither land nor job, and who survived by begging. Mary and her family belonged to the middle group.

As a very young teenaged girl the angel Gabriel told her that she would be the mother of God's Son who would come to save the world. After hearing this news Mary went to visit one of her relatives – Elizabeth. On returning from her trip to see Elizabeth Mary and Joseph dedicated themselves to serving God by raising Jesus. They traveled a long distance to Bethlehem to pay their taxes, and while on that trip Mary gave birth to Jesus. There is not a lot information given about the life of Mary during the time that Jesus was a child until he was about 12 years old. In Luke 2:43-52 we read about Jesus leaving his parents and going to the temple talking with the teachers in the temple.

Have the campers read Luke 2:43-52

Reflection Questions

1. After three days of searching for Jesus, Mary found Jesus in the temple. What did Mary say to Jesus when they found him? (*“Child why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.”*)
2. What does Mary's reaction tell us about her relationship to Jesus?

One of the most vivid images we are given of Mary is during the crucifixion of Jesus. Here we find her at the foot of Christ's Cross.

Have the campers read John 19:25

1. How do we see dedication to service in this passage?
(*Mary at this point continues to love Christ by loving Christ's disciple*)
2. If we are following the example of Mary loving Christ by loving others, who is it that Christ would want us to love?
(*Have the campers think of people in there own life that Christ has brought into their own lives to love*)

Mary's service can not be defined by one specific project or event that she did, rather Mary's service was the way that she lived her life. She was dedicated to loving everyone. She did the little things that made a difference. Things like everyday chores, and treating others with respect. These are things that you and I can do to make a difference in someone's life.

A Look At The Life Of Mother Teresa

Soon after, on January 6, 1929, at the age of 19, she arrived in Calcutta, India to teach at a school for girls. While in Calcutta, she was moved by the presence of the sick and dying on the city's streets. On September 10, 1946, on the long train ride to Darjeeling where she was to go on a retreat and to recover from suspected tuberculosis, something happened. Mother Teresa recalls: "I realized that I had

the call to take care of the sick and the dying, the hungry, the naked, the homeless - to be God's Love in action to the poorest of the poor. That was the beginning of the Missionaries of Charity."

She didn't hesitate, she didn't question. She asked permission to leave the Loreto congregation and to establish a new order of sisters. In 1952 Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity began the work for which they have been noted ever since. Mother Teresa founded the home for the Dying, which she named "Pure Heart". She and her fellow nuns gathered dying people off the streets of Calcutta and brought them to this home to care for them during the days before they died.

Mother Teresa's first orphanage was started in 1953, while in 1957 she and her Missionaries of Charity began working with lepers. In the years following, her homes have been established in hundreds of locations in the world.

Following a prolonged illness, Mother Teresa passed away on September 5, 1997.

Mother Teresa said "As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus." This quote give us a idea of how dedicated Mother Teresa was to serving others and loving God.

Have the campers read John 3:16

Mother Teresa believed that God's love for the world didn't stop with the sending of God's Son Jesus. She said "God still loves the world and He sends you and me to be His love and His compassion to the poor."

Reflective Questions

1. What do you think Mother Teresa meant when she said "God still loves the world and He sends you and me to be His love and His compassion..."?
2. What are some ways that you can live a dedicated life of service like Mother Teresa did?
(this is not a focus on the miraculous things she did, but rather the everyday way of life that she lived. Help the campers to connect with Mother Teresa as a person not the saint)

Wrap Up

We look at the lives of these two women, Mary and Mother Teresa, and it is easy to think there is no way that I can make as big of an impact as they did. They were amazing people that dedicated their entire lives the service of God, and through that service they accomplished so much.

As a little girl Mary didn't think to herself – I hope some day I can be the mother of the one who saves the world. Mother Teresa didn't set a goal to serve thousands of people. They both dedicated themselves to loving and serving God. They both started with the opportunities that God gave them, and then made that service a way of life. They both did the little things in order to accomplish the big picture.

1. What opportunities has God given you to serve?
2. What will you have to do in order to dedicate yourself to service?
(this can range from making a lifestyle change to a simple act of service)

E. ADDITIONAL STUDY IDEAS

If the campers are not connecting with the stories of Mary and Mother Teresa, ask them to think of examples of service they have seen while they are at camp. Ask them about people in their own lives that live a life of service, and what makes them stand out as someone that is dedicated to service.

For more advanced groups you may talk about how the understanding of God loving us first compels us to a life of service. Does it make a difference to serve with the understanding that we are serving God through our acts of service and not just the people that we are serving? Matthew 25:34-40

F. IDEAS TO INCORPORATE THEME THROUGHOUT THE DAY

The Bracelets that are given throughout the week that represent ways in which we have served, can be collected during the cabin devotional time, and placed in a bowl. Putting all the bracelets in the bowl will show what an impact that the community has had. There will then be a cross placed in the center of the room with the campers seated in a circle around it. The bowl of bracelets representing those acts of service will be placed at the bottom of the cross. The students will then go around the circle taking a bracelet from the bowl and placing it on the cross a complete this sentence: I can be a servant by ...

Meals are a great time to live out the life of a servant. Help the students to see needs and meet them (doing KP when it is not their turn, asking others how they are, listening to others stories, ...)

Help students realize what living every day as a servant might look like. Look for ways that your campers are serving each other and publicly affirm them when they are doing those acts. This will help them to realize that the little acts of service matter.

Today we are focusing on service as a way of life and the small things that we can do everyday to make service a part of the everyday. Have your campers find ways to make other campers day better. Take hot chocolate to another cabin, post encouraging notes on another cabins door, commit to asking 5 other campers outside of your village how they are doing and listen to their story...

Morning & Evening Worship Ideas

- Incorporate the idea of service into the service
 - o Foot washing
 - o Have the campers serve each other communion
 - o Serve hot chocolate

G. OTHER SONGS, STORIES THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Songs from the camp song sheet

- ⊕ Love Round (Deuteronomy 6:5)
- ⊕ Sanctuary
- ⊕ Casual Christian
- ⊕ Step By Step
- ⊕ I'll Do My Best
- ⊕ They Will Know We Are Christians

H. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY DOWN FOR JUNIORS

Help make the idea of a life of service very practical for this age group. Have them think of ways that their parents serve them on a daily basis (cook meals, drive them places, wash their clothes, encourage them, ...) After they have thought about ways others serve them, turn it around. Ask them how they might serve others on a daily basis. This may be harder for them to think of. The idea of this question is once again to drive home the idea that service is a way of life not a project we do. Help them to think about this as they answer.

I. IDEAS TO ADJUST STUDY UP FOR SR HIGHS

Sr. High students should really begin to understand what is mean to serve as a way of life.

1. Who are some examples of people in their life that live a life of service.
2. Explain why you think that person's life is defined by service.
3. Can your life be defined through service, and if not what kind of changes must you make to work in that direction.

J. PARENT DEVOTIONAL

We often mistake living a life of service with completing a project of service. Being dedicated to service goes way beyond the project, to how we live out our daily lives. Service is making a decision to be dedicated to our neighbor on a daily basis, not because it feels good, but because of the love that God has given us.

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Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Have the members of your family each share ways that they see the other members of the family loving God. This can be a great time of affirmation for all.

Talk about ways that you can be more focused on service as a family, and do

Closing prayer

Lord, help us be dedicated to serving and loving you. We know that you love us more than we can understand. Help us to live with an awareness of the needs of those around us. Help us to act with compassion when we see others in need, and give us the courage to serve you in all situations. Lord, help us to dedicate ourselves to your service. Help us to be the ones that others look to when they want to see you. Amen.