

Put Others First

Quarter 8 • Lesson 7

Focus on Character Development

1. *Connecting*: Do an activity about pushing others out of the way.
2. *Teaching*: Hear a story about putting others first (Mark 10:35–45).
3. *Responding*: Make a plan to serve others by putting them first.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse Poster
- *The Action Bible*, image of Jesus with his disciples
- Paper
- Crayons
- Student Pages
- Pencils

Teacher Devotion

*Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,
and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.*

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Mark 10:43–45

When Jesus came to earth as the Messiah, He was not what anyone expected. They thought the Messiah would be a king who would rule like all other kings. But Jesus turned their expectations upside down. He was a king who served instead of waiting to be served.

Do you wait to be served or do you care for those in need? How can you live in a way that turns the world's expectations upside down? Think of a practical way that you can put others' needs before your own. Ask Jesus to help you see and respond to others as He does.

Family Connection: Tell families that this week their children will learn about putting others first. Encourage the families to think of ways they can serve each other this week.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Do an activity about pushing others out of the way.

Start by asking these questions. Allow 2–3 different children to briefly answer each question. Share your own answers to each question as well.

- **Raise your hand if someone showed you love by helping you this week. What did this person do that was helpful to you?**
- **Raise your hand if you showed someone love by helping them this week. What did you do that was helpful?**
- **How did it make you feel to help someone else?**

Have the children divide into 2 groups—1 for boys and 1 for girls. Have each group squeeze into the smallest circle as they can. Choose a child to stand in the centre of each group. Tell that centre child to try to push his way out of the group. The child cannot hurt anyone while he does this. The other children will try to prevent him from pushing out. They cannot hurt anyone either.

When the centre children get out of the groups, or after about 2 minutes, ask the children to sit down to talk about the activity.

- **Those who were in the centre, how did it make you feel to push others out of your way?**
- **Those who were in the circle, how did it make you feel to be pushed out of the way?**

In this game, the centre people were pushing physically because that was the activity. But sometimes people push each other out of the way for other reasons. Sometimes they may push people out of the way emotionally because they are being selfish or are frightened. Pushing others out of the way can also mean ignoring other people's needs in order to get what you want. It can mean ignoring or putting others down so that you can look important.

- **Why do you think people push each other out of the way, both physically and in other ways?**

Answers might include: wanting something that the other person has, wanting to feel important, or thinking only of themselves.

2. Teaching: Hear a story about putting others first (Mark 10:35–45).

Optional: If possible, share the image from The Action Bible.

Teacher Tip: When children come from difficult circumstances such as poverty or broken homes, putting others first may be a very new and strange idea to them. They may have survived by looking out for themselves. Pray that God will speak to their hearts during this lesson.

During Jesus' ministry on earth, a couple of His disciples did something that was like pushing their way to the front of a group. They did not physically push anyone, but they wanted to be more important and powerful than the other disciples. Listen to what happened.

James and John wanted to be the most important disciples. These 2 brothers went to Jesus and said, "When You rule Your own kingdom, we want You to let us sit right next to you. One of us will sit on Your left side and the other on Your right side."

What the brothers were really saying is, “We want to be honoured and important. We want to be more important than any of the other disciples.”

Jesus knew that James and John did not understand what His kingdom is like. It is not a kingdom of earthly power, like the Roman Empire was. It is a kingdom where those who love Jesus serve God by living and doing things His way. Jesus told James and John that God, the Father, was the One who would decide who would be honoured in His kingdom.

Jesus then called all the disciples together to talk about what had happened. Let’s read directly from the Bible to find out what Jesus said. Jesus often referred to Himself as the “Son of Man.”

Read Mark 10:42–45 from your Bible.

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:42–45

In these verses, Jesus said that the leaders in God’s kingdom should think and act differently than other leaders. Ordinarily leaders want to be first. They want to have power. They want to be in front.

- How are leaders in God’s kingdom different than other leaders?

They serve others instead of looking to be served.

Unlike other leaders, those who lead in God’s kingdom know they are not the most important—God is. They know God deserves the honour—not them. They are not first—God is.

Jesus and His disciples travelled and lived together. Jesus wanted His disciples to love each other, just like He wants us to love each other. He wanted them to serve each other instead of trying to think of ways they could be served. Wow! This is a whole new way of living.

Many Christians show their love for God by serving Him and serving other people. Listen to the story of a man named Abraham. This true story took place in India. It is not a Bible story, even though the man has the same name as an important Bible leader. As I tell the story, think of all the ways this man named Abraham shows his love for God by serving others. Maybe someday God will call you to do what Abraham is doing.

Abraham was born into a Hindu family. Hindus do not believe in the Christian God but worship many other gods. One holiday when Abraham was a boy, he went to a vacation Bible school. There he learned about the One True God—the God of the Bible. He learned that God loves him, and he became a Christian. Abraham started going to a Sunday school and telling people, “Now I am a Christian.”

When Abraham was an adolescent, his father died. Abraham became angry with God. “Why would God let my father die?” he thought. “God does not love me. I am not sure there even is a God.”

As Abraham was turning away from God, his mother, sister, and uncle were choosing to follow God. His uncle said to Abraham, "I know you are having a hard time. But I want you to go to Bible school before you make the final decision that God does not exist."

Abraham did not want to go 800 kilometres away from his village to the big city of Hyderabad. But because he respected and honoured his uncle, he went. Slowly he came back to God. "I realized that a God who would allow His own Son to die for my sins was big enough to guide me through life," he said. He was almost sure God was real, but he prayed, "Please, God, show me a sign."

God did. God came to Abraham in a dream and told him, "I am Your God. I want you to love Me. I want you to serve Me as a preacher." Abraham's doubts vanished. He responded first by preaching in his home village and then by moving to a neighbouring state.

Today Abraham is a pastor in the city of Hyderabad. There he helps meet peoples' physical and spiritual needs. He shows the love of Jesus by putting other people first. "I am amazed at how God used a little Hindu boy who was searching for Him," Abraham said. "I believe that in just 6 years, God will let me serve 1,000 people at this church. I love Him, and I am so very happy that He allows me to serve Him."

- How is Abraham showing His love for Jesus by serving others?

Teacher Tip: Pray for Pastor Abraham. He is a real pastor who is spending his life serving others and showing his love for Jesus.

Share with your children how teaching them allows you to grow in your love of God. Perhaps you pray more or have grown in understanding the Father's heart for people.

3. Responding: Make a plan to serve others by putting them first.

Read Galatians 5:13b to the children. If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

Serve one another humbly in love.

Galatians 5:13b

Ask your children to turn to their neighbours and repeat the verse to them.

- Using your own words, explain what this verse means.

Call on 2–3 children to share their ideas. If needed, explain that the writer is telling Christians to put each other first with a loving attitude.

Some of you may have had to look out for yourselves in order to survive. Perhaps you had to find your own food because your parents did not earn enough money to buy food for the family. Or maybe you had to learn to stay safe by yourself because there was no one around to care for you when you were young. God knows this. He sees your needs. He wants to meet your needs.

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,
Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.*

Philippians 2:3

God wants each of us to put others first, not just look out for our own selfish interests. This week I have a fun secret assignment for all of you. I want you to look for 10 people you can put first and serve in love before we meet again. But you cannot tell anyone why you are serving them! Your service can be simple things. You could help someone carry water. You could stop what you are doing to listen to a friend who is sad or upset. You could allow someone to go before you or give someone the last piece of something to eat. Next week we will start by sharing some of the ways you found to put others first and serve them in love.

Optional Supplies:

Give each child a piece of paper and crayons. Tell them to carefully tear their papers into 3 pieces. Explain that they will make 3 cards that say, "I want to serve you." They will carry the cards with them all week. When they have an opportunity to put someone first and serve her, they should give a card to that person after they have served her. Next week they can share their stories with the class.

End of Option

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, the children can do an activity on them about serving others.

Close class by praying this blessing from Philippians 2:3 over the children.

Blessing: May Jesus help you to put away selfish things so you can put others first!

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

"My Lighthouse" by Rend Collective: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HA8VtUPgqTc>