

# Faith2Go

## We Love You

### Mission

To enable children to become disciples of Jesus by giving them opportunities to outreach to people who may not know and love the Jesus they serve.

To enable them to find their special gifts and experience the profound joy that comes from living their faith in loving service.

To encourage, equip and empower families to live their faith and serve together with their children.

- Reveal God's grace by meeting physical needs.
- Give the invitation to become a part of the family of God.
- Take a message of hope for the future.

**"It seems people don't necessarily remember what they are told of God's love, but they never forget what they have experienced of God's love."**

**Steve Sjogren**

### Scriptural Mandate

"Jesus came not to be served, but to serve." Matthew 20-28

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before hand . . ." Ephesians 2:10

"Having then gifts according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them."  
Romans 12:6-8

"As each one has received a gift, minister to one another as good stewards . . . that in all things God may be glorified." 1 Peter 4:10-11

"You will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere -- in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

## Service Makes a Difference

### Involvement in service connects children to God.

- Involving kids in serving at an early age is the most effective thing that we can do to retain them when they are older." Larry Fowler, "Rock Solid Kids.
- As (families) serve together, they gain a deeper understanding of one another and God. They find their faith more resilient and meaningful. Their children develop a faith that helps them stick to the church and to their beliefs into young adulthood. *Diana Garland, Inside Out Families, p.11*
- Surveys show that those involved in service to their community reported that they prayed, attended worship services and gave significantly more than those not involved in service. *ibid, p.42*
- Search Institute found that involvement in family service projects during childhood and adolescence has a powerful impact on growth of faith. *ibid p.46*
- Children learn to depend on God as they see Him at work in their lives – a closeness with God.
- Service gives children a sense of purpose and meaning.
- It gives opportunities to take on new responsibilities and teaches the value of completing tasks and teaches how to work with people of all ages.
- It teaches leadership skills and respect for the church and for others.
- It allows children to take what they have learned about God and apply it to real-life situations.
- It gives opportunities to work alongside and debrief with significant adults who can model faith help them incorporate it into their lives.
- Faith can grow in one-shot service opportunities – serving food to homeless, collecting toys and groceries. But the Christian faith is strengthened much more in service opportunities that allow people to develop

relationships with one another. A portion of time, week after week over a long period of time. *Diana Garland, Inside Out Families, p.44*

### **Childhood experiences influence how likely they are to volunteer as adults.**

- Children who serve become adults who serve.
- Adults who can remember as a child (5-12 years) doing something for others with their parents, show significantly higher faith scores than those who cannot remember being involved in this way." *Merton P. Strommen*
- A study by Wymer (1999) found that values learned in childhood serve as a stimulus for volunteering. Participants talked about having parental role models and observing the joys that they saw in their parents. *Jane Carr, Nurturing Children's Spirituality, p202*
- Participants in a 2002 Girl Guide study noted growing up around volunteering and the influence family members had on them. *Schoenberg, Pryor & Hart, 2003, ibid.*

Adults who volunteered as children give more money and volunteer more time than adults who began serving later in life.

- Two-thirds of adult volunteers began serving as children.
  - Those who volunteer as children are twice as likely to volunteer as those who don't.
  - Across incomes and age groups, those who volunteered as children give and volunteer more than those who didn't.
  - Those who volunteered as youth and whose parents volunteered became the most generous adults when it comes to giving their time.
- Gordon West [www.kidZatheart.org](http://www.kidZatheart.org)

### **What Kids Say**

- "Serving makes me look forward to coming to church."
- "I enjoy knowing that I am helping God."
- "Since I've been serving I've rededicated my life to Christ."
- "I just wanted to do something for others rather than just doing things for myself."

- “I want everyone to know about God. Don’t you?”  
Jane Carr, Nurturing Children’s spirituality, p207

## Service at Home

It's not as exciting as a mission trip to Africa, but contributing at home is truly the foundation for a lifetime of service. The small acts of kindness done at home show that caring is a “natural” part of life. Here are ideas you can use to get kids serving at home.

- **Helper's Hints** - On slips of paper, have kids write or draw a picture of a way to serve each family member. Then place the slips in a decorated shoebox. For example, kids might write, "Make Mom's bed," "Give a hug," or "Do the dishes." Each morning kids can choose a slip of paper and use the "hint" to serve someone that day. Periodically have kids come up with new ideas to add to their boxes at home.
- **Flower Power** - Younger children can create six construction-paper flowers, while older kids may enjoy arranging six artificial flowers in a decorative plastic cup. Have kids write one way they'll serve their families on each flower. Kids can place the flowers at home where they'll see them every day and remember to serve.
- **Love Language** - Discuss with kids how service is doing what someone else needs, not simply doing what we like to do for others. Then ask kids to identify meaningful ways they can show love to their families. Have kids create a service plan for the following week and keep a short journal of people's reactions to their acts of service. Share reports the following week.
- **Service Celebration** - Challenge kids to complete one act of kindness for each family member during the week. In your classroom, have kids share ways they served their families so other kids get new ideas. Then serve the kids snacks as a celebration of their service.
- **Table Talk** – Use the service discussion starter card to talk with your family about how they can serve others.

## Service at Church

Provide opportunities for kids and their families to serve at church with these ideas.

- **Toy Wash** - Children can help your Beginners by washing toys. Pre-schoolers and preteens can work together to scrub plastic toys.
- **Birthday Party for Jesus** - Have an "after Christmas" party where children can give their gently used toys to your children's ministry or a shelter in honour of Jesus.
- **Family Workday** - Announce a workday for families at your church. Make a list of chores such as vacuuming, painting, gardening, or spring cleaning. Provide coffee, juice, and doughnuts. Create "To Do" and "Done" columns on a wall, and write instructions for each job on a sticky note. Post the notes on the "To Do" side. Families can choose their projects and celebrate by moving the sticky note to the "Done" column when they finish.
- **Upper Primaries/Juniors** – give children ownership by giving them a ministry position and allow them to work alongside adults as apprentices. Give them training opportunities and feedback.
- **"I'm Serving God" Buttons** - Have kids design buttons that say, "I'm serving God!" Discuss the various ways people serve in your church, then have children thank these people with a handmade button. Give every child a button, too, as you celebrate their service at church.
- **Connection Point** - As families walk into your church, and are greeted, but kids are often bypassed or overlooked. Set up a roster and train your kids specifically to connect with other kids and welcome them. Prep kids with friendly conversation starters such as, "What's your school like?" or, "What's your favourite TV show?" Each week, have two or three kids rotate serving at the connection point. Encourage greeters to ask other kids their names and to introduce themselves. Greeters can give visiting kids a small gift from your ministry, and then walk with kids and their families to the appropriate ministry area.
- **Read Me a Story** - Kids who love to read can share that love while serving younger kids with this idea. Invite older kids in your children's ministry to read a children's Bible story aloud to younger children in Beginner or Kindergarten. Coach readers to point out illustrations as they read, speak

clearly and with enthusiasm, share their favourite parts of each situation, and invite little ones to share their favourite parts, too. Let your readers introduce themselves to the little ones and say what they love best about reading. Then let them dive in to the Bible. Close each reading session with a prayer of thanks for God's Word.

## Service in the Community

Seventy-three percent of kids believe they can make a difference in their communities. We only need to provide opportunities for children to act on this belief. Try these opportunities.

- **Backyard games and crafts** – Help your children organise weekly or monthly activities for the children in your neighbourhood.
- **Hospitality** – Include your family preparing food and inviting neighbours and their children to your home for a meal or afternoon tea.
- **Volunteer to read.** Libraries and schools are always looking for volunteer readers. Offer to staff your public library's reading hour with families from your church, or encourage kids to help younger readers at their schools outside regular classes.
- **Make birthday cards** and or gifts for people in your neighbourhood and nursing homes.
- **Be a good neighbour.** Older kids can help neighbours by weeding, mowing, painting, house-sitting, or pet-sitting. Pre-schoolers enjoy leaving flowers or handmade cards on doorsteps.
- **Give something special.** Encourage families to clean closets by giving gently used clothing and toys directly to less fortunate families or organizations supporting families in need.
- **Car Wash** - Wash car windshields for free. A Bible scripture can be left under wiper blades when finished.
- **Activity bags** – Create activity bags for hospitalised children.
- **Free water bottles** with a scripture text at community events.
- **Snack Attack** - Identify nearby parks and sports fields, and recruit enough parent volunteers to have one adult per five kids who can visit the park as a group. Arm each group with individually wrapped snacks such as cereal

bars, popsicles, or fruit snacks, or juice boxes. Pack the snacks in a box for each group with a sign that reads, "Free Snacks from the kids at (your ministry's name)." Have kids meet at your church. Start with a prayer, asking God to help kids meet the people he wants them to, and then head out to the parks and fields. Encourage kids to chat with their newfound acquaintances by asking questions such as their names, favourite sports, or what schools they attend as they distribute snacks. This "just because" act of kindness can help befriend neighbours and opens the door for inviting families to church or to an upcoming family or children's ministry event.

- **Toy Drive** - Kids in your ministry can sponsor seasonal toy drives several times throughout the year to collect specific, new seasonal items. Contact community agencies that supply children's needs such as a homeless shelter, women's safe house, law enforcement, social services, and your fire department. Ask for their wish lists of items that would directly help. Once the collection time is up, have kids gather the items and place stickers on them that say, "Just to make you smile! From the kids at (your church/ministry name)." Before you take your kids to deliver the toys to the community agencies, pray for the children who'll receive each item.
- **Bear Hugs** - This special outreach gives your kids an opportunity to comfort children in crisis. Having soft, lovable cuddles to give to kids in seriously stressful situations is meaningful not only to the child but the emergency responders as well. Collect new soft bears from children and adults at church. During your children's and adult worship services, invite people to bring up their bears. After the animals are up front, have your senior pastor pray that the gifts so lovingly given will bless hurting children in your community. At the end of your services, kids can box up the stuffed animals and help you deliver them to a local police station or fire department.
- **Help the Local Environment**
  - Plant a flower garden at a senior home and/or clean up a yard.
  - Clean up a park, or beach or parking lot.
  - Organise a recycling of books

## Serving World Missions

- A short mission trip within or outside your country or outside with at least one parent provides a shared experience that build faith.
- Encourage children to start an investment project to save money to help missions.
- Encourage children to learn about and support children around the world in their mission offering.
- Work through aid agencies to help needy children and people.
- ADRA [www.adra.org.au/](http://www.adra.org.au/)
- Asian Aid [www.asianaid.org.au/](http://www.asianaid.org.au/)
- International Children's Care [www.iccaustralia.org.au/](http://www.iccaustralia.org.au/)
- World Vision [www.worldvision.com.au/](http://www.worldvision.com.au/)
- Red Cross [www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au)

## Planning Tips

- Start small and keep it simple.
- Survey your church and community to see what the needs are.
- Pray, Pray, Pray. Before setting up times and dates for children to serve.
- Encourage parents and other adults to serve alongside the children.
- Ensure that you have enough supervisors.
- Communicate well with the children and families so that they understand the expectations and reasons for the service
- Debrief afterwards, talking through what was successful, what were the challenges and what you could improve next time.

## Supporting Resources

- GraceLink  
Sabbath School Curriculum
- Daily Bites – Share Jesus  
Faith2Go Commissioning
- Pathfinder Curriculum
- Adventurer Curriculum

