

FAST for CHANGE



CHILDREN'S FEATURES & CONVERSATIONS

The Giving Chain

Theme: “Whoever serves me must follow me.” (John 12:26)

We want our children to understand that God calls each and every one of us to follow in the way of Jesus. “To follow” means to share who we are and what we have with other people. God gives each of us the ability and the heart to do important things that make a difference. We can learn to be open to Jesus’ leading so that we can follow and serve him faithfully!

You will need:

- Sheets of construction paper cut into strips
- A pair of scissors
- Tape
- Several markers

Step 1 Begin creating a giving chain — have children brainstorm (and adults too!) ways we can and do serve others. You could ask a question like this: “What can/do we do to serve others — as individuals, as a church, as Christians, as families, etc.?”

Step 2 As people brainstorm, invite older children/youth to write ideas down on strips of construction paper (one idea for each strip of paper). Write down 5 or 6 ideas. (You may want to have a few ideas tucked into the back of your mind to get the wheels turning.) After people have finished brainstorming, add one of your own ideas — an example of what our church is doing (perhaps through your local relief and development agency) to serve others.

Step 3 While talking with children about how God calls us to serve him by following in Jesus’ way, begin linking the chain together.

- Talk about how Jesus always reached out to other people — was always there to listen and share and help and be a friend.
- Talk about how God uses each and every one of us to show God’s love throughout the entire world. This chain is an example of how we can show love by following in the way of Jesus.
- These ideas that we’ve come up with here... these are only the beginning! God helps us discover many ways to serve and to be disciples. We just need to ask God.

Step 4 Give a blank strip of construction paper to each child and invite them to think and pray this week about a way they can serve God by serving someone. (Provide some ideas — sharing, showing love, etc.) Encourage children to bring their paper chain link back next week with their thoughts written on it. Explain that you will add to the chain during next week’s children’s focus.

Step 5 Pray together.

Step 6 Consider displaying your chain in the sanctuary.

The following week:

Step 7 Make sure you have extra blank strips of construction paper available the following week. (Some people may forget their chain link, or will not have been present the previous Sunday.) Before worship begins, invite people to write something on a chain link. (You could even include links and instructions in the bulletin and have children collect them during children's time and add them to the growing chain.)

Step 8 Celebrate how the chain has grown and in turn how amazing God is because we were helped to learn how to follow in Jesus' way, by loving, caring and reaching out to others.

— The Rev. Jennifer Donnelly, Family and Youth Ministries, Armour Heights Church, Toronto., and published in ***Believe It! God's Riches are Here***, published by the **Presbyterian World Service & Development**, www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and a member of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.