



FAMILY
EMPOWERED
EVENT

SERVE



COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

inspire. equip. support.®

FAMILY EMPOWERED EVENT: SERVE

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Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 6NT, England

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INSPIRE, EQUIP, SUPPORT

INSPIRE

Many churches participate in an annual “serve day,” a time where church leaders prepare local service opportunities for the body to participate in. Tasks often include washing cars, cleaning houses, and painting places deemed “local eyesores.” But, unfortunately, when the day ends, the serving ends as well. Many leaders are left to wonder how they are creating a culture of serving in their faith community when it’s just one day a year.

How can leaders empower their people to flex their faith muscles and serve on their own? Families, with a little bit of coaching and encouragement, can actually create their own serve experience and ask God how He might want them to serve in their communities ... not just for one day, but as a lifestyle. It’s riskier in some ways. The question of whether or not families will rise to the challenge enters every leader’s mind. Will they dare to actually take service into their own hands, after years of having the church create opportunities for them? Though it may not be easy at first, it’s a risk worth taking! Many church families are beginning to have their faith stretched in ways beyond their comprehension. Not only are they challenged to lead serving within their homes, they’re challenged to change their entire lifestyle to include a posture of serving.

EQUIP

The posture of serving comes from a life wholly submitted and sacrificed to God. In Romans 12:1, Paul exhorts, “offer your bodies as living sacrifices.” This is true and proper worship. To offer one’s body as a sacrifice is about more than simply giving the physical being—it’s about submitting the entire person: mind, body, and soul (Wiersbe, 2007). God doesn’t want a portion of our devotion; He wants all of us to be fully surrendered to Him.

As “living sacrifices,” we are a stark contrast to the sacrifices made in the Old Testament, which were done through ritual and tradition. Instead of sacrificing a pure and spotless animal, we are to continually present ourselves to God as living representations of His redemption (Guzik, 2006). Our response to God’s grace and goodness is to give Him our full lives, seeking to honor and please Him with all that we are. It involves an intentional surrender of our will to God’s. This is described as our “spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1). As we submit our lives to God, He will transform us to be more like Jesus (Wiersbe, 2007). This act of sacrifice isn’t a one-time thing; rather, it’s an entire lifestyle of submission and denial of the self in order to offer a life as worship to God and His greater purposes.

Sources

Wiersbe, Warren W. 2007. “Right Relationships Mean Right Living.” In *The Wiersbe Commentary of the New Testament*, 441-442. Colorado Springs: David C Cook.

Guzik, David. 2006. “Study Guide for Romans 12.” *Enduring Word. Blue Letter Bible*. http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7993&commInfo=31&topic=Romans&ar=Rom_12_1.

SUPPORT

Leading a Family Empowered Event at your church can be enhanced by first having the experience yourself. To prepare for your church’s *Family Empowered Event: Serve*, set aside a day and do your own serve experience. Get your ministry team together and spend a day going through the Family Serve Packets together to get a taste of what you are calling your families to. By having your team walk through the serve experience, you will be able to better facilitate this time for your families.

PHILOSOPHY

The goal of a Family Empowered Event is to put ministry back into the hands of the family, decentralizing it from a building and/or the resources parents can become dependent on within the context of the church. Rather than directing every activity for families, we can provide them with questions and tools so they can lead an experience on their own. Our desire is that this experience will allow family members to “flex their faith muscles” so serving can become something that naturally flows from their lives.

WHY SERVE?

Serving is a powerful part of how we respond to God. If we consistently “take in” without “giving out,” how does our faith get stretched? How are we able to be a part of the work God is already doing in the world around us? Serving asks the question, “What needs to be done?” This other-focused question is utterly counterintuitive to the me-centered culture we live in. But, as Christ followers, we are called to respond to the needs around us and offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God, willing to give ourselves away to others. If we, as a family, as a church, would ask this question more often, how different would our homes and our communities look?

WHAT IS IN THIS RESOURCE?

This resource includes three different serve options that you as a church can help facilitate for your families to experience together. The goal is to equip families with the tools, but empower them to lead and guide their own serve experience, with the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Though each option is rooted in the same basic principle of a Family Empowered Event, the variations will give your church options to best fit the specific needs of your families. We have also provided you with other materials to help promote this event and share it with your community. You will find these materials in the Resources Folder.

Included

- *This Coordinator’s Guide*
- *Introduction video for families*
- *Family Serve Packets for three different options*
- *Promotional, instructional, and follow-up materials*

THREE OPTIONS

OPTION 1: GATHER AND SERVE

This option begins and ends at the church. The church will serve as a launching pad where families gather together and are inspired for the day to come. They will be given a Family Serve Packet with instructions on how to serve together. Each family will take the rest of the afternoon to go out, pray, discover, and participate in the needs in their community. Then, after 2-5 hours, families will re-gather at the church and share stories of their experiences. This option is ideal for a church that comes from a “serve day” background. It allows for the familiar feel of beginning at the church, but still empowers families to listen to the Holy Spirit as they set out to ask, “What needs to be done?” It’s also a great way for single parents and children who may not be a part of a spiritual family to attach to another family and share in the experience.

OPTION 2: SERVE AND CELEBRATE

This option begins in the home and is fun because it’s cloaked in mystery. Families will receive an envelope marked “DO NOT OPEN UNTIL (event date),” and they will anxiously wait until the designated day before they can open it. The entire community is commissioned to set aside a certain day, and a certain number of hours on that day in order to serve, even though they won’t know the specifics. This option gives families the freedom to serve as many hours during the day as they are comfortable with. It also ends with a gathering for celebration. You can meet back at the church or a local park, and we suggest a potluck or some kind of dessert night where families can come together and storytell the adventures of their serve experiences. This option has great potential because it not only allows for flexibility within a family unit, but it also encourages the faith community to come back together and celebrate what God has done.

OPTION 3: SERVE MONTH AND STORYTELL

This option allows for the most flexibility of all the options. Instead of designating a specific day and time for your serve experience, your church will declare a “Serve Month”—an entire month dedicated to serving and asking the question “What needs to be done?” Serve packets will go out to families and be available for the entire month. Families will choose, based on their own schedule, the best day for them to serve together. Storytelling Walls will be placed in the church where families will be able to contribute their stories and pictures from their serve experience. This option is useful because it allows busy families to choose when they can serve together. Storytelling Walls are also a great way to creatively and artistically display stories of God’s work in people’s lives and spur other families to join in on the fun.

For this option, you will want to reserve a date with your church and your families months in advance. Advertise for your families to meet at the church on the designated date at the appointed time, and have them block off several hours that day to meet, serve, and come back to the church for storytelling.