



**LOVE IN ACTION
(Children's Story/Parable)**

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Often we talk about the fact that kids should and could serve, but we don't really help them understand how to do that or provide opportunities in which they can participate. This week's story could be made very personal to your church if you spend a bit of time preparing a 'member list' of things that folks in your church need that children can be a part of providing.

In advance write these individual ideas/needs on 3x5 cards or small sticky notes and attach them to a 'helping hand' poster or other display. These notes may contain ideas such as mowing lawns, shoveling snow, grocery shopping, stopping by for a visit at home or in the nursing home, bringing baked goods, reading with someone, folding laundry, making beds, sitting with someone in church, adopting a grandparent, etc. The ideas are limitless.

Share with your children that our church is made up of many kinds of people - family members - with all kinds of different challenges, difficulties, pain, and problems and that Jesus says it is our special privilege to help each other. No one is too little to help, if they want to. But before we can be of any help, we have to know each other and what the family needs are.

Tell the children that you have spent a little time investigating just what would make some members of the family feel more loved. Let people read the needs or share some of them with the children. Ask the children to think about which one of these folks they would like to bless and then invite them to go back to their places with their grownups and talk about which 'card' or 'note' they will choose off the board. Tell them that the display will be placed in the foyer (or other common area), and as they leave church, they and their parents can choose which family member they will serve this week.

Close with prayer, asking God to give us sharing hearts and hands to love other members in our church family.

IF you want to provide a list of service opportunities to your Sabbath School classes, pathfinders or teen groups, following are a list of ideas for getting kids involved in service and nurturing.

Use these 34 ideas to help your children's group get busy and share the love of

Christ with others:

1. Collect old cellular phones and ink jet printer cartridges. Recycle the phones and cartridges, and donate the money you are reimbursed to missions. (See www.phoneraiser.com for more information.)
2. Purchase a gift from Heifer International to help families around the world become self-reliant. (See www.heifer.org for more information.)
3. Plant individual flowering plants in pots. Deliver them to a long-term care facility for senior adults.*
4. Use fabric paint to decorate new pillowcases. Include encouraging Bible verses and bright pictures. Deliver or mail the pillowcases to a children's hospital.*
5. Provide free babysitting for local families. Plan games, crafts, and a special snack for children who attend.
6. Lead children to prepare muffins and fruit cups. Deliver them to a local school for teachers to enjoy.
7. Offer free windshield washes at a gas station.*
8. Collect bottles of shampoo and soap to donate to a women's shelter.*
9. Collect and sort children's clothes, and donate them to a children's home.
10. Make cards to be sent overseas to military personnel who need a word of encouragement.
11. Assign each child a country to research. Have children decorate 11-by-17-inch sheets of construction paper to represent their assigned countries. Cover the construction paper with clear contact paper. Use the artwork as place mats at Wednesday night dinner tables.
12. Have children meet together to send out post cards and emails and make phone calls to individuals and families who have recently visited your church.
13. Collect new board games and puzzles to send to missionary kids (MKs) who are serving with their parents.
14. Collect new and gently used children's shoes that can be sent to children in need. (See www.soles4souls.org for more information.)
15. Teach children how to pray for missionaries.
16. Incorporate a mission lesson into an after-church children's event.

17. Are there college students in your church that have been on mission trips? If so, invite them to share their mission experience with [GAs](#) and [Children in Action](#).

18. Use a witnessing how-to booklet to train children to share their faith. Have children practice sharing their faith with one another.

19. Distribute free bottles of water at a local park or sporting event. Design a label with information about your church and an invitation to come and worship to attach to each bottle.

20. Lead children to create door-hanger invitations to attend your worship services. Use foam door hangers from your local craft store. Allow the children to decorate the invitations using markers, stickers, glitter, and glue. Be sure they include times of worship on the door hanger. When the hangers are finished, hang them on doorknobs of neighborhood houses or in a multi-housing complex.

21. Pick up trash at a local park or schoolyard. Be sure to have plenty of gloves and trash bags on hand!

22. Fill a cooler with canned soft drinks. Hand them out to men and women who are working outdoors. Invite the workers to attend your next worship service.

23. Take donuts to your local police station or fire station. Encourage the men and women who are working there to attend worship services when their schedule allows.

24. Put together a special craft or toy box with small children's gifts and games for your church's next missions trip. Trip participants can distribute the goodies when they reach their destination. Search Web sites for craft ideas with supplies and directions that can be stored in zipper storage bags and distributed.

25. Have children distribute a daisy or carnation with a Scripture verse attached to everyone who enters a supermarket or discount store.

26. Collect gently used children's picture and chapter books. Design a label with a Bible verse to put on the inside cover of each book. Donate the books to a preschool, after-school program, or Boys & Girls Club[™].

27. Create a missions giving jar out of an old coffee can. Have kids cut pictures from old missions and travel magazines. Use a clear-drying decoupage lacquer to decoupage the pictures onto the can. Cut a slit in the top of the can using a craft knife. Encourage children to save their change for missions.

28. Use an audio recorder to record children reading the Bible aloud. Include their thoughts about what the verses mean to them. Share the recordings with senior adults in your church who may have trouble seeing the print in their Bibles.

29. Collect money to provide a new pillow or bed for an orphan. Visit www.sweetsleep.org to find out how to give an orphan a night of sweet dreams.
30. Lead children to cut out photographs of missionaries from mission magazines. Cover the cut outs with clear contact paper, and add a magnet to the back. Encourage the children to put the magnet on their refrigerator to remember to pray for the missionary each day.
31. Hold a free yard sale for expectant mothers. Collect baby clothes and toys. Have children help you sort the clothes by size and make sure all the toys are clean. Contact your local pregnancy support organization or [Christian Women's Job Corps®](#) to find mothers who are in need.
32. During a church business meeting, while the adults are busy making plans, guide the children to bake cookies for area business owners. Call it "Love Your Community" night. Your business meetings will have a very sweet smell!
33. Bring a bit of springtime indoors for senior adults in a long-term care facility. Have Girls in Action and Children in Action decorate grapevine wreaths with artificial springtime flowers and ribbon. Deliver the wreaths to nursing homes to be hung on patients' doors.