

# Giving and serving others

## What Does This Mean?

*Servants* were the hired hands and slaves of Jesus's time. Jesus took this word and gave it a new and radical meaning. He took a word that described a person under the authority of others and used it to redefine leadership and greatness. Christians call Jesus the "servant King" because he washed his disciples' feet and expected his followers to be willing to act similarly ([John 13:14-15](#)). Jesus made it clear that in the kingdom of God those who are greatest are those who serve God and others.

*One of the principal rules of religion is, to lose no occasion of serving God. And, since he is invisible to our eyes, we are to serve him in our neighbor; which he receives as if done to himself in person, standing visibly before us. John Wesley*

Giving is a strong motif in the Bible. John's gospel says that God loved the world so much that he gave his only son ([John 3:16](#)). God gave the world to humanity and provides for them; in return, God calls for generosity to others. Giving to the poor and needy is accepted as done to Christ ([Matthew 25:37-40](#)). Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Wealth is seen positively in the Bible when it is matched by generosity and not put before others and God. The Bible does not say that money is evil; it says people should not serve it or love it ([1 Timothy 6:10](#)). Riches should be gained honestly and justly and are to be put to use. With wealth comes a responsibility for others ([Deuteronomy 16:17](#)). The attitude of the Bible is summed up in Luke's gospel: we are not defined by what we own ([Luke 12:15](#)).

## What Does This Mean in School?

Students can look at different forms of giving in a variety of subjects—giving of wealth, self, time, and skills—and the difference this giving makes.

- Use examples of giving and serving where you can (e.g., in math).

- Create giving and serving role-play possibilities in play areas for young children, supplying gift bags and boxes.
- Create opportunities to give and serve in different ways as part of learning. A student might give of their skills or time to another student as part of learning.
- Use examples of people who serve (e.g., scientists who use their knowledge to serve others).
- Explore local projects that serve the community and relate them to student learning (e.g., an environmental project).
- Find appropriate ways to give status to serving in the school.

Think of a time when you experienced a student giving to you or serving you in some way. Identify a lesson or unit where you can change the framework to giving and serving. For example, a lesson on railroads can look at how transportation serves the community, and a geography survey of the local area can look at the services provided for a range of needs (physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual).



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