

Lesson 12 / May 18, 2008

Small Acts of Service Make a Big Difference

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 12 Focus:

No job is too small for
God's people.

Lesson 12 Bible Basis:

Acts 6:1-7

Students will compare small acts of service found in the Bible with acts of service demonstrated in Myanmar's recent crisis, and look for ways to gear their own lives toward service.

Crisis can strike anyone, anytime. Companies go bankrupt, people can lose their homes or their jobs, and school relationships can go sour. In those times, people need help from others.

 What is a crisis you have experienced?

 How did someone help you during it?

Anytime there's a big problem to be solved, there's usually an opportunity for small acts of service that seem small but really make a difference. One of the biggest problems recently is the cyclone that killed tens of thousands of people in a small Asian country called Myanmar about two weeks ago (starting May 1, 2008).

Here are some news stories that will help you summarize the Cyclone Nargis tragedy for your students:

Initial reports: http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=11716

Official death toll reaches 22,500:


<http://www.reuters.com/article/asiaCrisis/idUSBKK101308>

Detail report:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSBKK1919620080508?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0>

Estimates about damages and aid (U.N. says death toll may be closer to 100,000):

http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/05/09/myanmar/index.html?eref=rss_topstories

 What big problems do you think the people of Myanmar are having right now?

 What kinds of small acts of service do you think will be needed in order to help solve these problems?

 Do you think some of these acts of service will be messy, gross, dangerous, or difficult?

Lesson 12
Memory Verse

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

— Ephesians 4:16

- ▶ **Are there any acts of service that you could be involved in, even though Myanmar is halfway around the world?**

When the discussion dies down, move to Step 2, saying, **In the early church there was a chore that nobody wanted to do. And it took a few people who were willing to serve to make a difference for the church. Let's read about it.**

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*. Your Step 4 appears below.)

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Small Acts of Service Make a Big Difference

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STEP 4 

Lesson 12 Focus:

No job is too small for
God's people.

Lesson 12 Bible Basis:

Acts 6:1-7

Students will brainstorm ways that small acts of service could help in a real-world crisis. They'll finish today's meeting by actually taking part in a small act of service.

S ometime during the business week, call your church office and ask if there's any mundane task that the church staff could pass off to your students this week. It could be stuffing envelopes, taking out the trash, or putting away chairs. Basically, you'll need to talk someone into leaving one of their normal tasks undone so that your students can get a taste of a small—but totally necessary—act of service. You'll bring this up later in the lesson. For now, say to your students,

Today's Bible story involved a big problem and an opportunity to help with an act of service that seemed rather small.

Do you ever think about all the small acts of service that happen every week here in this church? Some of the people on the church staff do stuff that's not very fun or exciting, but it's necessary to keep the church running. This week, we're going to help out [fill in name of person who gave you the task to complete]. I want you to see what he/she does to serve the church because it will help you understand firsthand how important those small acts of service are.

Explain the task to be done and then participate with your students in accomplishing it. If there's time, discuss:

- ▶ **What would happen if *nobody* did the job we just did?**
- ▶ **Can you name some other acts of service that aren't glamorous, but still need to be done at our church?**
- ▶ **Do those things necessarily need to be done by the church staff? Could someone in the congregation do them sometimes? Could you do them sometimes?**

To live a life of service, we must constantly be on the lookout for acts of service—big or small. And the more we look for ways to serve, the more opportunities we'll find. Close in prayer.

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