



Ideas for Serving with Your Kids

We asked... you answered! Over 1400 Watermark people told us how they serve with their kids. Watermark's [External Focus team](#) compiled & edited 162 of 'em—“steal” one or be inspired to come up with your own.

Sharing Your Stuff (& Helping Others Share, Too)

Giving material resources can be a great way to start serving with your kids, especially when you also pursue more relational forms of serving!

1. Peanut butter drive on our street
2. Popsicle stand to raise money for a local school
3. We had neighbors write on our sidewalk — for every 5 names, we bought a backpack for a low-income school
4. We have each child pack a Christmas shoebox for a child their own age and gender
5. Bringing flowers to an assisted living facility
6. Delivering cookies to neighbors
7. My boys and I intentionally bought items, filled Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes, and prayed for the boys who would receive them
8. Brought meals to couples with a newborn
9. Hot chocolate stand after tornadoes hit a neighborhood
10. Our kids raised money to provide toys for the QuestCare Clinic, and we built a Lego table with the funds!
11. Serve the firefighters and police officers in our neighbor-

- hood by baking, writing notes, and taking treats
12. About twice per year we clean out our excess and donate it
13. Book drive to support Readers 2 Leaders
14. Back-to-school backpack drive for single parent families
15. Did a canned food drive and delivered to Brother Bill's, where we served for an afternoon
16. Our family packed resource bags to give the homeless, then distributed them to our neighbors for them to pass out
17. Our family decided to cut back on Christmas gifts so we could make a significant contribution. We researched and studied possibilities, and decided on donating to a spine doctor in Ethiopia to provide money for one spinal surgery
18. Pick up day-old bread on Sunday morning and take to a homeless organization
19. Cupcake stand to raise money to buy items for the Samaritan Inn
20. We held a garage sale at home, involved the community and neighbors, and then donated the proceeds to an orphans organization in El Salvador
21. Adopting a single-parent family for Christmas
22. Delivered Easter baskets to South Dallas

Serving thru Orgs

There are many fantastic non-profit organizations where families can serve. These include Watermark's Ministry Partners (found at watermark.org/impact) and other orgs that you find, "vet," and jump into.

23. I bring Samuel with me to serve at Interfaith Family Services
24. Provide needed items to kids through a foster care agency
25. Babysat at a women's shelter, and talked to some of the moms about our faith and taking their next steps
26. Buckner International
27. My sons have joined me at Cornerstone Crossroads Academy, where I lead "Breakfast & Bible" on Fridays
28. My wife and I attended a Compassion event in 2015 with our 5-year-old daughter Madeline and now sponsor a girl in Uganda who is close to her same age

29. Organizing the baby room at Thrive Women's Clinic
30. OurCalling
31. Christmas caroling at a retirement community
32. Our family participated in some of the ministries from the Give & Go list over the summer
33. Building homes in Costa Rica
34. Donated food and time at Beautiful Feet in Fort Worth
35. Served together at the North Texas Food Bank
36. Father-daughter date serving at the Operation Christmas Child distribution center
37. Feed my Starving Children
38. Reading program at a local apartment

39. Participate with my kids in a softball league, and we live out our faith at the team's social gatherings
40. My kids and I served at a camp for people with brain injuries
41. I served with a ministry for refugees weekly and took my 3 kids to help me serve in their preschool area
42. Took my daughter and granddaughters to work in the community pantry. The children earned money, we went grocery shopping, we took our groceries to the pantry, and then they worked in the back organizing and shelving the items
43. Checking people in for clothing distribution to the homeless in Downtown
44. Regularly loving on families within Jesus Said Love

Family Serve!

Visit the "hub" for service ideas for you and your kids at watermark.org/familyserve

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45. Kids Beach Club in our local school
46. A service organization through our kids' school
47. Meals on Wheels
48. Cheering on the kids at Mercy Street sports leagues
49. Mike and I helped our high school son start Fellowship of Christian Athletes at his school
50. Ministry trip to the Rio Grande Valley
51. My daughter Lillie and I are in a Christian neighborhood service group
52. Went to a retirement center and brought blankets we had made, and played bingo
53. Served bi-monthly at a school for kids with disabilities.
54. Started a dance camp at Mercy Street a few years ago, which we put on annually for the kids
55. We serve with our 16-year-old daughter at 2ndSaturday each month
56. We support a girl in Africa, praying for her and sending letters
57. My kids help out with Young Life Bible studies
58. My son and I packed backpacks for the North Texas Food Bank, for children who do not have enough food to eat on the weekends
59. Our family serves at a family shelter for those who have faced abuse locally or in other countries
60. My son and I started tutoring 5th grade boys on Thursday afternoons, through Forerunner Mentoring in Lake Highlands
61. Vickery Kids Club: providing snacks during their Bible study and Christmas gifts
62. Animal Shelter
63. Our kids made encouraging cards and door labels for the residents of a transitional house for homeless people
64. Readers 2 Leaders
65. Pregnancy center's 5K run — the boys ran, and I served on the music team
66. RISD Academy turkey and coat drives
67. Served at a local Vacation Bible School
68. Passed out school supplies at Sigler Elementary in Plano during school registration
69. Served dinner to the kids Bible study at Mercy Street in West Dallas
70. Connected with families who were at Ronald McDonald House
71. Supporting a water wells project
72. Helped with a volunteer dinner for Read2Win in Fort Worth
73. Serving through Wee Volunteer
74. Volunteering weekly at a school in the Como neighborhood
75. We are involved in YoungLives, mentoring a teen mom from Lake Highlands High School. The kids have been involved with us in visiting her house, meeting siblings, taking food and gifts to her, and involving her in some of our holiday traditions
76. We cleaned and made ready apartments for single moms
77. We mentor a boy from Mercy Street. We pick him up every weekend and he spends time with our entire family
78. We participate in Walk for Life
79. With ACT in West Dallas by picking up trash, praying over the community, and sharing Christ with residents
80. Younglife Capernaum (the special needs ministry)

Help Service "Stick" with Your Kids

Don't simply "do service" — disciple your kids to become people who serve! How can you make service projects "stick"?

- 1. By Learning:** Teach your kids facts and principles about how you're serving (bring in scriptural themes, help them understand the larger related issues, etc.)
- 2. Through Relationships:** It's great when we can connect relationally with those we serve. So when possible, visit them in-person, or at least help your child "get to know them" by sharing stories, showing pictures, and providing context.
- 3. By Repetition:** Variety can be great for kids. But you can also go deeper by repeating an activity, serving along the same "theme," or serving the same people in multiple ways.
- 4. By Reminder:** Review what you've done right after you serve, but don't stop talking about it! Whether you use pictures or other reminders, spend time reviewing ways your kiddo has been learning about service.

Right Where You Live

It's fantastic to teach kids to look around for chances to serve nearby — right where God has placed them at home and school! (Also see our "98 Ideas for Serving in Your Neighborhood" at watermark.org/go.)

81. I try to show my family that you don't have to go far and away to find people who could use our help and our skills. Even just working on cars, houses, cleaning up, or giving people rides because of lack of transportation
82. Loved on our Kroger employees at Christmas
83. Helped clean up at White Rock Lake
84. We passed out tracts and wrote notes of encouragement and truth for our neighbors before Christmas
85. Help neighbors with yardwork
86. Pet-sitting for neighbors
87. Built a wheelchair ramp for a neighbor
88. Last year, my daughter and I participated in an annual service day at a local elementary school
89. There was a family in our kids' school that fell on hard times and had tremendous needs. We talked with our children about how we could help supply those needs, and our chil-

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Hosting Hospitably

Some families even take the step of building relationships through hosting. (You can find our guide for building a great get-together at watermark.org/go.)

- 135. Served our neighborhood with a family BBQ get-together
- 136. Hosted a cookie-decorating party for families in our community and read *The Crippled Lamb* by Max Lucado
- 137. Our family hosted a weekly dinner

and Bible study for the junior high football team. Our son led some of the Bible study sessions for his teammates

- 138. Dinner invitations to our house for the holidays
- 139. Hosted a Halloween get-together for the neighborhood
- 140. Planned a neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt
- 141. Invited neighbors to the Christmas

play that we host at our house. The kids perform the play.

- 142. Backyard Bible club with our neighbors and kids
- 143. Block party in my neighborhood for National Night Out
- 144. Put on theme nights for our neighborhood as a way to draw people in. We've had "dive-in" movies, bounce houses, etc.

Spectacular Serving Stories

Some stories didn't fit a category but were too inspiring to pass up. Here are a handful of those kinds of service opportunities. (And we'd love to hear yours! Just email externalfocus@watermark.org.)

- 145. My kids were there when we were approached by someone in need of a meal, fed that person, and talked with and prayed for them
- 146. My children sometimes help at the English class I lead for international students at a local college
- 147. Ran a running club for children and young adults who are on the Autism spectrum
- 148. Helped a friend that we met at Raise the Mark bring his family from Ghana and apply for citizenship and green cards
- 149. We are moving our family to the Bonton neighborhood to become "urban missionaries"!
- 150. We are serving with our kids by bringing two foster babies into our home and loving their socks off!
- 151. My son and I will gather the grocery store carts that have been taken by customers in route to their apartments. We go throughout our area and roll the carts back to the local store so the store workers don't have to. My son loves it when the clerks offer us a discount for our deed, but he politely declines with, "God gave us a gift, I just wanted to give you a gift too."
- 152. We remodeled and furnished one of our apartment units to serve and bless families who have a child or loved one in the hospital. Our whole family was and is part of the process of sharing Christ's love and reaching out to these families.
- 153. My family started and maintains a community garden. We have quarterly work days, where we maintain the garden but also look for opportunities to minister to the people with a wide variety of lifestyles and worldviews who come
- 154. My kids and I help parents, kids, and others in our public school and community who are struggling with issues related to special needs and learning disabilities. We share our own experiences, spend time with families who are looking for resources, and point them to help and support

- 155. My son and I gave an elderly man we didn't know a ride home from an auto shop one evening. I told him about Watermark and how God had changed my life.
- 156. Our family serves families and nurses in the NICU. We bring healthy snacks, an encouraging note with our photo, and our physical presence to sit with families in the waiting room each week. We get to know them. We follow up with texts and calls. We have shared car seats, premie clothes, tears, and prayers
- 157. During Advent we took our kids to the Dollar Store and hid money throughout along with envelopes that said "It's better to give than to receive." The kids LOVED it!
- 158. Our favorite service experience was going out of town to work on a friend's house who was hospitalized. We cleaned out her garden, chopped firewood, prepared meals, etc.
- 159. Tutored in reading and writing with Burmese children at the Newport Landing apartments
- 160. Share Jesus with our pen pal family in Norway
- 161. We recently started a relationship with a Muslim family. We have taught our daughter the differences of religion and showed her how wonderful it is that we can love this family, welcome them into our community, and share Jesus with them despite our differences and communication barriers
- 162. The kids and I serve at our crossing guard's church once a month in the summer, giving out food to the very poor. It is really cool that we know our crossing guard's family, pastor, and the people they serve

Thank you for discipling the next generation to serve!

If you have any questions or want tips on serving, the Watermark External Focus team is glad to "coach" you! Just get in touch: externalfocus@watermark.org.