

Service Projects for Preschoolers: How Your Family Can Make a Difference

Children are born into this world with the expectation that they are the center of the universe. It's not their fault, or anything that they control. When your son cries, you feed him or change his diaper. He comes to realize that he can get a reaction from you that makes him feel better, and naturally thinks that his every whim will be attended to.

By the time your child is a toddler, he can start doing things on his own, and that is a good time to start teaching him to take care of his own needs, where appropriate. You can start this by having him take care of picking up his own toys and learning to use utensils to feed himself at the dinner table. It is a process of learning that leads up to teaching him about caring for others.

By the time your child is a preschooler, he can start participating in some people-changing service projects that show him how good it feels to serve others. To this point your child has only learned that he can take care of himself. But, now he will see the benefits of helping others. Read 1 Peter 4:10, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." So, where do you start with service projects for young children?

Take a walk through the neighborhood. Bring a pair of gloves and a trash bag with you to pick up garbage along the way. During this walk, you can talk with your child about the importance of taking care of the environment, and what can happen if we don't. You can also come up with other ways to help the environment while you are strolling along. Consider bringing a notepad and pencil with you as well. This way you can write down any ideas about future service projects that would be helpful, and do not necessarily have to be on the order of helping the environment.

Hold a food drive in your community and/or church. There are many food banks around the U.S. that thrive on nonperishable food donations. Advertise your family's willingness to take donations to the food pantry location on a given date. Then set up boxes where people can place their donations. Be sure to express to your preschooler the importance of good nutrition and picking out foods that are beneficial to low-income families who cannot afford to shop at a grocery store. You might even encourage your child to buy food with money in his own piggy bank. Stores always have sales on canned goods, which makes it easy to choose from.

Visit an assisted living community in your neighborhood. Simply contact a community close to your home, ask the events coordinator about any volunteer needs they have, and see what your family to do to help. Some places allow children to "adopt a grandparent" who will benefit from extra attention. Or, your family could consider reserving a spot on the community calendar to hold a talent show, lead a craft, or hold a game session.

There are many more opportunities for your family to participate in service projects, including holding a yard sale, making care packages for soldiers, learning about foreign countries, and even playing with pets at your local humane society. Whatever you choose, it is important to explain to your preschooler why you are serving in a particular way, and who benefits from your actions. This way, your child will know that he is making a difference and touching someone's life in a positive way.

About the Author

Denise Oliveri is owner of [Preschool Sunday School Central](http://www.preschoolsunday.com), a site designed to help preschool Sunday School teachers find the best resources for helping with Bible lesson planning. There are tons of free materials to help you now. Visit today!

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