



The Partnering Stage

In the **Partnering Stage**, typically around ages 8-12, children begin expressing a growing desire for independence. As a Beloved Caregiver, your role shifts from doing things for your child to doing things *with* him or her. This season is all about inviting your child into shared responsibility—spiritually, relationally, and practically. Children want to contribute meaningfully, and they’re ready for more than we sometimes expect.

Just as Jesus called His disciples to join Him in serving, this stage allows children to practice kindness in everyday ways—whether helping a sibling, encouraging a friend, or caring for someone in need. These small acts shape character and lay a foundation for lifelong service.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

Encouragement for Caregivers

- Children learn by observing your actions, so model service and kindness in your daily life to show them what it looks like to love others well.
- Encourage empathy by asking your children to imagine how others might feel in different situations, helping them connect emotionally with those around them.
- Remind them that serving others isn’t about fixing every problem—it’s about being aware, caring, and willing to help in small ways.
- Begin with simple, age-appropriate acts of service such as making cards, helping with chores, sharing toys, or offering a kind word.
- Celebrate acts of compassion and connect them back to Jesus’ example of loving and serving others faithfully.

Growth Model



Plant

With prompting from a trusted adult, children begin to notice when others are struggling or in need of help.



Root

They start responding by helping when asked or guided by a caregiver.



Growth

As their empathy deepens, they begin to look for ways to help others on their own, without being prompted.



Fruit

Over time, serving others becomes a natural part of their character and faith, reflecting the love of Christ in everyday moments.

Activity: Becoming Aware of the Needs of Others

STEP 1 (The Why)

Helping others is a meaningful part of following Jesus, and when children practice serving, they begin to see how their actions can show God's love in everyday ways. These simple moments of kindness help children grow in empathy and compassion, encouraging them to notice the needs of others and ask, "Is there something I can do to help?"

This simple activity nurtures empathy, compassion, and awareness of others - helping children learn to connect their faith with caring for the people around them.

STEP 2 (Activity Directions)

- 1 Identify a Need**
Help your child identify someone who might be sick, lonely, or needing encouragement.
- 2 Connect with Empathy**
Ask your child to remember a time when he or she felt the same way—for example, when he or she missed a special event or didn't feel well.
- 3 Choose an Act of Service**
Brainstorm simple, loving ways to help—baking cookies, drawing a picture, reading to a sibling, or sharing a favorite toy—and then choose a day to serve in one of these ways.
- 4 Pray Together**
After serving, pause to pray for the person your child helped and thank God for giving your child the opportunity to show His love.

Encouragement

Every act of service plants seeds of compassion in your child's heart. When you guide your child to notice the needs of others and respond with love, you are showing him or her the way of Jesus. Don't underestimate the power of small acts—God uses them to form lasting character and faith.