

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

SERMON
on the Mount
LESSON 3

LESSON TEXT

Matthew 6:1-18

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will identify situations where they can please God, who is all-seeing.
- The students will compare living to please people with living to please God.
- The students will make a plan/decision to please God when no one else notices.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- 1 sheet of paper

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world
- cookies or other baked item, nicely wrapped and obvious to the students
- a big, obvious sign ("Cookies made by [name of the teacher chosen to be the 'bragging' teacher]")
- tape recorder (does not have to work)
- camera (film isn't necessary)
- extra Bibles
- 26 large index cards
- marker

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 1 copy for each student
- Page C, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: Secret Serving Word Find
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer
 Victories
 Good News from the Kingdom

Getting into God's Word

Story: "The Kid Who Bragged Too Much"
 Scripture Study
 Activity: Secret Service

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Matthew 6:1
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."
 Matthew 6:1



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Matthew 6:1-18. Study the lesson in your time with God so that your teaching will come from your heart. Consider why you do all the things you do. Are they done for recognition and praise, or for the glory of God? Think about your service in the kingdom and the world, and pray that your motivation will be pure.

TEACHER TIPS

This passage of scripture talks about how to give to the needy and how to pray. We want the students to leave class wanting to do these things without looking for praise from men. To accomplish this, in the class one teacher will seem to do exactly the opposite of what Jesus commands. He or she will brag about himself or herself. Read and practice the lesson with your assistants in order to coordinate your performance. Please make sure you exaggerate and over-emphasize everything you do in order to make your point clearly.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

SECRET SERVING WORD FIND

This word search puzzle will help the students realize many ways that they can serve others.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

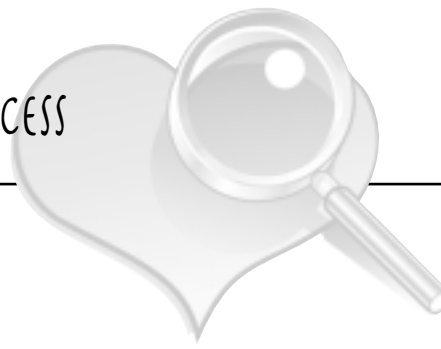
- pencil

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page A (Secret Serving Word Find) and a pencil when they arrive.
2. Have students find and circle all the hidden ways that they can serve.
3. After they find all the words, have them list how they would serve others specifically in ten of these ways. You could set it up so that the first one done gets a prize (they get to serve in some way in the class!). It's always fun to make it competitive in a friendly way.
4. Close out the Preclass Activity by asking: *What is the title of this worksheet? (Secret Serving) Who is it a secret from? (Others.) Is it a secret from God? Why not? (Because God sees everything.) Do you think he really cares if you do good things? How does he feel when he sees you secretly serve someone else in the ways you have listed? He loves to see us serving and helping others when no one else sees it. Do you ever feel that no one cares if you help or give? Have you ever done something for someone who did not thank you? God is always looking and loves to catch us helping and giving in secret. Nothing that we do for others goes unnoticed by God—even if it goes unnoticed by others.*
NOTE: The teacher who closes out the Preclass Activity should not be the same as the one who does the Scripture Study (for reasons that will be explained later).
5. NOTE: Answer key is on the next page.



STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER

Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together? Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to be especially thankful that God always sees when we are giving to others and that it makes him happy.

VICTORIES

Take time to have the students share about the challenge they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times? Who would like to share something they learned this week?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

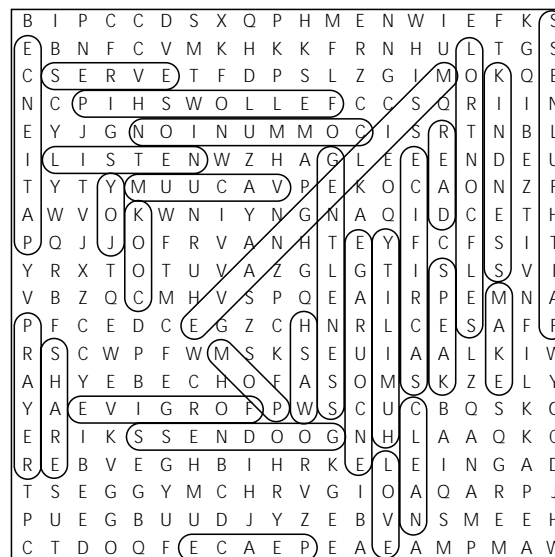
MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

INSTRUCTIONS

Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom." Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that the kingdom of God is worldwide and the victories of our brothers and sisters on other continents can inspire us and spur us on.





STORY

"THE KID WHO BRAGGED TOO MUCH"

This story is about a boy whose bragging caused people not to help him when he really needed it.

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page B, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page B ("The Boy Who Bragged too Much") to the students.
2. Ask a volunteer to read the story aloud to the class.
3. Ask: *What would you say the moral of this story is?* (Accept different answers. Example: Bragging brings bad consequences in our lives.)

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Matthew 6:1-18 tells us how to give to the needy and how to pray. We want the students to leave class wanting to do these things without looking for praise from men. To accomplish this, one teacher will seem to do exactly the opposite of what Jesus commands. Please make sure you exaggerate and over-emphasize everything you do. Basically, the students will teach you the meaning of the scripture.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- cookies or other baked item, nicely wrapped and obvious to the students
- a big, obvious sign ("Cookies made by [name of the teacher chosen to be the 'bragging' teacher]")
- tape recorder (does not have to work)
- camera (film isn't necessary)
- extra Bibles

INSTRUCTIONS

1. *Let's start our Bible study time with a prayer.* (Have the students get in a circle to pray. You—the bragging teacher—may have some of the students pray. You pray last. When it's your turn to pray, start praying and then stop in the middle of your prayer and turn on the tape recorder and say: *I need to record this so that [evangelist's name] can see how well I'm praying and how spiritual I am.* Then proceed to finish your prayer.)

2. *Before we start our Bible Story, I just wanted everyone to notice the delicious cookies I made for the snack time. Do you know how long it took me to make them? I spent three hours making these cookies, not to mention the time spent buying the ingredients. First, I had to go to the bank and get twenty dollars of my money. Then I had to go to the supermarket to get the ingredients. I waited in line forever. Then I carried everything home. I had to put all the ingredients together. Oh, I almost forgot: I had to buy cookie sheets too. I baked them in the oven for ten minutes each. It cost money to have the oven on while all those cookies baked. Last, I had to buy the container/plate that the cookies are on and the napkins for you. I also made this nice sign! And to show how much of a servant I am, would you please (speaking to another teacher) take a picture of me with the cookies so that I can show others what I've done for all of you.*
3. One of the teachers should pretend to take a picture of you next to your cookies.
4. *Let's turn our Bibles to Matthew 6.* Read vv1-18 as described below. (You may not need to read all the way through since hopefully the students will tell you that you are reading it incorrectly.)
5. Skip over the word "not." For example, v1 says: "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them." You read it as "Be careful to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have a reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be honored by men."
6. Hopefully the students will interrupt to correct you. If they don't, ask them what they think about what you just read. Some of them should tell you that you missed some words, especially the word "not." (If they don't get it, reread a verse or two very slowly and clearly.)
7. Act surprised. *You mean Jesus says not to do good things? But I thought I was supposed to do good things for others.* The students can talk to you about how Jesus wants us to do lots of good things for others but to do them to please God, not to seek someone's approval or to look good to others. Then ask, *What does that mean?* Keep the conversation going until the students help you see that Jesus does not want us to do things just for attention or to look good or so others will like us, etc. Basically, the students will be explaining



the passage to you and to themselves, and growing in their convictions as well.

8. Continue to question the kids about these things. Gradually, act like you understand the meaning of the passage. *Why is it not good to do something just to get others to like you? Why wouldn't God want us to do that?* Help them see that it's okay for others to acknowledge it when we do something for them (and we should always thank people when they do things for us) but that shouldn't be our main motivation. God wants us to know that he sees and values and will reward every good thing we do, whether or not anyone else notices.
9. Reread w1-4 correctly. *Jesus wants our insides to be pure and right, not just our outsides. He knows that if the inside is good then we will be really happy. God is more concerned about what is really going on inside of us than he is about the good things we are doing on the outside. Our insides and outsides need to match.*
10. Close out by asking the following questions:
 - *Why doesn't Jesus want me to do good things for others (acts of righteousness)?* (He does, he just wants us to do them to please God, not to look good to others.)
 - *Why shouldn't I want to look good to others? How will I ever get a date?* (God wants us to have great relationships, but he wants us to live to please him. If we are people-pleasers, then we're not thinking about pleasing God.)
 - *Who are these "hypocrite" guys anyway?* (A "hypocrite" is someone who knows the right answers but doesn't put them into practice.)
11. Finish by asking them, *By the way, how did you feel about me when I was bragging about all the things I had done? How can we keep from being like this?* (i.e., How can we be people who are trying to please God, not trying to gain praise for ourselves?)

ACTIVITY

SECRET SERVICE

The students will create a plan to serve in a way or ways that no one will notice.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- 1 sheet of paper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In order to put today's lesson into practice, the students will make a plan to serve in ways that no one will notice or give them credit for—except God, of course. They should think of a need they could meet that only God could see them doing. This will require some creativity on the part of the students to serve "incognito." It should be interesting to see what they come up with.
2. The goal is for the students to spend some time thinking and writing about how to give to someone else without looking for anything in return. The emphasis is on knowing that God sees and is pleased by their deeds. This is to be their real reward.
3. Ideas could include (but are not limited to):
 - doing cleaning at home after school, especially if parents are not at home (e.g., washing dishes, mopping the kitchen floor)
 - setting up chairs for preteen class before others arrive
 - using paper towels and glass cleaner and cleaning the mirrors in your house (or sliding glass door or car windows)
 - doing something at school to serve
 - reaching out to another student who has difficulty making friends
 - sending an anonymous encouraging note to someone
4. Once the students have decided on individual ways to serve, have them brainstorm ideas for a way they can "serve in secret" as a group. This will require some planning and coordination on the part of the preteen teachers and leaders, but it could have a powerful impact on the students. Ideas could include
 - cleaning up a nearby schoolyard or park
 - volunteering at a soup kitchen
5. In every community there are numerous opportunities to serve that you and your students can focus on together. It will be important that the kids feel that this is *their* project and that they take ownership to make it successful. Of course, someone will probably know they are doing the project, but the idea is that they are not broadcasting it to the ones who don't know.



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."

Matthew 6:1

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 26 large index cards
- marker

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the memory verse, in short phrases on each card (see below).

"Be careful not	to do your
'acts of righteousness'	before men
to be seen	by them.
If you do,	you will have
no reward	from your
Father in heaven."	Matthew 6:1

2. Have several students read the memory verse aloud from their Bibles.
3. Then close the Bibles and divide the class into two teams. Shuffle and mix both sets of memory cards together, and place them face down on the top of a large table.
4. Have the two teams line up parallel to the sides of the table (about three paces back from the table).
5. Have each team count off starting with "1." If one

team has an extra member, the teacher or an assistant can play in order to make the teams even.

6. To begin the game, call out a number. The members of each team who have that number run to the center and quickly choose a card from the pile and bring it to their team. Continue doing this. If the one team member gets a duplicate card for his or her team (a card that has already been brought to the team's pile) then on the next turn, a team member simply takes that duplicate card back and picks up another card. The team that places the 13 cards in order first is the winner. Play again as time allows.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat it while you explain to them the challenge for the week.

Have the students review what they are going to do in secret as they planned in their activity time. Encourage them to complete their service by the end of the week.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pray about and put into practice your plan of secret service.

Share your victory with the class next week

(but keep your specific act of service a secret if you can).

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

LESSON TEXT

Various Scriptures from Old and New Testament (see Reproducible Page D)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will compare the results of pleasing God to the results of pleasing men, based on New and Old Testament accounts.
- The students will give one example of a Biblical figure who pleased God and one who did not.
- The students will make a plan/decision to please God when no one else notices.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- several concordances
- extra Bibles
- hat or bag
- 9 strips of paper
- pen
- watch or clock with a second hand
- 1 or 2 glasses frames without lenses or magnifying glasses

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
Teacher Focus
Teacher Tips
Preclass Activity: A Pleasing Preclass
Starting Up
Welcome and Singing
Opening Prayer and Review
Great News Sharing

Getting into God's Word

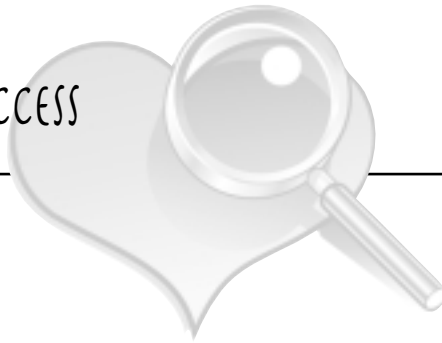
Scripture Study
Activity: Charades

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Matthew 6:1
Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."
Matthew 6:1



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Study the scriptures from Reproducible Page D (To Please or Not to Please). Study out also the result of pleasing God versus pleasing people. Think of some inspiring and practical stories from your own life that will help the students see the blessings of living to please God. Be open and encouraging as you relate some of the ways you pleased people and how you have changed to please God.

TEACHER TIPS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Know the lesson well. This lesson needs to be presented in an enthusiastic, lively way. Use every opportunity to share examples related to the scriptures that are used in this class in order to show your students the practical side of this lesson.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

A PLEASING PRECLASS

Students will use their Bibles to look up passages and determine whether the person in the passage was or was not pleasing to God.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- several concordances
- extra Bibles

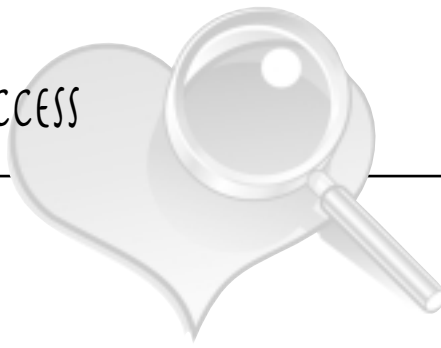
Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students come into the class, give each a copy of Reproducible Page D (To Please or Not to Please) and a pen or pencil.
2. Tell the students to look up the references given, read the passage and decide if the person/people in the passage was/were pleasing people or pleasing God.
3. They may work in pairs if they wish.
4. When they are finished, ask them to hold on to these sheets because they will need them later in class.
5. Do not go over the answers at this point.





STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with one of the students praying for each student to be more concerned about what God thinks than what people think.
- Have one student recite the memory verse for this lesson: Matthew 6:1.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson about not bragging, etc.

GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief so as many as possible can share.





SCRIPTURE STUDY

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have the students take out their Preclass Activity sheet again (Reproducible Page D). Go over the answers and let the students check their papers.
2. Divide the students into pairs, and assign each pair one of the scriptures from the left-hand column. Ask them to write on the back what the result was for the person(s) in that passage. For example, the result of Hebrews 11:7 is that Noah saved his family (and he condemned the world instead of blending in and doing what the world wanted him to do and so being drowned). In some cases they will have to read further in the passages to understand all the results.
3. Next, have the students write what would have happened if the people in the passage had done the opposite. For example what would have happened if Noah had not obeyed God? Or what would have happened if Ananias and Sapphira had decided not to lie, etc? This will help the students see that we all have choices.

4. After they have had about ten or fifteen minutes to read and write, have them share with the class what they learned.
5. NOTE: If you have a large class, several pairs will need to do the same reference.

Remind the students that the secret of success is to seek to please God instead of seeking to please people.

Ask the following questions:

- *In which situations are you most tempted to please people rather than to please God?*
- *In what ways do friends put pressure on you to please them?*
- *How can you help each other choose to please God?*

SCRIPTURE	PLEASED WHOM?	
Exodus 32:1-4	God	People
1 Samuel 15:22-24	God	People
Daniel 6:6-11	God	People
Matthew 26:69-75	God	People
John 14:30-31	God	People
Acts 4:18-20	God	People
Acts 5:1-11	God	People
Acts 8:9-25	God	People
Hebrews 11:7	God	People



ACTIVITY

CHARADES

The students will act out various situations from the Preclass Activity passages in a game of charades.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- hat or bag
- 9 strips of paper
- pen
- watch or clock with a second hand

PREPARATION

Write the name of each character/situation from the "Pleasing Preclass" on a slip of paper and place them into a bag or hat.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide the class into two groups.
2. The group that goes first chooses one of their team members to pick a slip of paper from the bag/hat. They have 30 seconds to decide how they are going to act out the character for their team. Then the team is given 60 seconds to figure out the character.
3. To get a "point" the students must name the character or characters involved. For example, answering "Ananias" would not be considered correct; only "Ananias and Sapphira" could be considered correct.
4. If team #1 is unable to identify their character(s) in the time allotted, then team #2 is given one chance to guess the answer. If correct, they get team #1's point. If incorrect, they receive minus one (-1) point. Team #2 also has the option to "pass" without penalty if they are unsure of the correct answer.
5. After this, team #2 takes a turn and the game continues until all the papers have been taken from the bag/hat.
6. To get bonus points: If team #1 answers correctly, they have the option to answer a bonus question for an additional point. There is no penalty for answering incorrectly. If team #1's charades answer is incorrect and team #2 answers correctly, then team #2 also has an opportunity at the bonus question (and vice versa).

BONUS QUESTIONS:

NOTE: Read the bonus question that is about the character acted out by the team.

1. Aaron (Exodus 32:1-4) *When Aaron and the people made the golden calf to worship, who had they been waiting for and where was he?*
Answer: Moses, on top of the mountain with God
2. Saul (1 Samuel 15:22-24) *Why did Saul give in to the people?*
Answer: He was afraid of the people.
3. Daniel (Dan 6:6-11) *What did Daniel do differently after King Darius issued his decree?*
Answer: Nothing
4. Peter denies Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75) *What happened after Peter denied Jesus the third time?*
Answer: a rooster crowed or Peter wept bitterly
5. Jesus (John 14:30-31) *Who has no hold on Jesus?*
Answer: the prince of this world or Satan
6. Peter and John (Acts 4:18-20) *What did Peter and John do when commanded by the Sanhedrin not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus?*
Answer: They insisted on continuing to preach.
7. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) *What happened to Ananias and Sapphira?*
Answer: died
8. Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-25) *Why did Peter rebuke Simon the Sorcerer?*
Answer: because he offered the apostles money for their miraculous powers or because he was full of bitterness and captive to sin
9. Noah (Hebrews 11:7) *According to Hebrews 11:7, what was Noah an heir of?*
Answer: righteousness or the righteousness that comes by faith



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."

Matthew 6:1

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 or 2 glasses frames without lenses or magnifying glasses

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide the students into two small groups if there are more than eight or ten in the class. Have each group sit in a circle.
2. Give the glasses/magnifying glass to one student (in each group) and have them start saying the memory verse.
3. Have them stop after a few words (or even one word) and pass the glasses/magnifying glass to another student who must continue saying the verse. After they say a word or two of the verse, they pass the glasses/magnifying glass to another and continue until the verse is completed. Some students may get passed the glasses/magnifying glass more than once. Make sure everyone gets the glasses/magnifying glass at least once.
4. Ask the students why they are passing glasses/magnifying glass. (The verse talks about being seen!)

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you remind them of the challenge for the week.

In order to put the lesson into practice, the students made a plan to serve in ways that no one will notice or give them credit for—except God, of course. They were to think of a need or needs they could meet that only God could see them doing.

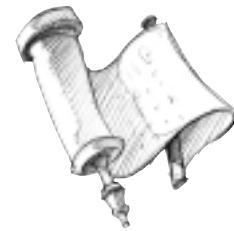
(Suggestions are given on their Memory Verse sheet.) Ask the students if they have performed their "secret service" yet. But do not ask them what it is or was. (Then it wouldn't be a secret, would it?)

Those who have completed the challenge can share with the group how it made them feel to do the service without anyone knowing. *Were you tempted to tell someone because you wanted to make sure they knew? Was it enough reward to know that God knew?*

Make sure they realize that if someone did discover that they did this secret service, that doesn't mean that God was not pleased. The point is that they were not to announce to someone that they did it.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pray about and put into practice your plan of secret service.

Share your victory with the class next week

(but keep your specific act of service a secret if you can).



SECRET SERVING WORD SEARCH

(words may be found forward, backward, up, down and diagonally)

- clean
- communion
- cook
- encourage
- evangelism
- faithfulness
- fellowship
- forgive
- gentleness
- goodness
- humility
- joy
- kindness
- listen

B	I	P	C	C	D	S	X	Q	P	H	M	E	N	W	I	E	F	K	S
E	B	N	F	C	V	M	K	H	K	K	F	R	N	H	U	L	T	G	S
C	S	E	R	V	E	T	F	D	P	S	L	Z	G	I	M	O	K	Q	E
N	C	P	I	H	S	W	O	L	L	E	F	C	C	S	Q	R	I	I	N
E	Y	J	G	N	O	I	N	U	M	M	O	C	I	S	R	T	N	B	L
I	L	I	S	T	E	N	W	Z	H	A	G	L	E	E	E	N	D	E	U
T	Y	T	Y	M	U	U	C	A	V	P	E	K	O	C	A	O	N	Z	F
A	W	V	O	K	W	N	I	Y	N	G	N	A	Q	I	D	C	E	T	H
P	Q	J	J	O	F	R	V	A	N	H	T	E	Y	F	C	F	S	I	T
Y	R	X	T	O	T	U	V	A	Z	G	L	G	T	I	S	L	S	V	I
V	B	Z	Q	C	M	H	V	S	P	Q	E	A	I	R	P	E	M	N	A
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P	U	E	G	B	U	U	D	J	Y	Z	E	B	V	N	S	M	E	E	H
C	T	D	O	Q	F	E	C	A	E	P	E	A	E	A	M	P	M	A	W

- love
- make
- mop
- patience
- peace
- prayer
- read
- sacrifice
- self-control
- serve
- share
- speak
- vacuum
- wash

When you finish finding all 28 words, choose 10 of those words and write below a way that you could practice each:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

THE KID WHO BRAGGED TOO MUCH

There once lived a kid who bragged about everything. If someone kicked a football high and far, he would say that he could kick the ball twice as high and twice as far. If someone painted a beautiful picture, he would say that he could paint a picture twice as beautiful in half the time. If someone sang a beautiful song, he would claim that he could sing a song that would make the birds stop to listen. He loved to brag. He bragged about little things, big things, things that mattered, and things that did not matter at all. Once he said that if he were to fight Superman that Superman would run away crying. He bragged that he could do anything.

Not only did he brag, but also if he ever did anything nice, then he expected everyone to notice. Once when he picked up an empty soda can and threw it in the recycle bin, he went around telling everyone that he should be nominated for a civic service award for cleaning up the community. When he would visit sick people in the hospital, he would say to them, "Isn't it nice that on such a beautiful day when I could be playing outside that I've come into this stinking, dull hospital room to cheer you up? I think I deserve an award for this." He was an expert at patting himself on the back for every little thing.

One day while he was riding his bike (which he said he could ride faster than anyone else in the county), he turned a curve too fast and fell into an old well that was many feet deep. The water came up to his waist. He started yelling for help.

One boy heard his cry for help and came to the edge of the well. He told the boy trapped in the well, "Just the other day you were bragging that you could jump higher than Michael Jordan or any other basketball player. So prove it—jump out of the well."

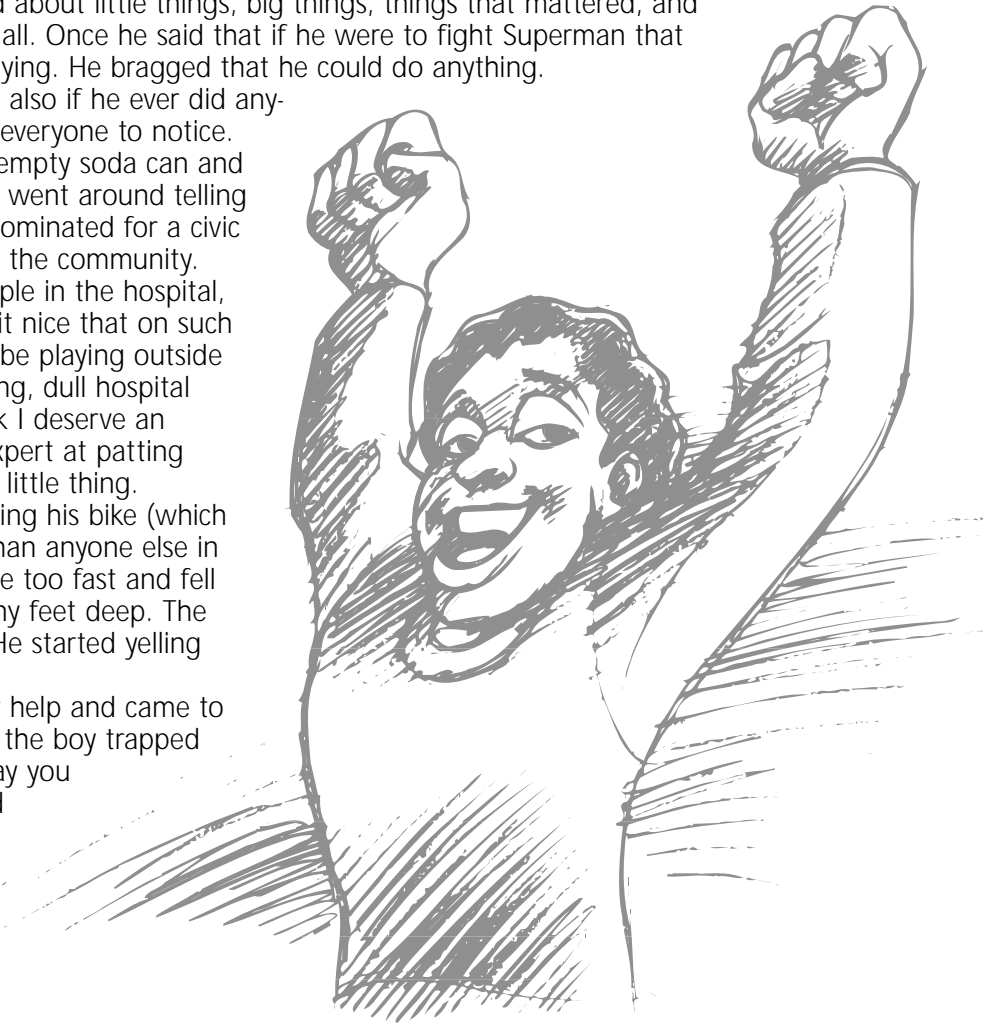
Another boy heard his cry and came up to the well. He said, "I heard you say

that you could dig better than a gopher or a mole. So go ahead dig yourself out of the well."

Another boy approached the well and said, "You told me you were the smartest boy in the world. Surely the smartest boy in the world could figure a way to get out of that well." He walked on by.

The boy was stuck in the well—a victim of his bragging tongue.

Several hours later some firefighters came by and pulled the boy out of the well. He was so embarrassed that he never bragged about anything again.



SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."



MATTHEW 6:1

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pray about and put into practice your plan of secret service. Share your victory with the class next week (but keep your specific act of service a secret if you can).

Ideas could include (but are not limited to):

- doing cleaning at home after school, especially if parents are not at home (e.g., cleaning up a room, washing some dishes, mopping the kitchen floor)
- setting up chairs for preteen class before others arrive
- using paper towels and glass cleaner to clean the mirrors in your house (or sliding glass door or car windows)
- doing something at school to serve
- reaching out to another student who has difficulty making friends
- sending an anonymous encouraging note to someone

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PLEASING PRECLASS

Directions: Look up and read each scripture listed below. Then decide if the people in the passage were pleasing people or pleasing God. Circle your choice next to each passage.

SCRIPTURE	PLEASED WHOM?	
Exodus 32:1-4	God	People
1 Samuel 15:22-24	God	People
Daniel 6:6-11	God	People
Matthew 26:69-75	God	People
John 14:30-31	God	People
Acts 4:18-20	God	People
Acts 5:1-11	God	People
Acts 8:9-25	God	People
Hebrews 11:7	God	People