

FOR LEADERS OF

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Opportunity to Serve

—a way to know you can make a difference

Recently, I did a survey of 240 young adults. I asked them if they were given opportunities to serve (do mission) as children. Only half remembered such opportunities and nearly all remembered working only with other children, and not with other adults in their church or with their parents. In the survey, 60 per cent of the 240 young adults either did not see the value of their mission/service work or were not given the opportunity to do any. We cannot continue to short-change children in this way. In fact, it is vitally important that teens have opportunities to serve, to know that they can make a difference.

There are dozens of important congregational services adults can do with children and youth. Just pick one and do it!

Service for the world

- Learn about and raise money for any one of the many projects in *Something Extra*.
- Invite exchange students studying in our country to your home.
- Write letters to advocate human rights through Amnesty International.
- Provide “care packages” for the world. See www.mennonitecc.ca/respond/kits/index.html.
- Write or e-mail mission staff employed around the world by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Ask how you can assist in their work.
- Welcome mission staff home by purchasing basic food supplies (flour, sugar, etc.) and offering some transportation.
- Go on a mission trip to a denominational mission field. (Contact Youth in Mission coordinator Reuben St. Louis and/or Barbara Nawatril, Mission Interpreter, at Church Offices 800-619-7301.

Inquiries about the content of this newsletter should be sent to Dorothy Henderson at 1-800-619-7301 (e-mail: dhenders@presbyterian.ca).

NOVEMBER/2005

A newsletter produced in cooperation with the Covenant Community with Children and Youth
Writer—Dorothy Henderson

Serve to Address Hunger, Poverty, Homelessness

- Serve in a soup kitchen or hostel.
- Work with low-income families to grow a garden.
- Build playground equipment for a day-care centre.
- Help staff a food pantry.
- Gather school supplies for low-income children who are starting school.
- Write letters to advocate for programs and facilities for homelessness.
- Help to deliver Meals on Wheels.



Service relating to multiculturalism

- Tutor recent immigrants who are learning English or French.
- Research and purchase multicultural dolls, toys and books for your church or for day-care centres.
- Become a partner with a youth group from a congregation with a different racial-ethnic heritage. Do service projects together.

Service Related to the Environment

- Start, promote, and maintain a church-wide recycling program.
- Offer to plant trees or shrubs for members of the congregation.
- Clean up litter in parks, downtown, or roadways.
- Research and write articles for your church newsletter about helping to protect the environment.
- Challenge your congregation to have “zero-garbage” homes.

Service with the Elderly

- Build bird feeders to give to seniors.
- Bake homemade bread and deliver it to homebound members.
- Lead recreation or singing in a nursing home.
- Hold a youth/seniors prom.
- Interview long-time church members about their stories and make a brochure on the church's history.
- At nursing homes, write or read letters for residents who no longer write or read.
- Start a clown troupe to perform in nursing homes.
- Form one-to-one relationships with residents of nursing homes.
- Offer to help seniors with shopping (Christmas, groceries, errands)

Political Service

- Create skits on current issues to raise public awareness.
- Persuade a local radio or television station to have a regular broadcast on youth issues.
- Canvas the community to learn about community needs. Tell your findings to the newspaper and city council.



Service to Address Violence

- Learn and teach self-defense for women.
- Learn and teach conflict resolution skills to children and youth.
- Lobby for tighter restrictions on guns and weapons.
- Discover and promote services for violence against women in your region.

Service with People with Disabling Conditions

- Undertake projects to make your church facility accessible to all.
- Learn sign language.
- Learn about ADD and ADHD and how to help children/youth with those challenges.
- Engage special vans to help people with physical disabilities attend church events.

Service Related to Community Quality

- Help the church with big mailings.
- Design posters for church events.
- Paint murals over graffiti.
- Create and maintain bike trails in the community.
- Offer child care during church functions.
- Create a volunteer guide to nonprofit organizations in your community, listing their purpose, needs, and opportunities.

Service Within the Congregation

- Send letters to church members on their birthdays.
- Teach Sunday school.
- Lead in worship.
- Help prepare and mail the church newsletter.
- Help church families move.
- Organize a church clean-up day.
- Organize and lead a youth worship service.



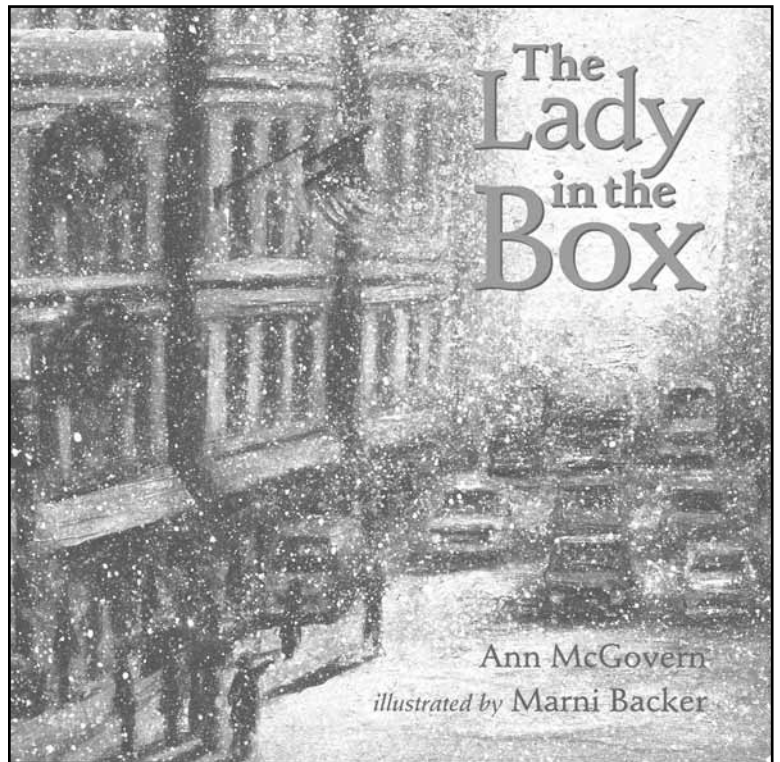
Excellent books about serving

The Lady in the Box, Ann McGovern, Turtle Books, 1997

Use this book for children's time in worship

This fall, as the days get shorter and colder, read this book with the children over several weeks. In this touching story, two children befriend a homeless woman and learn to be generous, thoughtful and respectful. After you read a section, invite the children in your congregation to participate in a generous action. (Note: This book has no page numbers! The numbers referred to are pages with text.)

- Week 1: Read pp. 1-3; Invite children to bring a jar of peanut butter, box of crackers and/or plastic knives for a food bank box.
- Week 2: Read p. 4; Invite children to bring a can of soup for a food bank box. (The story refers to peanut butter.)
- Week 3: Read pp. 5-6; Invite children to bring a scarf or mitts for a shelter.
- Week 4: Read pp. 7-10; Invite children to talk with their moms or dads about how they might help homeless people.
- Week 5: Read pp. 11-13; Ask children to guess what Mama will think about helping Dorrie. Pray with the children about support for homeless people.
- Week 6: Read pp. 14-18; If possible arrange for the children to visit a soup kitchen; if this is not possible, tell them about a soup kitchen in your area.



26 Big Things Small Hands Do, Coleen Paratore, Free Spirit, 2004

A gift book for ages 1-3. Add it to your church library.

This picture book for young children goes through the letters from A to Z and offers suggestions of what small hands can do.



The Kids' Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas For Young People Who Want To Make A Difference, Barbara Lewis, Free Spirit, 1995

A gift book for families with school age children. Add it to your church library.

This book contains dozens of service projects based on a topic that interests you—animals, community, crime fighting, environment, friendship, hunger, literacy, politics, safety, seniors, or something else. The book encourages children to know that they can make a difference in the world.

