



# the Parent LINK

Children's Ministry Edition



July 2011



## Get Serving This Summer!

The summer months usually mean fewer activities to track. That, combined with warmer weather and vacation time, makes summer an ideal time to serve. Start small, looking to your children's passions for volunteer ideas.

- If your kids are creative, have them make cards for neighbors.
- If your family enjoys nature, pick up trash at a local park or tend a community garden.
- To give back at church, clean pews, classrooms, or nursery toys.
- To keep children's skills sharp on summer break, have them write letters to homebound relatives or nursing-home residents.

Through fun, age-appropriate projects, children can see the immediate impacts of following God's command to serve one another

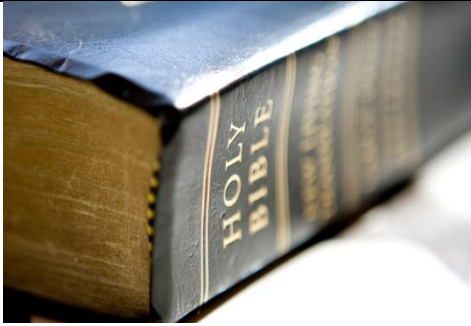
## POWERSOURCE

### ASK GOD:

1. To give each member of your family a spirit of service this summer.
2. To direct you to projects and people in need of assistance.
3. To work through your family members to bless the people you serve.

### INSIGHTS

- Out of 1,000 U.S. households, one-third of all families and one-half of middle-class families said volunteering is a big part of their life. *(Gallup Poll)*
- 80% of teenagers reported being active in volunteer work if, as young children, they did some volunteering. *(Independent Sector)*
- Research shows the following benefits of volunteering: responsibility, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-respect, self-discipline, self-motivation, patience, tolerance, and good citizenship.



“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.”  
(1 Peter 4:10)

God created all of us—including children—to love by serving.

## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

**1. Pitch-In Praise**—Let children know that the chores they complete at home are acts of service. Acknowledge their positive attitudes when they help around the house and yard without complaint.

**2. Share the Wealth**—When it's time to clean out the garage or closet, find people who can use your items. Together, take gently used clothing to shelters. Deliver books and toys to churches, schools, libraries, and hospitals.



**3. Secret Service**—To let children know that serving is its own reward; tackle some projects that allow you to remain anonymous. Then discuss what it feels like to help someone without being recognized. Remind children that everything we do is for Jesus, who knows our hearts and blesses our efforts.

## After a volunteer experience, debrief your children with these discussion-starter questions:

1. How did this activity make you feel? What was the best part of the experience, and what was the most challenging?
2. How did people react to what you did for them, and how did that make you feel?
3. What other ideas for serving can you think of? What are some more ways you can make a difference in the neighborhood? At school? At church? At home?

## FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Dive into these fun adventures to show kids just how fun and far-reaching their acts of service can be.

• **Super Samaritan**—You'll need stick-on name tags and markers. Read aloud the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:27-37). Give each family member a name tag and a marker. Say: “Write an ‘S’ on your name tag and decorate the rest of the sticker to look like your very own superhero logo. Then stick the tag to the inside of your shirt where no one else can see it.” Pray that God will help you all be on the lookout for people to help. Close by shouting together, “This is a job for Super Samaritan!” A week or so later, have family members share how they helped and served.



• **Waves of Service**—Fill a small swimming pool with water and five diving rings. On a large piece of paper, write down what the rings stand for: 1.) God, 2.) family and friends, 3.) church family, 4.) community, and 5.) world. Say, “When we choose to serve God, we start a chain reaction of events. By serving God, we also serve others.” Take turns dropping marbles into the pool and watch the ripple effects. Say: “This one little action affects all the water. That's how it is with service. Everything we do as we serve God has an effect on our world.” Brainstorm ways your family can serve in each of the five areas. Close by holding hands in a circle and praying: “Dear God, we know you're at the center of our lives. Please make us your willing servants. Bless our projects and remind us that every time we serve a person in need, we're actually serving you! In



# MEDIA MADNESS



## MOVIES

**Movie:** *Zookeeper*

**Genre:** Comedy

**Rating:** PG

**Cast:** Kevin James, Adam Sandler, Joe Rogan, Cher



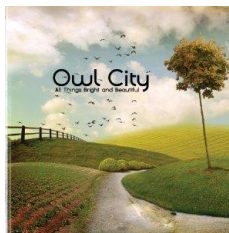
**Synopsis:** Andrew is a caretaker who's more comfortable with animals than people. When he decides to leave his job, the animals not only reveal they can talk, but they also help Andrew in the romance department.

**Our Take:** This film will attract kids who grew up watching *Madagascar*, but parents should note that it contains some rude and suggestive humor, as well as some foul language.

## MUSIC

**Artist:** Owl City

**Album:** *All Things Bright and Beautiful*



**Artist Info:** Two years ago, Adam Young scored a hit with his electronic/synthpop song "Fireflies." Now this one-man band is turning to acoustic guitar and piano accompaniments for his thoughtful lyrics.

**Summary:** Many of Young's songs reflect his Christian faith, although he isn't labeled a "Christian artist." He says, "My faith is very important to me and is a very big part of who I am as an individual."

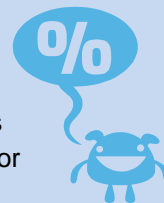
**Our Take:** Owl City is a good, inspirational alternative for kids who want to listen to popular new music that steers clear of offensive topics and lyrics.



## CULTURE & TRENDS

- The dangerous "pharming" trend isn't just for teens anymore. Younger children are stealing their parents' prescription meds—especially pain pills—to get a buzz. (*National Institute on Drug Abuse*)
- Parents who frequently feel angry at or bothered by their children increase the risk of their kids becoming bullies. (*Pediatric Academic Societies*)

## QUICK STATS



- 1 in 5 parents regrets the name they chose for their child (*today.com*)
- 42% of parents say high-tech distractions such as computers and cell phones are interfering with their children's active play time. Yet 53% of parents admit spending leisure time with their kids in front of a screen. (*YMCA's Family Health Snapshot*)

## GAMES & SITES

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Wii Play: Motion</i>	Twelve party games allow players to twist and turn, using the new Wii Remote Plus controller.	E10+; Wii
<i>Portal 2</i>	In this popular puzzle-filled game, players use a "portal gun" to pass between openings in walls and kill nonhumans (without blood).	E10+; Xbox 360, PlayStation 3
<i>AnimalJam.com</i>	This virtual world is an online component to <i>National Geographic Kids</i> magazine. Kids learn about animals, play games, and chat with others.	Best for ages 10+ or strong readers; free, but offers perks to paid members

This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, listen to, and wear.

