

SERVING Others in Love: 6 Small Group Sessions on Ministry

Copyright© 2003 by Doug Fields and Lifetogether™

Youth Specialties Books, 300 South Pierce Street, El Cajon CA 92020, are published by Zondervan, 5300 Patterson Avenue Southeast, Grand Rapids MI 49530

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Fields, Doug, 1962-

Serving others in love : 6 small group sessions on ministry / by Doug Fields and Brett Eastman.-- 1st ed.

p. cm.

Summary: Presents lessons to be used by small groups to explore ways to serve Jesus through prayer, scripture, fellowship, and ministry.

ISBN 0-310-25336-5 (pbk.)

1. Christian life--Juvenile literature. 2. Christian teenagers--Religious life--Juvenile literature. [1. Christian life. 2. Teenagers--Religious life.] I. Eastman, Brett, 1959- II. Title.

BV4531.3.F543 2003

259'.23--dc21

2003005873

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version (North American Edition). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other - except brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Concept and portions of this curriculum are from Doing Life Together (Zondervan, 2002), used by permission from Brett & Dee Eastman, Karen Lee-Thorp and Denise & Todd Wendorff.

Editorial and Art Direction: Rick Marschall

Production Coordinator: Nicole Davis

Edited: Vicki Newby

Cover and interior design: Tyler Mattson, NomadicMedia.net

Interior layouts, design management, production: Mark Rayburn, RayburnDesign.com

Proofreading: Vicki Newby and Linnea Lagerquist

Design Assistance: Katherine Spencer

Production Assistance: Roni Meek, Amy Aecovalle

Author photos: Brian Wiertzema and Art Zipple

Printed in the United States of America

04 05 06 07 08 09 // 10 9 8 7 6 5

CONTENTS

Read Me First	9
Session 1 You Are God's Masterpiece	21
Session 2 Wanna Be Great? Serve!	31
Session 3 Congratulations! You're Gifted!	41
Session 4 Your Unique Personality	51
Session 5 Serving from Experience	59
Session 6 Serving with Passion	69
Appendixes	79
Spiritual Gifts	81
Finding Your S.H.A.P.E.	91
Small Group Covenant	96
Small Group Roster	98
How to Keep Your Small Group from Becoming a Clique	100
Accountability Questions	102
Spiritual Health Assessment	103
Daily Bible Readings	112
How to Study the Bible	113
Memory Verses	116
Journaling: Snapshots of Your Heart	118
Scribbles: Journal Pages	121
Praying in Your Small Group	126
Prayer Request Guidelines	128
Prayer Options	130
Prayer Request Log	132
LIFE ^{TOGETHER} for a Year	138
About the Authors	144

YOU ARE GOD'S MASTERPIECE

As a freshman in high school, I began to follow God's ways and soon after felt God prompting me not to waste my life. When I was first introduced to the idea of serving, I knew I needed to. By the time I was a senior in high school I was working with the junior high ministry at my church. The fact that I was doing *anything* to express my love for God is a testimony of God's transforming work in me!

God used the youth minister at my church to recognize my potential and challenge me to serve as an act of obedience to God. God also used my small group leader to show me that God doesn't have to wait for followers to become perfect before he can use them. This guy's personal life was a mess, yet he served God by mentoring and discipling me throughout my high school years. As I reflect, I can see a lot of reasons why I began serving God at a relatively young age. Through them all God was at work, developing me into a person who ministers to others.

That's his goal for you too.

Since my teenage years, I've seen thousands of students develop their gifts and serve in many ministries. Some have taught children's Sunday school. Others have led junior high small groups. I've seen them stack chairs, greet peers as they arrive at youth group, write dramas, pick up trash, and play in the band. Regardless of their tasks, they had hearts sensitive to serving God.

You can serve in many ways, but one common truth binds all the opportunities together: God designed you to spend your life serving him. It may not be in a full-time, paid job or even within the local church, but you were created to serve. Don't waste your life sitting on the sidelines watching God's work. Instead get in the game and be part of God's plan. Your small group get-togethers and this book are two tools that God wants to use to help you discover your gifts and develop your passion to serve others. You're in for an exciting journey!



FELLOWSHIP: CONNECTING Your Heart to Others'

[goal: to have students share about their lives and listen attentively to others]

Name one thing you love to do that you're pretty good at.

Here are some ideas to get you thinking: singing, acting, making friends, playing sports, writing, caring for children, leading, talking, helping others, creating, dancing, building, setting up for an activity, teaching, and listening.

Can you imagine a way God can use you doing what you're pretty good at within the church? If yes, how? If no, why not?

If you haven't discussed the **Small Group Covenant** on page 96, take time to read it together and discuss it now. Make commitments to one another that your group time will reflect those values. You may want to have one person read the covenant to the group before you begin each lesson as a reminder.

Use the **Small Group Roster** (page 98) to record the names and contact information of the small group members.



DISCIPLESHIP: GROWING to Be Like Jesus

[goal: to explore God's Word, learn biblical knowledge, and make personal applications]

Congratulations! You're an original masterpiece! There is no one just like you! You're a unique individual, and God has great plans for your life. God doesn't *need* anyone to accomplish the work of his kingdom, but his plan is still to use you and me. He has something special he wants to do through you!



¹³For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully
made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
¹⁶your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

—Psalm 139:13-16

Terms that look like this are described in Learn a Little More near the end of the session.

Since God doesn't make any mistakes or have any accidents, why do so many people have a hard time recognizing their worth?

Most Christians understand that God has created everyone, but why do Christians struggle with devaluing one another?

Since God created you, then why do you have so many faults and hang-ups (as we all do)?

What's one thing you don't like about how God created you?

Verse 16 reads, "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." What's your initial response to this?

■ What are the implications for your life?

What could your youth group look like if everyone treated one another as wonderful creations of God? What would change this week if everyone took this seriously?

Read Ephesians 2:8–10.

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

—Ephesians 2:8–10

- What does it mean to be God's workmanship?
- Since we've been saved by faith, why does God want us to do good works?



MINISTRY: SERVING Others in Love

[goal: to recognize and take opportunities to serve others]

The goal of this lesson is to get you thinking about serving in a ministry. Consider the opportunities that are currently available and consider creating new options for serving.

You may choose an area to serve in and later realize it's not a good match. For instance, you may decide to teach third grade Sunday school and a month later say, "I have the gift of teaching, but those animals don't have the gift of listening." That's okay. Take that as a cue to either learn more skills to make you a better teacher and come back to it later or experiment with a different ministry opportunity.

On the other hand, don't give up on a ministry too quickly. Give yourself time to adjust before you decide whether it's a good fit. If you jump from one ministry to another too often, you'll get discouraged and may develop a reputation for being uncommitted.

List three ministry opportunities you would like to get involved with or start.



Take a few minutes and go through the following checklist of questions with each of the ideas you listed above.

Depending on the size of your small group and the time you have remaining, you may want to do this on your own or in groups of two or three.

- ◇ What would you need from God to help you succeed with this idea?
- ◇ What is it about this ministry opportunity that you feel passionate about?
- ◇ What natural abilities do you have that will help you with this ministry?
- ◇ Based on whether you're outgoing or reserved, what role can you see yourself playing in this ministry?
- ◇ Are there any experiences that you have had that make you especially qualified to help in this ministry?



EVANGELISM: ~~SHARING~~ Your Story and God's Story

[goal: to consider how the truths from this lesson might be applied to relationships with unbelievers]

Are there any opportunities within your church or youth ministry where an unbeliever can serve? If so, which ones? If not, why do you think that is?

- How might an unbeliever's service lead him or her closer to a relationship with God?

At the beginning of small groups such as this one, you should decide whether your group is open to inviting friends to join. If your group is open, list who you would like to invite and make plans for talking with them. Your small group leader or your leadership team may have already determined the group is closed at this time. If so, a good group respects and follows that decision. You may be able to invite friends to join you in the next LIFE TOGETHER book.

Read How to Keep Your Small Group from Becoming a Clique (page 100) when you're at home.



WORSHIP: ~~SURRENDERING~~ Your Life to Honor God

[goal: to focus on God's presence]

Some people refer to the church in sports terms when they say that most people in the church are spectators rather than players. The bleachers (pews) are filled with people watching the few who actually play (those who serve). Is that true at your church? Is that true of you?

For the next several sessions, you'll be challenged to get out of the bleachers and into the game by developing a heart for service. As you do this, take time to focus on God's presence through prayer so you can sense his leading in your life.

Share one specific way the others in the group can pray for you. This is a time to write down prayer requests in the **Prayer Request Log** (page 132).

Spend time thanking God for the people in your group and for the unique qualities each person has, which will lead to different acts of service and make your church stronger.

Before your group breaks, read **At Home This Week** together. (If everyone in the group has already done this in another LifeTogether book, you can skip the introduction if you'd like.)

16

You'll find three prayer resources in the back of the book. By reading and discussing them, you'll find your group prayer time more rewarding.

- 📖 **Praying in Your Small Group** (page 126). Read this on your own before the next session.
- 📖 **Prayer Request Guidelines** (page 128). Read and discuss these guidelines as a group.
- 📖 **Prayer Options** (page 130). Refer to this list for ideas to give your prayer time variety.

AT HOME THIS WEEK

Each week, you'll have at least four options to help you grow and learn on your own—which means you'll have more to contribute when you return to the group.

Daily Bible Readings

On page 112 you'll find **Daily Bible Readings**, a chart of Bible passages that correspond with the lessons—five for each week. If you choose this option, read one passage each day. Highlight it in your Bible, reflect on it, journal about it, or repeat it out loud as a prayer. You're free to interact with the Bible verses any way you want, just be sure to read God's love letter—the Bible. You'll find helpful tips in **How to Study the Bible** (page 113).

Memory Verses

Memorizing Bible verses is an important habit to develop as you learn to grow spiritually on your own. **Memory Verses** (page 116) lists six verses—one per week—for you to memorize if you want to plant God's Word in your heart. Memorizing verses (and making them stick for more than a few minutes) isn't easy, but the benefits are undeniable. You'll have God's Word with you wherever you go.

Journaling

You'll find blank pages for journaling beginning on page 121. At the end of each session, you'll find several options and a question or two to get your thoughts going—but you aren't limited to the ideas in this book. Use these pages to reflect, to write a letter to God, to note what you're learning, to compose a prayer, to ask a

question, to draw a picture of your praise, to record your thoughts. For more suggestions about journaling, turn to **Journaling: Snapshots of Your Heart** (page 118).

If you'd like to choose journaling this week, respond to this question: *What's my biggest fear about getting involved in a ministry to serve God?*

Wrap It Up

Write out your answers to the session questions your group didn't have time to discuss.

This week share with the others in your group which option seems most appealing to try during the coming week. The variety of preferences is another reminder of how different the people in your group are.

During other weeks, take time to share with the group what you did **At Home This Week**.

LEARN A LITTLE MORE

Wonderfully made

Maybe you feel you're no longer a masterpiece because of the sin that's in your life. You've made bad choices, and others have hurt you. Sin has left its mark on who you are now, and you feel like a stained masterpiece. You may find it easier to see the stains than the masterpiece, but the stains don't erase your value. God wants you to change your focus. God will use even the stains from your past to restore the masterpiece to greater glory. You'll need to discover the uniqueness God created in you and express it through your life and service.

Written in your book

Several times throughout Scripture there is mention of a book (or scroll) that belongs to the Lord. In Psalm 56:8 God's complete knowledge of the psalmist's sorrow is written on a scroll. The prophet Malachi speaks of a scroll of remembrance that records the names of those who fear the Lord (3:16). Perhaps the most popular term is the "book of life," which contains the names of the faithful (Psalm 69:28; Revelation 20:15).

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Genesis 1:27

Job 31:4

Matthew 6:26

NOTES

so 2,719. The growing its area, 10

[illegible]

sq 2719. The St. Bernard, forming its area, 10