

Starfish



Verse If you are given much, much will be required of you. If much is entrusted to you, much will be expected of you. Luke 12:48

Study Plan: As Christians, we understand that everything has been given to us by God. As good stewards, Christians use these gifts to serve others and serve God.

Step 1: What is stewardship? Leader's initials _____



A **steward's** job is to take care of things. Every cruise ship has a steward. The steward's job is to be friendly to everyone on the ship and make sure they have everything they need. She makes sure the luggage gets to the correct room. She makes sure guests know where the dining room and the swimming pool are. If someone gets sick, she makes sure the ship's doctor checks up on them. The ship's steward works long hours to make sure everyone is comfortable and happy. As she takes care of everyone, her time and talents are used for service to others.

We are called to be stewards of God's creation and of God's gifts to us. Everything we have and everything we are has been given to us by God. Beauty, brains, personality, health, physical strength, wealth, a loving family, a home, food, friends... These are all gifts for which we must be responsible. We must take care of the things we have been given and we should use these gifts to help others.



The idea that everything comes from God is probably not new to you. However, your understanding of the concept is probably changing as you grow up. What does it mean to you that everything comes from God?

If you conduct your behavior with kindness and patience like a ship's steward, you will naturally use some of your gifts and talents. Discuss how behaving well causes you to use your gifts and talents well.

Does our society and culture encourage this kind of behavior?



1. On a sheet of paper, make three columns.
 - ❖ Label the first column: "Kind things I do for others"
 - ❖ Label the second column: "Talents I use to do kind things"
 - ❖ Label the third column: "How this makes me feel."Fill out this chart to review your stewardship behavior.
2. Illustrate the behavior of a good steward by drawing a picture or making up a skit with the other members of your group. Show how a good steward uses her gifts well.





Step 2: Christians “serve” reconciliation!

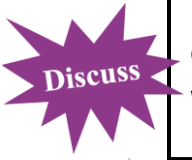
Leader’s initials _____

God’s important message to mankind is to love one another. By doing kind things for other people, especially those in need, Christians are living the way Christ urged when He said, “When you minister unto the least of these, you minister unto me.” Humans are made in God’s image and every person you meet wears the face of God, whether rich or poor, strong or weak, healthy or sick. Therefore, service to others is service to God.

Our everyday ministry is explained in our Book of Common Prayer on page 855

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

It is a Christian’s responsibility to find a way to use her talents to serve God by helping others and especially to resolve conflict and bring about renewed relationships.



How you can carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world? How can you continue His work of bringing people to love and respect each other?

What other ministries are lay people instructed to do? (See the above quote.)



Do 1 of the following activities:

1. Picture yourself as an advertising executive “selling” reconciliation.
 - a. Brainstorm about why someone would want to “buy” reconciliation from you. How would you convince them that reconciliation is worth their time and money?
 - b. Would you make a TV ad, an internet video, or a bus shelter poster?
 - c. What colors and pictures would you use?
 - d. Create your ad and show it to your church members
2. Create a Light of Reconciliation to remind you of your responsibility to bear witness to Christ and carry on His work of reconciliation.
 - a. You will need:
 - A small vase
 - Glass floral gems
 - Hot Glue
 - A votive or electric candle
 - b. Using hot glue, decorate the outside of the vase with the floral gems.
 - c. Keep the candle on your dining table to remind you that reconciliation starts at home.



Step 3: What can you do?? Leader's initials _____



Children and young people have the power to inspire and cause great change. They have the enthusiasm to act on ideas to create a better world. Read this story, adapted from the *Star Thrower* by Loren C. Eiseley.

A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement.

She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"



The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied,

"Well, I made a difference to that one!"

The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.

The positive attitude of the little girl caused others to join her and it was possible to save all of the starfish after all!!



Discuss volunteer and other service activities in which you already serve.

Discuss some people who are good examples of a life of service. This can be someone at your church, someone in the community, or a public figure.



Do two of the following activities:

1. Research volunteer service opportunities in your area. These may be listed in the newspaper, on the Internet, or at your school. List them in your notebook. Choose one and make a plan to volunteer for at least 10 hours.
2. Perform a project service together, such as: help at an environmental clean-up day, sing at a senior home, or collect canned goods to deliver to a food bank.
3. Make a necklace or bracelet to remind you of the starfish story. You can purchase starfish charms and other jewelry supplies at a craft store.

