

#forthelou Family Guide

A step-by-step resource to spark conversation,
creativity and genuine excitement around how to
show God's love through acts of service.



Wondering how to make #forthelou a worthwhile and fun experience for everyone?

You are not alone. Perhaps this will help.

LET GOD LEAD.

Life is busy. Still, God calls us to love one another as He loves us. He knows this takes time, effort and energy. He can be trusted to make a way.

So, take a deep breath, say a prayer and remember you all are enough. Right now. Just. As. You. Are.

*Isaiah 48:17, Matthew 22:36-38,
Matthew 25:37-40*

LET THEM IN.

Now that the pressure's off, invite everyone into the conversation and resist the temptation to talk too much or make most of the decisions.

God has been using broken, imperfect people to spread His love since the beginning of time. All we need is to show up with a soft heart.

2 Corinthians 12:5, Psalms 51:10-12, Mark 10:13-14

LIVE IT UP!

Families serving together to spread God's love is a beautiful thing and should be deeply enjoyed and authentically celebrated.

Be on the lookout for subtle ways to "mark the moment", as well as encourage and affirm one another.

*Hebrews 10:24-25, Ephesians 2:4-10,
Matthew 25:23*



**Consider sharing them in advance. Some people enjoy having extra time to think and/or write down their answers.*

LEARN SOMETHING NEW.

The process outlined in this guide promotes learning and gives everyone a chance to own their experience.

In the hours or days after you serve, set aside time as a family to do some post-serve reflection. It will deepen their understanding and generate questions and ideas to propel future learning experiences.

Below are a handful of questions* to get you started. Make sure everyone gets a chance to share and feel free to let the answers guide your conversation.

When giving feedback, try to focus on behavior, attitude and skill development, not just how well a task was completed.

- *What happened that I did not expect?*
- *What was the most interesting discovery about the situation, others and myself?*
- *What do I want to learn more about?*
- *How will this impact how I think and feel?*
- *What was the most enjoyable moment? What was the most challenging?*
- *Did I put forth my best effort? What am I most proud of?*
- *What would I do differently next time?*

If/when you are ready,

here are a few more things we found helpful.



Stay flexible. You will find the right, age-appropriate fit for your family. It might just take a few attempts.



Explain what to expect during your serving experience. Discuss both pleasant and unpleasant feelings that may arise. Make a list of things you will want/need to bring.



Look for ways to talk about the issue you'll be addressing and how it affects people. Was there a time you or someone close to you needed similar support?

Embrace the hard questions and find the answers together. There are plenty of books and online resources that can equip your family with the skills to serve others well. One of our favorites in [The Crossing Bookstore](#) is "Small Things with Great Love" by Margot Starbuck.



Talking through one's different life experiences is important. Equally important is recognizing the similarities. That is the secret to building community with one another.



Practice people first language and be cognizant of how you share info/photos at [#forthelou](#). Did you ask permission? Doing so preserves dignity and shows respect.



[#forthelou](#)
Family Guide



STEP 1: Set a time to talk as a family... DATE _____ / TIME _____

When you meet, grab some paper, pens/pencils, snacks, drinks, etc. and start with Step 2.

STEP 2 : Pray.

Invite God into your conversation. Consider asking Him for guidance, favor and courage.

STEP 3: Discover.

Take a look in the Bible at how God shows His love for us: Isaiah 41:10, Jeremiah 31:3, Matthew 7:7-12, John 3:16. What are some of your favorite examples? Let everyone share.

STEP 4: Reflect.

How does your family show love to one another? Do you cheerfully do what someone else wants to do, lend a hand to fix something, buy a special gift, etc.? Write down all answers.

STEP 5 : Identify.

Who are you drawn to? Underline answers, discuss and circle your family's top two priorities.

- | | | | | |
|----------|--------|----------|----------|---------------|
| Disabled | Lonely | Families | Veterans | Those In Jail |
| Elderly | Sick | Kids: | Teachers | Refugees |
| Homeless | Hungry | New Moms | Animals | Other: _____ |



Take a moment...

You all covered a lot of ground. And, chances are you discovered something new about God, yourself and/or a family member.

That is something to celebrate! (High fives, fist bumps, and happy dances all around!)

Now, refill those cups and snack bowls because Step 6 can be a tough one. You got this!

Step 6: Action.

With your priorities in hand, it's time to make a plan! You may need more time/info to confirm answers. If so, agree who will do the research and when the family will decide.

WHAT _____

What acts of service would work for your family? Circle all that apply, discuss and then underline your family's top two. Once you confirm WHAT, write it above.

Note: If partnering with an organization, there may be a minimum age requirement.

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Clean | Hang with Kids | Landscaping/Gardening |
| Sort/Organize | Hang with Families | Make/Drop-off/Serve Food |
| Fix/Build/Paint | Hang with Adults | Other: _____ |

WHERE/WHO _____

What comes to mind? Need inspiration? Visit thecrossingchurch/forthelou for a variety of opportunities. If those dates/times are not lining up, what about a neighbor, teacher or friend who needs support? Write down all answers, discuss and circle your family's top two. Once you confirm WHO, write it above.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

WHEN WILL YOU SERVE? _____

Work with the organization/person to set a time and write it above. We'd love to know how it goes! Share your photos using [#forthelou](https://twitter.com/forthelou) and tag [@crossingstl](https://twitter.com/crossingstl).