st james in the city

SERVE

Equipped to Serve

Live

What's the kindest thing that anyone has ever done for you?

Love

Listen to or sing a worship song about serving God.

Grow

Read Matthew 25:14-30

1. What do the talents represent?
2. Who owns the talents?
   Who do you think your gifts and abilities belong to?
3. Why does the master give the talents to his servants?
   Why does the master give different amounts of talents to different servants?
4. Why does the master congratulate the first two servants?
   Why exactly does the master punish the third servant?
   What does this teach us about what God expects of us?
5. What reward does the master give to the first two servants?
   Is it right to expect further talents as you mature?

Serve

Go around the group asking each member to list 2 or 3 talents which they think they have. You may need to help each other. We are often not few good at spotting some of our own talents.

Are there any talents which you are not using at the moment?

Prayer

Pray for one another. You could do this as you discuss the questions in SERVE above. If you have a large group it may be wise to split into smaller groups of 3 or 4.

SERVE

Commanded to Serve

Live

On a large sheet of paper make a list of all the ways you can serve God within the church.

On a separate piece of paper make a list of all the ways you can serve God outside of the Church.

Make a tick against three tasks on each list which you as a group consider to be the most significant.

Love

Listen to or sing a worship song about serving God.

Grow

Read Matthew 25 v31-46.

1. Does anything surprise you about the list in v35-36?
2. Why where both sets of people surprised by the kings judgement?
3. Are you saved by faith or by works? Discuss what this passage implies about this.
4. Has this parable surprised you in a pleasant way, like the first group; or has it come as it did to the second group?

Serve

In the light of this parable, which are the most important tasks on the two sheets you made at the start of the study.

Has this study changed your idea of service?

Prayer

Close the session in prayer. Pray for each other that God would reveal the areas in our church and in our community that need our service.

Leaders Notes for Question 3

The Bible teaches that we are saved by faith but that faith should be seen in our works. This parable teaches:

- Judgement awaits everyone.
- We are not all going the same way.
- There will be great surprises on that day.
- It shows the heart of Christianity is a relationship with Jesus, which **should** show itself in loving, sacrificial care for others in particular the poor and needy.
- It shows that people who have never heard the good news will be judged by their response in the light of what they have heard.
- Notice that although Jesus is the judge, he does not judge. People judge themselves by their own actions.

SERVE

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Taught to Serve

Live

If you were pronounced King or Queen tomorrow, with lots of servants which job would you make sure you never did again? E.g. wash, iron, clean the car, the supermarket shop, etc.

Love

Listen to or sing a worship song about serving God.

Grow

Read John 13 v1-17.

1. How bad do you think the disciple's feet would be? Think about what the condition of sanitation, weather, etc. were like in these times.
2. Why couldn't Jesus simply express his love in words? (v1)
3. How do you think the disciples felt as Jesus went round the room washing their feet?
4. Have you ever been surprised by someone doing a gracious act for you?
5. How did you feel?
6. What do you think the disciples later understood by Jesus' actions? (v7)
7. What can we learn from Jesus in this passage? Why should we serve others?
8. How will we be blessed by carrying out this advice? (v17)

Serve

After studying this passage, has your idea of service been challenged, and if so, in what ways?

Prayer

Pray for one another. Pray that we would be able to reflect more of Jesus' servant heart in our everyday life.