

SERVING GOD

You are never too young or too old, the reward is the same.

TOPICS:

Eternal Life, Fairness, Salvation, Serving

MATERIALS:

Box of paper clips

3 identical prizes (e.g. candy bars)

DURATION:

Approximately 10 minutes

PREPARATION:

Before class, link paper clips together to form three chains. One chain using about 40 paper clips, another using about 20 and a third using about 5.



WHAT YOU WILL DO:

During the class, you will ask volunteers to help you with a boring project, and tell them that they will get a reward for their efforts. While the volunteers are working, the rest of the class can look up and READ - Matthew 20: 1-16. Each volunteer will get a chain of linked paper clips. After the first volunteer is about half way finished unlinking the longest chain of paper clips, a second volunteer will help you with the middle-sized chain. When both are almost finished, you will ask a third volunteer to unlink the short chain of paper clips, each time offering the same reward. Most likely grumbling will occur from the first and second volunteer, which is part of the plan.

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

I would like someone to help me with a very boring project. I have a bunch of paper clips, accidentally linked together. They are of no use to me this way. If someone will help unlink these clips, when finished I will reward you with this great prize. (Show candy and let them begin. Wait until the first child is about half way finished.) I have another bunch of paper clips all linked together, would someone else like to help me with these? I will reward you with the same prize. (Wait until the first two are almost finished) I still have one more small bunch of paper clips linked together, would someone else like to help me with these, for the same prize? (When all are finished, give each their rewards, and ask the following questions.)

1. How did you feel when I first offered you a great reward to help me?
2. How did you feel when the next person got the same reward for doing less work?
3. (To volunteer number 3) How did you feel when you got the smallest chain of paper clips?
4. Everyone else, do you think what I did was fair?

I know it does not seem fair, that someone who only did a little work got the same reward as someone else who did much more. Do you know Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is similar? You see some people receive Jesus when they are very young. They have a whole lifetime to work for God, by doing things like helping others, praying, or by teaching. Some people do not receive Jesus until they are very old. They may only have a short time to serve Him. Receiving Jesus early in life is like when (name of first volunteer) volunteered to help. She/He had a long time to serve. Receiving Jesus later in life is like when (names of second and third volunteers) volunteered to help. They were still able to serve the Lord, but not for as long. The reward is the same for everyone who receives Christ, no matter how old they are when they do. That reward of course is everlasting life with Jesus in heaven. So remember, working hard and serving Jesus is a privilege and a joy that we can have as Christians, because we know that our reward is coming.

The Story of the Workers in the Vineyard

1 The kingdom of heaven is like a man who owned land. He went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 He agreed to give them the usual pay for a day's work. Then he sent them into his vineyard. 3 About nine o'clock in the morning he went out again. He saw others standing in the market doing nothing. 4 He told them, "You also go and work in my vineyard. I'll pay you what is right." 5 So they went. He went out again about noon and at three o'clock and did the same thing. 6 About five o'clock he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" 7 "Because no one has hired us," they answered. He said to them, "You also go and work in my vineyard." 8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard spoke to the person who was in charge of the workers. He said, "Call the workers and give them their pay. Begin with the last ones I hired. Then go on to the first ones." The workers who were hired about five o'clock came. Each received the usual day's pay. 10 So when those who were hired first came, they expected to receive more. But each of them also received the usual day's pay. 11 When they received it, they began to complain about the owner. 12 "These people who were hired last worked only one hour," they said. "You have paid them the same as us. We have done most of the work and have been in the hot sun all day." 13 The owner answered one of them. "Friend," he said, "I'm being fair to you. Didn't you agree to work for the usual day's pay? 14 Take your money and go. I want to give the one I hired last the same pay I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Do you feel cheated because I gave so freely to the others?" 16 So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last.