

Seven Special Servants



References

Acts 6:1-7; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 87–96



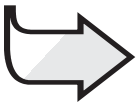
Memory Verse

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:4, 5, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that the skills God gives us can be organized for better service.
Feel happy that God needs and uses us to serve others.
Respond by dedicating our gifts to serving God.



The Message

When we organize our gifts, we serve God better.

Monthly Theme

God gives us skills for service.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

To better meet the needs of the many people who look to the Christian community for support, the believers form ministry teams. One group continues to preach, while a new group organizes the daily distribution of food. Seven wise, Spirit-filled men are chosen for this new responsibility. God blesses their efforts, and the number of believers continues to grow.

This is a lesson about service.

God gives different gifts to different people. Among the gifts of the Spirit is the gift of organization. Effective service is well organized. We honor God by dividing the many responsibilities among those who are ready to serve Him.

Teacher Enrichment

“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” 1 Corinthians 14:33. He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 96).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>20 Questions</i> B. <i>Treasure Hunt</i>	one or more church officers (deacon, elder, treasurer), screen things associated with deacon's duties (offering plate, map, towel, basin, Communion glass)
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> box covered with words/pictures of people serving others picture of church, Post-it notes or adhesive labels
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes none Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Shadow a Deacon</i> B. <i>Church Organization</i>	none chart of local church organization, chart of world church organization, small cards
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Thank-you Card</i> B. <i>Appreciation Day</i>	card stock, pencils/markers, art supplies chalkboard or whiteboard chalk or marker

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- one or more church officers (deacon, elder, treasurer, etc.)
- screen

A. 20 Questions

In advance, invite one or more church officers to come to your Sabbath School. Have each person stand behind a screen. Have the children ask up to 20 questions about that person’s church duties, and guess who the person is and what they do. Have the person then tell some more facts about their duties. Repeat with another church officer as time allows.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think is most interesting about the service [name] performs for our church? Would you like to do this when you are older? Why? What are some of the other positions of service in our church? Why is organization important in church?** (So people can best serve God.) **Today’s message is:**



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD BETTER.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- several things connected with a deacon’s duties (see activity)

B. Treasure Hunt

In advance, hide some things to do with a deacon’s duties. For example: offering plate, towel, basin, Communion glass. Say: **I have hidden some things that are connected to the duties of a deacon. How many can you find?** Give the children two or three minutes to hunt. Give them an opportunity to explain why they have chosen the things they have picked up. They may think of other things.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why is it important to have clearly defined duties in the church?** (God is a God of order. When we are organized, we are more effective and can serve God better. It helps us to do all the things God wants us to do.) **Each one has a task to do. All the people aren’t doing the same thing. All that needs to be done is done when the duties are organized. Our message for today says:**



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD BETTER.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Trust in the Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 111)
- "Give Me Oil in My Lamp" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 132)
- "We Are His Hands" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 129)
- "I Will Make You Fishers of Men" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 135)
- "This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 134)
- "There Were Twelve Disciples" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 63)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize that having an organized church provides a framework in which people may better serve God.



Offering

Say: **There are different levels of organization in the church. We have a worldwide network for sending missionaries, teachers, doctors, and nurses to teach others. When we give our Sabbath School offerings, we support this important network and help others learn about Jesus.**

You Need:

- box covered with words/pictures of people serving others



Prayer

Give each child a Post-it note and suggest that they write or draw a church office position and place it on the church. Pray specifically for the church and its leaders as well as other prayer requests.

You Need:

- picture of a church
- Post-it notes or adhesive labels

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes

Experiencing the Story

Characters: You need four groups.

- Group 1 Greek-speaking Jews
- Group 2 Hebrew-speaking Jews
- Group 3 apostles
- Group 4 deacons

If your group is small, some children may be in more than one group. Deacons may come from both groups.

Read or tell the story.

The young church kept growing. Every day more people came to learn more about Jesus. *[Mime teaching people.]* The apostles were kept busy teaching and encouraging the new believers.

[Each child "helps" someone else.] All kinds of people joined the church. Some were rich. Some were poor. Others lost their jobs, or their families did not want anything to do with them when they became Christians. All the believers tried to help one another. The rich sold some of their property and used the money to buy food for those who did not have any. People were busy with teaching and preaching, and did not think much about other things.

[Greek Jews come to apostles and seem angry. Point to the other groups.] One day the Greek-speaking Jews came to the apostles and started complaining. Everyone was shocked and upset. Until then there had been a feeling of unity among the believers.

The Greek-speaking Jews said, "The Greek-speaking widows are not getting as much food as the widows who speak Hebrew." *[Apostles shake their heads.]* The apostles knew that if they became involved in sorting out all the problems,

they would have no time to preach. And they needed to concentrate on teaching people about Jesus.

[All gather around the apostles.] The twelve apostles gathered all the believers together and said, "If we took time from teaching the Word of God to serve food, we would not be doing what God has called us to do. Choose seven men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit, and we will ask them to be responsible for caring for these practical matters."

Everyone thought it was a good idea. *[Look around at the group and choose seven to be deacons.]* The believers chose Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, all good, kind, Spirit-filled men.

The apostles were pleased. Now they could concentrate on serving God by teaching others. They held a special service to dedicate these seven men to their new duties as deacons. They prayed for them and laid their hands on them. *[All kneel down. "Apostles" put hands on "deacons."]*

Everyone was happy. Once again the young church was united. The apostles served God by teaching and spreading the gospel. The seven deacons served by caring for the practical things that needed to be done in a growing church. God blessed both the apostles and the deacons as they served Him.

Debriefing

What was the apostles' main duty?

(to share what they knew about Jesus)

Who needed help?

(Greek-speaking and Jewish widows)

Why were they complaining?

(They believed they were not getting their fair share of the food.)

What was the apostles' solution?

(to appoint deacons to look after practical

things) **Let's say today's message together:**



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD BETTER.

Memory Verse

Repeat the memory verse several times until the children know it. Use the following to teach the verse.

There are different kinds of gifts, Make a fist, then lift fingers one at a time as if counting.

but the same Spirit. Point upward.

There are different kinds of service, Make a fist, then lift fingers one at a time as if counting.

but the same Lord. Point upward.

1 Corinthians 12:4, 5 Palms together, then open.

Bible Study

Say: **Let's look in the Old**

Testament at the story of another person who was working too hard and needed help to organize a group of people.

You Need:
• Bibles

Have the children find and read aloud Exodus 18:13-26 to answer the following questions. Adults assist as needed.

Who was overworked? (Moses)
What was he doing? (hearing and judging everyday problems)

Who offered a solution? (Jethro, Moses' father-in-law)

What was the solution? (appoint judges)

What was the result? (Moses was relieved of too much work [verse 23]. The people were happy [verse 23]. Moses appointed judges [verse 25].)

What were the qualifications for a leader/judge? (They were to be capable and trustworthy, to hate dishonesty, and love God.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How was the apostles' situation like that of Moses?** (There were many disputes. The people depended on their leader[s] to deal with all their problems.) **What was the solution to Moses' problem?** (Organize others to share the responsibilities.)

God is happy when things are well organized. When we have organization in our church, leaders know just what they are to do and can better concentrate on their duties.

Let's say our message together:



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD BETTER.

3

Applying the Lesson

A. Shadow a Deacon

In advance, talk to the head deacon and arrange for the children to partner with a deacon for the rest of the day.

Explain to the children what they will do after Sabbath School. Explain the different duties they may be doing. Be sure they understand that they may have to take turns, and that it may take a few weeks for everyone to have a chance to “work” with a deacon.

Debriefing

Ask: **Does everyone understand what they are going to do?** If not, explain again.

Why are these jobs important?

(They make sure things run smoothly; they free the pastor and other leaders to teach and evangelize.)

All jobs in the church are important. No one is better than another. Let’s say our message together:



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD

BETTER.

B. Church Organization

Start with the local church. Explain the organization and name the main duties. If you are unsure, ask the pastor or another leader to help, or look at *The SDA Church Manual*. Then explain the world church structure:

- 1. The local church is made up of individual believers.**
- 2. The local conference (or local field/mission) is made up of a number**

of local churches in a state, province, or territory.

3. The union conference (or union field/mission) is made up of conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country).

4. The General Conference, or world headquarters of the church, is made up of all unions in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility for particular geographical areas. (Source: Seventh-day Adventist world church website: <http://www.adventist.org>.)

Distribute cards naming the various positions and levels of church administration and have the children recreate the structure.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why is organization so important?** (We know what each other is doing. We do not duplicate efforts. Everyone gets to use their gifts to serve God.)

Why did God give His people so many different gifts? (Because there are many different needs.)

Let’s say our message together:



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD BETTER.

You Need:

- chart showing the organization of the local church
- chart showing the organization of the world church
- cards for the different administrative levels

Sharing the Lesson

A. Thank-you Card

Distribute art supplies and card stock. Instruct the children to make thank-you cards for the leaders in your church. Use the church structure chart from Applying the Lesson to choose different leaders. Have each child make a card for a different person.

Debriefing

Admire the cards. Say: **Every job from preaching to cleaning up after potluck lunches is important. When we use our gifts to help organize things in our church, we please God and help others. Let's say our message for today:**



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD BETTER.

You Need:

- card stock
- pencils/markers
- art supplies

B. Appreciation Day

With the children discuss and decide on an event/activity you can organize together to say thank you to those who serve in your church. Divide the children into small groups to plan. Make sure that each group has an adult to help.

Allow time to report plans. Determine how you will proceed and be sure to work with your pastor or head elder to do what the children plan.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why is it important to plan for church events?** (So we all know what to do. So things will run smoothly. So nothing is forgotten.)

When we organize, we follow the guidelines in the Bible.

Let's say today's message together:



WHEN WE ORGANIZE OUR GIFTS, WE SERVE GOD BETTER.

Closing

Close with prayer. Mention different gifts or talents the children have that they can use in service to God.

You Need:

- chalkboard/whiteboard
- chalk/marker

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References

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Memory Verse

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The Message

When we organize our gifts, we serve God better.

What would you think if you came home today and there was no food for dinner? How would you feel if you saw your food being given to someone else? This sometimes happened in the early church. Some people had no food while others had plenty to eat.

The young church kept growing and growing. The apostles kept busy! All day, every day, they taught the Word of God to people who were hungering to hear it. But one day an ugly problem arose.

The Greek-speaking believers began to complain.

They thought that the Hebrew-speaking believers were not sharing the daily food equally. They believed the Greek widows were not getting their fair share. This was a problem we would call discrimination.

Discrimination means that we treat others poorly because they are different from us in some way. They may look different, or speak a different language. They may dress differently, or eat different foods. It seemed as if the Hebrew Jews were discriminating against the Greek believers.

The apostles knew they could not handle every problem in the new church. And they were wise enough to know they shouldn't even try. So they called the people together to talk about it. “Our work is to pray and teach the Word of God. Look among yourselves for seven

men,” they said. “Choose men who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. We will put them in charge of distributing food.”

The people looked at each other and nodded. “That’s a good idea!” they agreed. So they chose seven good men. Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus became the first deacons. The apostles prayed and laid their hands on them to set them apart for this special service. Then the apostles were free to continue the work God had for them to do.

God has given each one of His children a special gift to use in serving Him. Some have the gift of teaching God’s Word. These are the teachers we enjoy listening to and learning from. Some have the gift of caring for others. These are the people who are always glad to help out.

They wash the dishes after church dinners. They help their neighbors with car problems. They furnish food and clothing to people in need.

Another of God’s special gifts is the ability to figure out how to do things the best way. Do you know anyone who has this gift of organization? Another

of God’s special gifts is the ability to understand and help people who are in trouble. All of us can show others the love of Jesus and love them the same way He does.

The apostles kept doing their special work of teaching God’s Word. And the young church grew and grew. When believers use their gifts to serve God today, the church keeps growing! Every believer, including you and me, has a special gift and a special work to do for the Lord.



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, go for a walk with your family. Look for evidence that God is a God of order. Talk about what that means. Look at the variety of plants. Think how the same seeds always produce the same kind of plants. What other evidence of God's organization can you see?
- Thank God for being a "God of order."

Sunday

- Read and discuss Acts 6:1-7 with your family. What were the names of the seven deacons? Who are the deacons in your church?
- Cut up small squares of gift paper. Write one word of your memory verse on each square. Mix up the papers. Then try to organize them into the right order. Use this to teach the verse to your family.
- Thank God for the deacons in your church.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss 1 Timothy 3:8-11. Make a list of the things that Paul says a deacon should be.
- Create a logo for the deacons in your church. It should represent the work they do.
- Thank God for the deacons in your church.

Tuesday

- Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 for worship today. Make a chart to show the different gifts of the Spirit. List the gifts of the Spirit down one side. Write the names of everyone in your family on the other side.

Name each person and the gifts you think they have. Discuss how each can best use their gifts.

- Ask God to give you all opportunities to use your gifts today.

Wednesday

- During worship read and discuss 1 Corinthians 12:12-30. How does Paul describe the value of the different gifts?
- Try to do something for two minutes with one hand behind your back. Now try to move around for two minutes by hopping on one foot. Are you using all the ability God gave you? What happens in the church if people do not use their gifts?
- Pray that God will help your family to use their gifts in His service.

Thursday

- Something wonderful happened to one of the deacons. With your family, read about it in Acts 8:26-40. Find a way to use your gifts to help someone today.
- Create a gift box. Wrap a box in gift wrap. Place a gift voucher inside for some service you can do. Give it to someone in your family.
- Ask God to help your family use their gifts for Him.

Friday

- For worship today, read Acts 6:1-7 again. Act out the story with the help of your family.
- Say your memory verse together. Then ask God to help you use the gifts He gave you.
- Help your family get organized for Sabbath.