

SNAPSHOTS OF MINISTRY

TEACHING SERVICE BY EXAMPLE



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HOT

SHOTS

Snapshots of Ministry: Teaching Service by Example

Written by Mark Farnham and Jeff Diedrich

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Table of Contents

Introduction	ii
Lesson Format	ii
Course Objectives	iv
Lesson 1 —Meal by Meal: Everyday Ministry	1
Lesson 2 —Feed My Sheep: Ministering After Failure	7
Lesson 3 —Road to Rome: When It All Falls Apart	13
Lesson 4 —True and Faithful: Encouragement in Ministry	18
Lesson 5 —Matchless Grace: The Perfect Model for Ministry	24

Josh, a guy that spends every other Saturday morning in an 82-year-old lady's yard, mowing her grass and trimming her bushes.

Janelle, a girl that makes soup for her parents to take to a local homeless shelter, which she also visits once a month with a music group from her church.

Hiram, who takes his gift for technology and connects people in nursing homes with their loved ones, giving them used computers with video chat capability.

Veronica, who plays soccer with the neighborhood girls every Thursday evening on her parents' property, where she mentors them and invites them to her church.

How can a youth pastor turn the teens in his church into active ministers—into servants of Christ? How can he get them involved in the ministries of the church, to use their talents and abilities to benefit the whole body? The answer isn't easy, but teaching them about ministry is a great way to start.

Thanks to years of church history in the West, the term “minister” has taken on a high and lofty connotation. However, when Paul desired to be a minister in 1 Corinthians 4:1, he used the word *huperetes*, which refers to a galley slave on a rowing ship. It's hard to imagine a more extreme or humble example of servanthood.

God wants us all to be ministers, too—extreme ones, humble ones. We hope this study, which focuses on a handful of Christians serving in the early church, will help your students understand what a minister is, what a minister does, and how anyone can become a minister immediately. By studying the lives of ministers—and their ultimate example, Christ—we are challenged to serve however God leads us. We can by His grace become humble, useful ministers of God.

Lesson Format

Hot Shots are written with a firm belief that the Word of God is the primary life-changing element that the Holy Spirit uses to do His work. You can be assured that we will not depend upon psychology, values clarification, touchy-feely questions, or humanistic methods. Instead, we will allow Scripture to reveal God's character to the teens, thereby exposing them to His life-changing power. We stand unashamedly upon the Word of God, which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

While the writing staff at Positive Action For Christ understands that all our lessons must be centered in the Bible, we also see the need for helping the teacher by including creative teaching ideas. These creative ideas are simply sermon illustrations taken one step further. Instead of talking about opening a window in an illustration, we ask you to open it. Instead of imagining how destructive the tongue can be, you should present an

object lesson to show them. These ideas can enhance your lesson and help teens grasp the truth of God's Word.

Our belief is that through object lessons and illustrations we are better able to imitate the teaching of Jesus Christ. He depended wholly upon the Scriptures for the content of His lessons, but He also used coins, trees, water, and more to illustrate His teaching.

Each Hotshot follows the same lesson format throughout the study.



The Warm Up opens the door of the student's mind to the main lesson. This may include handouts, object lessons, or stimulating questions.



The Bridge transitions the teen from the warm-up into the main text of Scripture that you will be teaching.



The Content is the main body of the lesson, focusing on Bible exposition and application.



The Closing summarizes the lesson and calls for a commitment to the truth.

In this Hot Shot you will find Scripture memory verses that complement the lessons. We believe that Scripture memorization is an excellent tool which the Holy Spirit uses to sanctify and guide Christians today.



Before you start the study...

Read the Introduction, Course Objectives and Overview. It is important that you understand the scope of this study before you teach it.

Before each lesson...

1. Read through the lesson and take note of the Lesson Aim, Objectives, and the materials needed for creative teaching segments.
2. Plan ahead to modify the lesson if necessary. Your facilities or equipment may limit you. Substitute your own ideas if necessary.
3. Each lesson can be taught in 20–30 minutes, but preparation can let you shorten or lengthen the lesson as needed.
4. Use excitement when you teach! An excited teacher produces students who are excited about learning. If you don't feel that one of our teaching ideas or warm ups will excite your teens, spend some time and develop one that will work.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will:

- Understand ministry as shown in the Book of Acts.
- Realize that God wants each of us to minister for Him.
- Develop a realistic picture of what ministry is.
- Nurture an attitude of ministry.
- Find a niche of ministry and start serving.

Overview

Lesson 1: Meal by Meal: Everyday Ministry

- **Lesson Aim:** To help students understand that no ministry is unimportant
- **Text:** Acts 6:1–7

Lesson 2: Feed My Sheep: Ministering After Failure

- **Lesson Aim:** To show that ministry is possible after failure
- **Text:** Luke 22:54–62; John 21:15–18; Acts 2:1–40

Lesson 3: Road to Rome: When It All Falls Apart

- **Lesson Aim:** To help students realize that ministry does not always meet expectations
- **Text:** Acts 16:16–40; 27:9–28:10; 2 Timothy 4:5–22

Lesson 4: True and Faithful: Encouragement in Ministry

- **Lesson Aim:** To challenge students to minister through encouragement
- **Text:** Acts 9:26, 27; 16:13–15, 40; 18:1–3, 18–21, 24–28

Lesson 5: Matchless Grace: The Perfect Model for Ministry

- **Lesson Aim:** To show our perfect model for ministry—Christ
- **Texts:** Matthew 9; Mark 3; Luke 17, 19, 22, 23; John 2, 11, 13, 21

LESSON 1

Meal by Meal

Everyday Ministry

We all like center stage. We like to have our accomplishments noticed and our efforts rewarded. But most ministry takes place off stage, with little glory or recognition. It's often a grueling, thankless job that no one may even notice. But if it weren't for faithful servants of God doing the little things, no ministry could ever survive.



To help students understand that no ministry is unimportant



Students will:

- See that some ministries in the church are unnoticed but necessary
- Learn the qualifications for ministry in their church
- Understand the need for the Holy Spirit in ministry
- Interview the heads of ministries in the church
- Seek God's direction for their own ministry



Acts 6:1-7

In this passage, the apostles confronted a problem that was hurting the testimony of the early church. The believers were responsible for the care of widows in the assembly, but while the Jewish widows received food regularly, some Hellenistic widows were neglected. It wasn't practical for the apostles to leave their studying and preaching to serve food all day, so the church arrived at a simple solution: commission leaders who would serve the congregation by performing "menial" tasks.

What You Need

Copies of “Create a Job”

Pens or pencils

The Lesson



Distribute copies of “Create a Job” to the students. Give them a few minutes to complete the handout, then discuss their answers. Explain that we cannot evaluate ministry on the same terms as secular careers. Those who seek money or fame through the ministry are bound for disaster.



Use Paul as an example. If we were to use this handout to describe his choice of “career,” what conditions would we check off? He had no real salary, he faced constant danger, he worked extreme hours—and his duties included just about everything listed on the sheet. But even though he went largely unthanked during his life—right up to his execution—he did have one of the best titles ever: apostle of Jesus Christ. God used this humble vessel to bless the lives of untold people to this day.

Read Romans 16:5–15. Who did Paul thank? Who did he consider valuable to his ministry?



Every organization experiences a few problems when it undergoes a period of rapid growth in a short amount of time. While the early church was unified under the leadership of the apostles and the Holy Spirit, the assembly faced a challenge brought on by its own sheer size.

The church was responsible for the care of widows, yet the congregation failed to meet that responsibility consistently. These women, who in the day’s economy had no other means of support, would starve if not given food by the church. The congregation tackled the problem haphazardly, but a complaint arose among the Hellenistic Jews—those who had been influenced by Greek culture, who had grown up outside of Judea—that their widows were neglected in favor of native Hebrew widows. Legitimate or not, this accusation threatened to stir up conflict in the fledgling church.

The apostles addressed the issue quickly. It was not practical for them to stop studying the Scripture and preaching just to ensure fair food distribution themselves, so they told the congregation to choose seven men to do the work.

Qualifications

The church didn’t want just anyone serving the people in these positions—they needed men who met certain qualifications.

Small Group Activity: Divide the class into three groups. Tell each of them to write down a list of absolutely necessary qualifications for one of these positions: an usher, a Sunday school teacher, a board member of a Christian school. After each group has decided on their list, let them share it with the rest of the class. Ask, why did you pick the qualifications that you did? What was similar in

the three lists? Is there anything that all of these positions require? Do these qualifications apply at all to the rest of us?

The apostles asked for similar qualifications, ones that we can meet by God's grace.

Faithful—Acts 6:1

This job wasn't a one-time deal. The widows required food every single day. There was no exciting travel involved, no once-in-a-lifetime experiences—just day in, day out service to women who could no longer care for themselves. The position demanded humility and reliability, or the widows would go hungry and the testimony of the church would be tarnished.

Discussion What does Romans 12:3–5 say about the church? Who is vital to the ministry? How would our church suffer if we had no deacons? ushers? custodians? teachers? lay leaders?

Reputable—Acts 6:3

These men also needed to be reputable. This wasn't a popularity contest, but at the same time these men couldn't have anything in their public testimony that would create distrust among members of the congregation. They were trustworthy, dependable men who, though certainly not perfect, upheld a good example for the church. They did not sit around waiting for an official position of service—they were already recognized for their kindness and generosity.

Discussion How can people disqualify themselves from certain positions of service? How may they be restored? Are they never allowed to minister anywhere again? What examples does the Bible give of leaders that failed and were still used by God? What about those who were removed from leadership? What was the difference?

Full of the Holy Spirit—Acts 6:3

Because of the delicate nature of the issue, the church needed men who were completely under the control of the Holy Spirit. The phrase here refers to one who has placed himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By submitting himself to God for service, the servant would not exercise his own will, but rather follow the leading of the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 refers to this same kind of Spirit-filled control, contrasting it to the effects of alcohol on the human body. We must let nothing and no one be our master, except God.

Discussion What do we let control us? How can we be mastered by our hobbies, our pastimes, our entertainment? Is there a way to pursue godly leisure activities while still being controlled by the Spirit? Did Christ ever relax? How can what controls us affect our ministry?

Full of Wisdom—Acts 6:3

A servant must also have wisdom, the skill to do the job he is called to do. The “wisdom” used here is the Greek word “sophia,” a generic term that can refer to both worldly and spiritual wisdom. It’s common sense, the kind that God can provide to those that ask Him and are willing to listen (James 1:5).

This qualification distinguishes “young,” immature believers from those who have seen the work of God for years and have gleaned wisdom over time from His Word. This doesn’t mean that service is restricted to only the “talented” people in the church, but it does indicate that Christians must work hard and grow in the Word before tackling certain difficult positions in the assembly. For those that do, God will give grace to excel and glorify His name.

God does not look for talent. When Christ sought out His apostles, he did not pick twelve geniuses, or twelve musicians, or even twelve public speakers. Chosen from a variety of unlikely backgrounds, the twelve apostles’ sole qualification was that they were willing to follow Christ. Even this did not merit the position—they simply obeyed His call.

Stephen, one of those men chosen by the congregation, was used greatly by the Spirit (Acts 6:5, 8, 10). Through him God worked remarkable wonders for the congregation, blessing his submission and giving him wisdom to stand up to those that oppressed the church. He eventually gave his life for the Lord’s service, but in doing so he became an inspiration to untold believers.

The Ministry Job

It wasn’t a glamorous job to give food to widows—any more than it is to mow an older person’s lawn today. Whoever served in this position would not seek fame or glory. Stephen and the others were willing to be content and do their jobs without pay or attention.

But their ministry was by no means unimportant. Not only was the health and welfare of widows at stake, but the testimony of the church and ultimately the furtherance of the gospel. Even the smallest of ministry opportunities, when ignored by the congregation, can stall the growth of the church or even kill it.

The Result

Because Stephen and the others were willing to minister behind the scenes, the work of the church grew quickly (Acts 6:7). The gospel spread throughout Jerusalem, and many were saved. This would not have happened if the Hellenists and the Hebrews were arguing over whose widows were being served more.

Stephen, one of those men chosen by the congregation, was used greatly by the Spirit (Acts 6:5, 8, 10). He didn't stick to just serving meals. Through him God worked remarkable wonders for the congregation, blessing his submission and giving him wisdom to stand up to those that oppressed the church. He eventually gave his life for the Lord's service, but in doing so he became an inspiration to untold believers.



Invite one or two lay leaders to visit the class and share what kind of ministry they perform in the church. Ask them to describe the work they do and the impact it has on the lives of others for God's glory. If there are specific areas where they could use some help, encourage them to share that with your students. Give some time for Q&A, and close with a challenge for the students to ask God how He would want them to minister in your church.

What You Need

Two volunteer lay leaders

Create a Job

Salary	Hours	Perks	Duties
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Health insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel management
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Company vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing
<input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 40	<input type="checkbox"/> Expense account	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing
<input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 50	<input type="checkbox"/> Popularity	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 80	<input type="checkbox"/> Constant danger	<input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1.5 million	<input type="checkbox"/> 100	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 million	<input type="checkbox"/> 168	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal argumentation
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 million	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

What else would you want from a job or career?

LESSON 2

Feed My Sheep

Ministering After Failure

We're all accustomed to failure. Changing circumstances, challenging difficulties—each of us has attempted something and fallen short. Failure in the area of spiritual service can make us think that we are no longer useful to God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sin will hinder our walk, but God always offers a path to reconciliation, one that can restore us to ministry and make us stronger, more useful vessels in His service.



To show that ministry is possible after failure



Students will:

- Experience what it is like to fail
- Discuss the ways we can fail God
- Understand God's offer of restoration
- See how service is possible after failure
- Respond to the call for service



Luke 22:54–62; John 21:15–18; Acts 2:1–40

In Luke 22:54–62 Peter denied the Lord three times. He looked at Jesus from the courtyard; and as Jesus' eyes met his, he remembered the prediction of his denial. John 21:15–18 records the questioning of Peter by Jesus about his love for Him. Jesus restored the failed apostle and prepared him for the future. In Acts 2:1–40 Peter preached a powerful sermon on the Day of Pentecost that led thousands to Christ.

What You Need

Two volunteers,
Two blindfolds,
Equipment for several
challenge games

The Lesson



Request two volunteers to try their hand at a set of challenges. Tell them both to follow your instructions carefully. Below is a sample set, which you can alter depending on your classroom.

“These are the instructions for the game. Do not move until I say ‘go.’ If you cannot complete an individual challenge, you must try three times before moving on.

- First, go to the table with the blindfolds. Tie a blindfold around your head, pick up a ball, and throw the ball at the front whiteboard. Untie the blindfold and place it back on the table.
- Second, go to the golf clubs. Putt a golf ball into a cup from at least ten feet away.
- Third, bounce a ping-pong ball off two plates and into a bucket.
- Fourth, go back to the table with the blindfolds, except this time, try to throw the ball into the trashcan at the back of the room. If you miss, you can ask your fellow students to throw the ball back to you.”

In most cases, the students will tie on a blindfold before the fourth challenge, even though they weren’t told to do so. If they don’t put on the blindfold, congratulate them for listening carefully. Give a small prize to whoever finishes first.



Past failure can determine our expectations. We limit ourselves because we think we always have to do things the same way as before. But God liberates us with His grace, removing us from the power of sin. We don’t live like we always have. We can change with His help.

The Failure

Luke 22:54–62

T Peter was one of Christ’s most outspoken disciples. He was one of the first people on earth to declare His deity. In verse 33 of this chapter, Peter swore allegiance to Jesus, claiming he would follow Him to prison or even death, if need be. Just a few hours later, Peter demonstrated his loyalty by trying to defend Jesus with his sword.

But when Jesus was arrested, Peter fled with the rest of the disciples. As Christ awaited trial, Peter stood a ways off next to a campfire, trying to keep warm. There he was approached by three people who identified him as a follower of Jesus. But Peter denied Christ, saying he had nothing to do with Him. Just as the words left Peter’s mouth, a rooster crowed and Jesus turned to look at him. Then Peter remembered what Christ had said to him—how he would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed

in the morning. Devastated by his failure and sin, Peter ran out into the night, weeping uncontrollably.

Discussion Peter failed Jesus by denying Him. What are the “small” ways we fail Him today? What are the “big” ways we fail him—those mistakes we supposedly could never recover from? Is there really a difference? Is God limited by our failures? When we sin and fail Him, do we diminish His power?

The Restoration

John 21:15–18

Peter’s failure did not keep him from immediately seeking Christ after the resurrection. When Peter realized that it was the Lord calling out to the disciples from the beach, he jumped into the water and swam to shore.

Handout: Distribute copies of “What Do You Say?” to your students. Give them a few minutes to answer the questions. Discuss their reactions. In each case, what should be our primary focus? Is reconciliation or restoration worth the effort?

Jesus prepared a meal for His disciples on the beach. After breakfast, Christ confronted Peter, questioning him about his love and loyalty to Him. Peter responded three times that he loved the Lord, and Christ restored him to service.

Even though Peter had denied Christ and broken his promise of loyalty, Jesus forgave him and gave him another opportunity to further the kingdom. Commissioned to “feed” the flock that Christ would soon leave behind on Earth, Peter eventually became one of the giants of the early church. Christ took a traitor and used him to help found His church. Even outright denial was not too great a sin to forgive!

The Sermon

Acts 2:1–40

Just fifty days after he denied Jesus, Peter preached the first major sermon of the early church. He stood up in front of the crowd at Pentecost and proclaimed the gospel of the Savior that had forgiven him. God chose this moment to reveal His Holy Spirit to the world, and He used Peter’s testimony—however flawed or inconsistent—to begin His church in Jerusalem. Three thousand people accepted Christ that day, and many more followed in the months and years to come. God’s grace shone brightly through Peter, not because he had somehow made up for his sin, but because Christ could take the most unlikely of servants and accomplish a great work in and through him.

What You Need

Copies of “What Do You Say?”

Pens or pencils

Our Hope

God's work in Peter gives us great hope, especially when we fail God and disobey His commands. Two principles to remember:

God still loves us—John 21:15–18

God's love for us is not dependant on our inability to please Him. Christ went to the cross with full knowledge of every sin we have committed—or will commit in the future. He knew about every murder, every lie, every wicked thought, yet he willingly offered Himself up as a sacrifice for us. That love and grace has not changed in two thousand years, and it certainly hasn't changed since each of us accepted Christ. If He was willing to forgive our sins, to transform us from unregenerate sinners to joint heirs with Him, He will still use us as vessels of grace in spite of our sin, so long as we are willing to come back to Him in repentance and humility.

Peter could not have been comfortable when he spoke with Jesus on the shore, but Christ used the confrontation to bring His servant back to a more fruitful relationship with Himself. He spoke with love, not to stir up guilt or shame in Peter, but to gently pull him to reconciliation.

Discussion Do we sometimes convince ourselves that God loves us less after we sin? Why do we think this way? How can we model God's unchanging love in our relationships?

We must still serve Him—Acts 2:14

We cannot let the memory of our failures keep us from serving the Lord. Past sin is no excuse for not doing the right thing now. Every moment is an opportunity to showcase His grace in our lives, even if it's simply to acknowledge our sin, ask forgiveness, and move forward.

So why do we wallow in guilt and shame, refusing to believe that God would use us again? It's not because of humility or piety—no, a humble, pious Christian would offer himself as a living sacrifice regardless of what he thinks others might say about his testimony. And none of us has a right to say, "I can't forgive myself." Christ suffered the punishment for all of our sin, and He offers forgiveness without hesitation. We are not in a position to mete out judgment on ourselves where He does not.

When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, we must seek forgiveness and face the consequences of our actions. But if guilt keeps us from service, it is only because we are mistrusting God's grace.

Despite his failures, Peter stood up for the Lord (v. 14), and God blessed his efforts. We can confidently follow this man's example—not because we admire him, but because we have faith in the God he served.

Discussion How has guilt kept you from serving in the past? How can guilt be a symptom of pride? What is the difference

between guilt and conviction? How does faith in Christ's work on the cross change our attitude toward service?



Read the following character descriptions to your students, and ask them who each refers to.

- "I was a killer. Adopted by a royal family and given a life of privilege, I nonetheless stooped to murdering another man. People found out, and I fled to the wilderness where I became a shepherd. This kind of job was more suited to my speech impediment."
- "I was a prostitute. I became a traitor to my city state, lying to protect two foreign spies who had come to my house. I negotiated with them to protect my family."
- "I hunted down Christians and had them executed. No one else was more zealous in stamping out this new faith. Nothing short of a miracle could stop me."

The answers are Moses, Rahab, and Paul, respectively. Why did God use people like these—in spite of all their faults—to accomplish His plan? What does this tell us about His grace? Is there anything His grace can't overcome?

What do you say?

Walking around a corner in the school hallway, you see your best friend talking to someone you've never met before. She says, "I'm not exactly her 'friend.' I really just hang around her because I feel sorry for her." At that moment, she turns around and notices you standing there. What do you say?

You open your laptop to find it still logged in to your brother's social networking account. There on the screen is a conversation he had with one of your classmates, where he tells him about your secret crush. You had told your brother this in confidence, and now he's spreading it around. What do you say?

A friend asks you if you'd like to go a party Friday night, but since you know what goes on in these kinds of get-togethers, you politely decline. The next day, you find that she's told all of your public school friends that you're a religious fanatic mixed up in some kind of cult. Your classmates begin to avoid you. What do you say?
