

ONE STEP AT A TIME

**YOUTH IN ITALY SHARE HOW THEY
SERVE GOD WITH ALL THEIR HEART,
MIGHT, MIND, AND STRENGTH.**

By Hillary Olsen

Now that you know this year's Mutual theme is about service, what are you going to do? The Lord has asked you to serve Him with *all* your heart, might, mind, and strength (see D&C 4:2). That's a lot, and it can feel overwhelming. But it doesn't have to.

"It's like climbing a mountain," says Marco D., of Apulia, Italy. "Thinking about climbing the whole mountain at once is hard, but if you take it one step at a time, it's a lot easier. Put one foot in front of the other, and once you take a step, think, 'I did it!' and then take the next step."

Amid the pizza, pasta, and cobblestones of Italian life, youth in southern Italy have found some useful steps to focus on as they try to serve with *all* their heart, might, mind, and strength.



SEEK SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Receiving spiritual guidance is an important step to serving the Lord, and Davide C., 15, knows that it won't happen without effort on his part. "I need to be an instrument in God's hands," he says. "I have to be ready to receive and follow the promptings of the Spirit. To do that, I need to constantly surround myself with the things of the Lord."

Davide and his family are converts to the Church. Before he was even baptized, Davide learned how important scripture study is. His brother was the first to be baptized, and his parents soon followed. Davide knew that he needed his own testimony. As he studied the Book of Mormon, he felt the Spirit. The good feelings he felt helped him make the decision to join the Church.

Four years later, Davide still relies on guidance from the Spirit. "We have to be constant. We can't slack off in our scripture study and prayer," he says.

STAY PURE

Marco D., 17, points out the importance of obeying the commandments, specifically the law of chastity. "The adversary tempts us in every way, trying to get us to mess up," says Marco. "Friends can also be a bad influence." Several years ago Marco had to change the friends he spent time with because



he recognized the negative influence they were making on his choices. "I had to find friends who accepted me for who I am and not for who the world expects me to be."

Sometimes in our climb up the mountain, we stumble. When this happens, "go see the bishop and talk openly with him," urges Marco. "The bishop is our brother. We can trust him."

His efforts to be obedient and stay pure give Marco opportunities to serve God now, and they are also preparing him to be worthy to one day serve a full-time mission.

MAKE TIME

Manuel M., 17, recognizes that it's not always easy to serve God. "We are often put to the test," says Manuel. "Sometimes we'd rather do other things. Sometimes I'd rather sleep, go to a soccer game, or hang out with my friends. But my mom has always taught me that we have to choose to serve the Lord. It's OK to do other things too, but serving the Lord needs to be our priority."

Miriam D., 14, knows that the only way for her to ensure that scripture study and prayer happen each day is to set aside a specific time to do it. "I feel like I'm able to accomplish so

much when I set aside the time," says Miriam. "Besides, when we dedicate more time to the Lord, we can't be tempted as much—it makes us stronger."

SERVE WILLINGLY

For Sabrina D., 15, serving with all her heart, might, mind, and strength means serving with *buona volontà*. That means doing things with a willing and cheerful attitude.

Alessio I., 12, agrees: "It doesn't make sense to do it just because the bishop or your parents tell you to. You shouldn't feel obligated. The Lord wants us to serve for the right reasons."

How can we have more *buona volontà* as we serve? "Reading the scriptures helps me, because they teach us that serving is the right thing to do," says Sabrina.

Studying and understanding the Atonement better can also help us serve willingly and cheerfully. Elisa D., 17, says, "Just as Heavenly Father sent His Son, who sacrificed



everything for us, we need to be willing to dedicate all we can to serving the Lord.”

FOCUS ON OTHERS

Sisters Giulia, 16, and Veronica D., 14, know it's important to focus on others. “Service helps us to see people differently. When you serve someone, you're both blessed,” says Giulia.



Veronica says, “At one point I really wanted to share the gospel, but I didn't feel ready. I was scared. But when I focused on the people I was serving, I felt more confident because I knew that the Lord would help me.”

Giulia and Veronica were able to serve their friend Virginia in a life-changing way. They started inviting her to come to Church activities with them. They also invited Virginia's family to do things with their family. Soon Virginia's family started meeting with the missionaries. A year later, Virginia and her little sister were baptized.

Now that she's a member of the Church, Virginia looks for ways to serve the people around her. She really wants to share the gospel with others. Sometimes her friends at school make fun of her for her new beliefs, so she prays to know whom she should talk to. One day the Spirit prompted her to talk to a girl she knew. “I gave her a Book of Mormon and invited her to come to church

with me. She came! And now she's reading the Book of Mormon.”

Samuele D., 14, looks for opportunities to strengthen the members of his quorum: “I try to help the other boys in my quorum by encouraging them in class. Sometimes they feel embarrassed or nervous to participate.” Samuele says that helping others feel confident is one way he can serve God and prepare for future responsibilities.

START NOW

So, what are *you* going to do? Alessio I. says, “I don't have to wait till I'm older to make a difference. I need to do it now.”

These steps will help you too as you come to realize that you are a valuable part of the Lord's work. Take it a step at a time. You will make an important difference as you learn to give your all to the Lord's service. **NE**
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