

# The Starfish Story

*Original Story by: Loren Eiseley*

*One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean.*

*Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"*

*The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."*

*"Son", the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!"*

*After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said,*

*"I made a difference for that one."*

*This story reminds us that to look at Compassionate Service as a whole is daunting but to do one act of service at a time makes a difference for the person served.*

*Here are some links to inspiring talks on Compassionate Service, videos, and websites with ideas:*

***Flecks of Gold*** - This compelling story of an 1850s gold prospector illustrates how giving service to others blesses our lives. (3:15) <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2011-09-016-flecks-of-gold?lang=eng>

Taking a hit on the rugby pitch isn't the only thing that gets John's adrenaline pumping. As a Mormon following Christ, he also thrives on serving his family and his community. [www.mormon.org/john](http://www.mormon.org/john)

<https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2013-02-1040-im-a-mormon-a-rugby-player-and-i-serve-others?lang=eng>

Cute printable tags to put on little gifts as a random act of kindness. <http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/originals/9c/28/bd/9c28bd2ee6031c46081e0db0d2438245.jpg>

More printable cards for random acts of service.

<http://www.darlingdoodlesdesign.com/2013/02/random-acts-of-kindness-cards.html>

This is a link to ideas of 52 Random acts of Kindness. <http://dishinwithrebel.com/52-random-acts-of-kindness-for-2013/>

I love the idea that is going around of doing as many acts of service as you are turning for your birthday. I have seen a few blogs of this new trend and really love the outcome that comes to the individuals as they serve their fellowmen around them. Here are a couple blogs I have come across that have called their birthday's, that they have performed these acts of service, their "favorite birthday."

<http://penniesoftime.blogspot.com/2013/04/a-guys-42-acts-of-service-on-his-42nd.html>

<http://ticklestogiggles.blogspot.com/2010/05/my-birthday-was-awesome.html>

I have been touched by their accounts and inspired to act upon what I have discovered. My son Bryson turned 13 years old on March 27th and my son Carter turned 8 on April 6th. We set April 8th as our day that we would perform the acts of service for their birthdays equaling 21 acts of service. Although we did not perform them on the actual birthday I think the idea and action is what is important. At first my children were not all that keen on the idea of doing this and thought this was a good project for me, not for them but as the day wore on they were having a good time and looking at the list of things we had completed and what was next. Here are the acts of service we were able to perform, albeit we were not actually able to complete all 21 but it was a good day nonetheless.

- 1. Brought pistachios to the group at the Plasma center.*
- 2. Left note and treat for our mail carrier.*
- 3. Gave treats to the fire department with a note thanking them for the service they provide the community.*
- 4. Took treats and note to the police department.*
- 5. Took treats and a note to the Librarians. (This is where Bryson wanted to set them on the counter in front of the Librarians and run. Sure, why not, right?)*
- 6. Took cards and flowers to those at Stonehenge which is a type of nursing home or get better place. This one started to bring tears to my eyes and to me felt like the most meaningful. The elderly get forgotten so much. We asked the nurses to direct us to those they felt could benefit from it the most so they gave us six rooms to deliver to. It was so sweet.*
- 7. Taped money on the vending machines at Orem Community Hospital.*
- 8. Cleaned up litter at park.*
- 9. Taped coins to playground for little kids to find.*

10. *Left an Easter egg hunt at the park with a basket and note.*
11. *Door bell ditched some neighbors with treats.*
12. *Gathered shopping carts at a store and returned them into the store. Bryson got a huge line of carts and was attracting a lot of attention.*
13. *Taped microwave popcorn on a couple Redbox machines with a note to enjoy. We sure had to put a lot of tape to make them stay.*
14. *Put diapers and wipes in a public bathroom.*
15. *Went to Dollar Tree and the kids each hid a dollar with a note to enjoy. The kids really had fun with this one.*
16. *Put quarters in the quarter machines for some child to find.*
17. *Wrote Thank You notes to family members.*
18. *Had a friend come with us to Chuck e Cheese.*
19. *Taped some Chuck e Cheese coins to the games for little kids to find.*
20. *This wasn't one that we had planned but I thought it was so sweet. Carter was looking at a toy at D.J. and another kid came up looking at it and Carter said do you want to play with it and let the kid play with it instead. Carter came and told me about it and I thought it was a great act of service.*

So we almost made it to 21 acts of service but it was such a great day and good for my children and I to be thinking outside of ourselves.