

## Ten Pointers for the Polite Servant

1. **Courtesy is contagious.** Always address adults by titles Mr., Miss, or Mrs. Introduce yourself to the resident with a handshake. Smile a lot! Residents are often nervous about hosting a group of “foreigners” and may appear unfriendly at first. Your warm smile and verbal respect may be the icebreaker to a new friendship.
2. **Guests always knock.** Ask permission before entering the house or using the bathroom. Never throw anything away or begin a project without conferring with the resident. Treat the resident's property with respect by picking up after yourself. Say thank you each afternoon before returning to camp.
3. **Servants serve.** It is easy to demand your own way and vent dissatisfaction, but God has chosen you to be different. God has asked you to serve even the unlovely. You may not receive a compliment from the residents you help. You may even be cursed. With prayer, God will help you remain loving even in difficult situations. Should someone insult you, smile in return. Also seek ways to help your leaders and fellow teammates. Be open to opportunities to encourage.
4. **God paints in Technicolor.** One team member may love country/western music and another rap, while you hate both genres. One resident may be surly and another sweet. Some of us are clean-freaks and others are lackadaisical about hygiene. Nevertheless, we are all God's children. Do your best to accentuate the positive in each person and try to overlook what you may view as negative.
5. **One person's trash is another's treasure.** Possessions are often treasures. Never toss anything away without asking permission. Ask your resident to tell you about possessions or photos prominently displayed. Check with teammates before borrowing tools, gloves, or other personal possessions. If you damage something, be quick to admit fault and apologize, even if the object seems of little material value to you.
6. **Use the right tools for the right job.** God has blessed you with many skills, but not all skills. God created us to work in community. Appreciate the talents of your teammates. Ask for guidance in tackling new projects and when operating tools, even those you think you understand. And remember, God may have another person in mind for a job you impulsively tackle. Wait. Listen. Pray. Then volunteer.
7. **You can't fix stupid.** It is easy to blurt the wrong thing, steamroll a chore without thinking of the best approach, or close the door to a friendship opportunity with a careless remark. Save critique for your journal and prayer time. Ask the Lord to give you the words to address the problem, and take disagreements to your leader first. Listen to directions, and ask questions before tackling a job. Pray for guidance in handling a difficult situation or team member.
8. **Be humbly grateful, not grumbly hateful.** Christ has chosen you to represent him on this job, a very high calling. Things didn't always go well for Jesus, either. He was overworked and often badgered by people wanting things from him. Jesus took it to God in prayer. God will give you strength to deal with inconveniences and difficult situations. Thank God for choosing you, and open yourself in prayer to guidance.
9. **We're not in this alone.** The folks back home want to hear from you. Buy postcards and jot a few notes each night. Let your support system know how much you appreciate them. Remember to update your prayer partners. They are your best resource. Keep them posted on your prayer needs.
10. **It ain't over until the mission committee says amen.** Christ's ambassador is a lifelong commitment, and after this experience, you will never be the same. This trip has changed you. You have a story to tell and an obligation—to God who called you and the church family who sent you—to share it. Make yourself available to share your experience. Give financially to the next team or a friend participating in another servant project. And remember to be open for your next call.

