

## TRAINING SESSION PLAN

# SERVICE LEARNING

When kids organize a day to collect canned goods for a local food bank, they provide an important service. When they actively reflect on why food is needed, what they learned, and what might happen next, the project becomes service learning.

**MEETING GOAL:** Staff understand the concept and components of service learning, and gain strategies for creating and supporting service learning projects.

**PREP:** Make one copy of each handout for each participant.

### MATERIALS:

- ☐ Handout: Types of Community Service, page 4
- ☐ Handout: Community Service and Service Learning, page 5
- ☐ Handout: Service Learning: Steps and "What's," page 6
- ☐ Handout: Service Learning Reflection, page 7
- ☐ Handout: Service-Learning Quick Planner, page 8

## STEP-BY-STEP

### OPENER

5 MINUTES

**Explain:** When kids volunteer or work in their communities, they're providing a valuable service. They're also learning.

#### Ask and List

Ask participants to quickly list what kids learn and how they benefit from service to others. Allow one minute. Invite participants to read from their lists.

### INTRODUCTION

**Explain:** Service learning takes a service and builds it into an active learning experience. It connects kids with others and with the idea of being a member of society. At its best, service learning helps young people learn from their experiences and their interactions with others in their communities. Service learning shows that learning, teaching, giving, and receiving all happen together. At this meeting, we'll take a closer look at service learning.



## SERVICE AND SERVICE LEARNING

### Ask and Discuss

- Distribute Types of Community Service handout.
- Ask staff to reflect on their own volunteer or service activities. Do they fit into any of these categories?
- Ask a few participants to describe the most meaningful service experience they've had, and what made it powerful for them.
- Create a list of features of meaningful service work.
- Distribute Community Service and Service Learning.
- Ask participants what they see as the most important difference between service and service learning, Looking at the features of meaningful service, what other components are added to make it service learning?

## STEPS TO SERVICE LEARNING

20 MINUTES

**Explain:** The simplest way to think about service learning are the “What’s” —What should you do? What did you do? So what? Now what? The “What’s” form the framework for reflecting on and learning from the experience.

### Activity

#### Step 1: Identifying the “what to do” and why

- Ask staff to brainstorm a list of possible service opportunities, for example: school clean-up, collecting supplies for a shelter, performing at a senior center, clean-up in a local park, or collecting oral histories to make a book. Other examples include tutoring, helping children or seniors learn computer skills, serving on a community board, working with a housing organization, participating in a mural arts program, organizing a food and toy drive, working at a hospital or clinic, helping immigrants learn English, or assisting with voter registration.
- As a group, go down the list and mark them with S, M, or L to specify short activities (a day or less), medium (a few days or so over time), or long (committed days over a longer stretch of time).
- Go down the list again, and star the ones that would interest—and benefit—kids the most.
- Revisit the ones with the stars and think about learning objectives. What kinds of skills can be developed through this project?

#### Step 2: The action, the doing

- Looking at the list, what seems most do-able? What kinds of issues need to be addressed? Are partners needed? Do you need to coordinate with other organizations?
- What about logistics and logistical considerations? Transportation? Snacks? Supervision? Liability?
- How might it fit in the schedule? When could it be done?



### Step 3: Reflection

- This is the active learning piece. Service learning asks the participants to think about what they're doing, why it matters, and how it connects with larger issues.
- All service learning needs a process for learning along the way. A closing performance or presentation sums it up.

**Discuss:** Hand out Service Learning: Steps and "What's." Look at the Service Learning Reflection handout. Discuss what reflection is, and what it takes in terms of time and focus. What techniques can you use that fit the age group? What can children work on most independently?

### Step Four: Celebration and Recognition

- How can participants recognize or celebrate their work and their work together?

## PLANNING FOR ACTION

10 MINUTES

Ask participants to look at the list of possible service activities, and their ratings for interest level, length, and do-ability.

Form pairs or small groups of staff who work together with the same kids or in the same program. Pick one service activity from the list—or another they may have thought of along the way—and start to flesh it out using the Service Learning Quick Planner.

What supports are needed to make service learning work in the program?



# TYPES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

## DIRECT SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Participants work with others, providing service directly

- Peer tutoring
- Buddy reading
- Working with senior citizens, animals, other kids
- Improving community appearance

Your Experiences? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPORT OR INDIRECT SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Participants raise money or collect goods to turn over to an organization that helps others or contributes to a cause

- Car wash
- Bake sale
- Toy drive
- Sponsor a soldier

Your Experiences? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CIVIC ACTION OR ADVOCACY

Participants join with others to express their views and bring about change

- Demonstration
- Petition
- Letter writing campaign
- Public service announcement

Your Experiences? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_



# COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SERVICE LEARNING

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

An opportunity for students to volunteer in service to others.

Focus is on the task and the benefit to the recipients

Objective is typically the provision of the service, without specific learning objectives identified

Project ends when the service is completed

Can be developed independently (for example, street clean-up), through schools, or with community organizations

Fosters civic engagement

## SERVICE LEARNING

A teaching method built on students' experience of service to others

Focus is on the learning from the task and the mutual benefits for all involved

Learning objectives that include academic skills and knowledge are specifically identified

Provides structured time for participants to reflect on and identify their learning during and after the service

Typically involves partnership or coordination with schools, community organizations, or volunteer programs

Fosters civic engagement



# SERVICE LEARNING STEPS AND "WHAT'S"

## STEP ONE

### WHAT MIGHT YOU DO?

Students and teachers together:

- Identify needs and possibilities
- Develop a plan for the service activity
- List learning objectives

## STEP TWO

### ACTION: WHAT DO YOU DO?

Students with guidance and structure from teachers:

- Make arrangements as needed
- Connect with community partners or other organizations
- Provide meaningful service and follow-through
- Plan for reflections and final demonstrations of learning

## STEP THREE

### REFLECTION: SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

Students with guidance and structure from teachers:

- Record what they are doing
- Reflect along the way, answering questions
- Raise issues, feelings, rewards, and challenges
- Respond to the "So what?" and "Now what" questions
- Prepare a final demonstration, performance, or presentation
- Describe new understanding and the impact of the project
- Place the experience in a larger context of understanding

## STEP FOUR

### CELEBRATION AND RECOGNITION

Students and teachers together:

- Bring closure to the project
- Involve community partners
- Reinforce values of service



# SERVICE LEARNING REFLECTION

Whatever the form of the reflection—journals, photos, Web sites, performances, discussions, ask the What's.

**What did you do?** Participants explain simply and clearly what they did. This builds skills in summarizing, presenting facts and information, and explaining processes. For example, "I spent three hours on Tuesday picking up trash in the park."

**So what?** Participants think about what difference the service made. Add the question of what difference it made for whom: for the community, other people, oneself. This type of reflection builds skills of analysis, critical thinking, and forming opinions. For example, "The park got clean and nice. I found out that people throw away all kinds of things, and there aren't enough trash cans. I don't like picking up trash. Maybe others don't, either. If there was less garbage on the ground, we wouldn't need to clean it up."

**Now what?** Participants should think about changes or next steps. What might they do differently? What else should happen? This builds skills of making hypotheses, drawing conclusions from evidence, planning, and presenting ideas. For example, "I'm going to try to throw away less stuff on the street. I think we should write a letter and try to get more trash cans in the park, and get them emptied more often."

Reflection and learning is ongoing. Final reflections, presentations, and performances sum it up. Offer options that fit students' different learning styles and your own skills.

- ☐ Keep an ongoing journal like a diary, answering questions throughout project
- ☐ Create a blog
- ☐ Write a letter or e-mail
- ☐ Write a poem or a series of poems that reflect experiences
- ☐ Create a skit showing roles of different participants and perform it for the group or stage it as an event
- ☐ Make a photo journal
- ☐ Create and script a video
- ☐ Create a map with highlighted areas and issues or experiences
- ☐ Represent the experience in music or with songs
- ☐ Hold small group discussions about the project
- ☐ Hold large group discussions
- ☐ Write an article for a newsletter or paper
- ☐ Role-play something that happened during the project that was challenging
- ☐ Stage a debate with different students advocating different positions around the issue



# SERVICE LEARNING QUICK PLANNER

Service project or activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date, dates, or amount of time: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of students: \_\_\_\_\_

**Logistics:** (Transportation, snack, liability, other issues) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Needs coordination with:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Community partners:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reflections:** (How, what, and when) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Closing events, performances, or presentations:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Challenges:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Needs for support:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

