CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
SERVICE-LEARNING VS COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Service-Learning versus Community Service
Lesson 8 of Civic Engagement Program

Skill Level
Intermediate (6th-8th grades)

Educational Standards Supported

Learner Outcomes
The learner will be able to:
- Identify service-learning opportunities versus community service opportunities
- Begin planning a service project in their community

Tag(s)
4-H Citizenship

Time Needed
30-45 minutes

Materials Needed
LCD Projector/Screen
Computer
YouTube Video:
youtube.com/watch?v=L_MWpvMm5tk
Student Worksheet

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Introduction to Content
This lesson will focus on defining and distinguishing the differences between community service projects and service-learning activities.

Introduction to Methodology
Students will fill in a worksheet where, as a group, they will work together to complete the steps in service-learning. Students will actually plan a service project for their school or in their community.

Terms/Concepts

Service-learning – formal process where a plan is put into action, defined objectives, roles, attendee reflection, and outcomes, research is done to investigate the needs of a group or community

Community service – more informal volunteer opportunity that is open to the community, does not typically require highly specialized organization or intense labor, can be performed any time for any reason, could be done with a group or other individuals

Setting the Stage/Opening Question

Ask, "What is service-learning?" *Wait for answers.*

Respond, "Service-learning is a "hands-on technique that teaches participants to integrate community service opportunities with instruction and reflection. It is an opportunity to plan a service project and teaches civic responsibility and strengthens communities."

Ask, "What is a community service project?" *Wait for answers.*

Respond, "Community service is what youth may choose to do or be required to complete to help others. As you grow up, you will find that you must donate service hours to organizations or people in your community to meet the needs of scholarships. When you apply for specific scholarships, organizations want to see that you are invested in and helping others in your community."

Show the video - youtube.com/watch?v=L_MWpvMm5tk. (Stop at 1:52.)

Experience

Pass out the student worksheet.

Say, "The parts of a service-learning activity are investigation, planning, action, reflections and demonstration/celebration."

Ask youth what they think they would be doing in the investigation stage.

Then tell them to fill in the blanks on the student worksheet as you lead a discussion.

Break youth into groups of four and have them move to wherever they can discuss.

Say, "The first step – investigation – is where our team does an assessment of a need. Is there something we need here at the school or in our community that we do not already have or that needs to be revised?"

Ask the students to discuss as a group and answer question 2 on their handout. Call on groups to share their answers. Give them positive feedback to encourage them.

Ask the students to discuss as a group and answer question 3 on their handout. Call on groups to share their answers. Give them positive feedback to encourage them.

Say, "The second step is planning. Now that you have investigated the need, an idea is forming in your head. How will your group plan to host an event or service project that you may have identified in step one?"

Give them a few minutes to discuss. Give them some prompts:

- Where might you hold your service project?
- Who would be in charge of certain planning aspects?
- What will each person's responsibilities be for the project?
- Will there be food? Drinks? What decorations are needed?
- Will there be funding raised to pay for supplies and food?
- What is the goal of the service project?

Allow students to work on their handout together. Then introduce step 3 – Action. Say, "Now what? You have a plan, you know who is going to do what, what do you need to do next?" *Let the students answer.*

Say, "Step 3 is action – that means taking action. Now that we have our idea, we are going to go out into the school or the community and start making arrangements and plans. This is where you might go out and talk with someone about reserving a building, contact the media to advertise your project, work on specific needs or wants, hold a fundraiser or apply for a grant."

Allow students to work on their handout together. Then introduce step 4 – Reflection. Say, "What reflection needs to be done? Is there something you're missing? Have you defined why you are doing what you are doing?" Give students time to discuss and work together.

Some prompting questions for the groups to consider are:

- What are we trying to achieve?
- What feelings are these plans evoking in me?
- Has this been a good experience? If so, why?
- Has this been a bad experience? If so, why?
- What have I learned through this process?
- Have I acted in the best interests of the group?
- What is my new knowledge or understanding of planning an event?
- Are there broader issues in my community than we initially discussed?
- What do we need to do going forward?

- Have any of our plans changed?
- What are the consequences of what has been done?

Allow students to work on their handout together. Then introduce step 5 – Demonstrate and Celebrate. Say, "Now that we have reflected on what might need to be adapted or changed, we move into the Demonstrate and Celebrate step?"

This is where we will put our plans into action. Say, "If we are raising awareness about something, what is a way we could do that? Would we have bumper stickers made? Will we host an event?"

Give students time to discuss and work together.

Go over the answers to the Student Handout. Ask students to share what they have learned through the lesson.

Share
Ask students to share something with their group that they learned in the lesson.

Process
Ask students to explain the difference between a community service project and a service-learning project. *The main difference is that a service-learning project is going to include an action plan and the youth who have taken part in the planning process.*

Generalize
Ask students how this new knowledge could help them in the future.

Apply
Ask students if there is a way they could implement a service-learning project in one of their clubs or organizations inside the school? What about implementing a service-learning project outside of the school? Maybe in the community, at church or even somewhere else in the state.

References

Harris, Jamie H. "Putting the Pieces Together of Service Learning." PowerPoint Presentation. Accessed 5.7.24.

TIPPS
Life Skills

Head – Thinking

Heart – Relating, Caring

Hands – Working

Health - Being

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Worksheet

1.   The steps in Service-learning are:

Step 1 - Invest_____

Step 2 - _____

Step 3 - Action

Step 4 - _____

Step 5 - Demonstrate and _____

2.   In Step 1 – Investigating - What are two things your group might do to gather information or knowledge?

a. _____

b. _____

3.   If you were identifying a project to work on at school or in the community, what might that project be?
_____

4.   Step 2 - What plans would you need to make to implement your service-learning project?

_____

_____

5. Step 3 - What actions would you need to take to line up logistics for your project?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Step 4 - What reflection needs to be done? Is there something you're missing? Have you defined why you are doing what you are doing?

_____

_____

7. Step 5 – Demonstrate and Celebrate – At this point what will we do to carry out our project? How will we do so and what will be the end result?

_____

_____

8. What is the difference between a community service project and a service-learning activity?

_____

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