



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: LEARN AND SERVE

(1 hour in class; time varies out of class)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn about different problems in the local community, choose one, and brainstorm ways they can make a difference.

MATERIALS

Newspaper articles; additional materials determined by the nature of the service project

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare newspaper articles that discuss community problems: trash, hunger, etc.
- ✓ Arrange to have someone from the community come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems.
- ✓ Consider things that will determine the nature of a service project: money, transportation, supervision, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ For homework one night, ask students to talk to their parents/guardians about what they think are the biggest problems in their community. The next day, have students share in class and add these ideas to a list of community problems on the board.
- ✓ Have your students come up with additional ideas to add to this list by having them read through the newspaper articles you collected. (You may want to distribute entire newspapers if your students are familiar with reading them.)
- ✓ Have your students add any additional community problems they can think of to the list.
- ✓ The next day, have someone from the community come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems. This

could be a public official such as the mayor or a city council member or someone who works for an umbrella social service organization such as United Way. Ask the speaker to talk with the class about current community problems. Encourage students to ask questions about the problems to learn more about how they originated and what solutions might be effective.

- ✓ Tell your class that they are going to address one of these problems, but first they need to decide which problem. Have your class vote to decide which problem to address.
 - ✓ Now that you have a problem for your class to consider, ask your students to come up with possible solutions to the problem. List these ideas on the board.
 - ✓ In order to identify the correct project for your class, encourage the students to think about which of these activities would be most feasible and desirable to execute. The following questions will be helpful to consider:
 - ✓ How much time do we have for the service activity?
 - ✓ What kinds of support do we need (money, transportation, adult supervision) and where can we find this support?
 - ✓ Which ideas are likely to have the greatest impact on the problem?
 - ✓ Which ideas do we most want to do?
- Note: It is important as the teacher that you “veto” any ideas at this point that the students are advocating for that you find unacceptable or unreasonable. Be sure to explain to the students why that idea will not be included in the final list.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: LEARN AND SERVE (continued)

- ✓ Vote on one project idea for the class to complete.
- ✓ After completing the service activity, have students reflect on their experience in writing or discussion.
- ✓ To conclude the experience, celebrate students' efforts to make a difference. This could be as simple as a popcorn party, extra recess, a pizza picnic, or as involved as a public event in the community with student awards.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are some of our community's needs and problems? Why do you consider these problems? How do you know these are needs and problems in our community?*
- ★ *Was it hard to come up with a service project for the class? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What was hard, easy, fun or difficult about the service experience?*
- ★ *Did the class make a difference?*
- ★ *What did we learn from this experience and how could we apply that learning to future efforts to improve our community?*

MORE!

If the service project the class undertook is not one that involved influencing public opinion, you might also consider one of the following activities for your class:

- ✓ Write a letter about the problem to a newspaper editor or a public official in the community
- ✓ Organize a public display with facts, artwork, and any other information you can think of