



Creating Meaningful Service and Mission Experiences with Youth

[PARTICIPANT HANDOUT]

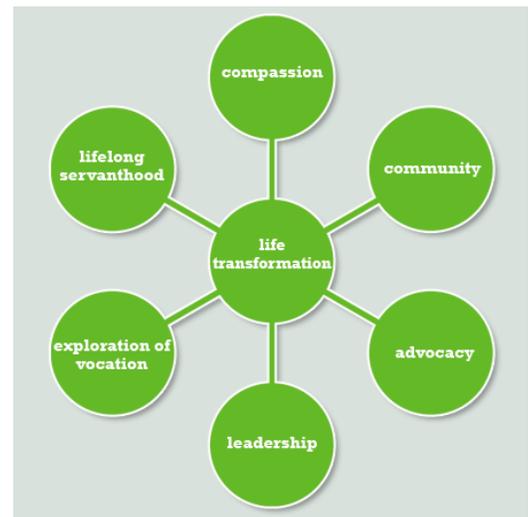
Introduction

Outcomes of Service Learning

Central outcome: Life transformation

Through service learning, it is hoped that young people will continue their growth in discipleship and service and begin to display greater measures of the following six outcomes:

- **Compassion.** Youth will be called to be mature Christians who hold a deep and hopeful sense of compassion for the world and all God's people.
- **Community.** Youth will be drawn into community, including with those they serve and those with whom they serve.
- **Advocacy.** Youth will work for justice, becoming advocates for the urgent needs of the world.
- **Lifelong servanthood.** Youth will become naturally and joyfully engaged in lifelong service to others.
- **Leadership.** Youth will desire to engage in leadership of others and will use their gifts of leadership in service to others.
- **Exploration of vocation.** Youth will explore God's call in their life and deepen their sense of vocation.



Service Learning: The Process

Definition: An intentional experiential learning process that utilizes hands-on service and reflective thinking to provide richness and meaning to service experiences while fulfilling the biblical invitation to serve in Christ's name.

Using the Four-Step Service Learning Process

Step 1: Preparation – Get Ready

Common practice:

- Organize fundraisers
- Collect paperwork
- Gather supplies
- Make travel arrangements
- Pack up and get ready

Add flavor to the experience:

- Understand the unique needs and issues of the context
- Build relationships
- Engage in relevant Bible study
- Form a group covenant
- Share expectations
- Hold a sending service

Step 2: Action – Engage in Service

Common practice:

- Show up, serve, go home

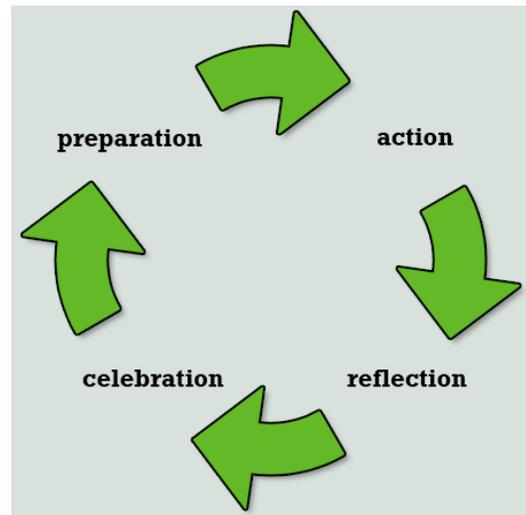
Add flavor to the experience:

- Get a meaningful orientation
- Learn about others, the organization, a community
- Name blessings received
- Start the reflection process
- Understand the critical role of adults in shaping the experience

Step 3: Reflection – Learn and Grow

Common practice:

- Experience ends with little or no follow up or processing
- Perhaps talk over 2-3 questions
- Going too shallow?
- Going too deep?
- Only using group conversation as the reflection method



Examples of creative reflection methods

- write a poem
- write a song
- paint, draw, or doodle
- capture and share photos
- produce a video
- create a sculpture
- create a dramatic presentation
- design an information sheet or flyer
- use *lectio divina* or other reflective prayer practices
- create a scrapbook of memories
- create a blog to share photos and stories
- write a “Letter to the Editor”
- create an artistic piece from items collected at the service site

Service learning resources available at www.sallt.org

- Service Learning Field Guide
- Training videos / DVD
- Reflection Guide
- Tip Sheets
- Training materials
- Links to resources and websites

Add flavor to the experience:

- Begin reflection onsite
- Reflect as a group later
- Provide for individual reflection
- Provide reflection opportunities that invite creativity and involve multiple learning styles

Step 4: Celebration – Tell the Story

Common practice:

- Little or no follow up with youth
- Little or no sharing with others
- Little or no evaluation

Add flavor to the experience:

- Being welcomed home (if a trip)
- Continue the reflection process
- Evaluate the experience
- Honor gifts and talents
- Share stories with others
- Lead teaching/training sessions
- Consider future service

A Closer Look at the Action-Reflection Cycle

The key to quality reflection is to understand how humans draw meaning from concrete experiences.

What did I just experience? → How do I feel? What am I thinking about? → How will this apply to my life?

What? So What? Now What?

What? questions: Invite participants to describe, without judgment or evaluation, their observations and experiences.

Examples: What happened today? What did I experience? What role did I play? Describe an interaction you had with another person.

So What? questions: Invite participants to reflect on their experience, including an analysis of their thoughts and feelings.

Examples: What emotions did I experience? What am I thinking about? What confuses or interests me? How was the experience different than I anticipated? What did I learn about the people (or place) I encountered?



Now What? questions: Invite participants to consider the implications of the experience and how their learning might influence changes in their lives.

Examples: What changes might I make in light of this experience? How might God be calling me? What do I want to learn more about? How can I share this experience and my learning with others?

Using What? So What? Now What? questions:

- Plan ahead by choosing 2-4 questions for each step
- Allow participants to choose which questions to respond to
- Allow for creative expression (photos, video, poetry, etc.)
- Affirm all thoughtful responses
- Resist suggesting answers (other than your own experience)

We don't learn from experience ... we learn from reflection on experience. – John Dewey

The Impact of Service Learning

The old way vs. the new way ...

Fulfill baptismal promises:

Through service and mission experiences, young people can:

- Learn to trust God,
 - Proclaim Christ through word and deed,
 - Care for others and the world God made,
 - And work for justice and peace.
- *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

Reflection for Practice

How does this training about service learning change or reinforce your understanding of service projects and mission trips?

In what ways might you integrate the service learning process into your upcoming service experiences?

