

Generosity

Grades 6-8

Segment Summary:

A service-learning project teaches ninth-graders how to be generous with their time and talents.

Many schools now require students to participate in service-learning, which offers them a chance to perform generous acts in exchange for academic credit. While some students argue that they would rather spend their afternoons hanging out with friends, others say they don't mind donating their free time to help those less fortunate. One zealous group of ninth-graders even works on the weekends to complete its service-learning project: planting a community garden. These students say they feel humble when they participate in service-learning because they often witness a harsher side of life. But they benefit from this new perspective when they see the positive impact they make on the community. While service-learning can be hard work, these ninth-graders are grateful that they have the opportunity to be generous with others.

Discussion Questions:

1. What character traits do the teens in this **Connect with Kids** video segment possess?
2. How is a service-learning project an example of generosity?
3. Do you agree with requiring service-learning to advance to the next grade or to graduate? Why or why not?
4. Why would schools require service-learning projects?
5. If service-learning were not required, do you think that many teens would participate? Why or why not?
6. What are the benefits of service-learning? What are the costs?
7. What do you currently do to help your community? Could you do more? If you could do more, what would you like to do?
8. Some people disagree with service-learning. What are some alternatives to service-learning that would allow students to experience real-world applications of their studies?
9. If you are required to do something, are you being generous? Explain.
10. Do the students at your school regularly demonstrate generosity toward each other? Explain.

Vocabulary Words and Definitions:

Alternative (n.)

Definition: a plan, idea, etc., that can be used instead of another choice

Context: Mr. Handlemann gave his students two alternatives: either write a research paper or prepare a topic-specific speech.

Community-service (adj.)

Definition: related to a type of work that a person or group performs, without being paid, in order to benefit others

Context: The class chose to pick up trash along a 1-mile stretch of highway as its community-service project.

Generosity (n.)

Definition: willingness to give money, time, etc., in order to help or please someone

Context: Babysitting your younger siblings so that your parents can take the night off is one way to demonstrate generosity.

Grant (n.)

Definition: an amount of money given to a person or organization, especially by the government, for a purpose

Context: The community food bank is funded by a federal grant.

Humble (adj.)

Definition: not considering oneself or one's ideas to be as important as other people or their ideas

Context: After following the tornado's destructive path, Teresa felt humble in the presence of the townspeople who suffered great pain and sorrow.

Inspire (v.)

Definition: to encourage a person by making him or her feel confident and eager to achieve something great

Context: Webster's flawless performance and masterful technique inspired several audience members to take violin lessons.

Mentor (n.)

Definition: an experienced person who advises, encourages and helps someone less experienced

Context: Roberto's mentor spends hours teaching him how to fish and play the guitar.

Proposal (n.)

Definition: a plan or suggestion that is given formally to an official person or group

Context: Gabi's proposal for a family vacation included hiking part of the Appalachian Trail.

Service-learning (n.)

Definition: a program that allows a person to strengthen academic skills while performing generous acts to improve a community

Context: When students participate in service-learning, they witness the impact that their actions have on the community at large.

Solicit (v.)

Definition: to ask for money, help or information

Context: Many nonprofit organizations, like the Salvation Army, solicit money and clothing from the public and then distribute these contributions to those in need.

Source: *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. 2000.

Activity: Give a Man a Fish ...

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Explain the difference between a role model and a mentor
- Predict the benefits of mentoring
- Conduct interviews to learn the long-term benefits of mentoring
- Create print advertisements describing the long-term benefits of mentoring

Materials:

- Pens, pencils, colored pencils, markers
- Paper

Procedure:

1. Begin this activity by asking your students the following questions:
 - What do the terms “role model” and “mentor” mean?
 - What is the difference between a role model and a mentor?
 - How can a role model affect a person’s life? How does a mentor affect a child’s life?
 - Which can have more of an impact on a child: a role model or a mentor? Explain.
 - Which requires more generosity: being a role model or being a mentor? Explain.

2. Share the following expression with your students:

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for life.”

Ask your students to relate this expression to the role model/mentor relationship.

Note: A role model generally influences a person for a short period of time and may not have direct contact with the person. A mentor often inspires a person and can have a long-term influence on the mentee through his or her long-term commitment to the relationship.

3. Explain to your students that they will interview three people to learn more about the long-term impact that a mentor can have on the life of his or her mentee. Students will interview at least one mentor and two mentees. Based on his or her interviews, each student will create an original print advertisement or Internet ad describing the lifelong impact that a mentor can have on a person.
4. As a class, instruct students to compose a list of questions that they will ask during their interviews. Remind students that the questions they ask should reflect their goal of learning more about the long-term benefits of a mentoring relationship. *Bonus points to students who tape their interviews and post them online.

Sample questions for the mentees:

- What lessons have you learned from your mentor?
- What aspects of your life have changed since you began your relationship with your mentor?
- How has having a mentor affected the way you view life?

Sample questions for the mentors:

- What types of activities do you do with your mentee to impact his or her life?
 - What lessons or experiences do you share with your mentee?
 - What is your goal in your mentoring relationship?
5. Allow time for students to complete their interviews. You may decide to allow class time for creating the advertisement or assign this for homework. On a day you specify, each student will present his or her advertisement to the class.

Note: If possible, encourage your students to use computers to create the layout of their advertisements and to include color and graphics that are appropriate for the advertisement.