

Service learning in Lutheran schools

A whole school approach

The essence of effective community service learning is in moving students beyond charity to active, committed citizenship. They hope that students will move beyond handing out cans of food to becoming actively engaged in long-term community problem solving. (Eyler)

A service learning approach that focuses on all students, from all year levels is essential in developing a culture of service in the school community. Auditing, mapping and planning across the school allows you to:

- Discover gaps and repetition in activities and curriculum
- Share and celebrate the great work you are already doing
- 'Tweak' activities / units of work eg How could I tweak this unit of work so it has a stronger focus on service learning?

Keep the concept in mind that service learning is focused on home, school, local, national and global communities. Consider also the idea of moving our thoughts and actions from charity to justice... 'walking with humanity' John XXIII

Reflect and consider the following thoughts...

<p>Charity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involves the haves sharing with the have nots.• Requires no change in social structures• May promote dependence; may be paternalistic• Is non-controversial• Does not require identification with the person in need• Is usually spontaneous• Pays attention to and is concerned with the present symptoms• Focuses on individual needs• Seeks immediate solutions; is a temporary provision• Provides a direct service with temporary results	<p>Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involves haves and have nots working together• May be threatening to me personally; often controversial• Requires identification with suffering and need• Requires working towards social change• Encourages and actively promotes independence• Arises from observation and reflection• Pays attention to and is concerned with underlying causes of injustice• Focus on changing social structures or situations• Is a long term commitment; seeks enduring solutions• Provide indirect help aimed at permanent change
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Thanks to Lynne Moten (Seymour College, South Australia) for the reflections about charity/justice.

Planning across the school

Here is a basic plan of what a P-12 service learning approach could look like (example only)

Prep/reception – year 3

- Service through special events in the school (integrated into the curriculum)
- Start connections with local organizations (eg Yr 2 responsible for leading the collection of items for a

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local organization, they also focus on educating the school community about the who, why & what)

- Home – what can students do at home to serve?

Year 4 – 6/7

- Developing / establishing a recycling program for the school (eg Yr 1/2 responsible for veggie patch, Yr 3/4 responsible for worm farm , Yr 5/6 paper recycling)
- Year 4/5 through a unit of work about local community may identify a need in the community and look at ways of how they can take action (eg Looking at homeless in the community & supporting local soup kitchen through making soup with parent volunteers and delivering it to the soup kitchen in an ongoing manner – not just a ‘once off’ etc)
- Buddy programs / relationships with younger students

Year 7-12

- Year 7-9 Focus on units in curriculum that explore issues relating to justice, refugees , water etc across curriculum areas of Christian Studies, SOSE, Science and English.
- Buddy Programs / Relationships with younger students
- Going further with meeting local needs in the community eg year 9 students help support a local primary school with their breakfast program through both donating items and building relationships with the students in an ongoing manner throughout the year.
- Year 10-12 working alongside the marginalized in the community (focus on developing relationships, listening to stories to understand the issues, briefing and debriefing throughout the process through discussions and journaling)
- Year 10-12 service trips nationally and globally that focus on developing reciprocal partnerships
- Refer to ‘Planning an experience’ and ‘Stories’ on for further information.