

Service learning in Lutheran schools

A sample service program

Service Program: For Clean Up Australia Day

a teacher at a local school decides that students will clean up part of the banks of the Brisbane River.

Re-orient to include student direction and academic learning

- consult with the local community
- vote to clean up part of the banks of the Brisbane River
- plan the project
- observe, take inventory and clean up the river bank
- analyse what they found; hypothesise about its sources
- look at the impact of the pollutants on flora and fauna
- share the results with the local council and residents
- offer suggestions for reducing pollution – perhaps by writing a brochure and developing a web site.

Links to curriculum

- Maths – analysing survey results
- SOSE – voting, contacting the council
- Science – analysing water and pollutants
- Geography – comparing water quality of different rivers and maps of watersheds
- English – writing a brochure or a report
- Art – designing a brochure or a map
- Information Technology – developing a web site with resources for preventing pollution.

Enrich the process with intellectual inquiry and reflection

- Investigate a wide range of concepts and values including, for example: 'community' and 'responsibility'.
- Draw distinctions between different kinds of responsibility – students may not be causally or legally responsible for the pollution, but do they have some social or moral responsibility to improve the situation?
- Examine their assumptions about moral responsibility by asking, for example: 'What is the extent of our moral responsibility? How do we judge this? What is it to be a good citizen?'

Service-learning:

- links to academic content and standards
- involves young people in helping to determine and meet real, defined community needs
- includes on-going, meaningful reflection and analysis
- is reciprocal in nature, benefiting both the community and the service providers
- can be used in any subject area so long as it is appropriate to learning goals
- works at all ages, even among young children.