

Leader's Manual for

***Giving
and
Growing***

**A Student's Guide
for Service Projects**

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**A Student's Guide
for Service Projects**

by Frances Hunt O'Connell

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Serenity Prayer

God grant me
serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage
to change the things I can, and
wisdom
to know the difference.

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Introduction

The leader's manual and the student's guide

This leader's manual accompanies and complements *Giving and Growing: A Student's Guide for Service Projects*. If you already have an established service program, this manual will help integrate the materials in the student's guide into your program, as well as provide you with additional activities to use in your group meetings. On the other hand, if you are just starting a service program, the leader's manual and the student's guide, working together, can provide you with the direction and resources needed to build a new program.

The materials in *Giving and Growing* are meant to supplement your program, not dictate what it will be. Use of these materials will depend on your particular program. You may be working with confirmation candidates or with students who are fulfilling graduation requirements. You may be meeting with students once each week, every two weeks, monthly, at the beginning and the end of the program, or not at all. You may be meeting with them as a whole class, in particular groups, or individually. No matter what your program's purpose or structure, this manual and the student's guide will provide the resources you will need to carry out a successful service program.

The materials in both this manual and the student's guide are arranged in unit format. The unit themes correspond with the stages and experiences in a service program. It will be easy to add to the materials, to select from them, or to relocate them to suit your needs.

The student's guide provides all the standard forms needed for a service project, plus guidelines, learning exercises, and reflection activities for the student. It is essentially student self-directed. The relationship of the leader's manual to the student's guide is unique; most of the resources needed to do a service project are

contained in the student's guide (not the leader's manual). Therefore, you need to read the student's guide material for each unit carefully *before* studying the information in the leader's manual.

The leader's manual provides background material, prayer services, and troubleshooting hints, along with five units of classroom sessions—one unit for beginning the service project, one unit for ending it, and three interim units. The classroom sessions contain skill-building exercises along with activities that raise awareness of the spiritual aspect of service experiences. The activities can help students integrate this spiritual awareness into their lives.

Both the leader's manual and the student's guide contain the "Serenity Prayer," which precedes the introductions. The students are asked to consider using this prayer each time they begin their service work. Also consider using this prayer to begin each meeting with the students.

Suggestions for preparing the program

Plan ahead. An important ingredient of successful service programs is a prepared leader. Time is at a premium when students are doing service work. While many of your resources are already prepared in the leader's manual and the student's guide, such details as scheduling of due dates, making arrangements for speakers, and getting information about agencies must also be planned and accomplished before beginning your program.

Contact agency representatives. Developing effective working relationships with agency representatives is essential. Meet with the representatives before service projects begin. Tour the agency, learn about their volunteer service programs, and find out what they expect from

the students. If your schedule does not allow this on-site meeting, call and get the information over the phone. Keep records of what you learn so you can share this information with the students.

Once your relationship with the agency has been established, maintain it. Call often to check on the students. Make students aware of your contact with the agency and pass along to the students any feedback you receive regarding them.

Become familiar with your legal responsibilities. Do not allow students to work in situations where you, the parish, or the school could be held liable should some accident occur. Talk with an attorney who is familiar with the insurance coverage of your parish or school to clarify and specify the types of service work the students can do without incurring liability.

Inform staff and parents. If you are leading a service program in a school, be sure to inform the faculty and staff, especially those whose schedules will be affected, about the function and the schedule of the program. Also, provide parents and guardians with this information, to relieve any anxieties they may have about a service program. A sample information letter to parents or guardians is provided on page 15.

Organize files. Lastly, make a file for each of the students working in the service program. Filing is an efficient way to manage the many forms and records required for a service program.

Reflection exercises and journal writing

The student's guide provides reflection questions and exercises at the end of each unit. These are designed to help the students integrate their service experience into their life as a whole. You may want them to keep a journal of their service experiences. The student's guide (on page 11) offers guidelines for keeping a journal that can help you get the students started. Even if you do not require the students to keep a journal, the guidelines will help the students keep one on their own if they so desire.

Grading

Service projects are often used to fulfill course or credit requirements. When this is the case, you are faced with the task of determining successful completion of the service project and, in some instances, grading the degree of the students' accomplishments.

When the service project is a requirement to be fulfilled and does not call for grading the students' accomplishments, the projects can be judged as being complete or incomplete, fulfilled or not fulfilled, or pass or fail. In these cases, determine a list of requirements, which are usually designated in a service project contract with the students. If the students complete the requirements, the credit for completion, fulfillment, or passing is awarded.

Grading the level of the students' performance is a more delicate task. Much of the learning and knowing is subjective and unique to the student. However, grades can be determined by assessing these elements:

- written work
- participation in scheduled meetings
- ability to follow directions
- personal responsibility as demonstrated by punctuality, consistency, and follow-through

Supervisors' reports and students' self-evaluations can be helpful because they add objectivity to these assessments.

Grading can also be responsibly and fairly accomplished by using a set of value-ranked assignments. For example, if a student completes all of the assignments, the student gets an A. If a student completes all but the top-ranked assignment, the student gets a B. If a student completes all but the two top-ranked assignments, the student gets a C, and so on. In this system a number of assignments are required of all students as a standard for adequate participation in the service project. These assignments need to be completed in order to get a passing grade.

Using the appendix in the student's guide

Most of the resources that the students will need can be found in the appendix of the student's guide. The following is a list and description of them:

Descriptions of service programs and clients: This listing provides the students with

information about a variety of service opportunities. Most students are not knowledgeable about the types of agencies and clients that utilize volunteers and will need an initial introduction to them.

Contract with the agency for student service: This contract provides a written commitment from the student to the agency for a given amount of time, during specified days and hours. The student and the supervisor should sign the contract at the time of orientation and then put it in the student's file.

Contract with the school for student service: This contract ensures that each student understands exactly what is expected of him or her and agrees to abide by the requirements of the program. This contract should be returned to you and placed in the student's file.

Parent permission form: This form provides for parental endorsement and input concerning the student's service project. Parents need to have an active part in the program, providing support and encouragement to their daughter or son. This form should also be kept in the student's file.

Student's record of service hours: This chart is kept by the student and used to record the dates and times of his or her service work. You may want to check with the agency to verify the hours of work recorded by the student.

Supervisor's reports: These four reports are progressive evaluation tools for use by the agency. The student's supervisor should fill out the reports on a regular basis. Supervisors are advised to go over each supervisor's report with the student. The supervisor's reports can also be used to maintain regular contact with the agency and to broaden the basis for evaluating the student's service project. Keep these reports in the student's file. Due dates for supervisor's reports are at your discretion. The objective, however, is to provide students, parents, and the school with written records of student participation and performance in a service project.

Self-evaluations: These four evaluations enable the students to progressively assess themselves in their service work. Their appraisal of their efforts is as important as the agency's evaluation of them. The supervisor's report and the self-evaluation are best done within the same one-week period of time so they can reflect upon each other. If possible, you should discuss the self-evaluation with each student.

Student's evaluation of the agency: This evaluation allows the students to express their opinions about the agencies where they worked. Evaluations of this sort can be of great help for future matching of agencies with particular students and their individual talents and abilities.

Student's evaluation of the service program: This evaluation is a tool for the students to indicate which aspects of the program might need to be modified or adjusted. It is a valuable assessment tool for planning future programs.

Prayer services

The leader's manual contains three prayer services that are designed to give students an opportunity to prayerfully reflect on the spiritual and religious aspects of their service experience. Leader's instructions and student handouts for the prayer services are located in units 1, 3, and 5 of this manual.

The song "Here I Am, Lord" (Daniel Schutte, *Glory and Praise*, vol. 3 [Phoenix: North American Liturgy Resources, 1982], p. 52) is an example of a song that emphasizes both the dimension of a calling to service work and an openness to being who we are when doing the work. Use this song or a similar one for each of the prayer services.

A general introduction is part of each prayer service. Use it as is or modify it according to the needs of the group. The reflections following the scriptural readings are designed to promote group participation.

The group prayer can be read in various ways:

- together by the whole group
- alternated from one side of the room to the other
- by preassigned individuals scattered around the room who take turns reading the prayer section by section

Music that is conducive to prayer and reflection can be played at appropriate times during the services to enhance prayer and reflection.

Other resources in the leader's manual

This manual also contains ideas and resources for expanding or adapting your student service program.

Planning special service projects: This resource (located on page 31) contains ideas for students who are interested in doing additional service projects. It is not necessary for the leader to assume the responsibility for implementation of these additional projects. Rather, other adults might be encouraged to participate in them. When suggesting special projects, be sure to look for service opportunities that exist within the school and keep in mind group projects such as planning a special olympics or sponsoring a needy child in a less-developed country.

Additional resources: This bibliography (on page 32) contains a listing of resources in the following categories: youth ministry, reflective reading, retreats, and videos.

A word of encouragement

If you are just beginning a service program, you might be feeling a little overwhelmed. Please realize that anyone who has ever attempted to begin such a program has felt the same way. A successful student service program does not just happen—it is built, day by day, student by student. And it takes a long time, so go slowly. Listen to the students when they tell you what they need. Pay close attention to how students are treated at the agencies where they work. Let the students choose the type of work they want to do. Recognize that a traditional classroom dynamic need not exist during meetings with the students. Let the young people tell you what they are learning. Finally, be patient. Most dreams take a long time to become reality, and a viable service program is a dream worth waiting for.

Finding the right place for you

Getting started

The following classroom activities are designed for use during an initial meeting with the students. They build on the activities that are provided in unit 1 of the student's guide. Their purposes are to provide further orientation to the service program, to help establish a sense of common cause, and to help finalize the students' selections of service projects.

1. Introduction: Invite the students to sit in a circle. If some students are new to the group, ask everyone to introduce themselves to the whole group. Each introduction should include the student's name, a brief biographical statement, and one talent they believe they will be able to bring to the people they will be working with. For example:

- My name is Mary Ann Ryan. I have two brothers, and my hobby is skiing. I am a good listener.

If the group is already well-acquainted with one another, let them simply explain what they intend to accomplish in a service project and what talents they believe they will be able to bring to their service work.

2. Small-group work: Divide the students into groups of three or four. If they have not done so previously, allow them to complete the first three exercises in unit 1 of the student's guide (pages 13–15). A list of types of service work and a list of agencies that usually need volunteers can be found in the first unit of the student's guide. You may need to add types of service work and agencies, not listed, that are available in your community.

3. Small-group discussions: Ask the students to share with the members of their small group the types of work they selected from the list on page 14 in the student's guide. Next, encourage each small group to discuss the personal characteristics they recorded as necessary

for doing those types of work. Tell the groups to take notes on their discussion so that they can report their ideas later to the whole group.

4. Small-group reports: Ask each small group to report on their sharing and discussion. Record on a chalkboard or a piece of newsprint the types of work selected and the personal qualities needed for doing those types of work. Along with work preferences and interests, the following characteristics may emerge: respect, patience, empathy, responsibility, good communication skills, and self-confidence.

5. Activity closure: Assure the students that they will receive help from you and the exercises in their student's guide in developing the characteristics they identified as being needed for their service projects. Also, if you intend to have speakers from various agencies come to address the students, tell the students now so that they can be anticipating this event.

If you have time, look at each student's completed list of personal characteristics in unit 1 of the student's guide. Then you may want to offer suggestions about the type of work a student will find most beneficial and which agencies might be his or her best choice.

Arranging for agency speakers

It is a good practice to ask agency representatives to speak to the students and recruit them as volunteers. Representatives can describe their agency's clients, the types of service provided, a volunteer's job description, and the work environment.

- One possible format is to have representatives from several agencies give brief presentations to the whole group. Then situate each representative in a different area of the room and allow the students to circulate to ask them questions.

- Another format is to arrange an agency display fair at which agencies set up booths or tables where information about the agencies is available and representatives can be questioned.

The following organizations or agencies are generally of interest to students: nursing homes, retirement residences, hospitals, day-care centers, special education agencies (for both physically and mentally impaired children and adults), residences for court-placed children, emergency shelters, soup kitchens, crisis centers, service agencies (for example, the American Cancer Society), schools, and parish religious education programs. These types of agencies utilize teen volunteers and ordinarily are happy to send representatives to speak with interested groups. If a representative from one agency is busy on the day you need her or him, try another, similar agency. Use the *Yellow Pages*, the diocesan directory, and agencies that students know about. Almost everybody in the community knows someone who could use volunteer help.

A "Listening for leads" handout is provided at the end of this unit to help the group listen attentively to agency representatives. The students will need one copy of the handout for every three representatives they will listen to. Obviously, the representatives will appreciate a captive audience, and any notes the students take will help them make better decisions about their service projects.

Agency interview and orientation

Once the students have chosen an agency for their service project, an interview with their supervisor at the agency will facilitate a good start for the student volunteers. Guidelines for setting up an interview and carrying it out can be found in unit 1 of the student's guide.

You can help the students feel comfortable with a first-time interview experience by using the role-play activity provided below.

Role-playing an interview

Divide the students into pairs. Ask one student to play the role of the supervisor and the other the role of the student volunteer. Direct the students who are to play the supervisors to look over the supervisor's interview questions. Ask those who are to play the students to look over

the student's interview questions. Then ask the students to carry out the interview. The following questions can be used to role-play the interview. (*Note:* These questions can also be found in unit 1 of the student's guide.)

Supervisor

- Why do you want to work here?
- What work do you envision doing here?
- What experiences have you had that will help you be successful here?
- What do you hope to learn here?
- What words would you use to describe yourself?
- When will you be available to work?

Student

- What kind of work will I be doing?
- Is there a procedure to follow each time I come in to work?
- Do you have a dress code?
- What types of people will I be working with?
- What qualities do you look for in a volunteer?
- Could someone give me a tour of the building before I start work?

After each pair of students has role-played the interview once, ask the partners to reverse roles and go through the interview again.

Prayer service: What can I share?

The three prayer services in this manual are designed for the beginning, middle, and ending stages of the service program. These prayer services can be a faith response to God's call for us to serve others. If the service program that you are leading is required rather than voluntary, it may well be that not all students are participating as a faith response. Yet the prayer services can still be required for the learning outcomes that they provide. However, an attitude and approach on your part that is sensitive to and respectful of each student's faith level is important.

This first prayer service (page 17) provides an opportunity for the students to reflectively anticipate their service work and to ask God's blessing on what they are about to begin. This prayer service can serve as an effective closure to the orientation stage of the service program. In preparation for the prayer service, make photocopies of the handout and distribute a copy to each student.

Opening song: The song "Here I Am, Lord" (Schutte, *Glory and Praise*, vol. 3, p. 52) works well as an opening for this prayer service.

Introduction: Briefly explain that this prayer service stresses the uniqueness of each person and the many gifts each of us has to offer one another, including the people with whom we work.

Scriptural reading: Read or ask for a student volunteer to read aloud 1 Cor. 12:4–11.

Reflection: Invite the members of the group to share their interpretation of what the scriptural passage has to say to them about their upcoming service work. If you anticipate that sharing will be difficult, begin the sharing in pairs and then encourage the students to share with the whole group.

Group response: Read together the selection adapted from *Jesus/Now* (Leslie Brandt [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], p. 83), found on the student handout.

Offering: Invite the students to write on a slip of paper the quality they most wish to share with the people they will serve. Collect the papers and burn them with incense at the altar. This symbolic action provides an opportunity for the students to offer to God the time, the energy, and the talents they will spend in their service project. (Quiet background music may be played throughout.)

Closing prayer: As a group, reflectively read the prayer adapted from *Why Am I Afraid to Love?* (John Powell [Allen, TX: Tabor Publishing, 1982], pp. 106–109), found on the student handout.

Closing song: Close the prayer service with the song "Come with Me into the Fields" (Daniel Schutte, *Glory and Praise*, vol. 1 [Phoenix: North American Liturgy Resources, 1977], p. 15) or another song of your choice.

Sample parent or guardian information letter

Dear parents,

Your son or daughter is about to begin a service project in your community. The purpose of such a project is to encourage students to use their talents and abilities to help someone else.

A program of this sort is designed to fit the individual situations of each student and each family involved. This project is not meant to take the place of a student's family responsibilities; rather, participation in this program should teach the student that he or she is now capable of taking on additional responsibilities.

Your son or daughter will be receiving information regarding different agencies that want to work with student volunteers. Please talk with your son or daughter about what type of service work and agency would be most suitable for him or her. Also consider what type of schedule would best fit your family needs.

You are welcome to tour the different agencies that your son or daughter is considering. Please feel free to voice any concerns or questions you might have regarding this project. Service projects are intended to be learning experiences for the students and not added burdens to the families. Let me know how I can help make this a positive experience for both you and your son or daughter.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

School service program leader

Listening for leads

Speaker's name _____

Representing _____

Description of clients _____

Volunteer job description _____

My reaction _____

Speaker's name _____

Representing _____

Description of clients _____

Volunteer job description _____

My reaction _____

Speaker's name _____

Representing _____

Description of clients _____

Volunteer job description _____

My reaction _____

What can I share?

Opening song

Introduction

Scriptural reading

Reflection

Group response

As God's children and . . . ministers and servants

in a rebellious and disjointed world, we are the recipients of God-imparted gifts

to be used toward the accomplishment of God's purposes in our world.

It is true that some of us appear to have more than others,

but every one of us is of equal importance to God and has been entrusted with talents to be used to glorify and serve God.

The value or significance of these gifts is not to be determined by the accolades of our peers, but the manner in which we accept and utilize them for the glory of God.

The frightful thing is that even some of God's children use them for self-service and self-gratification and stagnate their lives by neglecting to invest them in the needs of their fellow beings. (Adapted from Brandt, *Jesus/Now*, p. 83)

Offering

Closing prayer

Loving others can be truly accomplished only when the focus of our minds and the object of our desires is another, when all of our activity results from concern for another and not from concern for ourselves. . . . If we truly love in this way, we will be loved and we should accept the love of others. . . .

In other words, love means a concern for, acceptance of, and an interest in the others around me whom I am trying to love. It is a self-donation which may prove to be an altar of sacrifice. I can love others only to the extent they are truly the focus of my mind, heart, and life; and I can find myself only by forgetting myself. Love is indeed costly and demanding. Because of the inward pains that all of us bear, the scar tissues that are part of our human inheritance, because of the competition and example of a self-grasping world, it will be difficult for us to make the sacrifice of ourselves that is involved in loving. Loving always means at least this sacrifice, the orientation of my thoughts and desires toward others and the abandonment of my own self and self-interest. Needless to say, such abandonment always involves a high cost to self. (Adapted from Powell, *Why Am I Afraid to Love?* pp. 106-109)

Closing song

