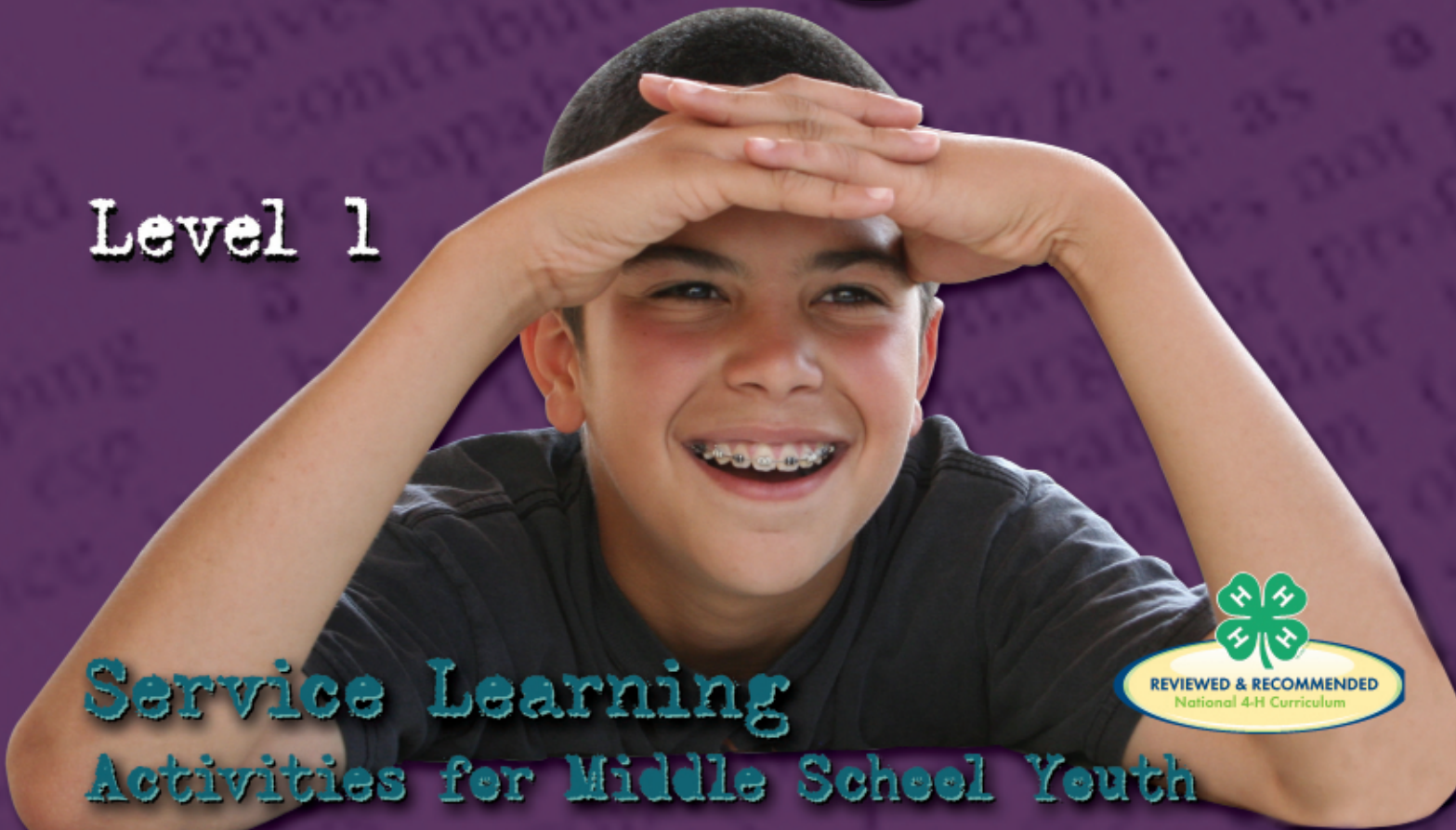




"AGENTS OF CHANGE"

Level 1



**Service Learning
Activities for Middle School Youth**



Name _____ Group _____

NOTE TO HELPER

You have a key role in helping youth learn about service learning and themselves. Youth can't do it without you! You can help young people get the most out of this project through your enthusiasm and ability to ask thought-provoking questions. You can help youth determine goals, identify resources, create presentations, think about their choices and evaluate their own progress.

Service Learning Project Activity Guides

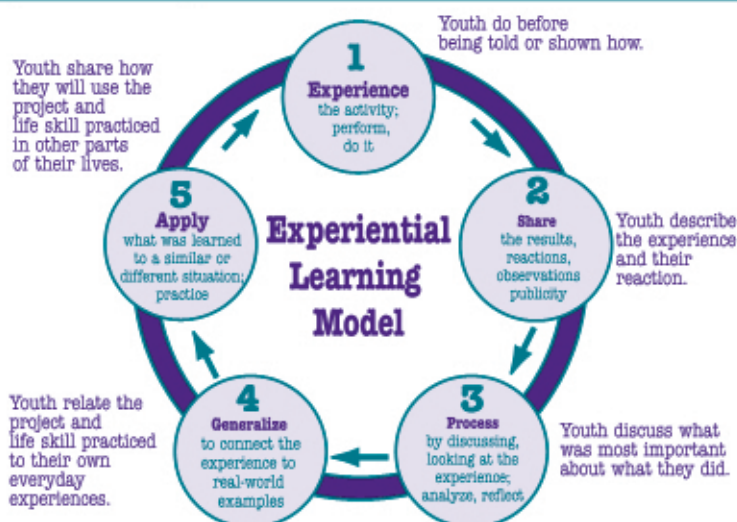
This is the first in a series of two service learning project activity guides for youth. The Level 1 guide takes middle school aged youth through the process of researching, planning and conducting a service learning project. Level 2 is designed for high school aged youth. Each guide has an achievement program to encourage youth to learn and develop life skills. Your assistance in completing the achievement programs is very important.

In each activity, you'll find a description of the project and the life skill to be emphasized, questions to follow each activity, suggestions for additional activities and helpful information. The activities are designed for youth to learn by doing.

With your help, youth reflect on what they did and what it means to them.

Your challenge is to allow youth to explore the activity and learn from the experience, even if it doesn't work the way he or she expects. In the "Debrief" sections for each activity, the best way for you to help a young person learn is to listen as they consider each question and draw their conclusions. You may also need to help youth find additional resources.

The **Service Learning Project Helper's Guide** provides additional learning by doing activities that can be adapted to the family, 4-H project groups, clubs, classrooms or other groups. You'll also find hints about life skill development, characteristics of youth at different ages and tips for activities in the youth guides.



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E., "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals" © 1983 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
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The experiential learning model helps distinguish 4-H youth development education from many other education methods.

Acknowledgments

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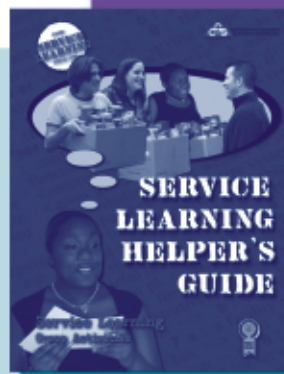
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BU-08183

Level 2 helps youth plan their own service learning project. Activities include: survey-taking, community mapping, ethical dilemmas and career development.



BU-08184

The **Helpers Guide** supports youth working through Levels 1 or 2. Interactive group activities teaching communication skills, group process and journaling.

HAVING FUN WITH SERVICE LEARNING

Are you ready to make a difference in the world around you? Then you're ready for the service learning project!

You will find interesting and exciting activities in this guide. You'll learn how to research a topic, create an action plan, carry out your plan and celebrate your success. Don't be afraid to jump right in and don't give up if the activity doesn't work the first time.

Journaling after each activity is an important part of this project. Check out the Service Learning CD or Project Online website for tools to help you reflect after each activity. It is especially important that you journal while conducting your service learning project on-site and take time to think about your experiences.

Achievement Program

While you are having fun doing the activities, you'll also be completing Level 1 of the Service Learning Achievement Program shown on page 5. There are two levels in this program – one in each of the service learning project activity guides. This program will help you set goals, record your successes and be recognized for your work.

Your Project Helper

Your project helper is on your team, supporting you and making learning fun. This person may be a parent, project leader or advisor. The choice is yours. As you do the activities, you'll discuss what you did and the questions in the "Debrief" section with your helper. Sometimes your helper will work with you to find people, groups, events, books, web sites and information to help complete an activity. After completing each activity, your helper will initial and date your achievement program chart on page 5.

Do your best to complete each activity and answer the questions. You may need additional resources for some activities. The internet, magazines, books, videos, DVDs and information from associations can help you. The public library, other service learning enthusiasts and your extension center will have more information.

You'll learn a lot about service learning through this project, but you'll also learn about yourself too. Many of the things you'll learn are skills you can use in other areas of your life, like:

- Decision-making
- Planning and organizing
- Goal setting
- Communications

As you complete the activities, answer the questions and record your project highlights. Writing things down will help you realize how much you have learned.

Have fun!

Your mission is to be a Special Opps Agent... A Person Who Actively Seeks Opportunities to Make a Difference

Your Mission

In the first part of this guide, you will research a problem. After selecting a problem to focus on, you will design an action plan to address it. After accepting your mission assignment, you will go into the field as a special agent to do your service learning project. At the end of the project, you will celebrate contributions and your success.

About Service Learning

Service learning helps you apply your skills and knowledge to a real community problem. It means checking out a problem and preparing, rolling up your sleeves and doing, and figuring out what it all means. Progress often comes in small steps. Journaling can help you chart progress toward your goal. It can also remind you how your actions today impact a larger community problem or issue.

Your Journal

Journaling is very important in service learning. It helps you learn from what you did. More than just recording your activities for the day, journaling helps you think about what it all means. A journal should help you answer the question – “**So What?**”

When you want to make big improvements in the world around you, progress often comes in small steps. Journaling can help you chart progress toward your goal. It can also remind you how your actions today impact a larger community issue.

Write one journal page after completing each activity in this guide or after a session at your service learning project site.

If you want to write your journal by hand, make copies of page 36* and keep them in a folder. If you want to keep your journal electronically on a computer, use the Service Learning CD to open the journal page on your computer. Some people like to journal through pictures and sketches. You may want to add pages to your written or electronic journal to hold photos.

Service Learning 1 Project Guidelines

- Do a minimum of seven Level 1 activities each year.
- Complete Level 1 within three years.
- Keep the Planning Guide current by setting project goals and recording the project highlights you experience. Use extra paper if needed.

Types of Service Projects

- Direct Service - works directly with community members or those being served.
- Indirect Service - uses a “behind the scenes” approach to work on an issue or resolve a problem.
- Advocacy - advocates for a solution to a problem.

Journaling Tips

- Sit in a quiet place where you can concentrate.
- Think through your day and service learning activities.
- Use all of your senses as you recall how things looked, tasted, smelled, sounded and felt.
- Be honest. Write down your real feelings – not just the best-sounding answers.

PLANNING GUIDE

Here is a great way to see if you learn something new and develop important skills in this project. Before you start doing the activities in this guide indicate what you know **now**. When you complete the "Service Learning Achievement Program" write down here what you know **after**. You may be surprised to see what you learn! Share the results with your helper.

I know how to ...

Name community problems and needs
 Identify what makes a worthwhile service learning experience
 Select a service learning mission
 Conduct research about the mission
 Sequence activities in a plan
 Redirect a project when things change
 Actually do my own service project
 Understand ways to reflect using all five senses
 Create a newsletter to educate others
 Deliver an oral presentation
 Recognize contributions by others
 Write a news release
 Plan another service learning project

Before

1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3

After

1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3
 1 2 3

Circle 1 (to a great extent), 2 (somewhat) or 3 (not at all).

Goal #1

Goal #2

Goal #3

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Requirements

- Within a three year period, complete all of the "Mission Possible" activities in Level 1.
- For each activity complete one of its "Bonus Assignments." With your helper's approval, you may create your own "Bonus Assignments."
- Have your project helper date and initial the activities as you complete them.

Page	#	Date Completed	Helper's Initials

Write your own activity here:

Date: _____ Helper's Initials: _____

Write your own activity here:

Date: _____ Helper's Initials: _____

Write your own activity here:

Date: _____ Helper's Initials: _____

Activities	Date Completed	Helper's Initials
Chapter 1 — Preparation		
I Can Change the World		
Get the Scoop		
Mission Possible		
Facts or Fakers		
Chapter 2 — Action		
The Right Step		
Pinnacles & Pitfalls		
Do Your Thing		
Chapter 3 — Reflection		
Mining Your Experiences		
Mission Redux		
News, News, News		
Center Stage		
Chapter 4 — Celebration		
Medals & More		
Going Worldwide		
The Mission of Life		



I CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

There are many problems that exist in the world. At times it may seem like those problems are overwhelming. But history has shown that even one person can make a difference. Your first assignment as a Special Opps Agent is to look through three windows and identify problems found in your community.



You will use three **perspectives*** in this activity to identify needs and **assets*** in your community. Decide on three different windows in your community to look through. One could be your home, another your school, and a third your public library.

Go to a window in each building and look outside. Invite a friend or your helper to go with you. Look carefully and reflect on what you see. Now put on a blindfold (or close your eyes) and try to describe the view to your friend or helper. Are there signs of things that could be changed? How could you cause those changes to happen? Record what you see. Make notes or draw pictures and share them with your helper.

A large, empty rectangular box with a teal border, intended for students to record their observations or draw pictures.A large, empty rectangular box with a teal border, intended for students to record their observations or draw pictures.A large, empty rectangular box with a teal border, intended for students to record their observations or draw pictures.

Written by Rhea Galati and
Carol Weatherford

[Debrief]

Reporting Out (Share what you did)

When you looked out your windows, what senses did you use to identify what could be changed? Where did your ideas come from?

Investigate (Process what is important)

What needs and assets did you see that you didn't know about before? What are some ways these needs could be met?

Trace the Links (Generalize to your life)

How do you feel when you see needs that are not being met or assets not being used? How do you deal with those feelings?

Follow the Lead (Apply what you learned)

What can you do to help others notice these needs and assets? Are there others you can talk to about them? How can you put together a plan to meet one of these needs?



Explore more at

www.4-hcurriculum.org

National 4-H Curriculum

[Bonus Assignments]

1. Take photos of what you see outside each window. Create a poster or collage showing the needs you observe. Share with others.
2. Build a model that shows what you see outside one of the windows. Label it to show needs, assets and major landmarks.
3. Interview a person who lives without being able to fully use one of the five main senses – sight, sound, smell, taste or touch. Find out how the person observes the world, its needs and its assets. Share what you learn with your helper or group.

INTELLIGENCE



Looking With Heart

When standing at the window, allow your eyes to wander slowly over what you see. Think about the key buildings or landmarks. Now look again and see more details. Use your senses – smell, sight, sound, touch and taste. What would it feel like to be a bird that soars high above your community?

You may need to use your **mind's eye*** to see your community's needs and assets. Close your eyes, or put on a blindfold, and describe with **word pictures*** what is outside the window. Think about the needs and assets that exist underneath the surface.

Identifying needs and assets in your community can be exciting because you see things you never noticed before. It can also be scary. Some problems may seem very complicated and others may only take a few steps to fix. Whether the needs and assets are big or small – write them all down.

Later in this guide, you will choose a mission to address one community need. You may see many things that you would like to do. Write down all of the needs that you observe through the windows. You don't need to choose a mission just yet, so don't feel like you have to limit yourself to listing only one.

* Words shown like **this** are defined in the Glossary on page 34.

GET THE SCOOP

Your next assignment as a Special Opps Agent is to interview two people about their service experiences. A service experience can be any activity that gives back to the community. Maybe your interviewee helped an elderly person, or walked to raise funds for a cause. At the end of the activity, you'll deliver a special report to discuss your findings.



Pretend you are a radio or television reporter preparing a news story about giving back to the community. Your assignment is to investigate what makes a service experience worthwhile and what can make it negative. Think about your story's purpose and what you want to ask. Write your questions in the boxes. Pick two people and interview them about their service experiences. Record their answers on a notepad.

Question #1

Question #2

Question #3

Question #4

Headline:

Lead Sentence:

Themes:

Conclusion:

After reviewing your notes, prepare your report so it tells a story. Use this outline as a guide. Finally, deliver your live news report to an audience such as your club or class.

[Debrief]

Reporting Out

Where did you find people to interview? How did you feel about conducting the interview?

Investigate

How did you write good questions? How did you get people to tell you the information that you wanted?

Trace the Links

Where else can you find information sources? Why is it helpful to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of an experience before trying it?

Follow the Lead

How can interview skills help you later in life? What did you like or dislike about producing the report at the end?



Explore more at

www.4-hcurriculum.org

National 4-H Curriculum

[Bonus Assignments]

1. Shadow for a day a real news reporter. Learn about their job and how news stories are produced. Share what you learn with your helper.
2. Produce your news story with a video camera into a real news piece with you functioning as the on-air reporter.
3. Create a newspaper featuring only stories about service. Print your newspaper and distribute it or put it online.

INTELLIGENCE

Reporting 101

It is very important that you accurately record what your interviewees say. When writing down responses from your sources, make sure you write **exactly** what they say. If you have access to a voice or video recorder, use it during your interviews (make sure you ask the person you are interviewing if it is ok to record).

When it is time to write your news report, review your notes. Think about what will make an interesting news report and help your audience. If you need help, listen to a news report on the radio, watch one on television, or read the newspaper. A typical news report opens with a strong **lead sentence** that summarizes the point of the news story and draws the reader or listener in.

A news story is supposed to be balanced and show both sides of an issue. Try to factor all opinions expressed by the interviewees into your report. Use real quotes to tell a story.

MISSION POSSIBLE

Now that you have identified needs and thought about what makes a service learning experience worthwhile, it's time to pick a mission. In this activity you'll **brainstorm** a list of potential missions and circle your top ten. Then you'll play a game to help you pick from your top three ideas.



On individual index cards, write at least 20 ideas for a mission project. Tape the index cards along the outer edge of a posterboard.

Circle your top 10 ideas. From those 10 select three ideas that interest you the most. Draw a line from each of the three ideas toward the center of the posterboard. Divide each line into 30 parts.

Place a token at the beginning of each line.

Write your three ideas on the chart. For each row, assign three points to your favorite idea. Assign two points to your second-most favorite and one point to your least favorite. On your posterboard, advance the tokens according to the number of points you awarded each idea. The token advancing the farthest becomes your mission!

	Idea 1 Points	Idea 2 Points	Idea 3 Points
Need I Want to Address			
What I Want to Do			
Impact My Work Will Have			
Partners for This Mission			
Skills I Will Use to Do This			
Transportation to Project			
Equipment			
Funding Needs			
Number of Hours			
Relates to My Life			

Idea #1

Idea #2

Idea #3

[Debrief]

Reporting Out

Where did all of your ideas come from? What did you do to complete the chart?

Investigate

What problems occurred while you were picking your top 10 and top three ideas?

Trace the Links

When has it been difficult for you to make a decision? How did you make up your mind? Where else in your life can using a points system help you make a decision?

Follow the Lead

How does using planning and organizing skills help you accomplish things? How can thinking about options ahead of time help you organize an activity for your club or school?



Explore more at

www.4-hcurriculum.org

National 4-H Curriculum

[Bonus Assignments]

1. Some people use planning systems to help them make decisions about a project. Interview someone who uses a planning system. Talk about what they like about their system and what they don't like about it. Have them demonstrate it for you with a sample project. Tell your helper what you find out.
2. Investigate one of the major ranking systems used in a sport. Find out how rankings are assigned to teams or individual players. Share what you find with your helper.

INTELLIGENCE

Weighing Choices

The service opportunities available to you are endless. It may seem difficult to choose only one. Choosing a mission that relates to an interest or hobby can help you get started right away or help you explore further.

For example, a 4-H member with an interest in animals, may want to do a service project that involves animals – by volunteering at an animal shelter or conducting a community education campaign. If you like to work on the computer, you might want to tutor someone on the computer. Or you could design a web page for an organization that does not have one.

When making your choice, there are many factors to consider. Do you like the cause? Are there potential partners to help you? Will you need any special equipment or funding? Can you get easily to the location(s)?

Some ideas may be great, but not fit within the amount of time you have. Some ideas may require more work or time, but can be more worthwhile. The chart used in this activity and point values can help you look at some of these issues. You should not use the point values to dictate your mission. A mission with a lower point value may be more difficult to conduct, but it may be more meaningful.

Choose a mission that truly interests you and will help others.