



National Farmers Union

“Leading by Serving”

Section 3: Grades 6-8

Contents:

Lesson 1: Why Serve? ~ 1 hour

Lesson 2: How Will I Serve?~* ~ 1 hour

Lesson 3: Farmers Union’s Century of Service* ~ 1 hour

Lesson 4: Serving My Community ~ 1 hour

Optional Activities

** Lesson contains a cooperative education component.*

For more information contact:
National Farmers Union
education@nfu.org
202.554.1600
www.nfu.org



CHS FOUNDATION
proudly supports
this curriculum
chsfoundation.org

Lesson 1: Why Serve?

- Unit Objective:** Teens will reflect on how volunteerism impacts their communities and themselves.
- Grades:** 6-8
- Length:** 1 hour: 10 min. for background information and discussion, 10 min. for “Deep Thoughts,” 30 min. for YouTube videos, and 10 min. for “I’ll Be Shopping with You, Mom” story and discussion
- Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart and markers, pencils, five copies of “Deep Thoughts,” one copy “I’ll Be Shopping with You, Mom,” a video camera (if available)
- Preparation Needed:** Print a copy of “I’ll Be Shopping with You, Mom,” and cut the four paragraphs and discussion questions apart.

Background:

There’s no question that there are many needs in the world today. Hunger, poverty, environmental degradation and disease are only a few of the serious challenges facing our world. In order to meet these needs, every citizen – young and old – has the opportunity and a responsibility to serve in our communities.

Through our activities today, we will explore the concepts of **volunteerism** and **servant leadership**. A volunteer is someone who shares their time, talents and treasures to help others without expecting anything in return. A servant-leader is someone who has an eagerness to serve that, as a result, makes them aspire to lead.

Although volunteers do not seek anything for their efforts, there are indirect benefits. The primary benefit volunteers get from serving is the satisfaction of knowing they have made a difference in their community and world. The pride, satisfaction and accomplishment one feels are worthwhile reasons to serve.

In addition, those who are servants first, often develop into the most respected leaders. Servant-leaders are often rewarded in their careers, in their educational pursuits and in their personal lives.

Nobel Peace Prize Winner Albert Schweitzer once said, “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know. The only ones among you who will be happy will be those who have sought and found how to serve.”

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce background information above.
2. Ask the following questions. Record the answers on a whiteboard or flipchart.
 - a. *What do you feel are common reasons people choose not to volunteer or serve?* (not enough time, apathy, self-absorbed, feel one person can’t make a difference, etc.)
 - b. *What are some of the benefits to our community when we volunteer our time, talents or treasures to service for the common good?* (helps those incapable of helping themselves, improves the entire community, distributes the wealth, etc.)
 - c. *What are some of the benefits that the volunteer might receive from volunteering?* (feels good, strengthens scholarship and award applications, etc.)
 - d. *What would the world look like if no one volunteered or provided acts of service?*
 - e. *What would the world look like if every single person volunteered?*
3. Have students divide up into small groups and pass out “Deep Thoughts.” Have students discuss these quotes, paraphrase them in their own words and come up with at least one real-life example for each quote. Afterward, ask for volunteers to share their paraphrase and example for one of the quotes.
4. Divide the students into one of four groups: environmental issues, hunger issues, rural issues, and health issues. Each group should work together to choose a charity or cause of their choice related to their group’s topic area. As examples, the environmental issues group

might choose increased recycling as its cause, the hunger issues group might choose a local food bank, the rural issues group might choose their local Farmers Union organization and the health issues group might pick a cancer awareness event. Let them know these are just examples and they should brainstorm and come to a consensus as a group.

5. After the groups pick their causes, challenge them to create a 30-second YouTube video that they will perform for the rest of the group to encourage people to give to or volunteer to help with their cause or charity. The focus of the video should be why it is important to give to that cause and how involvement or donations might benefit the cause as well as the volunteer. Ask someone to record the videos to post on YouTube.com.
6. At the end of the videos, gather as an entire group and discuss outcomes.
7. Ask for four volunteers to come to the front of the group. Hand each a paragraph of “I’ll Be Shopping with You, Mom” and ask them to read the paragraph aloud and in order.
8. After the reading, introduce the corresponding discussion questions.

Sources: Lesson adapted from *Heart of a Volunteer*: a compilation of quotes on volunteerism by Compendium Publishing

1 A mother was recently approached by her teenage daughter, who asked for a new \$160 piece of electronics equipment to replace her old one. Her old one, by the way, was only a year old and was working fine. The wise mom said she would think about it, but first, she asked if her daughter could help her with some errands that afternoon.

2 That afternoon, the mother and daughter climbed into their car and headed for the local grocery store. Once there, the mom went straight to the bulk food section and started loading food in the carts. Soon two shopping carts were overflowing with bags of generic rice, sacks of potatoes, boxes of ramen noodles, cases of canned vegetables, jars of peanut butter and jelly, and loaves upon loaves of bread. Without a word, the mom headed straight for the checkout lines, paid for the food, and loaded up the car. The daughter was curious but said nothing.

3 The mom then drove in silence straight to a local food bank. Without a sound, she started to carry in the groceries while her startled daughter helped. Soon, both of them were filling up the empty shelves while the workers and needy families looked on. After a few seconds, however, both of them were showered with teary eyes, crushed with hugs, and thanked with more “God bless yous” than the daughter had ever heard before.

4 As they were driving home, the mom finally smiled and handed her daughter the receipt for the groceries. The total was \$162 and change. “That is what \$160 is really worth,” the mom said. “Next week, you can buy that gadget you want, or we can make another trip to shop for the food bank that helped keep us alive and together when you were just a baby. It’s up to you.”

The daughter smiled and with tears in her eyes said, “I’ll be shopping with you, Mom!”

Discussion Questions:

1. What are your initial thoughts about the story that we just read?
2. What was the daughter’s primary motivation before her visit to the food bank?
3. How do you think the daughter in this story felt after her visit to the food bank? Do you think her priorities and actions have changed? In what way? For how long?
4. After participating in these activities today, do you think your priorities and actions will change? In what way? For how long?
5. What are some of the things that you really want? What are the things that you really need?
6. How do you balance getting what you want with what you need in your life?
7. What actions could you take when you return home for balancing what you want with the needs of your family and others in your community?

Deep Thoughts

Paraphrase these quotes in your own words and come up with examples that illustrate these quotes.

“We rise by lifting others.”
-- Robert Green Ingersoll

“There are those whose lives affect all others around them. Quietly touching one heart, who in turn,
touches another.
Reaching out to ends further than they would ever know.”
-- William Bradfield

“Everyone has the power for greatness, not for fame but greatness, because greatness is determined
by service.
You don’t have to have a college degree to serve.”
-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

“People are homeless, hungry and sick.
Somebody should do something about this. Be somebody.”
-- Bonnie Brady

“The miracle is this – the more we share, the more we have.”
-- Leonard Nimoy

Lesson 2: How Will I Serve?

Unit Objective: Students will assess their current service level and explore areas in which they might be suited to serve.

Grades: 6-8

Length: 1 hour: 5 min. for opening activity, 10 min. discussion and background information, 15 min. for “Who Am I?” personal assessments and 15 min. for small group discussions, 15 min. for wrap-up discussion.

Materials Needed: Pencils, enough chairs and table space for each student, whiteboard or flipchart and markers, enough copies of the two-page “Who Am I?” activity.

Preparation Needed: Make double-sided copies of the two “Who Am I?” activity pages.

Background:

As servant leaders, we have the opportunity to give of our time, talents and treasures to a variety of causes and organizations. Not everyone is interested in or gifted in the same exact things.

Since we have a finite amount of time and treasures, it is important to prioritize the areas in which we are most interested in serving. **Philanthropists** generally give to causes that they deeply care about and that match their personal missions.

Personal history with a cause is a common reason for choosing a cause. For example, a person might have had a good experience with the Farmers Union youth group as a teen, so he or she begins supporting the organization as a volunteer or as a **donor** to the Farmers Union Foundation in adulthood.

Personal experience is another reason. If someone has experienced a family illness, such as cancer, they might become a supporter of an organization that fights that disease.

Finally, people support causes because of their values and beliefs. A person might highly value environmental stewardship and, therefore, choose to support organizations that work to protect the environment.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Have the group sit in chairs in a circle. Explain that you will be calling out certain activities. If they have done the activity, they should move to the chair on their right. Those who have not yet done the activity should stay seated. You may end up sitting on someone’s lap or may experience a pile up. *Move to the right if you have:*
 - a. *Attended Farmers Union camp or day class*
 - b. *Volunteered at some type of event in your community*
 - c. *Read to a younger child*
 - d. *Attended a Farmers Union organizational event like a local meeting or state convention*
 - e. *Helped someone who was sick*
 - f. *Visited a senior citizen’s home or a senior center*
 - g. *Worked with some type of project to protect the environment*
 - h. *Donated food, clothes, toys or other goods to charity*
 - i. *Raised funds for some cause*
 - j. *Donated your own money to a cause or organization*
 - k. *Include any other activities that would be specific to the interests of the group*
2. Have students return to their original chairs and reflect on the activity. *Did everyone move at least once? What were your observations from this activity? What do you think this activity reveals about our group?* If it hasn’t been said yet, sum up that the activity shows that everyone has different areas of involvement and interest when it comes to volunteerism and service. *There is an area of service for everyone and that is what makes the world go around.*
3. Introduce the background information above.
4. Ask a volunteer to hand out a pencil and the “Who Am I?” activity page for each person. While the sheets are being handed out, ask rhetorically: *What time, talents and treasures do you*

possess? What do you care about the most? What is your personal mission? Where do you think your gifts of service might be best aligned? Explain that you will be providing time to fill out the self-evaluation sheets and they should quietly reflect on each question. They should put their pencils down and quietly wait when they are finished.

5. When the majority have finished, have them take their paper and pencil and partner up into groups of three for the next exercise.
6. By using the results of their “Who Am I?” forms, the small group’s goal is to help each team member identify at least one service action that would utilize his or her talents, interests and experiences and one cause or service action that they could **cooperatively** undertake as a group with the talents and interests each bring to the table. (In other words, a team of three would come up with four service leadership ideas: one for each team member, and one for the group.)
7. Adult leaders should make themselves available for assistance, walking around the room offering service leadership ideas if a group appears to be stuck.
8. Ask each group to share their individual and group service leadership ideas. Ask each to explain why they chose their group idea. Write the results on the whiteboard or flipchart with check marks by repeated suggestions.
9. Close with a few large group discussion questions: *What did you think about this exercise? Did most of the causes you chose come from your personal history, experiences, values or a mixture? Was anyone surprised by the ideas your small group members had for what might be a good service leadership activity for you? Would anyone like to follow through on one of these service leadership ideas or another idea you heard in the future?* Point out any other observations you may have about the ideas they came up with.

Sources: DIYPlanner.com and Learning to Give lesson, “Caring Enough to Give Your Very Best,”(<http://learningtogive.org/youthworkers/7%20Growing%20as%20a%20Philanthropist/activity18.asp>).

Who Am I ?

What do I **value** most? Circle your top 5:

Creativity
Family
Freedom
Friendships
Good health
Happiness
Honesty
Justice

Love
Problem-Solving
Productivity
Peace
Recognition
Respecting Others
Security

Serving Others
Spirituality

Sustainability
Truth
Wealth
Others:

Learning/knowledge

What am I **good** at?

I am **interested** in . . .

What are some of my **goals** in life?

What five **causes** mean the most to me?

Abuse victims
Children
Community
Depression
Disabilities
Elderly
Environment
Farmers
Foreign aid

Hunger
Mental disabilities
Mental illnesses
Military families
Natural disasters
Peer pressure
Poverty
Public servants or
those seeking office

Physical illnesses
Physical disabilities
Others:

I will **contribute** to the world by . . .

I **am** ... _____

There is **not** ...

has **never** been ...

and will **never** be ...

anyone just like **me**!

To sum it up, I feel my **purpose** in life is to...

Lesson 3: Farmers Union's Century of Service

Unit Objective: Kids will explore community service throughout Farmers Union's history.

Grades: 6-8

Length: 1 hour: 5 min. for introduction, 20 min. for building the Farmers Union timeline, 10 min. for timeline discussion, 20 min. for guest speaker, 5 min. for wrap-up discussion

Materials Needed: A roll of butcher paper and tape or tacks, markers, a bowl, a copy of "Farmers Union: A Century of Service" for each student, plus one extra.

Preparation Needed: Identify and invite someone in your Farmers Union organization who would be able to speak and answer questions about some segment of the local Farmers Union's history. Make copies of "Farmers Union: A Century of Service" for each student, plus one extra. Take the extra copy, cut out the individual decades into strips and place them in a bowl for a random draw.

Background:

In 1902, 12 Texans established National Farmers Union through a strong desire -- and a need for -- **cooperation**. They understood that family agriculture producers would be better served if they worked together for the **common good**. This objective of leading and serving for the common good has steered Farmers Union for more than a century.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Hand out copies of "Farmers Union: A Century of Service."
2. Introduce background information above as segue into "Farmers Union: A Century of Service." Go around the room having students take turns reading the material aloud.
3. Divide the group into six teams, if possible. Point out the roll of butcher paper and markers. Each team will randomly draw from a bowl two decades of Farmers Union history to depict on a visual timeline. Team members will have to work together to decide how they will portray Farmers Union's community service in each decade. As well, they will need to **cooperate** with the other teams, and keep the greater common goal of a complete historical timeline in mind, in order to allot enough space for the depiction of each decade. The end result will be a Farmers Union timeline depicting a century of service to rural America.
4. After the timeline has been created, ask for volunteers to help hang the timeline. Keep in mind any future uses of the timeline as you hang it.
5. Have representatives from each team explain their depictions of their respective decades.
6. Discuss the results of the activity as a group.
 - a. *What did you think about this exercise? Was it difficult or simple?*
 - b. *How was it working with your individual teams?*
 - c. *How was it to cooperate and plan ahead with the other teams in order to make certain you had enough space in which to illustrate your part of Farmers Union history?*
 - d. *Can you draw any comparisons between what it took to complete this exercise cooperatively with what it takes in order to participate in a cooperative like the ones Farmers Union has helped to create and support over the years?*
 - e. *Would it have been easier or harder to do this project by yourself rather than in teams? How would it have been easier or harder?*
 - f. *What could have happened with this project if you did not successfully cooperate?*
 - g. *What did you learn about National Farmers Union's history from this exercise?*
 - h. *What are some of the communities that National Farmers Union has served over the past century?*
 - i. *If you were to incorporate your local or state organization's community service contributions into the Farmers Union timeline, what might that look like? (They may or may not know of any, which will lead into the purpose of the guest speaker.)*

7. Explain that this timeline represents just a few of many community service activities in National Farmers Union's history. It does not even begin to identify all of the ways Farmers Union has served local communities nationwide. In your community alone, there are countless service projects Farmers Union has undertaken since its inception.
8. Introduce the guest speaker, who should share a few stories of Farmers Union's local history related to service and community development. Allow time afterward for question and answer time with the speaker.
9. Open the floor for more group discussion: *Now that you have learned a bit more about our local Farmers Union history, do you have other ideas for incorporating our organization's community service into the Farmers Union timeline?*
10. Discuss ideas for adapting the timeline to reflect local activities as well as ideas for displaying the timeline in the community to raise awareness of Farmers Union's century of service.
11. Discuss the depiction of 2010 and beyond on the timeline. Ask what other ideas people have for where they think the organization is going or should go in the future, locally or nationally.
12. *What roles do each of you see yourself playing in Farmers Union's next century of service?*

Sources: Lesson adapted from information in *Connecting America's Farmers with America's Future: The National Farmers Union 1902-2002* by Lee Egerstrom, Milton Hakel & Bob Denman, and interview with Kansas Farmers Union Board Member Tom Giessel

Farmers Union: A Century of Service

- 1900s:** NFU is formed by 12 Texans interested in working cooperatively to help all farmers get better prices for their products. In its first decade, NFU forms its first marketing cooperative and pushed for federal legislation assuring farmers' rights to form co-ops.
- 1910s:** Farmers Union advocates voting rights for women and direct election of U.S. senators.
- 1920s:** Farmers Union pushes heavily for the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act, which allows agriculture producers to form voluntary cooperatives. NFU then launches
- 1930s:** Farmers Union establishes its youth education programs.
- 1940s:** Farmers Union is a founding member of CARE, which was formed to feed the hungry survivors of World War II. (Since that time, CARE has become one of the world's largest private humanitarian organizations.) NFU also successfully lobbies to
- 1950s:** Farmers Union succeeds in getting the School Milk Program in schools.
- 1960s:** NFU wages war on poverty by instituting the Green Thumb program (now called Experience Works), which places low-income, older workers in jobs and volunteer
- 1970s:** opportunities
- 1980s:** NFU becomes a founding member of the World Hunger Action Council and promotes the development of rural health cooperatives.
- 1990s:** Farmers Union succeeds in having part of the military budget shifted toward humanitarian food aid using surplus U.S. commodities.
- 2000s:** NFU unifies farm groups, business owners, bankers, church groups and others to show that a farming crisis impacts all parts of a community. NFU's Rural Unity Day events are instrumental in achieving \$9.7 billion in federal farm relief in 1999.
- 2010...** NFU leads coalitions that successfully advocate for mandatory country-of-origin food labeling and increased usage of renewable fuels from the farm. It also works with anti-hunger organizations on expanding food-aid programs in the 2008 farm bill and supports efforts to extend international food aid programs that send donations of American food to impoverished children around the world.
- Farmers Union will continue to serve communities in rural America and around the globe in the coming decade. What will your role be in Farmers Union's next century of service?**

Lesson 4: Serving My Community

Unit Objective: Students will identify their dreams for their communities and plan service ideas for achieving these dreams.

Grades: 6-8

Length: 1 hour: 15 min. for introduction and “Building Community,” 15 min. for “Community Dream Quilt” activity, 10 min. for reporting and collage-building, 10 min. for discussion and 10 min. for service project planning

Materials Needed: Whiteboard or flipchart and markers, pencils, 8 ½ X 11 sheets of blue paper for each student, colored pencils, markers, scissors, Scotch tape, pieces of poster board

Preparation Needed: Make copies of “Building Community.”

Background:

President Obama has asked all Americans to participate in our nation’s recovery and renewal by serving in our communities. Our communities have many needs and opportunities for involvement.

America’s new foundation will be built one community at a time – and it starts with you. No one knows your community better than you and your friends and neighbors do. What positive changes will you help create in the world around you?

Teaching Strategy:

1. Open the lesson with the background information above. Next, have the group define **community** in their own words. Take notes of key words and phrases on the whiteboard or flipchart.
2. Next, ask them to identify the good things about their community. Finally, ask what needs to be improved or changed in their community.
3. Divide into small groups and hand out “Building Community” and pencils. Students should work together in their small groups to answer the questions. Have them share results if there is time after they all have completed the questions.
4. Give each student a sheet of blue paper. Ask them to draw or write what they would like to see their community look like 10 years from now. Students can draw or write their dreams for the community on the blue paper. When they are finished, ask them to cut around the edges to make the dreams look like clouds.
5. Have each student take turns sharing their dream clouds with the rest of the class, describing what they have drawn or written.
6. After each person shares, they should use tape to stick their dream cloud onto a piece of poster board. You may need multiple pieces of poster board depending on the size of the group. By putting the ideas together, they will form a “Community Dream Quilt.”
7. The “Community Dream Quilts” not only can be displayed at the youth event, but also can be displayed at other community events to show the dreams Farmers Union young people have for their communities. Brainstorm with the group and devise a plan for displaying their posters after the event.
8. Continue with discussion:
 - a. *What are some of the common themes and dreams that are being displayed on our Community Dream Quilt?*
 - b. *Why do you think these things have not yet been achieved in our community?*
 - c. *A famous philosopher named Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” What do you think he meant by that?*
 - d. *How can we do our part to make sure these dreams come true in 10 years?*
 - e. *What challenges might we face in making these dreams a reality?*

- f. What are some service projects that we could undertake as a group that would help achieve these dreams?*
9. List service projects on the whiteboard or flipchart and have students prioritize the projects to find the ones that are most important or are most interesting to them. Have the group vote by a show of hands which project they think they should undertake as a group. Establish goals, resources they need to accomplish the project and a time frame for completing the project.
 10. Ask a few follow-up questions and take notes on a whiteboard or flip chart to help develop the plan they chose:
 - a. What are our goals for the project?*
 - b. What resources would we need to accomplish this service project?*
 - c. How long would this service project take a group this size to do?*
 - d. What are some of the intermediate steps we need to do before undertaking this service project?*
 - e. Are there any other details about this service project that we have not discussed?*
 - f. After this service project is completed, how will we measure our success?*
 - g. Plan a time in the future for the entire group to follow-through with the service project ideas.*

Sources: Lesson adapted from LEAGUE Worldwide's, "Blue Sky Activity," (http://www.leagueworldwide.org/media/pdf/More_Forms/BlueSkyActivity.pdf) and an essay by Kansas Farmers Union Board Member Tom Giessel

Building Community

By Kansas Farmers Union Board Member Tom Giessel

When the first settlers came to the vast, treeless American prairie, they created communities. It was not large sums of cash that shaped our communities-- it was the people, and their generosity of time, talent and heart. It was small groups of people, making sacrifices, nurturing relationships with neighbors, and coming together to build a school or church or to secure a post office. It was the laughter, tears, pain and pleasure of life on the wind-swept prairie.

They understood that the Earth would yield what was necessary to sustain life and secure a future. They knew at some point, they would have to “let go” of what had been “theirs” for a brief time. They were well aware that they would leave everything behind, but, on the other hand, made sure nothing was lost forever, for those yet to come.

Looking back, they could easily define community, because they built one, literally, from the ground up. Now, our communities are ours to build in our time.

Questions to Ponder:

1. What do you think it would be like to build a community from scratch? How would you begin?
2. Mr. Giessel said it wasn't necessarily money, but “time, talent and heart” that built communities when our country was first being settled. Does it take the same things to maintain a community today? Why or why not?
3. What is being done, or should be done, in your community to make sure that “nothing is lost forever, for those yet to come”?
4. What do you think Mr. Giessel means when he says, “Now our communities are ours to build in our time”?
5. What specifically can we do to build our communities in our time?

Optional Activities

The following activities could be incorporated at the end of any lesson to fill extra time.

1. Plan a group service project based on student suggestions from the lessons.
2. Have senior youth create visual aides to use in teaching the younger age groups. Have the senior youth teach the lessons to the younger age groups for a leadership component.
3. Play charades or hangman with new vocabulary words.
4. Have students create posters, jingles, slogans, advertisements or other forms of promotion to convince others to volunteer.
5. Have students write down the names of as many people that they can think of who they consider to be leaders. See how many they can think of and discuss what makes each of them leaders.
6. Teach some Farmers Union songs.