



Opportunity to Value and Practice Service to Others

Service is a way for youth to gain exposure to the larger community and to the world itself. Young people should feel free to contribute their skills, ideas and time to their community. They should also feel their contributions are accepted, acknowledged, and appreciated.

In our youth group.....

Are youth encouraged to use their time and energy in helping others?

Are there opportunities for youth to identify community needs and develop service plans to meet these needs?

Do all youth and adults participate in service projects?

Are youth and adults recognized for their service?

Do youth know that others value their community service contributions?

Do youth report the impact of volunteer service?

Some practices your group might want to implement to provide opportunities for service to others:

- Have your group plant a tree or some flowers for the community.
- Fill school bags with supplies to donate to schools for students needing them.
- Help senior citizens obtain and install smoke alarms.
- Model helping behavior by assisting a stranger with a small challenging task.
- Organize activities with service as the primary goal.
- Reflect at group meetings following a service activity.
- Provide opportunities for youth to learn about their community through programs and projects with local agencies, government groups, service organizations, etc.

Why provide opportunities for service? Community service and citizenship activities provide a means for youth to connect to communities and to learn to give back to others. Research shows that youth with opportunities for service better understand the 'big picture' of life and find purpose and meaning in their own lives.