

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

For One-Time Service Events

Preparation: Proper preparation lays the foundation for the service experience. This can be done on-site or on campus if necessary. The purpose of preparation is to encourage volunteers to consciously think about what we hope will open them up to experience service with an open heart and critical mind. It is also an opportunity to give details of expectations during the service experience.

Preparation done well increases the likelihood that there will be positive outcomes for both community members and student participants. Issues that arise during the preparation can set the tone for a service project and should be connected to issues discussed in reflection.

Preparation of volunteers should include information on the following:

1. Logistical Information about the day:

- When and where will your group meet? (If necessary)
- How will you get to the service site? If driving, provide clear directions.
- Make sure all participants fill out the Informed Consent Release located in the appendix of this packet.
- Stress the importance of timeliness-the agency is expecting you at a certain time. (Always build in extra time in case you get lost or travel takes longer than anticipated).

2. Information about the content of the project:

- Who will meet your group at the site?
- What type of training/orientation will be provided?
- What type of service will you be doing?
- What will happen at the end of the service experience?
- Where will the reflection session be and how long will it last?

3. Information about broader issues relating to the project:

- Providing information about the population with which you will be working.
- Discuss how issues such as oppression, privilege, and racism affect the population with which you will be working.

4. Explore expectations and assumptions of the participants:

- Find out what participants hope to gain from the project.
- Discuss stereotypes, impressions, assumptions and concerns going into the project.

Use the following preparation exercises to help your group explore their expectations and assumptions.

Ideas for Preparation Exercises

1. Sentence Stems: These help participants begin thinking about their expectations for the experience. Have participants complete the statements aloud or by writing.

Example:

Today I hope . . .
I am anxious about . . .
I expect the children to . . .

2. Quotes: Give each participant a quote relating to service (CCSJ would be happy to suggest some), ask them to read it quietly to themselves and then keep it in their pocket during the service. Afterwards in reflection, ask participants to take out the quote, reflect on it quietly to themselves, and then share it with either the larger group or in pairs. This is a good way to tie in preparation with reflection.

3. Articles/Photos: Provide articles or photos about the issue the project addresses or the population you will be working with. Use these to stimulate discussion and learning.

4. Encourage Creativity: Some people connect to their ideas and feelings best through creative and artistic expression. Use crayons and drawing paper and ask participants to draw their expectations for the project.

5. Role play: Act out situations that may arise during the project. Discuss what was learned.

6. Guided Imagery: Participants get comfortable, close their eyes, and listen to a narration. This exercise can help participants get in touch with their assumptions, expectations, and fears about the project. Get creative and write a narrative that leads participants through the day.

Example: Today you are going to spend time with children who are critically ill. Picture yourself arriving at the hospital/home. How do you feel? You enter the lobby of the hospital/home. What is the first thing you see? What do you smell?