

LOOKING BACK: REFLECTING ON YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR CHILD

Looking Back

Making the most of your volunteer experience does not end with the completion of your volunteer activity as you walk out the door. A very important component in the learning process for your child is called reflection. Take time to look back over your volunteer experience.

Discuss with your child questions such as:

- ? What did you think about _____ that happened at our volunteer site?
- ? How do you think that your part of the project made a difference?
- ? How was your part of the project part of the whole big project?
- ? Let's think about what we learned today about the issue of (hunger).
- ? How do you feel about (hunger) in our community after having done our community service project today?
- ? What was the best part about what we did today?
- ? What part of what we did today did you like the least?
- ? How can we make it better next time?
- ? What are some other ways that we can contribute next time?

Adapt your discussion to the developmental understanding of your child. Use language and examples that your child will understand. Early Childhood age children have a very concrete understanding of the world. Their experience is limited to home, school, immediate neighborhood and friends and family. Gear your discussion to concepts that impact these areas.

You can expand your reflection activities with the following list of projects. Not only will these become treasured mementos of your ongoing volunteer experiences, these projects will reinforce planning, writing, spelling, communication, and public speaking skills. For Early Childhood age youngsters, projects will aid in the development of fine motor skills such as the use of scissors and the use of pencils and crayons. Puppet shows and skits afford the opportunity for creative dramatics.

1. Keep a photo album or scrapbook

Before taking photographs of your volunteer activities, be sure to ask permission of the social service agency in which you have been placed. Most agencies are happy for you to take photographs, although some areas may be restricted. In order to assure privacy and confidentiality, be sure to ask permission before taking the photographs of any clients of the organization. You must also ask permission of the parents before photographing any children on the premises.

2. Mark your calendar

Be sure to mark your calendar to record the dates of your volunteer activities. It is fun to decorate the calendar with colorful stickers and post-it notes that record some of your thoughts and feelings about your experience.

3. Keep a journal describing your volunteer experience and reflection thoughts.

A journal is a fun and inexpensive way to record your experiences and feelings. Children who are not yet able to write, may wish to create of journal of drawings. It can also be a fun interactive project between a parent and child. After discussion, the parent can write a narrative to accompany the child's drawing.

Here are some other ideas:

4. Draw or paint a picture.
5. Write a story.
6. Tell a friend
7. Write a letter to a grandparent, friend, or teacher describing your experiences.
8. Write a newspaper article or letter to the editor.

9. Create a skit.
10. Make a puppet show.
11. Take your show on the road!

Don't Forget to Celebrate!

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Devorah Vineburg is the lead staff professional at the Volunteer Center of Brown County, Green Bay, WI, in the areas of training, consultation and technical assistance to nonprofit agencies. Her website Crafty Community Connections located at www.craftycommunityconnection.com is an excellent resource of ideas for craft and volunteer service projects that can be donated to local people, agencies and charities as a community service. It is a great resource for crafters, kids, teachers, scouts, youth groups, Sunday Schools, parents and friends. The website is updated each month. Subscribe to our free newsletter. On our Shop for Charity page, buy a featured item, and an identical item or its wholesale value will be donated to your favorite registered charity. www.craftycommunityconnection.com