

Day(s) of Service Guidebook



25 YEARS OF CHRIST-CENTERED MISSION TRIPS

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Mission trips are a great opportunity for teenagers to explore and learn more about a new culture as well as serve alongside partners in places where God is already at work. While YouthWorks loves connecting teenagers to communities across the country, our ultimate goal is that when you return home, teenagers would continue growing in their faith and serving in a local context.

Maybe you want to plan your own day of service or service week at home, but don't know where to start. After 25+ years of ministry, we know the ins and outs of planning a successful service day and week anywhere. That's why we've created this brief guidebook that will give you a high-level overview of all the things you need to plan for and know about when organizing a day of service right in your own backyard.

As you look through this guidebook, if you find that you want more specific planning guides, curriculum, meal plans, work project guides, etc., take time to check out our updated resources on the YouthWorks store. We're here to support you as you continue to lead your teenagers in their faith and service at home.

Also, remember that our full-time Customer Engagement Team is always here to support you. During your day(s) of service, we would love for you to share your stories and photos from the day with our marketing team as well. Feel free to email us at marketing@youthworks.com, and your group may even be featured on our social media or blog!

Know that everything in this guide can be customized to meet the needs of your group. No two days of service look the same. Don't get discouraged if not every teenager experiences great life-change or meaning from the day either. For some teenagers this may just be the first step in experiencing living out their faith through service. Be encouraged knowing that all your hard work and planning will make a difference both now and many months or years down the road.

PLANNING YOUR DAY(S) OF SERVICE

There are a few things you'll need to do before the actual day(s) of service. Plan to begin preparing for your day(s) of service at least 3 weeks in advance. Below are some key areas to plan for.

WHO'S COMING?

The first step is getting a general idea of who will be attending your day of service. Your church or organization may have specific parameters for how many adults will also need to attend based on the number of teenagers coming. YouthWorks has a 1:5 adult to teenager ratio for middle school aged groups and a 1:7 adult to teenager ratio for high school/mixed age groups. Depending on how many people are serving, you may need to find volunteer drivers or rent a bus for the day.

Service Partners occasionally have group size restrictions or age requirements, so make sure you know the ages of each teenager and think through ways to split the large group into crews of around 10 people per Service Partner or project.

WHERE WILL YOU SERVE?

What types of service is needed in your community? Begin talking with local neighbors and organizations to see where your group can be most helpful. If you are partnering with local organizations, try to prioritize serving with partners that you plan to work with throughout the year on a consistent basis. Other key questions to ask local partners are what their volunteer age, group size and serving timeframe preferences are.

When looking for partner organizations, see if there are any nationally known Service Partners as well. Service Partners that YouthWorks serves with nationwide include Salvation Army, United Way, Boys and Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity, Feeding America, Goodwill, YMCA, St. Vincent de Paul and ARC.

Maybe there is more of a need in your community to do painting, gardening or minor construction projects. Think through any tools you may need to do those projects as well as the skills of teenagers and adults from your group. Before beginning any work project, always make sure to do a house walkaround with the home or building owner for any potential hazards such as lead paint, poison ivy or animals.

Another option for service is running a kids club in your neighborhood. We recommend that if you do choose to do this type of ministry, plan to do it for a week or full summer so that you can build relationships with community kids.

WHERE WILL YOU MEET?

When gathering to serve, it's important to think through a good meeting space to start out and conclude the day. You'll not only want a larger space to gather with the entire group, but also a smaller space to meet briefly with your Adult Leader volunteers to go over the details of the service day ahead of time.

ARE THERE ANY ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS?

Once you have teenagers signed up and service planned out, you can determine what additional elements of the day you want to add in. Some ideas of additional elements include:

- A pre-service and post-service devotional processing guide
- A message and worship time
- Simple meals outside of a bag lunch from home
- Devotional journals
- A community speaker or fun, recreational, educational activity in the evening
- A community cookout where you can invite the people that you served to a local park or your meeting space for a free meal and fellowship
- Foot washing experience

SAMPLE DAY(S) OF SERVICE SCHEDULE

Now that you have some of the key details planned, you can build out a schedule for the entire service day or week. Below is the framework of YouthWorks' typical day of service schedule used in the past with churches and schools.

8:00 AM-8:20 AM: ADULT LEADER MEETING

Gather your Adult Leaders before everyone arrives to go over expectations and the schedule for the day. At all YouthWorks sites, Adult Leaders receive a packet or binder during this meeting that includes key contact information, details about their service site, a copy of the schedule and any directions or addresses they may need. This is also a great time to process with adults about their hopes for the day and answer and questions they may have.

8:20 AM-8:30 AM: CHECK-IN

Set up a table at the entrance for teenagers to check-in, make a nametag for themselves and turn in any paperwork needed for the day if they haven't done so already online. This is also where they should learn which crew they will be in and where they will be serving.

8:30 AM-9:30 AM: MORNING PROGRAMMING

Begin the day with a time for teenagers to connect with God and the bigger picture of what today's service represents. This is a good time to remind teenagers of what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus in your community through respectful service. You may want to incorporate worship, a small group discussion time in their crews, a devotional journal or brief message to start off the day.

Just before heading out for the service day, make sure to lead a brief orientation for each crew. You'll want to go over any key logistical details teenagers may need to know such as where to put their bag lunch and water bottle, reminders to wear nametags, which vehicle they'll be travelling in, an overview of the service partner and cell phone expectations.

9:30 AM-3:30 PM: SERVICE DAY

Following orientations, each crew will head out to their service site for the day. Make sure you coordinate with Service Partners or let Adult Leaders know when they can take a 45-60 minute lunch break. If possible, you, as the main leader, could avoid having yourself as a crew member, so that you can drive to and check-in with each service site. This allows you to get a pulse on how the day is going.

3:30 PM-4:30 PM: AFTERNOON PROCESSING TIME

Gather back together in your meeting space to process how the day went. Use both large and small group discussions and activities to debrief the service experience. Sample debriefing questions include:

- Talk about your service experience:
 - Have you served at a place like that before? How did you feel when you heard we'd be serving there?
 - Was there anything today that you saw or heard that surprised you?
 - How did you have to step outside your comfort zone today?
 - How do you think we could learn more about places like this or about the issue that's being addressed here (e.g. homelessness, food insecurity, people with special needs, etc.)?
- What are your first impressions of any community members you met?
- Did you learn anything new about someone on your crew today?
- Did you learn something new or unexpected about this community?
- What do you want to remember about today?
- How did you see God working today?

4:30 PM: EVENING: END OF DAY OR OPTIONAL GROUP-LED ACTIVITIES

At this point, you can either end the day together or continue with optional evening activities. Below are some of the typical types of evening activities YouthWorks leads at our mission trip sites:

- Hosting a community cookout – invite community members to join for a meal that teenagers prepare and serve to them
- Visiting a local museum
- Going on a nature hike or exploring a recreational area
- Having a community speaker share
- Doing a poverty simulation or YouthWorks' beads needs activity
- Visiting a local tourist site such as an amusement park, national park or beach

CHECK IT OFF THE LIST

Use this checklist to make sure you've covered all your bases when planning for your Day(s) of Service.

RECRUITING AND SIGNING UP

- ☐ Advertise your day of service with posters, via social media and word of mouth.
 - Make sure to include any fees, timing of the event, how to sign up, meeting location, what to bring, overview of plans and age of students eligible to attend.
- ☐ Collect sign up information or registration forms and any fees.
- ☐ Recruit adult volunteers based on your adult to teenager ratio.
 - Double check with your church or organization about any additional training adults may need in order to volunteer with your teenagers.
- ☐ Put teenagers and adults into crews based on service needs.

PLANNING SERVICE AND TRANSPORTATION

- ☐ Determine what types of service are needed in the community (service partnerships, vbs, tangible work projects, etc.).
- ☐ If partnering with a Service Partner:
 - ☐ Ask what service your group can help with.
 - ☐ See if they have any age/group capacity requirements.
 - ☐ Collect any additional forms for the service day.
 - ☐ Find out the time ranges of service and when/where your group can break for lunch.
- ☐ If doing a tangible Work Project:
 - ☐ Meet with the homeowner/partner ahead of time to do a walkthrough of the potential project.
 - ☐ Make sure you have the tools you need to complete the project.
 - ☐ Prep the service crew ahead of time with any information they need on how to do the project.
- ☐ If facilitating a VBS/Kids Club:
 - ☐ We recommend only doing this if you are planning to serve for a full week or longer in order to foster relationships with the kids.
 - ☐ Recruit younger children to attend VBS/Kids Club (we recommend 5-10-year-olds) and collect any registration and transportation forms.
 - ☐ Plan out the theme and curriculum for the week.
 - ☐ Determine a location to hold the event.
 - ☐ Shop for supplies and snacks for the kids.
- ☐ Contact a bus company or determine vehicles/drivers to transport teenagers and adults to the service locations.

PROGRAMMING AND MEETING

- ☐ Create folders for adult volunteers with the schedule for the day and any important contact and service information.
- ☐ Meet with adults ahead of time to cast vision, answer logistical questions and run through the schedule.
- ☐ Plan out worship, devotional and debriefing times. Make sure you note any supply needs.
- ☐ Organize any additional bonus programming: meals, evening programming, etc.

Once that's all taken care of, you are ready for your Day(s) of Service!