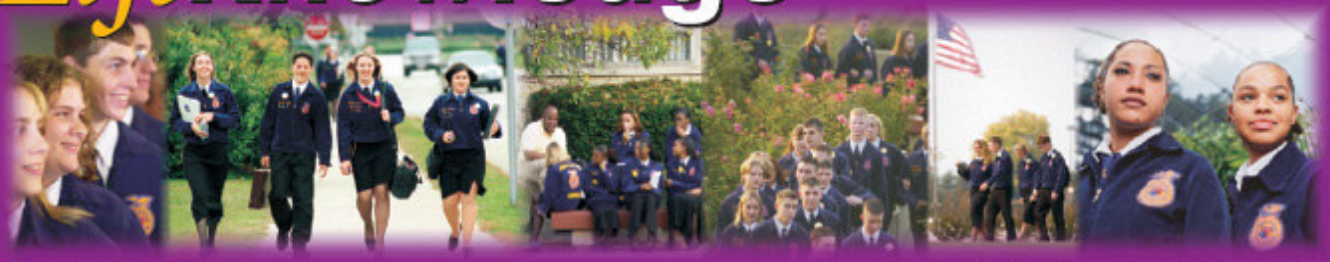
LifeKnowledge
Real Lessons for Real Life



High School
National FFA Organization

Lesson HS.107

ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Unit. Stage Four of Development—SERVE

Problem Area. How Do I Serve Others.

Precepts. **E2:** Perform leadership tasks associated with citizenship.

National Standards. NL-ENG.K-12.5 — Communication Strategies — Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

☑ Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will …

1. Identify ways to serve the public.
2. Identify how to inspire others to get involved.
3. Interact with public servants.

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Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.

Resources

National FFA Essential Learnings.

Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- Writing surface
- Transparencies
- Overhead projector
- Markers
- Poster paper for each student
- HS.107.Assess—one per student
- HS.107.TM.A
- HS.107.TM.B
- HS.107.TM.C
- HS.107.AS.A—one per student
- HS.107.AS.B—one per student

Interest Approach

As students enter the room, display the famous quote by President John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." (HS.107.TM.A)

Establish a serious mood within the room, and begin only when the room has become completely silent. You will then ask students to keep the author of the quote to themselves.

First, ask students to think about what community service means to them. Then allow them to comment on how much they have participated in community service in the last year. Ask what types of service they have participated in, and why.

Before we begin today, I would like to ask you all to keep who said these famous words to yourself.

To begin our journey today, we first are going to take a few seconds to think about an important idea. I need each of you to sit up straight, close your eyes, and concentrate on what I am about to ask you. I want you to think about what comes to mind when I ask, "What is community service." What types of people do you see, and what do you see them doing.

Now I want you to think about what role you play in your idea of community service. Great. If you would like to share your thoughts, please show me your hand.

Allow students to comment on their thoughts. You may wish to record some important thoughts on the writing surface.

Those were some great comments; thanks for sharing. We are now going to go back to the idea of community service. How many of you saw yourselves helping others a moment ago. How many of you have participated in some sort of community service lately.

Likely, the number of students with prior experience will be low. If some students have served in the past, it may be valuable to ask them to share their experiences.

Synthesis of Interest Approach

Show students that through their own examples, there is an extreme lack of community service in the world. Although students had examples of heroic servants, few had been a part of the rewarding opportunities that serving others provides. Ask students to name the person who gave the famous quote. Communicate to students that today we will answer the question about what we can do to serve others and our country.

Thanks for sharing, but I hope all of you saw how few of us have really participated in community service.

Someone please show me your hand if you know who said the quote on the writing surface.

Allow for student response.

That's right: John F. Kennedy. Who can share with us what they think President Kennedy was trying to say here.

Expected responses: we need to help others before we worry about ourselves, etc.

We have identified a problem with community service—most of us haven't participated in it! By the end of today, we will not only be experts in it, but we will make a huge impact on those around us; we will get others involved. We will also, together, answer the question "What can we do for our country."

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Identify ways to serve the public.

Crayon Moment . Students will brainstorm ideas of how to serve the public. They recently thought of images of service and now will get into groups to list as many ideas as possible. This is the first step in the project they will complete today. Break students into small groups of four or five for the activity.

A moment ago, we closed our eyes and tried to envision what community service means. Many different images probably entered your head. In a moment, we are going to capture some of those images and expand on them.

When I say, "Go," get together in groups of four or five, and use the poster paper and markers to capture as many ways to serve the public as possible. Make sure to write large and neatly enough so the rest of the class can read it. Feel free to use pictures and/or words to describe your thoughts. Does anyone have any questions. You have about eight minutes. Go!

I. Public service

A. Ways to serve

When students have finished, choose one from each group to share their group's ideas with the rest of the class.

Stop! As I went around the room, I saw some great ideas. Right now we need a volunteer from each group to stand and show us your ideas.

Have students display posters around the room where they can be seen. Have the member from each group present. Then summarize the ideas presented.

Great job everyone! Turn to your group members and say, "Right on!" If we could say anything about these presentations, it is that there really are many ways to serve others.

Objective 2. Identify how to inspire others to get involved.

Transition from objective 1 into next activity. Make connection of many ways to serve, but the lack of interest to serve. Lead students in a discussion on how to get others involved. Lead students to ideas like peer pressure, posters and advertisements, leaders, parents, teachers, etc., as ways to get students to act.

If we look at our lists around the room, we can see there are many different ways to serve the public! But from our small survey in this room, we found that, despite these myriad ways, few of us take advantage of these opportunities. Let's take a minute to think about what makes people get involved. Who in here is on a sports team.

Choose a student from those who show their hand.

What made you want to join the team.

Allow for response.

Great, thanks for sharing. How about the FFA—what made some of you decide to be active in FFA.

Allow for response.

Fantastic! What do we call it when a group of students pressure another student to do something.

Expected answer: peer pressure.

In most cases, peer pressure is considered a bad thing, but we can use our influence on others to accomplish good, like getting people to serve others. Would you all agree that there is a lack of motivation when it comes to community service. We are going to make a huge difference in what we do here today, not only in our own lives, but in the lives of those around us! Let's take a few minutes to capture some of the ideas that we just shared with each other in our notes.

Unmask HS.107.TM.B.

Influencing Others

I. Adults

- A. Teachers
  - 1. By authority and example
  - 2. Many life experiences
- B. Parents
  - 1. Also by authority and example
  - 2. Share own examples
- C. Community leaders
  - 1. Usually by example

II. Peers

- A. Friends
  - 1. Example and peer pressure
- B. Student leaders
  - 1. Example
- C. Celebrities
  - 1. Example
  - 2. Define what's cool

Students will be given a project where they will create a poster to get other students involved in community service. Students will use the information they learned in class to design informational posters to be placed around campus, encouraging other students to get involved. Posters should focus on what students can do, how they can serve, and why. Be sure to obtain permission to post the flyers/posters around campus.

Students should begin to brainstorm the project in class and finish designing as homework, or additional class time may be provided to complete the work (this option allows for more instructor guidance). Posters should be presented in class when the assignment is due, and the class should put up posters around the campus in kiosks and on bulletin boards.

In a moment, I am going to pass each of you a large sheet of poster paper. We have discussed several opportunities to serve others, and now we are going to share our ideas with the rest of the school. Pick one of the ideas your group came up with and create an advertisement for community service, focusing on that idea.

The purpose here is to get other students involved, so be creative. You may want to mention the rewards of community service, where and how students can serve, and how they can get more information. You may want to get information on web pages students can visit, phone numbers they can call, or other contacts that they can make in our area. Make it as easy as possible for them get involved.

You will be able to brainstorm this project in class, but you will need to complete it at home. When you are finished, we will display the posters around the campus.

Objective 3. Interact with public servants. (optional depending on time)

As the capstone event to the lesson, students should be assigned to contact a public official/servant, using the possible list from class, and thank them for their service. A letter should be written to this official and turned in to the instructor, unsealed, in an addressed/stamped envelope for the instructor's review. Instructor will then put the letters in the mail if they are acceptable.

This objective may be omitted for the sake of time, or assigned after the completion of the poster project. It is assumed that students at the advanced level would have basic letter writing skills; however, instructor may want to review as needed after assessing prior knowledge of students.

You have done a fantastic job! I believe we will make a difference in our community through the work that you all have done here. I hope some of you have made a personal commitment to serve others, as well as encouraging others to help you. You can make a difference and have a good time doing it.

For our final step in this project, I want each of you to think about someone who serves others without any hesitation. As we thought of examples of community service, think of the people who live their lives serving others. This might be a volunteer at a charity event. It might be a person who helped make a difference in your life. It may be a parent or a coach who volunteers their time for students. It may even be a school board member.

Together, we each are going to select a person who serves others and thank him or her for making a difference in our community. After you decide whom you would like to thank, you will write a letter, expressing your gratitude for all that he or she does to make this a better place. You will have a few moments to think about it while I pass around a sign-up list to make sure we are thanking different people. Here are some basic guidelines for the letter:

Unmask HS.107.TM.C and pass out HS.107.AS.A.

I. Format

A. Block letter format

B. Can be typed or handwritten on stationery
C. Check for spelling
D. Address to Sir/Mr. or Madame/Ms.
E. No more than a page

II. What to say

A. Include why you think this person's service is valuable
B. Try to include personal stories
C. Thank the person for what he or she does

III. Details

A. Bring letter in addressed and stamped envelope, unsealed for instructor review
B. I will check for content and spelling and return to you to be mailed

Instructor should set appropriate timeline for project due date. Be sure to evaluate each letter before allowing student to mail his or her letter. Also, check to make sure there are no duplications on the sign-up list.

Review/Summary

Synthesize what has been learned for the day. Try to include student discussions in closure as much as possible.

As we close, let's first turn to our group members and say, "Well done, group!" You all truly have made a difference today! What you did here will affect more people than you can possibly imagine.

Re-display quote (HS.107.TM.A).

Earlier, we took a look at this quote. I hope after today, and as you continue with your community service projects, you feel a deeper meaning of this quote. Just think, if every person in the world took the time to help others, what the world could be like. But also, think of the difference that just you can make. If you can help make the life of just one other person better, isn't it worth it. As you leave today, try to maintain the enthusiasm you demonstrated during the lesson, and go out and make a difference.

Application

Extended Classroom Activity:

Students can write a brief summary/report on their experiences with community service. This assignment can be either a written assignment or an oral presentation in front of the class. The instructor may even group together students with similar community service experiences to give their report.

FFA Activity:

Have students fill out the community service section of their record books. Discuss with them how to properly fill out the page, and cover the minimum degree requirements pertaining to community service hours for each FFA degree.

SAE Activity:

Encourage students to display a poster advertising community service at their place of work. They might discuss with their employer ways to get employees involved in some sort of community service activity. If the organization already has some sort of activity, the student could share this activity with other students in the class. Students may also brainstorm ideas to use their animal projects as a community service activity.

Evaluation

A written test is provided to measure objectives 1 and 2.

Answers to Assessment:

1. T
2. F (Peer Pressure)
3. T
4. Examples from class discussion

HS.107.Assess Name: _____

ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Write "T" for true and "F" for false. (2 points each)

_____1. Teachers, parents, and community leaders all may influence others by example.

_____2. Friends generally influence others by authority.

_____3. Celebrities set an example by defining what's cool.

Short Answer (4 points)

4. What are the four ways to serve the community we discussed in class.

“Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”

INFLUENCING OTHERS

Adults

- **Teachers**
  - By authority and example
  - Many life experiences
- **Parents**
  - Also by authority and example
  - Share own examples
- **Community leaders**
  - Usually by example

Peers

- **Friends**
  - Example and peer pressure
- **Student leaders**
  - Example
- **Celebrities**
  - Example
  - Define what's cool

WRITING YOUR THANK-YOU LETTER

Format

- **Block letter format**
- **Can be typed or handwritten on stationery**
- **Check for spelling**
- **Address to Sir/Mr. or Madame/Ms.**
- **No more than a page**

What to say

- **Include why you think this person's service is valuable**
- **Try to include personal stories**
- **Thank the person for what he or she does**

Details

- **Bring letter in addressed and stamped envelope, unsealed for instructor review**
- **I will check for content and spelling and return to you for mailing**

HS.107.AS.A Name: _____

HANDOUT FOR LETTER

Writing Your Thank-You Letter

I. Format

A. Block letter format
B. Can be typed or handwritten on stationery
C. Check for spelling
D. Address to Sir/Mr. or Madame/Ms.
E. No more than a page

II. What to say

A. Include why you think this person's service is valuable
B. Try to include personal stories
C. Thank the person for what he or she does

III. Details

A. Bring letter in addressed and stamped envelope, unsealed for instructor review
B. I will check for content and spelling and return to you to be mailed

HS.107.AS.B Name: _____

WRITING A LETTER TO A PUBLIC SERVANT

Print Neatly!

Student's Name Name of person to thank Person's title/position

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