THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING

WE LEARNING FRAMEWORK SKILLS LEGEND:
- Argument Formation
- Information Literacy
- Leadership Skills
- Organization
- Action Planning
- Research and Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Reflection

THEME: Youth
SUBJECT: Social Studies
GRADE LEVEL: Grades 4 to 6

LESSON PACKAGE OVERVIEW:
Students will learn about the concept of volunteering in their local and global communities. They will reflect on their personal passions in order to design a volunteer plan to make a positive impact in their immediate community and globally.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
► What does “helping” look like in our lives?
► How do we benefit from helping?
► How and where can we help others?

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:
• Analyzing and deconstructing various written and media texts to discuss how defining the features of a community will affect the rate of participation in volunteer efforts
• Connecting experiences of volunteering by researching and making notes from various forms of texts
• Studying the societal impact, both real and imagined, of volunteer work within local and global communities through action planning and taking action by volunteering within local communities

Recommended Assessment for Learning:
You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels and knowledge. You are also best positioned to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this lesson package successful.

In this lesson package, teaching strategies include active role play, collaborative group work, personal reflection. Suggestions for demonstration of learning include action planning and taking action through volunteering and understanding the positive impacts of volunteerism. Please make any accommodations or modifications that best serve your students.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
- Blackline Master 1: Comprehension Questions
- Computer with Internet connection
- Projector
- Sticky notes (4 for each student)
- Poster boards

WORD BANK
Volunteering—Freely offering to take part in a project enterprise or be responsible for a task
Help—Make it easier or possible for someone (to do something) by offering them one’s service

WE LEARNING FRAMEWORK SKILLS LEGEND:
LESSON 1:
UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF VOLUNTEERING

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

Investigate and Learn

EDUCATOR’S NOTE: The intention is that this task will be difficult. Allow selected students to complete the task, as the rest of the class observes the struggle. Allow students to assist if they feel inclined to do so.

1. Ask two students to move the desks and chairs in the classroom to the sides to create a large space in the middle of the classroom. However, the two students are each only able to use one hand to move the furniture.

2. As students begin to move the furniture with difficulty, stop the students and ask the class: “What can we, as the rest of the class, suggest to make their task easier?”

3. In partners, students will discuss solutions that can assist the two students in completing their task. Student responses may include:
   - More students can help them move furniture.
   - The two students can assist each other.
   - Students can discuss the goal and make a plan.

4. Ask the two students to try the suggestions.

5. Ask students: Why was it important to help your classmates? Why did you assist your classmates? What did you feel when you saw them struggling? How did you feel when you helped your classmates with the task? How do you think they felt? Ensure that you consider the opinions of both the helpers and the helpees and discuss the two perspectives.

6. Write the words: “home,” “school,” “local community,” and “global community” on large pieces of chart paper. On the four walls of the classroom place the words. Divide the class into four groups. Give each student a marker and four sticky notes. Review what the four areas signify to students, including how they relate to them personally. Ask the question: “In these specific areas in your life, how can you volunteer your time and knowledge to help people?”

7. Students will be given two to three minutes in each area to answer the question on a sticky note. Play reflective music while students are writing down their thoughts about how they can help people in their lives. When the music finishes, students will stick their note onto the poster and move in a clockwise direction to the next poster.

8. Read the story, Helping Out is Cool by Ellen Feinman Moss. Students can set up a free account online and borrow the book at www.archive.org/details/helpingoutiscool00moss.

9. Ask students: What examples of volunteering did you notice in the story? List and categorize these into home, school, local or global actions on the front board. Discuss, how volunteering made the girl feel in the story?

10. As a class, discuss the ideas students have contributed. How can they help people in their home, school, local community and global community?

11. Allow students to create their own definition of volunteering by providing answers and justification for the above question.

12. RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING: Write a short paragraph describing an area that you would like to volunteer your time and knowledge to and why you think you can make a difference.
LESSON 2:
WHAT AM I PASSIONATE ABOUT?

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

1. Show the video “Youth Volunteerism” at youtube.com/watch?v=q4je9N26ouY (2:27). This video brings to light individuals who volunteer to assist people within their community, and find this experience meaningful.

2. As a class, have a discussion with students about how they feel when they see and hear stories of people who volunteer. Does this also make these students want to contribute to their local and global communities? If possible, read an article from a local paper or Global Voices about a volunteering experience or show students Craig Kielburger’s story. Global Voices can be found on your WE Are Canada USB or by visiting WE.ca/educator-resources.

3. Instruct students to individually think about and write down any volunteering experience they have done. This may be as simple as helping an elderly person cross the road.
   - Who did this experience have an impact on?
   - How do you think it made them feel?
   - How did it make you feel?
   - What are three things that you learned from this experience?

5. As a class, brainstorm various volunteer groups, agencies and organizations locally and globally. For example:
   - Big Brothers, Big Sisters
   - Food banks
   - Libraries
   - Hospitals
   - Animal shelters
   - Religious organizations

6. Ask students: what are you passionate about? Where would you like to contribute your time, knowledge and efforts? Do you have a special interest in one of the organizations listed above? For example: Students can volunteer in a library if they enjoy reading and books.

7. Students will now have the opportunity to reflect on organizations and areas where they would like to volunteer. Ask students to write a persuasive letter to the principal, encouraging the principal to allow the students class time to volunteer in an area they are highly passionate about. Letters should explain:
   - Which issue or organization are you passionate about and why?
   - What created this passion?
   - Who will be helped by your volunteer experience and why is this important?
   - What will you gain from this experience?

8. Send the letters to the principal.

REFLECTION: Why is it important to volunteer in an area that you are passionate about? Why will this make a difference for you personally?

EDUCATOR’S NOTE: Share with students any personal experiences you might have. Include photos if you have any. Tell students how volunteering made you feel. Why did you pick this particular area to volunteer? What motivated you to spend some of your free time doing this activity? Who did it make an impact on? What were the top three things that you learned from the experience?
LESSON 3: THE JOY OF VOLUNTEERING

SUGGESTED TIME: 75 minutes

1. **RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:** Write a short paragraph describing an area that you would like to volunteer your time and knowledge to and why you think you can make a difference.

2. Ask students: In your everyday lives, do you volunteer your time to help other people? If students volunteer, what does this look like? How does this make them feel? Why, as students, do they provide this service to people in their community?


   This TEDx talk is about a young girl who started a street store in Bhubaneswar, India. She volunteered her time to make a difference in the lives of people within her community.

4. **RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:** While watching the TEDx talk, ask students to complete comprehension questions about the video on Blackline Master 1: Comprehension Questions.

5. After watching the video, discuss with the class the impact that the volunteering experience had on Tanaya. When we volunteer, the focus is on how we can help people who need it. However, Tanaya talks about her experience volunteering making an impact on her own life.

6. In the video, Tanaya talks about eight lessons that she learned during her volunteer experience. List these eight lessons on the front board. Leave the lessons on the front board as a visual for the next activity.

7. Keeping in mind the eight lessons, brainstorm ideas about how the class can volunteer within their own school to create a positive impact.

8. In groups of five to six students, students will design a volunteer experience for their school community. Students should create a plan that outlines the volunteer experience using the following questions as guidelines:
   - What is the volunteer experience?
   - Who will be helped?
   - How will it make a difference in the school community?
   - What materials and resources will you need?
   - How much time will preparation and the actual experience take?

9. Have each group partner with another group in the class. Groups will share their ideas and provide constructive feedback to each other.

**EDUCATOR’S NOTE:** These volunteer experiences can be implemented in the Take Action section of the lesson package.
LESSON 4: 
VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND KNOWLEDGE

SUGGESTED TIME: 
150 minutes

Action Plan

1. As a class, brainstorm how students can become active within their local community. What volunteer opportunities are available in the school and neighbourhood? Students should recognize that the volunteer experience can be small, as long as it has a positive impact.

2. Prompt students to think about how they can raise awareness about the action they want to take. How will they share it with their community? Direct student thinking toward an understanding that volunteer experiences should be positive for participants as well as those they are helping.

3. Once the volunteer action has been selected by the class, ask students to think about the purpose of their action with the following questions:
   - What is the purpose of their action?
   - Who are they helping through their action?
   - Will the impact of this action be small or large?
   - Can this action be continued over a longer period of time?
   - Are the students helping or volunteering?

4. Create an actionable timeline as a whole class, and each student or groups of students will be allocated a specific measurable task.

5. As a class, think about the types of evidence that need to be collected to show the impact being made. This evidence should ensure that the overall purpose for the action is measured so that students can reflect on the impact that they have made:

   Types of evidence:
   - Photographs of student participation in the action
   - Feedback from those who were affected by the action
   - Anecdotal evidence from students about their experience and from those who were helped by the action
   - Social media posts (Twitter and Instagram)

6. Create a template outlining the specific evidence that students are required to collect. Form groups within the class who are required to collect specific data.

Take Action

7. As a class, review the school’s social media policy and classroom and school guidelines about behaviour outside the classroom. Students should ensure that they maintain etiquette, respect and decorum.

EDUCATOR’S NOTE: Within the Take Action section, encourage parental participation. This will allow students to continue to reflect on the impact of their volunteer experience within the home environment.

EDUCATOR’S NOTE: Social media posts depend on the school’s media policy since students are able to receive real time feedback from individuals who wish to contribute their ideas or opinions about the action. This will need to be highly moderated by the teacher.
LESSON 5:  
SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

SUGGESTED TIME:  
60 minutes

Report and Celebrate

1. Share your learnings and the actions you took with other classes and community members. Challenge them to learn about volunteer opportunities in the community and take action by volunteering their time.

Here’s how:

- Hold a volunteer fair where community groups who need volunteers gather in one place to seek volunteers from the school and community.
- Ask students if they would like to further commit to being a part of the volunteer movement by taking the WE Are Canada Pledge. If students are interested, visit WE.ca for more information and to take the pledge.
- Post your volunteer actions online through social media to show the world your impact with #WEVolunteerNow or focus on writing posts with volunteer opportunities that others can take part in.

2. As a class, reflect on the learnings and experiences from the Action Plan and Take Action sections. Think about the measurable goals that were set for the Take Action section and, using the evidence collected, reflect upon how well these goals were achieved through the action.

3. Write down the goals on the front board and ask students to reflect through a written, verbal or visual response. Within the reflection, students should link the evidence collected in the Take Action section and directly align this to the measurable goal. Does the evidence demonstrate a successful event?

4. Ask students to reflect further to understand the deeper impact of the Take Action section and to consider how they can ensure their event has lasting impacts:

- How will we ensure that the events we started will continue every year?
- How might we spread the event to other schools and communities?
- How will we continue to encourage others to explore additional ways they can volunteer and make change in their communities?
- How can we continue to inform our communities about volunteer opportunities all year round?

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT: Encourage students to think about how as an individual they are able to make change in their communities by volunteering. As a young member of society, what other issues are they passionate about and how can they volunteer their time to make an impact? As a Canadian and a global thinker, what have you learned about the importance of volunteering in your community? How can you share the lessons you’ve learned with others now and in the future? How can students celebrate their actions with members of their school and local communities? Ask students to create a video, tableau, song or journal to reflect on and celebrate their actions and the impact they created.
Blackline Master 1: Comprehension Questions

The Joy of Volunteering: A Beautiful Journey

What is a street store?

What does the street store do for people experiencing poverty?

How does it make them feel?

Who can create a street store?

What is a "dignified shopping experience"?

Is there something similar available in your community?