



Introduction to YVC and Volunteerism Unit Plan



Introduction and Framework

Introduction to the Unit

YVC affiliates implement in-school programming in different ways. This unit plan is a guide and will require modification due to variations in meeting frequency, duration, specific school requirements, etc. Activities for this unit plan are based on a once-per-week meeting frequency. **All activities, including icebreakers, service-learning lessons, assessments, and objectives are flexible and should be modified for specific youth needs or program desires.** More service-learning activities related to volunteerism can be found in [YVC's Service-Learning Library](#).

This unit plan contains 6 weeks of activities focused on introducing youth to Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC), the needs of their communities, and volunteerism. Prior knowledge amongst youth will vary. This unit is written for middle or high school students. In addition, this unit will serve as a primary means to gain youth voice regarding issue areas youth would like to address in following units.

Although this unit emphasizes an introduction to community volunteerism, youth will also have opportunities to explore other disciplines including public speaking, planning, teamwork, writing, analyzing, and critical thinking.

Instructional Design and Framework

Week 1: What is YVC?

Week 2: What is my community?

Week 3: Community Mapping

Week 4: Introduction to Volunteerism

Week 5: Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum- Advocacy & Community Education

Week 6: Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum - Fundraising/Financial Planning & Indirect Service

Meaningful Service

As each affiliate, school club, or class has different needs, assets, partnerships, and budget, physical service projects are not built into this unit plan. Integrate meaningful service into the instructional design and framework in a way that makes sense for your context. Consider the full volunteer spectrum (direct/indirect service, fundraising/financial planning, advocacy, community education) when planning projects. Remember that along with following all 8 program standards, it is imperative for each project to align with all elements of a true YVC project: icebreaker, meaningful service, service-learning, and reflection. It is acceptable to spread out elements of the YVC model as long as the same group of students is being engaged in all elements over the period. YVHQ recommends you determine a period of time for each unit or issue area content section and ensure that all elements of the YVC model are present sometime during that period, sprinkling in elements of icebreakers, meaningful service, service-learning, and reflection throughout. Projects should always benefit the community.

Unit Goals

Youth will know what Youth Volunteer Corps is.

Youth will explore and identify needs in their communities.

Youth will create volunteerism plans that fall into all ranges of the volunteer spectrum based on issue areas they have chosen to address.

Unit Objectives

- By the end of the unit, youth will know the purpose and work of Youth Volunteer Corps.
- By the end of the unit, youth will identify what makes their community unique by creating a puzzle piece.
- During the unit, youth will participate in a community mapping exercise by identifying three potential issue areas in their communities.
- Throughout the unit, youth will think broadly about their community by identifying various stakeholders pertaining to their selected issue area.
- During the unit, youth will discuss volunteerism after reading a poem.
- By the end of the unit, youth will evaluate their own intentions on volunteering by participating in a reflection.
- By the end of the unit, youth will identify issue areas they would like to address in their community through various activities.

National Education Standards Addressed

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Assessment

Youth will participate in a pre/post test bookending the unit.



Week 1: What is YVC?

Introduction

- Greet and introduce yourself to youth. Give a brief overview of why you are there and share with youth they will be learning and volunteering with Youth Volunteer Corps. Begin by sharing that in YVC, they will participate in icebreakers, meaningful service, service-learning, and reflection time, and then move into the icebreaker.

Icebreaker: People Poems

- Have youth create an acrostic poem describing themselves from the letters in their name. Youth will introduce themselves by sharing their names and poems.
Example: Carolyn= **C**aring, **A**rtist, **R**eading, **O**nly child, **L**acrosse, **Y**ellow (favorite color), **N**ice

History of YVC

- Read: Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) began in 1987 as a summer service program for Kansas City youth. Today, YVC is a network of affiliated organizations across the U.S. and Canada running that same program by engaging youth ages 11-18 in team-based, structured, diverse, flexible service-learning opportunities. YVC affiliates include United Ways, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, volunteer centers, parks and recreation departments, individuals, and other youth-serving organizations. Each YVC program looks a little different depending on the host organization and the local community, but they all implement the same program model no matter where they are located.
- There are thousands of teens serving with YVC every year across North America and every time you serve with YVC, you are serving alongside your peers in the US and Canada.

YVC's Mission, Goals, and Impact

- As a group, watch [this video](#) to learn more about YVC.
- Read: YVC's mission is to create volunteer opportunities to address community needs and to inspire youth for a lifetime commitment to service. As you serve with YVC this semester/year/club time, you will explore all of YVC's Four Fundamental Goals:
 1. To engage youth in service projects that are challenging, rewarding and educational.
 2. To serve the unmet needs of the community and its residents.
 3. To promote among youth a greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of their community.
 4. To promote a lifetime ethic of service among youth.Since 1987, YVC has engaged over 300,000 youth volunteers in over 5 million hours of service to communities across the US and Canada!
- Share details about your local affiliate, how to become involved, and your impact.

Pretest

- Explain to youth that to begin this unit, they will participate in an activity (pre-test) to measure how much they know about volunteerism and their communities.



Week 1: Introduction to YVC and Volunteerism Pre-Test

1. Volunteerism is...
 - a. The giving of money to help someone in need
 - b. The practice of giving one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities in one's community
 - c. A paid position where one gives their talents to fulfill responsibilities

2. What is a community?

3. Please list five needs or social issues present in your community.

4. Please list three different examples of volunteering.

5. In your own words, describe the purpose of YVC.



Week 2: What is My Community?

Introduction: This week, youth will define, explore, and identify needs within their communities.

Icebreaker: Hobby Charades

- Ask youth to act out a hobby or interest of theirs while the group guesses.

Community Puzzle

- Engage youth in the [Community Puzzle](#) activity. This activity includes service-learning and reflection elements.

Youth Leadership

- After completing the lesson, use responses from discussion questions featured in the lesson to connect next week's activities and help identify issue areas that youth would like to study this semester or club cycle.
 - What do you wish was different about your community?
 - What populations are the most marginalized or under-resourced in your community?
 - What does your community lack?
 - What does your community do well or have?



Week 3: Community Mapping

Introduction: A continuation of week 2, youth will identify community needs through a community mapping exercise.

Icebreaker: I Belong To...

- Ask youth to share 2-3 communities that they belong to.
- If youth are struggling, remind them that they belong to the YVC community and their school community.

Week Two Recap

- Delegate a youth volunteer to summarize the previous week's activity and findings (community puzzle).

Community Mapping Exercise

- Engage youth in the [Community Mapping](#) activity. This activity includes service-learning and reflection elements.

Next Steps

- Provide youth with time to choose an issue area that matters to them and research facts and statistics related to that issue area. Encourage youth to tailor their research to their community and share with the group.

Youth Voice

- After completing the lesson, use responses from discussion questions featured in the lesson combined with youth's feedback from their research to identify issue areas that youth would like to study this semester or club cycle. Have youth vote on issue areas they would like to address during your time together.



Week 4: Introduction to Volunteerism

Introduction: Youth will explore their thoughts and feelings regarding volunteerism and will learn the importance of volunteerism. Youth will also connect volunteering ideas to issue areas they identified in previous weeks.

Icebreaker: Two Truths and a Lie

- Everyone stands in a circle and, one by one, says their name, two truths, and one lie about themselves. The rest of the group guesses which one is the lie.

Week Two and Three Recap:

- Delegate a youth volunteer to summarize week two and three activities and findings, particularly any issue areas that were identified to address as a group throughout the community mapping exercises.

Introduction to Volunteering Lesson: Volun-what?!

- Engage youth in the [Volun-what?! activity](#). This activity includes service-learning and reflection elements.

Next Steps/Youth Voice:

- Review issue areas that youth identified in weeks two and three to address in this class/club cycle. Ask youth to brainstorm specific volunteer activities and projects for issue areas.
- For example, if youth identified homelessness as an issue area, volunteer activities could include: weaving plastic sleeping mats for the homeless community, working with an agency that serves the homeless population in your community to meet a need, partnering with an advocacy campaign that works with the homeless community, writing cards of encouragement to those experiencing homelessness, etc.



Week 5: Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum- Advocacy & Community Education

Introduction: To complete the unit, youth will continue to research their communities and will participate in activities that explore volunteerism outside of direct service (service provided in a person-to-person/agency context). This week, youth will focus on two types of service: advocacy and community education.

Icebreaker: 5 Fingers

- Everyone sits or stands in a circle holding up five fingers. One at a time, everyone says their name and something that they've never done (i.e. never been out of the Midwest, never had lobster, never volunteered before, etc.) If someone in the circle has done the stated activity, they put a finger down. Take turns going around the circle as long as time allows.

Unit Recap:

- Ask for a youth volunteer to give the group an overview of what has been discussed so far. Fill in any gaps that may be pertinent for youth to know for the next activity.

Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum Activity

- Hand out [Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum](#) packets to each youth volunteer.
- Guide group through the Community Profile portion of the packet. Split youth into groups of 3-4 and give groups time to research demographic information together.
- Ask each group to decide what community issue/issue area they have decided to focus on using the information gleaned from the Community Profile and the Community Mapping exercises from previous weeks.
- Read the following: "Oftentimes when we think of volunteering, we are thinking of something called direct service. Direct service is when you serve person-to-person/agency like serving a meal to the hungry population or walking dogs at the animal shelter or playing games with the elderly at the senior living home. There are other ways to volunteer though! Volunteering can also include advocacy, community education, fundraising, and indirect service. Over the next couple of weeks, you will work with your group to brainstorm ideas in these four categories for the issue area you have chosen. Today, you will focus on advocacy and community education."
- Read the committee descriptions aloud for Advocacy and Community Education and give youth time to fill out the corresponding project planning worksheet. Tell them during the next meeting they will fill out the Fundraising/Financial Planning and Indirect Service portions of the worksheet.



Week 6: Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum- Fundraising/Financial Planning & Indirect Service

Introduction: To complete the unit, youth will continue to research their communities and will participate in activities that explore volunteerism outside of direct service (service provided in a person-to-person/agency context). This week, youth will focus on two types of service: fundraising/financial planning, and indirect service.

Icebreaker: Tell Us About Yourself

- Pass around a bag of candy and tell players to take as many pieces as they want. Once all the participants have candy, tell them that for each piece they took they have to say one thing about themselves. If someone did not take candy, they must at least share their name and favorite food.

Week 5 Recap:

- Ask a youth volunteer to give the group an overview of the Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum activity from last week's time together.
- Remind youth that last week, they discussed advocacy and community education.

Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum Activity

- Instruct youth to meet with their groups. Hand out their [Project Planning Across the Volunteer Spectrum](#) packets from the last meeting.
- Ask each group to review the Community Profile, issue area, and ideas for advocacy and community education.
- If necessary, read the following, "Oftentimes when we think of volunteering, we are thinking of something called direct service. Direct service is when you serve person-to-person/agency like serving a meal to the hungry population or walking dogs at the animal shelter or playing games with the elderly at the senior living home. There are other ways to volunteer though! Volunteering can also include advocacy, community education, fundraising, and indirect service. Today, you will work with your group to brainstorm ideas for the issue area you have chosen, focusing on fundraising/financial planning and indirect service."
- Read the committee descriptions aloud for Fundraising/Financial Planning and Indirect Service and give youth time to fill out the corresponding project planning worksheet.

Wrap Up/Final Reflection

- What is something new that you learned about your community during this unit?
- How has this unit changed your view on volunteering?

Administer the Post-Test



Week 6: Introduction to YVC and Volunteerism Post-Test

1. Volunteerism is...
 - a. The giving of money to help someone in need
 - b. The practice of giving one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities in one's community
 - c. A paid position where one gives their talents to fulfill responsibilities

2. What is a community?

3. Please list five needs or social issues present in your community.

4. Please list three different examples of volunteering.

5. In your own words, describe the purpose of YVC.
