

An abstract mural painted on a brick wall. The mural features large, bold, organic shapes in red, black, green, blue, and yellow. The brick wall itself is a mix of light and dark tones, with some bricks showing signs of wear and discoloration. The overall composition is dynamic and colorful.

UNDERSTANDING OUR MISSION

2022 **SERVICE PROJECT
CURRICULUM**

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UNDERSTANDING OUR MISSION:

2022 Service Project Curriculum

WELCOME

WE BECOME
THE HANDS AND
FEET OF CHRIST,
FACILITATING
HOPE AND
TRANSFORMATION
TO THOSE WHO
NEED IT THE MOST.

TODAY WE SIT WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION and hope that the worst is behind us. We have endured 2+ years of a global pandemic that closed the doors to many of our churches and schools, forced us into varying degrees of isolation, and cancelled many of the events that were staples of the wider United Church of Christ, such as National Youth Event, local summer camps, and local youth faith formation programs. Each of us have felt the lull, as well as Zoom fatigue for many. As the situation improves, many local churches and their youth programs are exploring ways to engage in meaningful service in their local community to recapture one of the tenets the Church considers to be central to its mission: Service.

Community service, outreach, mission, or how we show up collectively in and beyond our communities, takes the focus off us as individuals and turns the lens outwards to see where God is calling us to be present in an unjust world.

We become the hands and feet of Christ, facilitating hope and transformation to those who need it the most.

Each of us has the ability to do something, great or small, to alleviate the burden that someone else feels. With the constant growth of social media, innovations to the Internet, and real-time updates, we are privileged to learn about social justice movements across the United States and the world and enter at different points of the journey to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Service work is an opportunity for you to join with others to see where God is calling you today. I hope this resource aids you in that journey to make a difference with your siblings in Christ.

— Rev. Trayce L. Potter, UCC Minister for Youth & Young Adult Engagement

HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM RESOURCE

THIS CURRICULUM RESOURCE is meant to be used in four sessions before, during and after your youth group engages a service project. Each session is about two hours long, and we encourage you to modify it to suit your needs.

In brief, the themes are:

- **WHY DO WE DO IT?**
Explores the reasons the church engages in service-learning opportunities and how that brings about a more just world.
- **IT'S JUST NOT FAIR**
Explores how privilege is at work at all times whether we are aware of it or not. We can use our privileges to bring about meaningful change by working towards justice.
- **TOGETHER WE'RE STRONG**
Explores the theme of teamwork and how we can accomplish so much more when we work together.
- **NOW WHAT?**
Explores next steps for your youth group to continue learning about ways to engage in service-learning work and opportunities that are important to your particular youth.

Each session:

- ◆ offers a scripture reference that is tied in with the devotional,
- ◆ helps structure some conversation,
- ◆ educates about justice work,
- ◆ includes fun and learning activities,
- ◆ closes with a devotional, and
- ◆ offers homework for group bonding.

We encourage you to use what is helpful, in preparation for your service trip, and leave the rest. Much, much more information and many more activities are available at the Association for United Church Educators (AUCE) website: <https://www.auce-ucc.org/youth-ministry-resources>.

We understand there is no one-size-fits-all curriculum, and that even as the United Church of Christ periodically produces curriculum, many of our local churches will have to tweak language and activities to best accommodate the uniqueness of their ministry setting and young people. We invite you to utilize this resource liberally and make it your own! This PDF is meant to be a four-part curriculum resource around mission and service that can be adapted for local churches within the United Church of Christ.

THEMES

THERE ARE VERY FEW THINGS IN LIFE that can be neatly compartmentalized to avoid influencing another area. The same is true when it comes to understanding people and social justice. We are not one-dimensional creations that thrive and/or suffer because of a particular area or lack. Instead, we are only whole when all things come into alignment to allow us to flourish and be the true versions of ourselves as created. The same is true for the world in which we live; one area of life directly impacts another. To truly be engaged in social justice work and mission we must look at the individual parts of the systems and the interconnectedness of themes to best facilitate change.

For this curriculum resource there are four parts that will assist you in leading up to the day of the service/mission project you have already designed, and then debriefing what was seen, experienced, and learned.

Each of these themes can stand alone and be taken to a much deeper level. In fact, you are encouraged to do so. With each theme you will be provided a list of resources that will allow for greater learning and understanding. Additionally, it is the hope of the Faith Education, Innovation and Formation (Fatih INFO) Team that we will continue to provide additional curriculum resources around the topics that youth leaders have identified as being critical to their youth. Feel free to reach out with your excitement and ideas!



THE FOUR THEMES

Why Do We Do It?

Together your group will discuss how each individual understands the mission of the church and why justice work is important. This is a theological and educational grounding for why you all will be doing a service-learning opportunity.

It's Just Not Fair

Together your group will learn what privileges are and how they exist in everyday society for certain groups of people. Youth will be invited into vulnerability, learn about one another, and explore how privilege can lead to meaningful strides in justice work.

Together We're Strong

As youth embark upon their service-learning opportunity, they will discuss why this project is important, share what they hope to gain and explore why teamwork is an important concept.

Now What?

Now that your service-learning opportunity is complete, you will have the opportunity to debrief together and explore what justice initiatives are important to the youth with whom you work.

DAY 1: BEFORE YOU GO

THEME: WHY DO WE DO IT? Today you will explore the reasons the church engages in service-learning opportunities and how that brings about a more just world.

SCRIPTURES

- ◆ Genesis 37:5-11
- ◆ Zechariah 7:9-10

SONG

Dream God's Dream, by Bryan Sirchio, is available on Convergence Music Project (<https://www.convergencemp.com/artist/bryan-sirchio/dream-gods-dream.html>). (Please be sure you have the appropriate copyright license for the use of the music. Copyright licensing supports the artist and protects the church.)

BEFORE YOU GATHER

- ◆ Gather supplies that are needed: large sheet of paper, markers, sticky notes for each youth or Google Jamboard (Aside, as an individual, you can learn more about Jamboard here: <https://youtu.be/GbytDLNVNM>), print enough scavenger hunt lists for each student
- ◆ Bookmark scripture passages, or have them pulled up on smart device
- ◆ Have an answer to the following question: What is the church and what is its purpose?

GATHERING TIME

Begin by welcoming youth to the group and introducing yourself.

Let's start by listening to the song, "God's Dream." (*Play the song "God's Dream"*).

Adapt the following statements to make your own as you share them with the youth:

The last several years have been challenging for us as individuals, but also as the body of Christ. On a global scale we have been impacted by death, sickness, isolation, scarcity, mental health challenges, and the pressures of our own lives and families. Each of you has been resilient in the face of uncertainty and has overcome more than I will ever know about.

Just as you have been challenged, the church has been challenged as well. While many church buildings were closed, we were able to grow in our personal faith. And that leads me to a question to which I'd love to hear your answers. What

is the church and what is its purpose? (Take note of whether the youth are talking about the local church, their particular church, a denomination or the universal church.) All of those are great answers, and if I was asked this question, I would say: the church is a collective body of people who have found some commonalities in their beliefs about God and want to share those beliefs with the world. And the United Church of Christ is a group of churches where all their people agree to be together in covenant, even when it's hard. When we are together, we can reaffirm that our work in the world demonstrates God's love and faithfulness to each generation. We seek to reconcile that which has been wrong in this broken world of ours, and to bring about justice and unity so that everyone is seen as worthy and whole, just as they are. The church exists to bring about God's dream in the world.

Pause and ask for questions or comments.

Today we are going to have fun and prepare for our upcoming service project. *(Remind youth about why that particular project was chosen.)*

Ask the youth how this project will relate to their lives or will impact people they know and love.

To understand our “why” for doing this project, it would be helpful to understand three concepts that we oftentimes hear in the church:

MISSION – a calling to go into the world to make a difference as an example of our collective faith

SERVICE – embodying Christ by doing something good for the benefit of others

SOCIAL JUSTICE – working toward the realization that all people should have equal access to wealth, health, well-being, privileges, and opportunity regardless of any demographic and background markers

Ask youth to define each word as best as they can. Common biblical definitions are listed above, but should be adapted to encompass language that your youth understand.

So, we are doing this service project to highlight a social justice concern because it is our mission to make the world a better place. *(Talk more in depth about your service project here.)*

And to prepare for our time together participating in service, we are going to do a two-part activity today.

ACTIVITIES/OPTIONS

Activity 1: Scavenger Hunt

Suggested Time: 25-30 minutes

We will be doing a personal scavenger hunt today that will help us to learn more about each other and what is important to us. Each youth must find the following items:

- ◆ Item to represent something that is important to you
- ◆ Item that represents something from your culture/heritage
- ◆ Item that represents the best of what the church is/can be
- ◆ Item to represent something that points to your future
- ◆ Item that represents an activity you enjoy doing
- ◆ Item that represents something you have given up because of Covid-19
- ◆ Item that you cannot live without

Allow youth to use technology as needed. Perhaps youth can share tablets or phones or use creative art supplies already present when needed and appropriate. Some youth do much better with articulating their thoughts verbally, so allow this to be an option as well.

Activity 2: Covenant Writing

Suggested Time: 15-20 minutes

Now that you have shared some things that are important to you, I want to spend some time writing a covenant that incorporates the beliefs that are important to this group so that we can practice inclusion and justice whenever we are together.

First, let's define what a covenant is.

- ◆ Talk about what covenants are (and aren't). For example, they are guides to how we want to be together. They are not rules with penalties. A covenant is built around mutual honor and respect. It incorporates listening, hearing and considering the other as much as oneself.
- ◆ Give each person a piece of paper and pen or have youth log in to Jamboard.
- ◆ Ask youth to share what values they feel are most important. They can either verbally share or rely on the sticky notes.
- ◆ Ask youth to share statements that they would like to have as part of the groups' covenant.

- ◆ Ask youth how should they address one another. Are there things that should be avoided?
- ◆ What seems to be missing from the covenant so far? “If you were not a part of this group and you were looking at this covenant, what might you say is missing?” (This is a way to get clear about what is assumed but not added explicitly.)
- ◆ Begin to take all statements and draft your group’s covenant.
- ◆ Ask youth how they feel about what is written. Is this a reflection of how they would like to gather?
- ◆ How will this covenant help to mirror God’s dream?

DEVOTION

Have youth read the following scriptures: Genesis 37:5-11 and Zechariah 7:9-10. Then say:

One thing all people have in common is that we dream. Some of us may not remember those dreams when we wake up, or you may only remember bits and pieces periodically, but the dreams are there. Throughout history, there have been many famous people who have shared their dreams with the world. In scripture, Jacob dreamed of a ladder, Daniel interpreted dreams for the king, and Joseph dreamed of grain and his brothers were quite displeased. All these dreams were significant and illustrated important aspects of things that were yet to come.

Well, as the United Church of Christ, we believe that God is still speaking, which means God is still dreaming. There are still prophets and children who boldly describe what God is telling us will happen. They are showing us visions of hope and a future as Jeremiah talked about. But what does that dream look like? What can a just world look like if each of us helped to bring about change?

Have youth talk about what A Just World For All would look like and share your thoughts. Then say something like:

I don’t know about you, but sometimes I have been surprised when my dreams have come true. It seemed so impossible or unlikely, but somehow it turned out the way I had envisioned. Maybe it’s something small like getting an A on a test, maybe it’s getting into your dream school for college. Whatever it is, dreams come true — ours and God’s. I’m excited to see how together we can make God’s dream a little more real.

HOMEWORK

Say: It is important for me to understand what is important to each of you. I’m going to ask you to do something simple at home. You can use

any form of social media, television, radio or talk with a friend/parent/adult for help. If you are using social media or the Internet, please find one TV commercial/Tik Tok/news story and watch it several times to identify a justice issue that can be highlighted from it. *(Encourage each youth to find one story that is of particular interest to them that they would like to continue learning about at future events. This will help the youth minister/leader prepare lessons that their youth will be particularly engaged in.)*

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God. Thank you for the dreams that you have placed within us to help guide us into being the people you have created us to be. We are whole and loved as we are, and desire for all your children to feel and be seen the same way. Amen.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

God's Dream by Desmond Tutu.

DAY 2: PREPARING FOR THE MISSION

THEME: IT'S JUST NOT FAIR! Today we will explore how privilege is at work at all times whether we are aware of it or not. We can use our privileges to bring about meaningful change by working towards justice.

SCRIPTURE

- ◆ 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

SONG

Waiting for You, by The Many, is available on Convergence Music Project (<https://www.convergencemp.com/waiting-for-you.html>). (Please be sure you have the appropriate copyright license for the use of the music. Copyright licensing supports the artist and protects the church.)

BEFORE YOU GATHER

- ◆ Gather all supplies that are needed: paper money, copies of the “privileges for sale” sheet
- ◆ Have a copy of the group covenant available (printed or written for everyone to see)
- ◆ Print or have access to the equality/equity/justice picture so that all youth can see it.
- ◆ Bookmark or have scriptures pulled up on a smart device
- ◆ Be ready to discuss: Definitions of equality, equity, justice, privilege—recommended definitions are found below
- ◆ Ask one youth to be the Playlist Manager for the creation of the group’s music playlist. Specifics can be found in the section, “Homework”

GATHERING TIME

Begin by welcoming the youth.

If any of you were able to do the homework and would like to share, let’s take a few moments to discuss what you saw and learned. You were invited to search various media forms and find one social justice issue that is important to you. *(Spend 10-15 minutes reviewing and discussing what youth found.)*

Play “Waiting for You” by The Many.

Last session we talked about why justice is important. Simply, we engage in service projects and mission projects to bring about a just world for

all, which is a part of God's dream. Today we want to go deeper into how God's dream is enacted, and how we sometimes don't quite commit to the changes that are needed to allow all of God's children to thrive. There are three words I want us to try to define before I show you a picture. *(Ask youth to define equity, equality, and justice.)*

Recommended definitions here:

EQUITY recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

EQUALITY means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.

JUSTICE takes equity one step further by fixing the systems in a way that leads to long-term, sustainable, equitable access for generations to come.

Show the picture of equality vs equity vs justice (found here: <https://www.diffen.com/difference/Equality-vs-Equity>). Ask youth to talk about what they see and what they feel. How are the pictures different?

Ask for youth to come up with real scenarios in which equity and equality can be displayed? What would justice look like in those situations?

One of the key things this picture shows us is that some people have privilege.

Privilege exists when a special right, advantage, or immunity is granted or available only to a particular person or group.

ACTIVITIES/OPTIONS

Option 1: Privilege Walk

Suggested Time: 30-45 minutes

If your youth are fairly new to the group and with each other and have not had the opportunity to build trust with each other and really get to know each other, you may want to use the second option instead. If you believe your youth will still feel safe participating in this option, an alternative would be to use blindfolds. Youth will not be able to see who identifies with each statement but will be able to see the "final results." You may also find additional questions or full videos demonstrating this exercise on YouTube searching for "privilege walk."

This activity is to help us understand the many ways privilege shows up for us based on being members of certain groups. Please note that this exercise is

not meant to make anyone feel guilty or ashamed of their privilege or lack of privilege because of their background, upbringings, and heritage. It is not meant to isolate or elevate any individual, group, or peoples. Rather, the exercise seeks to highlight the fact that everyone has some privilege. By illuminating our various privileges as individuals, we can recognize ways that we can use our privileges individually and collectively to work for social justice. At any point if you feel like you need to take a break or want to sit the rest of the activity out, please do so.

Directions:

- ◆ Line up in a straight line across the wall (or wherever you designate).
- ◆ Listen to the following statements, and follow the instructions given.
- ◆ For example, if I say, “If your name starts with the letter A, take one step forward,” only people whose name starts with that letter will move and everyone else will stand still. This activity should be done in silence and if anyone feels uncomfortable stepping forward and backward on any statement I read, then please stay where you are, but try to remember the statement read.

Statements: Take one step forward if these statements apply to you:

(Statements based on “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” which first appeared in *Peace and Freedom Magazine*, July/August 1989, pp. 10-12, a publication of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Philadelphia, Pa.)

- ◆ When I go to the store, people believe that I am trustworthy, and I will not steal something. People in the store do not follow me around.
- ◆ As a boy I can play with dolls or as a girl I can play with trucks without anyone questioning my choice.
- ◆ I can walk after dark in public places without fear. I am not taught to fear walking alone after dark in most public spaces.
- ◆ When I am taught about American history or about contributions made, I am sure that I will see and hear stories about people who look like me.
- ◆ The majority of the staff at my school look like me.
- ◆ My school has plenty of books in the library, computers for students, and additional resources for students and teachers.
- ◆ I will not be teased because of my last name.
- ◆ I am encouraged to excel in every subject in school.
- ◆ When a question about my race is asked, I am not the only one singled out to answer or speak my opinion.
- ◆ When I watch television, there are a lot of people in positive roles that look like me.
- ◆ My intelligence is not questioned because of the way I speak.
- ◆ Using public bathrooms and going up and down the stairs in public spaces are easy tasks for me.

After the activity, please gather in a circle or other comfortable seating arrangement for debriefing.

Questions

- ◆ Please share one word that captures how you are feeling right now. If you do not want to share, just say, “Pass.”
- ◆ Would anyone like to share more about their feelings?
- ◆ How did it feel to be one of the students who were still closer to the starting line?
- ◆ How did it feel to be one of the students who progressed further?
- ◆ Were there certain sentences that were more impactful than others?
- ◆ What have you learned?

Option 2: Privileges for Sale

Materials: Play money for each group, list of privileges for each group, Privileges for Sale list:

Privileges for Sale

Below is a list of privileges that are available to buy, each privilege costs \$100 and you have \$1,000 as a group to purchase the privileges.

- ◆ You are never misgendered or have the wrong pronouns used to identify you.
- ◆ You are able to feel safe in interactions with police officers.
- ◆ You are confident that you are paid fairly regardless of your gender.
- ◆ You are able to choose almost any career path that you would like and not have many or any limitations placed upon you.
- ◆ You are able to go to a doctor and get treatment that doesn't conflict with your lived identity.
- ◆ Your identity is recognized and taught in the education system without limitations that are and have been voted on.
- ◆ Your intelligence is not questioned due to your accent or the way you speak.
- ◆ You can walk down the street without fear of being sexually assaulted or being targeted with sexual/vulgar language.
- ◆ You are confident that if you work hard in your job, you will have the opportunity to be promoted.
- ◆ You see people who look like you in executive and leadership positions in major corporations.
- ◆ Your parents are able to kiss/hug/be affectionate in public without threat or punishment.
- ◆ You are free to have a bad day or be in a bad mood without it being blamed on your identity.

- ◆ You are able to go shopping alone knowing that you won't be followed or harassed by security.
- ◆ You are given the access to the tools/systems/equipment necessary for to succeed in and out of the workplace.
- ◆ You are not embarrassed to bring friends to your home.
- ◆ You can be confident that your age is not seen negatively when you apply for a new job
- ◆ You are able to sponsor your partner for citizenship in the country you live in
- ◆ You have access to health insurance provided that covers the necessary medical treatments you need
- ◆ You are able to read books, watch movies and other media where you share identities with the characters.
- ◆ You are able to use public restrooms or changing facilities without stares or fears of physical/verbal abuse.

You can modify this list to talk about other privileges by visiting thesafezoneproject.com/activities/privilege-for-sale

Divide youth into small groups of approximately 3-4 people (this can also be done without groups provided you have enough play money to go around).

Explain to the groups how the activity will work: For this activity we are going to pretend that we are all the same. Same gender, same race, same background. We all have the exact same makeup, and no one has any privileges. On this sheet of paper, you will find a list of “privileges” or common ways people interact with the world based upon how they are perceived in it. Each group will receive \$1,000. Your group will have to decide how you are going to spend your money to exist in the world. You must agree as a group on how you will spend your money. In 10 minutes, we will come back to a large group and each group will present the privileges they chose to buy and why.

Set the timer for 10 minutes but monitor the room to see if youth finish early or need more time. Be flexible.

- ◆ Have groups report their choices.
- ◆ Gather for debriefing, asking questions such as:
 - ◆ What was this activity like/what did it make you feel?
 - ◆ Was it difficult to pick out which privileges to buy? Why?
 - ◆ Which privileges surprised you or caught you off guard on this list? Why?
 - ◆ What would you buy if you had more money?
 - ◆ What did you learn from this activity?

DEVOTION

Have one youth read the daily scripture: Matthew 20:1-16. Then say:

One phrase young children often proclaim is, “It’s not fair!” Oftentimes, what the child is trying to communicate is that something happened that they didn’t like. However, there are many times that something really isn’t fair.

When we look at our scripture, we see how some of the workers felt that their time wasn’t fully respected, and their worth was diminished because they were not fully compensated for the work they had done. How can someone who worked all day earn the same as someone who only worked part of the day? It just isn’t fair! But what we don’t know from scripture is what needs were present and what the other workers had been doing prior to coming to work. It is sometimes easy to get so consumed by our own sense of fairness and our needs that we completely miss out on the opportunity to see the stories of those we feel have done us wrong.

As we prepare for our service, we must slow down and see people. They are not the summation of decisions they have made, punishments they have been assigned, wrong turns they have taken. There are parts of them that we will never see or learn, and yet they are still loved by God, just as they are. We honor all that is sacred about them just as God does for us.

HOMEWORK

Say: Music is sometimes called a universal language because of its power to draw us closer. I want to learn more about each of you and the music you enjoy and listen to. For your homework, please add your favorite songs to our collaborative music playlist. (Instructions for how to create a playlist can be found here: <https://www.theverge.com/2017/7/3/15913768/music-playlist-sharing-apple-music-spotify-collaboration>). When adding songs please be careful to pick versions that are “clean” and that would not be offensive to one another. If you have doubts, it’s best to leave it out. If any of you are not able to add songs for any reason, you can email/text/group chat your selections and the Playlist Manager (*include that youth’s name*) and we will do our best to add them. Tomorrow, during our opening gathering, I will ask if any of you would like to share something about your favorite song and why it speaks to you.

Have your appropriate guardian fill out the medical and release forms and return it them to us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy God, at some point we have felt wronged and hurt by the actions of others. We have held on to some of that pain without knowing why. Today, help release us from the injustices and pain we have endured and bring about healing and restoration. God, remove the barriers that keep some from experiencing your fullness and your joy. Help us to be free in you and to move in this world without hinderance because of what we look like, who we love, where we live, and how we choose to be. May we no longer experience unfairness, but the fullness of the life you desire and have promised to each of us. Amen.

DAY 3: SERVICE DAY

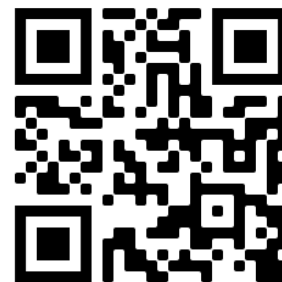
THEME: TOGETHER WE'RE STRONG! Today we will explore the theme of teamwork and how we can accomplish so much more when we work together.

SCRIPTURE

- ◆ Matthew 25:35-40

BEFORE YOU GATHER

- ◆ Gather all supplies that are needed based on the activity you choose to do (see below)
 - ◆ **Activity 1:** Enough Legos/blocks for each group
 - ◆ **Activity 2:** Various items for obstacles, blindfolds
- ◆ Have a copy of the group covenant available (printed or written for everyone to see)
- ◆ Print or have access to all materials needed for your service trip (this includes your church's medical forms and releases)
- ◆ Bookmark or have scriptures pulled up on a smart device
- ◆ Download *Together We're Strong* by Tracy Howe here: <https://vimeo.com/714228715>



GATHERING TIME

Welcome!

If any of you were able to do the homework and want to share about your favorite song, let's take a few moments to share now.

Watch the video "Together We're Strong" by Tracy Howe.

Spend time talking about the service project. What are youth hoping to learn? What do you want them to gain from this experience?

Go around the circle and ask each participant what they are most looking forward to – the fellowship with each other, the work they will do, the nearby attraction you may have included in the trip – it is all valid!

Before we go/get started I want to talk about teamwork. Why is teamwork so important? *(Allow youth to respond).*

Teamwork allows us to accomplish tasks that would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to accomplish on our own. It lets each of us bring our individual gifts and skills to the table and use what we have. Just like our song said, together we're strong.

Things we learn through teamwork include communication, strategizing and problem solving. Today, before we start with the service project, we are going to use teamwork to accomplish a task.

ACTIVITIES/OPTIONS

Option 1: Sneak Peek

Suggested Time: 20-25 minutes

Equipment Required: Enough Legos or blocks divided for each group and for the example piece (each set should have the same number and identical pieces)

Before the youth arrive (or even the evening before) build a small structure that youth will have to try to replicate. Make sure the structure is hidden or covered so youth cannot see it when they arrive. Divide up the extra Legos/blocks and have each group on a separate table where youth will be able to work.

- ◆ Divide youth into equal teams and have each group go to a table where there are blocks already laid out
- ◆ Tell the youth you have built something, and you want them to work together to recreate it using the blocks on the table before them.
- ◆ Each group should select one person from their team to go up and look at the structure for 15 seconds. The person who saw the structure will do their best to memorize it and describe it to their group members.
- ◆ After they return to their teams, they have one minute to begin building. After that time, another member from the team may take a sneak peek of the structure and report back alterations to the group or communicate next steps for building.
- ◆ Youth should continue this process until either one team successfully rebuilds the structure or all teams recreate it.
- ◆ After the building is complete, gather youth to debrief the process. Some suggested questions are:
 - ◆ What was it like to complete this activity?
 - ◆ How did you decide the order for who would go to view the structure?
 - ◆ Did you have a strategy before attempting the challenge?
 - ◆ What did teamwork look like for your group?
 - ◆ How well did you communicate as a team? How could you improve?
 - ◆ What skills can you take away from this activity, and how can you apply them to our upcoming service project?

Option 2: Trust Walk

Suggested Time: 15-20 minutes

Equipment Required: Various items for obstacles, blindfolds

Instructions

- ◆ This activity can be done indoors or outdoors. Before youth arrive set up an obstacle course to your liking. This can be done by moving chairs, tables, books, and other items. You can even add signs that will instruct youth to do an activity. Recommendations include:
 - ◆ Spin in a circle, hop on one foot, crawl here, etc. Pay special attention to the youth in your group to make sure all activities are safe and can easily done by ALL youth
- ◆ If possible, have youth gather in a separate room for the opening sections of the day so they do not see the obstacle course.
- ◆ Tell the youth that they will be using teamwork to complete an obstacle course. This can be done in pairs or larger groups. Instruct the youth that one person will be the leader and the others will be blindfolded and will have to rely on the instructions of their leader/partner. Once they complete the obstacle they will switch and have someone else be the leader and the previous leader will be blindfolded. They will then complete the activity going backwards.
- ◆ Place obstacles like chairs, tables, toys, etc. randomly in the place the activity will be conducted.
- ◆ After the building is complete gather the youth to debrief the process. Some suggested questions are:
 - ◆ How did it feel to be the leader? How did it feel for the team members who were blindfolded?
 - ◆ What was difficult during the activity?
 - ◆ How was the communication between your team?
 - ◆ How was the communication?
 - ◆ What did you learn about teamwork?
 - ◆ What skills can you take away from this activity and how can you apply them to our upcoming service project?

DEVOTION

Have a youth read the scripture Matthew 25:35-40. Then say:

I have had to learn that things are constantly changing. The seasons. Technology. Relationships. People. Where we find ourselves today is not

always indicative of where we will be tomorrow. And on the flip side, the opposite is also true. Where we have been does not always mirror where we are going in the future. Essentially what I am saying is we cannot, or at least should not, make assumptions about people we come in contact with.

During our mission project, we may encounter people who look a certain way or act a certain way or are in some way different. However, remember the words of Matthew and how all of us reflect God's presence and creation. Whatever we do is being done to and for God as well. And so, I want to challenge each of us to see people the way God does.

HOMEWORK

Say: I am proud of the way all of you showed up and worked today. I am sure each of you learned something and are taking something away from the service you did today. I want to encourage you to spend a few moments reflecting on that by writing a letter to yourself. Your writing prompt is:

“Thinking about all we have learned and experienced this week/month leading up to the service project, how have I grown?”

You can write using any form that you're comfortable with and you may choose to share any part of it tomorrow, if you feel comfortable.

Have your appropriate guardian fill out the medical and release forms and return it them to us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for your Body that exists in the world. Each of us has a special part to play to allow justice to flourish for all. Help us to recognize our gifts, use them for your glory and see all as uniquely made in your image. In Jesus's name, Amen.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The exercise Privilege Walk was adapted from the work of Peggy McIntosh's concept of White Privilege. Some statements were taken from Eastern Illinois University.

DAY 4: AFTER SERVICE

THEME: NOW WHAT? Today we will explore next steps for your youth group to continue learning about ways to engage in service-learning work and opportunities that are important to your youth.

SCRIPTURE

- ◆ Micah 6:8

SONG

Leaning In: A Prayer of Intention, by Christopher Grundy, is available on Convergence Music Project (<https://www.convergencemp.com/leaning-in.html>). (Please be sure you have the appropriate copyright license for the use of the music. Copyright licensing supports the artist and protects the church.)

BEFORE YOU GATHER

- ◆ Gather all supplies that are needed: art supplies
- ◆ Have a copy of the group covenant available (printed or written for everyone to see)
- ◆ Bookmark or have scriptures pulled up on a smart device

GATHERING TIME

Welcome!

If any of you were able to do the journaling assignment last session and feel comfortable sharing, please do so. *(Allow a few moments for reflection, and if there are none, you can share your reflection to the same questions the youth were presented with.)*

As we wrap up our theme of service and mission, I want to learn how you see the world and our city/town. This will help us to see what we identify as the strengths of where we live, as well as places that we can continue to be intentional in our outreach and service on an ongoing basis. *(If your church is more of a commuter church, you may want to have youth consider mapping out where the church is located instead.)*

ACTIVITIES/OPTIONS

Map It Out

Suggested Time: 45 minutes

Equipment Required: Art supplies including paper, markers/crayons, pens/pencils. Some students may prefer to work with playdough or another medium.

- ◆ Decide whether the youth will be mapping out their particular neighborhoods, or if you would prefer to have them focus on the area where the church is located
- ◆ Once the youth are gathered and it is time to begin the activity, have them come forward to pick up art supplies.
- ◆ Give the following instructions: Today you are going to create a map of your city/where the church is located with some special items to be included. Your map should have the following:
 - ◆ Important places that are needed
 - ◆ Places youth gather
 - ◆ Places youth go with their families
 - ◆ Schools
 - ◆ Major places of employment
 - ◆ Places with certain reputations/places to avoid (whether it is true or a perception)
 - ◆ Identify issues facing your city (such as pollution, traffic, homelessness, lack of grocery stores, etc.)
 - ◆ Identify services offered by the city
- ◆ Youth will have 15 minutes to complete their map. There are no wrong answers. This is about how you see things. Encourage youth to use whatever resources they may have access including the Internet/Google.
- ◆ Have youth pick a partner for the next step. Take another 10 minutes and share your map with your partner. After both partners have shared their drawing, ask them to think about what's good or not so good about the city, they live in. What are some of the positive things about living in it? What are some of the negative things about living in it?
- ◆ After the time limit, bring youth together to have them share their lists. Identify common themes that emerge.
- ◆ As a large group, have youth discuss how some of the negatives can be overcome. Are there things they would be interested in doing as a group?

DEVOTION

Have a youth read Micah 6:8 Then say:

These are very familiar words that help us to envision a world that makes God happy. It is one in which relationships are not built on inequity or fear, but one that flourishes because of love and mutual respect. Systems of oppression are eradicated because there are no boundaries that are meant to hold us back from experiencing the abundant life that has been promised to each of us.

Listening to the news, and at times constant negativity on social media, it is easy to see that the world is far from the actualization of the world that Micah has laid out for us. But during our service project, we took steps by exploring some really difficult topics, looking at ourselves and those we know, and working alongside of strangers, so that we can take one step towards justice.

The work is slow at times, but it is always worthwhile. My friends, we can change this world and make it a much better place than that which we were handed by our ancestors. So, here's to taking many more steps together in the creation of a just world.

CLOSING PRAYER

God, this week we have seen you at work in the world around us. We have seen the beauty of your hands and we echo your words that it is good. All of your children have not had an easy life. There have been struggles, and tears and frustrations over the way things are. But we uphold your dream that all are loved, valued, seen, respected and whole. We take the charge of Micah seriously and vow to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with you, our God. In Jesus's name, Amen.

BACKGROUND

AS A DENOMINATION, we look “to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world.” We are committed to serving the world through word and service to ensure the creation of a just world for all.

In the Fall of 2021, a denominational survey was mailed to approximately 750 churches that have a “youth minister” listed on the database. From that, 122 individuals completed the survey to help gather vital information on the state of youth ministry in the United Church of Christ and what both the national setting and conferences could do to help local churches as it relates to youth ministry. As a follow up to that survey, an event — Reimagining for Tomorrow’s Youth Conference — was hosted under the leadership of Rev. Trayce L. Potter, Minister for Youth & Young Adult Engagement, and the Faith INFO Team (Faith Education, Innovation and Formation). This three-day virtual conference gathered nearly 200 individuals who work in youth ministry and/or faith formation in some context to provide tools for navigating the changing landscape of youth ministry, speak life into the dry bones of youth ministry, and to expand the conversation around how to best resource local congregations.

These two opportunities to provide feedback painted a clear picture that local churches need tangible resources to faithfully walk alongside young people and aide in their faith formation. We appreciate all who offered feedback and detailed the ways curriculum plays such an important part in what happens in youth gatherings.

This resource was created in response to the clear ask. Thank you for your engagement with it.

Additional copies of this resource are available for free download at
ucc.org/youthservice.

PRODUCED BY
Faith Education, Innovation, Formation
Justice and Local Church Ministries
United Church of Christ

