



## SERVICE LEARNING TIP SHEET

# Reflection Prompts, Journal Ideas, and Creative Reflection Methods

Compiled by Mark J. Jackson

Reflection is a crucial component of the service learning process, so make sure you spend adequate time processing the group's experience. Ideas are provided below for reflection questions, individual journaling, and methods for creative reflection.

### Reflection Prompts

These prompts follow a simple three-step process for engaging in reflective conversation: **What? So What? Now What?** Choose the questions you feel are best for your group and your service experience.

#### (1) What?

Use these prompts to invite participants to describe (without judgment) their observations and experiences.

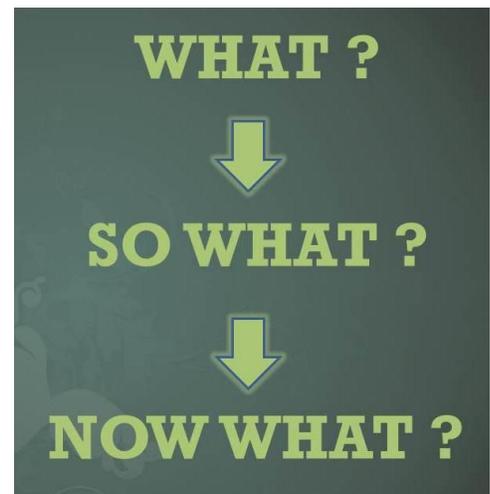
- What did you do today? What was your role? What did you contribute?
- What was accomplished?
- Were you comfortable or uncomfortable today?
- Did anything frustrate you?
- What was the best/worst/most challenging thing that happened?
- Describe the people you met today. What were your interactions like?
- How did people respond to you?
- Describe the atmosphere. Invite reflection on the senses: What did you see? Hear? Smell? Taste? Touch?
- Where did you see God at work?
- What happened as a result of your work? Who or what will see a benefit?

#### (2) So What?

Use these prompts to invite participants to process their feelings and thoughts on a deeper level. (Be sure to choose questions from both the "feeling" and "thinking" sections.)

##### Feeling questions:

- What was this experience like for you?
- What feelings or emotions (if any) did you experience?



- How did it feel to serve? What impact did it have on you?
- What did you appreciate (about another person, the site, your experience, etc.)?
- How did the actual service experience compare to your expectations?
- Do you feel like you made a difference?
- How were you blessed through the experience?
- What is new in your relationship with God?

### **Thinking questions:**

- What did the experience make you think about?
- How did the experience change your thinking about [choose a topic or issue]?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- What worked? What didn't work?
- What thoughts (if any) does this experience give you about issues in your local community? The nation? The world?
- How have your assumptions or stereotypes (about people, a community, the world, etc.) been challenged by the experience?
- What did you learn about yourself from this experience?
- Is service always helpful or effective?
- Who determines what's best for a community?
- In what ways has your understanding of service/servanthood changed?

### **(3) Now What?**

Finally, use these prompts to invite participants to consider how their experience might shape their future – including changes to attitudes and behaviors.

- Where do we go from here? What's the next step?
- What would you do, or will you do, differently next time?
- What are you interested in learning more about?
- How will this experience affect your future?
- How will you share this experience and your learning with others?
- What is God leading you to do with this experience?
- How might God be calling you to use your gifts in light of this experience?
- How does this experience challenge you to live as a Christian in the world?
- Why is it important for you to be involved in service?

### **Journal Ideas**

The list below provides examples of prompts you can offer for individual reflection through journaling. You might give youth the entire list and allow them to choose which prompts they'd like to respond to.

- **ROLE.** What I've been doing.
- **STORY.** A particular moment I want to remember.
- **GIFTS.** How my gifts and talents are being used.
- **QUESTION.** Something I'm wrestling with or don't understand.

- INSIGHT. An “aha!” moment.
- AWE. Where I sense God’s presence.
- THINK. What I’m learning or thinking about.
- FEEL. Feelings and emotions I have experienced.
- BLESSING. A blessing I have received.
- IMPACT. The difference I am making.
- FAITH. How my faith is strengthened or challenged.
- ACTION. What I want to do with this experience.

## Creative Reflection Methods

Be sure to invite youth to engage their creative side during the reflection process. This gives young people the opportunity to capture and express thoughts and feelings in new ways.

Examples of creative reflection methods:

- write a poem
- compose music or write a song
- paint a picture, draw, or doodle
- capture and share photographs
- produce a video
- create a sculpture
- create a dramatic presentation (such as monologue, skit, or pantomime)
- design a brochure, information sheet, or flyer
- create a blog, inviting each person to contribute reflections
- use *lectio divina* or other reflective prayer practices
- create a scrapbook of memories associated with the service experience
- create a website to share photos and stories
- write a story from another person’s perspective (such as a person encountered during the service experience)
- create a photo slideshow
- choreograph a dance
- write a “Letter to the Editor” of a local news publication
- stage a debate to discuss two opposing views
- create role-play situations to demonstrate issues raised
- create a question-and-answer panel, with participants serving as panel members
- create an artistic piece from items collected at the service site

