



Activity Guide

Strengthening Our Community

Purpose: Youth will impact their school community and surrounding neigh-

Time: 60 minutes

Part 1: Connect

3 Things in Common

Split youth into small groups (try doing this in an interesting way— like alphabetical by the last letter in their first name). In their small groups, have them find three things they all have in common. One person from each group will share the three things they discovered with the class. Keep youth in these groups for the next activity.

Questions:

What makes you feel like you belong? What makes you feel like you are special? Name someone who has thanked you. What did they thank you for? How did they thank you?

Materials

- White board or large paper
- Notebook paper
- Markers or crayons
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Share the Love kit

Part 2: Discuss

In small groups: Ask the following questions about community. Give them time to brainstorm and write responses in between each question.

Questions: in small groups...

1. What is community? What are some different types of communities?
Encourage students to think small and large; their family community, school community, global community, etc.
2. What kinds of roles do people have that positively affect our communities?
Example: In your school (teachers, students, parents, nutrition services, custodians, etc)
In your neighborhood (families, elders, business owners, veterans, volunteers)
3. What do these people do to help you be successful?

Group share: Once groups have finished brainstorming, have a young person from each group share ideas with the large group and write a master list that everyone can see.

Part 3: Choose

Youth determine Thank You card recipients.

Step 1: Explain to the students that today they get the chance to thank people in their community for helping them be successful.

Step 2: Looking at the list the students compiled of people that contribute to strong communities ... Students decide:

- Who on this list could use a little extra love?
- Will the group choose one place for all to mail their cards to, or will they hand deliver to individuals locally?



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Part 4: Create

Step 1: Youth help distribute card making materials.

Step 2: Encourage youth to write a sentence or two thanking the person they chose with a specific reason (ex. Thank you [name] for providing a healthy lunch so I can focus and grow).

Step 3: Take pictures of your project and send to: commed@spps.org. Some photos will be featured in the Bridge and on the Share the Love website.

Part 5: Reflect

Step 1: In a circle, give each young person a chance to show the class their card and also to share one way they plan to Share the Love to help their community be successful (help a friend, shovel a walk, read to someone, etc).

Step 2: Youth pack the cards into the mailing box. Be sure to complete and include the recipient note.

Optional: Extension Activity

As a large group, brainstorm ideas for the following questions and write a list that everyone can see.

Questions: Who else might need a little extra love in our community? (veterans, new community members, elders, animals, people experiencing homelessness, community activists)

1. What are some of the ways we are already caring for our community?
2. What else can we do to support and strengthen our community?

Have youth decide on a project then brainstorm the different tasks needed to make it successful. Divide groups into tasks such as: marketing (announcements, posters, etc), supply collection/storage, documentation (pictures of project, students completing tasks, quotes), thank you's to those who gave, and recording project progress.

Have small groups map out their tasks and report back to the class.

Designate time each day/every few days to do a 5 minute check in on each group's progress.

Ideas

- Peer Piñatas filled with notes of encouragement
- Welcome notes for new community members
- Write and distribute a children's book about strong communities
- Food or coin drive for donations
- Organize a youth talent show at an elders facility
- Newspaper collection for animal shelters

Suggestions for improving the Share the Love activity guide? Email commed@spps.org



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