



## About Personal Growth, Self-Discovery and Reflection

Life consists of movement, struggle, growth. We need to accept responsibility for our life or we trade growth for security and stagnation

There are many types of growth:

- Intellectual
- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Social
- Physical

Energy is developed through relationship. Insecurity produces aggression, domination or withdrawal. Concern is best expressed before crisis.

Continual development is a sign of life. Development is a source of inspiration to self and others. This inspiration is a manifestation of faith.

A quote from Plato, "The unexamined life is not worth living" warns of the emptiness of a life in which there is no time taken to reflect on it. Life starts in our heart, in the silence of self. Reflection and Prayer is the time we take to turn down the volume of the "static" in our daily life and to tune into God's presence, God's voice, God's movement.

Human development...extends to the realm of major shifts within our awareness, perspectives, and overall life practices. In addition to freedom from the distortion and damage from childhood experiences, positive development also requires awakening to and letting go of socially conditioned attitudes and values which limit self-awareness and feed self-serving, egocentric perspectives and behavior.

Cultivating meaning, purpose, and the capacity for love are forms of strengthening our connections in life, rather than serving our isolated egos. This core life task is essentially nonmaterial and spiritual. It requires cultivating our relational lives through practicing compassion and mutuality, as opposed to domination, submission or isolated detachment. It also requires cultivating our creative powers in work and in everyday life, through flexible thinking and resiliency in the face of new challenges or problems.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Schultz D.P. & Schultz S.E. (1987). A History of Modern Psychology. Orlando, FL: Harcourt-Brace.

Based on basic adult development, the following nine assumptions<sup>2</sup> are relevant when developing retreat/formation programming:

1. Human life is the focal point of God's activity in the world. - scripture records the activity of God's self-revelation in the lives or people. By reflecting on our own lives and experiences, we can learn a great deal about how we are to grow. And reflecting on the lives of those in scripture and others who have lived lives of faith, we can more easily recognize God's revelation to us in our own lives.
2. People want to know how to make their lives better - we learn as little as possible about what we HAVE to know (*are told to know*) and as much as possible about what we WANT to know.
3. Adults have a vast store of facts and experiences - our task is not so much to acquire new information (although sometimes that completes the experience) but utilize experiences we have in a way that will help us to grow and make life happier and more complete.
4. Lectures are the least effective way to help people grow. Active reflection involving both the intellectual and the emotional, reason and feeling provides a sure and quick way for growth.
5. Adults learn better in situations that allow them to share in the learning process - evaluating their ideas, attitudes and actions; enlarging, modifying or changing their ways of thinking.
6. Sharing in small groups is a powerful tool for building community. An experience of summativity where the whole is greater than its parts allows for an intermingling that births new insights, understanding, acceptance and change. Of special note: there is no predetermined end product that will automatically be produced, but there is movement toward something new that involves the total person, cognitive, emotional and physical.
7. Adults usually do not grow in an orderly, progressive, fashion, but in piecemeal growth spurts.
8. Learning and growing spiritually should not be a burden but a zestful and enjoyable journey.
9. Spiritual growth and human development go hand in hand.

*Wisdom is bright and does not grow dim. By those who love her she is readily seen, and found by those who look for her. Quick to anticipate those who desire her, she makes herself know to them. Watch for her early and you will have no trouble, ....Even to think about her is understanding fully grown... (Wis. 6: 12-15)*

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<sup>2</sup> Miller, Robert L. & Weber, Gerard P. (1987) *Touchstone, An Activity Book for Adult Leaders*, Tabor Publishing: Valencia, California, pp. 9-11.

## What is Prayer: Brainstorm on Newsprint

- Communication
- listening
- tune into or pour out our deepest feelings
- enhancement of life
- striving to become a faithful imitation of Christ...prayer relevant to supporting, encouraging and developing common life together.
- Thomas Merton: The centrality of Christian faith and hope is the courage to realize oneself and to accept oneself as loved by God...prayer is nothing more than getting down to this level/understanding and being known by God and responding in the best way we can to God and above all don't set limits to the mercy of God. Don't believe that because you are not pleasing to yourself that you are not pleasing to God. God does not ask for results. God asks for love.
- intimacy
- revelation of our needfulness (poverty) as well as our aspiration (dreams)
- a commitment; a life task
- Houston Smith: Believes his whole life has been spent on learning how to pray. Prayer involves "fumbling into an understanding of the deepest part of ourselves, and developing a sense of belonging".

*Why do people pray?*

(petition, gratitude, silence)

A doration

C ontrition

T hanksgiving

S upplication (crisis, please or help)

## Some thoughts on Personal Prayer

Best way to pray -----"JUST DO IT"!!!!

Discipline; Patience

It is not a separate part of life

Prayer is: communion, conversation, and being with God.

Some scriptural images of Prayer: Gen. 28:10-22; Luke 8:22-25

Prayer should change your life

Be creative and pray from "where you are" at this moment in your life

## Some thoughts on Communal Prayer

So why do we pray in Community?:

- don't live/exist in isolation
- other who share common belief, and that who we are and what we do reveals Christ
- overcomes separateness
- celebrates the reality an action of 'god in life
- calls forth gifts: prayer can also invokes hospitality, shared leadership, inclusiveness

Our program values pray as part of the year. We hope the structure of praying 3 times a week will contribute to bonding and intimacy that occurs throughout the year. We also hope that it is supportive of personal faith development and personal prayer.

Common prayer is a way to celebrate the reality of God in our lives and to experience the support of others.

When does communal prayer happen? Some examples:

- in the morning (morning prayer)
- before/after meals
- after work
- in the evening (evening prayer)
- before going to bed (night prayer)
- joining with others for Eucharist

***What's MOST important is not when you pray, but that PRAYER HAPPENS***

- Regularity: time, place, space, and knowledge of who will prepare prayer
- Even though communal prayer may seem artificial at times, KEEP doing it
- "In the beginning was prayer" - keeping it short and simple helps
- Prayer is not a competition. Be yourself, pray from your heart and for what is important to you

Resources: Bible  
Other books of reflection, poetry, etc.  
Candles  
Song Books  
The book of Christian Prayer or a Sacramentary

## How to Prepare a Prayer Service

A basic/helpful structure:

- 1) Have some kind of introduction  
eg. "in the name of...." "come let us worship...."  
light a candle dim the lights
- 2) Include Hymns/Songs, Psalms, Readings, Responses
- 3) Prayers of petition, praise and intentions
- 4) Some kind of conclusion  
eg. a spoken prayer by the preparer say a traditional prayer ("Our Father")  
a sign of peace sing a song blow out the candle

## A Prayer Review of the Day (@15 mins)

### 1. Thanksgiving

Begin by looking over the day and asking where you need to be thankful. Do not choose what you think you should be thankful for, but, by merely looking over the day, see what surfaces, what you notice even slightly, as compared to everything else. How do you feel towards what is shown to you? Do you sense your true state of poverty? Express gratitude to God the Father (Mother, Creator), the Son or Spirit, even if only for being alive and breathing life for one more day. Let gratitude gradually transform your life.

### 2. Asking for light

This is a prayer for enlightenment from God, not a self-analysis of your actions during the day. Therefore, ask God to show you what God wants you to see. Ask God to show you your day through God's eyes.

### 3. Finding God In All Things

**General:** Again, look over the events of the day. This time asking to help be made aware of where God has been present in your life - either through self or others. Also ask to be made aware of what God is asking of you. Consider your interior moods, feelings, urges and movements -- see what stands out, even if only in a slight way. Look for such things as joy, pain, peace, turmoil, increased love, anger, harmony, anxiety, freedom, enchantment, presence of God, isolation, etc. In what general direction do you think you are *being drawn* by the Lord? How have you been *responding* to these experiences or situations that draw you towards the Lord? How have you made an effort to *know* what God is doing in your life and to *take action* to cooperate with this activity? The Son is constantly trying to make His home in us with the Father/Mother and the Spirit; we remain distant and isolated by not looking for Him in our lives, and by not responding to His urgings which are always present.

**Particular:** Is there any one place in your heart that the Lord is especially calling for conversion (with God's help, of course)? Is there any one thing in particular that you are being asked to focus your attention on, to pray more seriously over, or to take action on. This is where your attention and energy needs to be focused instead of on all the other things you may think important.

### 4. Sorrow and Forgiveness

Seek forgiveness from God for where you did not see or you did not respond to God's love and invitation by your *inaction*, or for where you see you have obstructed God's designs by your *actions*. Also, do not be afraid to ask for the gift of an ever deepening sorrow for having offended the One who loves you. This will draw it to yet a deeper experience of being forgiven and loved by God. This is radically different from the sadness and self-pity that leads to depression and discouragement because of failure.

### 5. Help and Guidance for Tomorrow

As in "give us this day our daily bread", ask for what you will need for tomorrow. For example, you may need to pray to overcome something - to accept something - to persevere - to be more sensitive and responsive to God's activity in your life - to let go - to love more - to have compassion of heart, etc. So *ask, look for, trust* and *cooperate* with God, for there is *nothing* that can be done without God's loving assistance and guidance.

**Note:** This short prayer exercise is to help increase our sensitivity to God working in our lives and to provide us with the enlightenment we need in cooperating with and responding to the presence of God.

## Reflection Topic - Micah

"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has showed you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but *to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* (Micah 6: 6-8)

**Journal:** What are ways that you've seen people of this country "acting justly" or "loving tenderly"? Are these ways new to you? Challenge you? Is there any "way" in particular that you see yourself enacting in your own life? Based on your experience here, who might you add to the list of people to read about and why?

### There are all kinds of ways of "acting justly", and "loving tenderly":

- recycling, using the backside of paper products, reusing envelopes
- Write political representatives about issues that are important
- tear up your credit cards; be willing to do with less; car pool
- pay more attention to what you buy and where it comes from; purchase only locally grown produce, clothing, etc. or tax yourself voluntarily for each item you purchase that comes from the third world (bananas, coffee, sugar, tea, tuna),
- refill ice cube trays; turn off the lights when your not using them; don't let the water run when you brush your teeth and wash your face
- fasting (from shopping, from overconsumption, from using your car)
- find out who is hungry in your neighborhood and why; Serve meals; visit the shut-ins
- Write an amnesty international prisoner
- Join a service club
- Donate to worthy causes.
- Learn about important issues. Volunteer for important cause.
- Seek out the solutions to structural problems
- Pray
- Read alternative literature (for example: Sojourners, The Other Side, The Utne Reader, Mother Jones).
- Read about the lives of people who lived justice with conviction:
  - ★ *Jesus:* who not only heals and prays, is gentle and forgiving but also speaks out boldly against False Ideas. Jesus unfolded the scroll and found the place where it says "the spirit of God has been given to me and has anointed me ... to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to oppresses people, and new sight to the blind, to set prisoners free and to announce the year of God's favor." (Luke)
  - ★ *Mary:* who embodied availability, gentleness, contemplation and an attitude of Simple justice toward the anawim , the poor; whose song proclaim the greatness of a God who has confused the proud in their inmost thoughts, has deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places, the God who keeps promises
  - ★ El salvadoran Archbishop *Oscar Romero* who was transformed from what many perceived to be a meek, compliant churchman into a forthright, fearless, champion of the people who dared to defy government in the name of the voiceless poor. "Me they can kill, but the clamor for justice among the people they cannot silence"
  - ★ Catholic Laywoman *Dorothy Day* who in the 1930's put her spiritual values to work by creating Houses of Hospitality and a Movement known as the Catholic worker. Once questioned by the FBI on suspicion of being a subversive she said, "All I do is feed people if they are hungry and give them a place to sleep."
  - ★ *Mother Theresa* who has a simple reply to the question: who can I love? Where is the face of God to whom I can pray? The answer is simple that hungry one, that lonely one, that unwanted done. If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.

## Reflection Topic - Scripture

After this, Jesus appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the harvest director, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that one; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves just wages. Do not move around from house to house.

"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The reign of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The reign of God is near.'" Lk. 10:1-11

### QUESTIONS FOR JOURNALING:

- 1) What words, phrases, or thoughts in the scripture most "speak" to you?
- 2) If you were preparing people to go forth on an experience of service, what instructions would you give them?
- 3) How has your experience thus far been similar to the one described above in the scripture? How has it been dissimilar?

## Reflection Topic - Scripture

There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit, there are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God who works all of them in all people. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and God gives them to each one, just as God determines. I Cor. 12:4-10

- 1) How are gifts distinct from service? From working? What is the same in each?
- 2) Through this experience, what gifts do you recognize in yourself? How can they be used for the common good?
- 3) What gifts have you recognized or discovered in the people of India?
- 4) What gifts, culturally, can we share with each other?

# Service Reflection Toolkit<sup>3</sup>

**Why Reflect?** We do not learn from doing, we learn from thinking about what we do. Research shows that reflection has *some* positive impact on the attitudes of the volunteers regarding service.<sup>4</sup> However, the lack of reflection has a STRONG NEGATIVE impact on the volunteers's attitudes about service and the service activity.

**Reflection is** a crucial part of community service, which allows volunteers to look back on, think critically about, and learn from their service experience. Reflection may include acknowledging and/or sharing of reactions, feelings, observations, and ideas about anything regarding the activity. Reflection can happen through writing, speaking, listening, reading, drawing, acting, and any other way you can imagine.

## Benefits of Reflection<sup>5</sup>

- Gives meaning to the experience (was goal accomplished, how did we do, how is community served by this, how is this part of a larger effort, etc.)
- Provides an opportunity to establish expectations (individually, team)
- Can help volunteers understand the limitations and opportunities of the service site or community organization
- Relieves tension and provides re-energizing and renewal (especially important when service is emotionally challenging)
- Can create a sense of accomplishment that is crucial, especially where there are limited external rewards
- Can create a habit of appreciating ourselves
- Integration of service into the rest of one's life – developing a "spirit" of service, social justice, spirituality and civic-mindedness
- Improved service – As volunteers examine the effects of their behavior, they discover ways to improve the quality and quantity of their service.
- Can create a sense of closure, especially important after a long service period, project, or emotional experience.
- Personal Growth and Team Development:
- Fosters life-long learning skills– develops an ability to learn from positive and negative experiences
  - "Reality Check" – guards against reinforcing inaccurate perceptions/biases
  - Volunteers gain a broader perspective of other's experience
  - Builds community among the volunteers
  - Personal Problem solving increases personal empowerment, confidence
  - Group problem solving creates shared understandings, open communication, and better teamwork
  - Clarifies values as volunteers confront new situations
  - Provides practice clarifying goals and making choices to accomplish these goals
  - Encourages volunteers to do higher level thinking, as they look for root causes of complex issues
  - Acknowledges gained skills gained builds confidence

*"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."  
Oliver Wendall Holmes*

<sup>3</sup> Pages 8-16 of this packet are adapted from the National Service Resource Center publication Northwest Service Academy, Metro Center, Portland, OR [www.northwestserviceacademy.org](http://www.northwestserviceacademy.org)

<sup>4</sup> "Key Elements of Service Learning," Indiana Department of Education, Service Learning Program

<sup>5</sup> Info taken from "Learning Through Service," Kate McPherson, Project Service Leadership, and "Possible Outcomes of Service Learning," National Youth Leadership Council.



# What? So What? Now What?

This is a well-used and successful model to assist you in designing the reflection activities. Although you can derive learning from each question, focussing on all three will provide broader insights and keep participants from getting stuck on only the facts or just the feelings.

1. **What?** (Reporting what happened, objectively). Without judgement or interpretation, participants describe in detail the facts and event(s) of the service experience.

**Questions include:**

*What happened? What did you observe? What issue is being addressed or population is being served? What were the results of the project? What events or "critical incidents" occurred? What was of particular notice? How did you feel about that? Let's hear from someone who had a different reaction?*

2. **So What?** (What did you learn? What difference did the event make?) Participants discuss their feelings, ideas, and analysis of the service experience.

**Questions can also be focused on the meaning or importance of the activity to:**

**\_ The Participant:** *Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest? Did you hear, smell, feel anything that surprised you? What feelings or thoughts seem most strong today? How is your experience different from what you expected? What struck you about that? How was that significant? What impacts the way you view the situation/experience? (What lens are you viewing from?) What do the critical incidents mean to you? How did you respond to them? What did you like/dislike about the experience?*

**\_ The Recipient:** *Did the "service" empower the recipient to become more self-sufficient? What did you learn about the people/community that we served? What might impact the recipient's views or experience of the project?*

**\_ The Community:** *What are some of the pressing needs/issues in the community? How does this project address those needs? How, specifically, has the community benefited? What is the least impact you can imagine for the project? With unlimited creativity, what is the most impact on the community that you can imagine?*

**\_ The Group** (group projects): *In what ways did the group work well together? What does that suggest to you about the group? How might the group have accomplished its task more effectively? In what ways did others help you today? (and vice versa) How were decisions made? Were everybody's ideas listened to?*

3. **Now What?** (How will they think or act in the future as a result of this experience?) Participants consider broader implications of the service experience and apply learning. Be aware to strike a balance between realistic, reachable goals and openness to spontaneity and change.

**Some questions include:**

*What seem to be the root causes of the issue/problem addressed? What kinds of activities are currently taking place in the community related to this project? What contributes to the success of projects like this? What hinders success? What learning occurred for you in this experience? How can you apply this learning? What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue? What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties? What information can you share with your peers or community volunteers? If you were in charge of the project, what would you do to improve it? If you could do the project again, what would you do differently? What would "complete" the service?*

Whereas the "What?, So What?, Now What?" model focuses on group processing and discussion, ideal reflection activities allow the participants to reflect publicly and privately, utilizing a variety of forms of expression.

## Designing a Reflection activity: Tips for Success

An effective reflection activity should:

- Have an outcome in mind (i.e. leadership, team building, improved critical thinking, acknowledgment)
- Be appropriate for the team (age, culture, etc.)
- Happen before, during, and as soon after the service experience as possible
- Be directly linked to the project or experience
- Dispel stereotypes, address negative experiences, increase appreciation for community needs, increase commitment to service
- Be varied for different learning styles, ages, etc.
- Actively involve the service recipients for a really compelling reflection session
- Be facilitated well for maximum participation, creativity, and learning

## Facilitating a Reflection activity: Tips for Success

There is plenty of information and resources available about facilitating group activities. Some specifics for service reflection activities include:

- Seek a balance between being flexible to address member's needs, and keeping the process consistent with the theme. In other words, if some notable incident happens during the day, or has been forming for some time, it will probably be on the member's minds enough to prevent their presence in any other conversation. Thus, even if you have an outcome in mind, what needs to get said may be the most important thing to discuss or reflect upon. Similarly, the conversation cannot be allowed to veer with no focus: Reflection questions often lead to other questions, which lead to other questions . . . while these diversions can lead to great discussion, they can, as easily, go all over the place with little value for participants. Maintain focus by bringing it back to the theme or significant topic, and presenting "so what, now what" questions before leaving a decent topic.
- Use silence: People need some silence to reflect internally, some more than others do. Ask the question then wait.
- Ensure that all participants have an equal opportunity to become involved

*"The meaning of things lies not in the things themselves, but in our attitude towards them." - Antoine de Saint Exupery*

# The Toolkit

Following is a collection of reflection activities, separated into the amount of time required. The intention is for reflection to be available and utilized any time, whether you have fifteen seconds or two hours. Endless supplies of activities are available from combining ideas from activities in the kit.

## 15 - 60 second activities:

- Posed question: Reflection does not require a product or a discussion. Gather the group, obtain silence, and ask a question (for ideas look above). Give a few more seconds of still silence.
- Posed sensation: Same as above, but ask participants to check in with some sensory stimuli (sound, smell, sight) and make a mental bookmark of the project with that observation.
- Capturing: Each participant makes a face, a sound, or movement capturing how they felt about the service project.
- Snapshot: Create a silent snapshot of the service project. One person starts with a pose or action related to the project, everybody else joins the “snapshot.”

## 1 to 5 minute activities:

- Question discussion: Randomly, or in a circle, each person responds to a posed question (such as “project highlight”)
- One to Three words: Each person shares one to three words to describe the service activity or how you feel about the service activity or anything else regarding the project.
- Journaling: Each person responds to a question in writing
- Poetry/Writing Slam: Take turns; each day somebody else will write a short poem or sentence about the project, then share it with the group.
- Sculptor: One participant chooses a topic and asks for a set amount of participants to be the clay. The clay people let the sculptor mold them into the sculptor's vision of their topic i.e. invasive plant removal or the plight of someone who is homeless or racism.

## 5 to 30 minute activities:

What? So What? Now What?: To get to each step in the model, allow five to 30 minutes for group processing.

- Written Reflection: Pose three or four questions, using “what, so what, now what” model, and allow time for writing.
- (i.e. What you did, why/how you did it, how you could do it better)
- The Image: Prior to the project, each person writes or draws about the people or objects they will be working with (such as a tree for a tree-planting project or the community being served), the subject matter, or their feelings about the project. Revisit (or re-write/draw) it after the service project and discuss.
- Senses: Before activity, project, event or even before the first day or service, ask participants to share what they expect to hear, smell, see, touch and taste. The follow up after the day with what the participant actually senses
- Pictionary: Have a pictionary game about the experience and how you felt. Talk about it as a group.
- Parables/Stories: Read a piece of pertinent literature and have participants respond and draw correlations to service experience

- Letter to self: Prior to a project, have participants write a letter to themselves about their personal and career goals regarding the project, or feelings about the project or community. Place it in a sealed envelope, mail it to yourself or hand out again to the team after six months and reflect.
- Masks: Make a two-sided mask from a paper plate. Draw an image of how others might see you on one side, and how you see yourself on the other. Discuss the contrast. Or, could be work self/free time self, actual work/dream work.
- Gingerbread Models: Draw a large gingerbread person at the beginning of the day, with drawings/writings of what makes a good (mentor, urban forester, team member, etc.). At the end of the day, share what you did well, how you thought you could improve.
- Yarn Web: Stand in a circle with a ball of yarn. Each person throws it to another and says one word that explains what they will bring to the next project, something they appreciated in the person they are throwing it to, what they learned, etc. The yarn forms a web supported by the group. Use a thicker string, lower it, and have someone climb on, and try to support a person! (use caution with this one).
- Cartoon: Draw a cartoon that teaches something important regarding the service project.
- All on the Wall: Put a large piece of paper up on one wall or all the way around the room. Participants write or draw feelings/thoughts/learnings on the paper. Facilitator leads discussion based on writings.
- Recommendations: Compose a letter to your site supervisor offering suggestions for working with future volunteers.
- Lifeline Biography: Draw a line representing and plot significant periods/events (with writing or drawings) influencing who you are. Share with a partner or small group. This can be adapted many ways: do the same except using a river as a metaphor (where were there rapids, meandering, etc.) or do a Service Biography line (when first service experience, what influenced you, positive and negative impacts on your life)
- Object share: Each person brings in and passes around an object, and shares how the object is like them or the project they just did (pick a specific one) examples include: “what I contributed to the team, how I felt about this project, what I learned, etc.” The object can be something found in nature, a type of food, a book, etc. (pick one!)
- How did it taste: Bring a mixture of fruits and nuts, have them use these items as metaphors to describe their day, week, project, group interaction, etc, and answer the question, “how did it taste.” The, “what would you like it to taste like?”

### **30 minute to two-hour activities:**

- Song, Poem, Collage, Sculpture, Written Story, Skit: Create something artistic as a large group, or individually then meshed together, to express what happened, how it felt, or what the service experience meant to you. It can incorporate what was learned, accomplished, challenges overcome along the way. Could be presented to people from organizations that helped, parents, community volunteers, etc.
- Interview each other: Break the group into pairs or triplets and have them interview each other about their service experience, take notes, and summarize a couple of things to the group.
- Teach: Teach others what you learned through this service experience. Put together instructions or references for learning more about it.
- Imitations: Each team member picks the name of another team member out of a hat, and imitates that person relating two or three positive traits/contributions to the team, and one quirky habit (something light – judgement is essential)
- Inventory: Develop an inventory for the community being served or your own community, regarding the problem you are addressing or work you are doing. What are the resources, who are the local leaders, what roles to certain organizations play, what relationships exist, what other work has been done, what are the various attitudes about the project, what are the challenges, where are they, etc.

- **Media:** Build a skill as well as reflect by writing press releases, taking pictures, contacting media, and obtaining some media coverage of the project.
- **Poetry:** Each participant comes up with a metaphor to represent where they are in life (or in service) right now. The metaphors are shared in the whole group, writing them on the flip charts. Break into groups of six, each group chooses a metaphor to write about, each person writes (stream of consciousness) for five minutes. Each person chooses two favorite phrases from their writing and weaves them together with the phrases from other participants of their group to compose a twelve-line poem.

## **Appreciation/Acknowledgement**

- **Yarn Ball:** (see above for more info) Each person states what he or she appreciate about the person they are throwing the ball to.
- **Appreciation Cards:** Each person writes their name on a card, or slip of paper. Then, the cards are passed around the circle, and each person on the team writes (and draws, if desired) something they appreciate about that person. When they come back to the person of origin, have each person take time to read the cards and make comments.
- **Whisper-walk:** The group forms two lines facing each other. One blindfolded or eye-closed person at a time walks down the middle of the two lines. People on either side of the line step in to the middle (if and when moved to), tap the walker on the shoulder, and whispers in their ear something they appreciate about them. People at the end of the line help guide the person back in line, then they take their blindfold off.
- **Inside Circle:** Each team member takes turns sitting in the middle of the circle with their eyes closed (or opposite the group with their back to the group) and remains silent while the rest of the team randomly share things they appreciate about that person. You might even have somebody writing down what was said.
- **Imitate-Exaggerate:** Each person in the team picks from a hat the name of one other person on the team, and imitates their positive qualities with exaggeration, until the other team members guess who that is. This can be done with the entire group at once, around some task or decision, then discussed afterwards.

## **Longer-term Project or Team Experience activities:**

- **Scrapbook or Memory Box:** Create a scrapbook of your memories with the team or project, including pictures, quotes said, skills learned, challenges overcome, etc.
- **Letter to Yourself:** At the beginning of the year, write a letter to another person or yourself on something like what your expectations or goals are for the year or why you choose to do service. Collect, save and redistribute at the end of the year. Share and discuss.
- **Team Photo Trading Cards:** You can add history, quotes, and service “stats.”
- **Video:** Shoot a video about the project or about the topic related to the project.
- **Display/Mural:** Create a group or project display/mural, which chronicles the project. If utilized, this can be an excellent outreach tool for recruiting new members or community volunteers, or the public awareness of the project.

**Newsletter:** Pool your service reflections, stories and pictures together to make a newsletter. This can be sent out to members, sponsors, staff, and community volunteers involved in the project.

**Journal:** A little writing, every day, goes a long, long way.

**Report:** Write a report on the project. Use photos!

**ABC book:** Illustrated with one sentence, thought and/or picture for each alphabet letter. For grown-ups, use the project or organization name instead of alphabet!

# Journaling: A Primer

Journaling is one of the best reflection tools. Ideally, the program or project would allow for a ten to fifteen minute period every day for the volunteers to journal; preferably at the end of the day or during/after a debrief. It is helpful if staff or the project leader provides substantial structure to insure quality, conscientious journaling, and even more helpful if the person leading the reflection activity is journaling themselves! Regardless of the time allotted, it is important to encourage participants to write whatever comes to mind, and to not worry about grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. This entails a commitment to confidentiality, that nobody will ever share what they have written unless they want to. You also want to be definite and clear about the time allotted, (five to fifteen minutes) and let them know when it is almost finished.

## Journaling Methods

Clusters: Have people shout out words or phrases that describe the day. Ask each person to take two minutes to write five or six words in random spaces on their journaling page. Give a short speech about the interconnectedness of everything, the web of life, Quantum Physics, or whatever and ask them to do a free write focussing on those five or six items and how they are related.

The Critical Incident: Choose an incident that involved the entire team and give them a couple of minutes to think about the incident. Then ask them to write a detailed, factual report of what happened, making sure to answer the four “W” questions, “who, what, where, when.” You can then have participants share their stories to see how they differ from another.

Dialogue: A good one for developing observation and communication skills. Ask participants in the morning to pay special attention to conversations they hear throughout the day, including light conversations between staff and volunteers, volunteers and sponsors or stakeholders, etc. Ask them to pay special attention to mannerisms, accents, and the tone of the conversation. Later, have the participants pick a dialogue and duplicate as closely as possible how it went. This should be done in a light-hearted manner on a light-hearted day to avoid a “bashing” session. This is an exercise that gets better with time, as their attention skills improve. fmv”

Different Perspectives: A great one for developing empathy skills. Ask participants to recall a specific occurrence from the day that involved some degree of conflict. Ask them to assume the viewpoint opposite that which they actually held during this conflict (or the viewpoint they were the least empathetic with) and write a description of the conflict from this perspective. This can include what happened, their role in it, what they want, what they envision as the ideal solution. Good debrief questions are, “How did it feel to do this writing, how were you able to get in their shoes or how was it difficult, what is one thing you realized through this writing.”

The Fly on the Wall: Ask participants to take a couple moments to reflect on the day (where they’ve been, what they’ve done, whom they’ve worked with, tools they’ve used). Then ask them to pretend they were a “fly on the wall” observing but not participating in the scene, and write a short descriptive passage based on their observations. You can also use any animal or plant or person that was near the project site.

Guided Imagery: Encourage participants to relax, close their eyes, get comfortable, notice their breathing, etc. and read a guided imagery. Then, ask the participants to free-write about what they experienced.

The Free Write: The easiest and perhaps most effective journaling method, wherein people that think they “can’t write” or “have nothing to say” realize how much and how well they can write. For a predetermined amount of time participants engage in continuous writing by keeping their pens moving . . . even if only to write, “I don’t know what to write.” It is helpful to trigger the free-write with an open-ended sentence such as “I don’t think I’ll ever forget . . . “ or “If I could do one thing differently, I would . . .” or make up your own! Let participants know when they are nearing the end of the write time, then ask them how it went.

The Letter: Have participants write a letter to themselves, a relative, a historical figure, a political figure, etc. describing the project and what it means to them, or ask for some piece of advice, etc.

### **Good Reflection Writing/Sharing Questions:**

- What is service? What is the difference between service and volunteering?
- Has your definition of service changed? Why? How? Should everyone do service?
- Describe a problem the team has been having. List possible solutions.
- Make a list of the skills used and learned on this project.
- What have been the best and worst parts of this project?
- Describe a person you met on your project. What are their attitudes about the project, where might those attitudes have come from?
- What communities/identity groups are you a member of? How might this be related with your commitment to service?
- Have you ever felt hopelessness, despair, discouragement or burnout related to your service? How have you dealt with this? How can reflection help?
- What are some of the problems facing the world today? (mind map) How does your service connect or address these issues?
- Identify a person, group, or community that you got to know this year, who is significantly “other” for you. What are the needs or challenges facing them that particularly got to you? What is one way in which you’ve allowed yourself to be changed as a result of knowing these folks?
- What community need, work challenge, or public issue have you given the most deliberate, critical, analytical thought to this year? What are some factors and facts you looked at, data you considered? Who or what resources did you consult?
- Over the next two years, what’s one issue or challenge you would like to be a more respected authority on? How will this be a challenge for you?
- Dedicating ourselves to service rather than selfishness or our own comfort can be scary. We risk honestly getting to know others who are different, and come face to face, day after day, with pain, abuse, hatred, violence. What are two fears or inner worries you have, that somehow keep you from being the person of service you hope to become? What is something in your life that brings your courage, that gives you hope?
- What is one way in which you expect the community you are serving to nourish, nurture, or satisfy you? What are two ways you will take responsibility for that community?
- Summarize the most important things you will take with you from the experience.
- Your commitment to service can involve many things, including keeping your word (also being realistic when we say “yes”) and resisting the temptation, at least some of the time, to move on to new causes and needs. Think of something this year that you really didn’t want to continue doing, but you kept doing it the best you could. Was there something you got out of that?

## Service Reflection Quotes

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: The unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man." - George Bernard Shaw

"Nothing will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must first be overcome." – Samuel Johnson

"The universe is made of stories, not of atoms." – Auriel Rukeyser

"You cannot travel on the path until you have become the Path itself." – Buddha

"It is better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness" – Confucius

"We didn't inherit the land from our fathers. We are borrowing it from our children." – Amish Belief  
"The best test, and the most difficult to administer is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" – Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*

"All . . . are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny . . . I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

"A human being is part of the whole, called by us 'Universe,' a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty." - Albert Einstein

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum to the women and men to gather wood, and divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." - Antoine De Saint-Exupery, *The Wisdom of the Sands*

"Reading (or serving) without reflecting is like eating without digesting." ~Edmund Burke

"Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves." ~Henry David Thoreau

"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are." -Anais Nin

"No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it." – Albert Einstein

"No gem can be polished without friction, nor human perfected without trial." – Confucius

"Not everything that counts can be measured. Not everything that can be measured counts" – Albert Einstein

"I was taught that the world had a lot of problems; that I could struggle and change them; that intellectual and material gifts brought the privilege and responsibility of sharing with others less fortunate; and that service is the rent each of us pay for a living . . . the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time or after you have reached your personal goals." - Marian Wright Edelman



## MORE ABOUT JOURNALING

We are all different and approach efforts to grow personally and spiritually differently.

Ira Progoff, who has done a great deal of work and given many workshops of journaling says that, "A psychological workbook is a continuing confrontation of oneself in the midst of life."

## WHY JOURNAL

As we look at journaling, it is not just psychological growth but also how we are growing in our relationship with God that will receive emphasis.

A journal is not a diary but a way of dialoging with myself.

- to become more aware of what I do and who I am
- calls me to notice and record movements, feelings within me
- take note of events and persons who affect or influence me
- record feedback I receive from others so that I can reflect on it and test its validity
- have at my bedside to record my dreams as soon as I awake, so that I can try to understand their meaning later
- clarify my thoughts especially when a difficult decision is facing me
- a place to record the thoughts and feelings that come to me in my prayer
- a place to think through the conflicts and tensions that develop in relationships
- to keep track of my use of the tool of active imagination, a way of "dreaming awake" (INNER WORK by Robert Johnson)
- to observe patterns, trends that occur in my life.

## HOW TO JOURNAL

- Write something everyday, even if it is only a sentence. If you form this habit and keep at it, I guarantee you, you will grow during this year!
- Read the materials that have been supplied to you, don't let them overwhelm you and use some of the exercises perhaps once a week or so, maybe in connection with your prayer experiences together.
- In your notebook there is a sheet to help you do a review of the day. Perhaps after spending five or so minutes in the review, you might write one sentence to note some significant movement that occurred.

★ KEEP THIS PRIVATE FOR YOUR OWN EYES ONLY, SO THAT YOU CAN BE AS TOTALLY HONEST AS YOU CAN. THIS IS SO IMPORTANT FOR REAL GROWTH TO OCCUR.

## PREFERENCES/REALITIES:

- Some of us like to write while others find it a trying task.
- Some of us may have experienced ideas running round and around in our heads, especially when we are anxious or troubled about some event, past or future.
- I usually think - a day or two after a conversation - "I should have said this or that to make myself clear."

*Whatever your particular inclination, we encourage you to write at least one sentence a day!*

# Personal Goal Setting Session for Community Sharing Development

Reading from Eccl. 3:1-8

New season in life, summer over, some of our jobs begin again, etc.

1. Time line: As we begin a new season, we want to take some time to pause reflect and share with each other, by glimpsing at what has happened in our lives -- looking at past goals, changes and/or patterns in our lives.

Take some time to reflect on your life and pinpoint significant periods or chunks of time - using any criteria you wish: jobs you have had, places you have lived, or five year periods. Whatever.

Take a sheet of paper to signify each chunk. Hold paper horizontally and at the top of it identify the years in that chunk and the event that signals the transition/turning point to the next chunk. In each period identify:

- high and low points
- a goal from that period of life
- other than the turning point, any other significant changes? successes?
- what is the questions you are asking of life at this period -- what were the questions life asked of you?

**reflect for 20 minutes.**

2. Dyads sharing: Share anything significant you want to from the above timeline reflection and  
- any pattern or patterns you see in the life line?  
- what does it say about the direction your life is taking?  
- how do you feel about that?

**20 minutes**

3. Personal reflection on futuring/goals **15 minutes**
  - Considering all of this, what are your goals for the next 6 months in the following areas:
  - Personal
  - Professional /service
  - Justice
  - Simplicity
  - Spiritual (if it is not covered in the others)

Consider the following: what kinds of things do you yet want to accomplish in this volunteer year/in the future? What contributions have you made to society and to your church and what do you hope to make in the future?

4. Reflection questions for community sharing: shared on starred item **30 minutes**
  1. what might have to change in your present life to accomplish this goal? (obstacles, barriers, attitudes?, support?)
  2. what first step do you need to take in order to put your answers into practice?
  3. reflecting on Jesus' life: is there anything that confirms or challenges what you need to do to implement this goal? (at very end of Community sharing - take time to write on small piece of paper /sticky note your top goal for next 6 months.
  5. Closing prayer: Candle, music, tape goal to poster, say out loud if want to, time for petitions, closing

## SETTING PERSONAL GOALS



**Goal:** *An end that one strives to achieve; destination, mark, point, pursuit, objective in mind, end in view.*

**Objective:** *something aimed at. Steps taken to reach a goal.*

**Resources:** *something that lies ready for use or can be drawn upon for aid: Personal knowledge, other people, libraries, non-profit organizations, government, willingness to ask questions, newspapers, magazines,...etc...*

**Criteria for my success:** *a standard, rule, or test by which something can be judged as accomplished in my eyes.*

Begin by asking yourself, where am I at this point in my life? Just graduated from college? tired of my current course in life? looking for ways to answer God's call to me? looking for excitement? all of the above? Take some time to reflect on this, either quietly, or by writing in your journal. Then ask yourself, "*what would I like to get out of this year of service(DATE)?*" This involves making a choice about what goals you would like to work on, and deciding how you will achieve these goals.

One way to work on goals is to set objectives. Although goals and objectives are very similar, they are not quite the same. Think of a goal as the point you would like to reach. Think of objectives as the steps you need to take, the things you need to do to reach that point. In setting your objectives, brainstorm the possible resources available to you, and choose the ones that will help you accomplish your goal. Again reflect quietly or write them in your journal.

Once you have chosen a goal and thought of the objectives and resources you will need in order to reach your goal, you might like to consider this question: *How will I know if my goal has been met?* What will be the criteria of success in my eyes? This would be the measure that would tell you that you have achieved your objectives and goals. There are many possible criteria of success - you decide what will be meaningful for you.

Goal setting is a personal process. It requires thought and discernment, decision making and action. Goals help us move ahead in our lives, and provide direction and structure, and

accomplishing a goal can be a very satisfying experience. The positive thing about goals is that you can make your dreams come true!!

**\*\*\*\*\* A Word About Serendipity And Spontaneity: \*\*\*\*\***

- *Serendipity* refers to an aptitude for making accidental fortunate discoveries.
- *Spontaneity* refers to acting or resulting from a natural feeling or impulse, without constraint, effort, (Go with the flow...).

Many grand happenings in life are the result of serendipity and spontaneity. Such as running into a special friend in front of the ice cream shop when you have a free hour, or catching a bus just as a heavy rain storm begins, or finding a \$5.00 bill on the day you have no lunch money.

If, however, you wait for serendipity and spontaneity to bring about the grand happenings in your personal life or your community life, you may find that the time has passed and you wonder what you have been doing. We encourage you to use your time well, decide what you want and go after it! And enjoy those spontaneous moments and serendipitous happenings as gifts from our playful, loving God!

**\*\*\*\*\* A Word About Faith: \*\*\*\*\***

The gift of faith is strengthened in our life as we attempt to follow God's call to us, and listen for those moments in prayer when God tells us, "yes, I am here!" God has given us each of us talents and gifts, and the freedom to decide how to best use them. We listen to God's call to us, and act in faith as we attempt to follow. If we attempt to plan every aspect of our life to the extreme, we can forget to act in faith and listen to God's message. On the other hand, we praise God by living as fully as we can, and this happens when we stretch our potential, or talents, to the fullest!

## PERSONAL GOALS FOR MY VOLUNTEER YEAR WORKSHEET

Goals may be in one or several life areas:

\* Prayer \* career \* ministry \* spirituality \* health \* family \* relationships \* self-knowledge \* skills \* personal development \* friendships \* faith \* social awareness / consciousness \*

**Goal #1:**

**Objectives:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Criteria For Measuring My Success:**

**Goal #2:**

**Objectives:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Criteria For Measuring My Success:**

**Goal #3:**

**Objectives:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Criteria For Measuring My Success:**

## Stages of Community Development\*

Stage/Activity	Volunteer / Missioner concerns	Volunteer / Missioner feelings	Volunteer / Missioner behaviors	Leadership behaviors (Programs meet member concerns)
<p><b>Stage One: Forming</b></p>	<p>Who am I in this community?</p> <p>Who are the others?</p> <p>What is my role?</p> <p>What can I contribute?</p> <p>What tasks will I have?</p> <p>Will I be capable?</p> <p>Who is the leader?</p> <p>Will I be valued?</p>	<p>Excitement, anticipation, and optimism.</p> <p>Pride in being chosen to participate.</p> <p>Initial, tentative attachment to group.</p> <p>Suspicion, fear or anxiety about future.</p>	<p>Initially, almost all comments directed to program leadership.</p> <p>Direction and clarification sought.</p> <p>Status accorded to group members based on roles outside group.</p> <p>Members fail to listen, resulting in erroneous conclusions or statements.</p> <p>Issues are discussed superficially.</p>	<p>Provide structure by holding regular meetings and assisting in task and role clarification.</p> <p>Encourage participation by all, domination by none.</p> <p>Facilitate learning about one another's area of expertise and preferences.</p> <p>Share all relevant information.</p> <p>Encourage members to ask questions of you and one another.</p>
<p><b>Stage Two: Storming</b></p>	<p>How much autonomy will I have?</p> <p>Will I have influence over others?</p> <p>What is my place within the group?</p> <p>Personally: Whom do I like? Who likes me?</p> <p>Issues: Do I have some support?</p>	<p>Resistance to the Task or decision-making and to improvement different from what each person is comfortable using.</p> <p>Sharp fluctuations in attitude about community and its chance of success.</p>	<p>Attempts made to gain influence, suggestions, and proposals.</p> <p>Subgroups and coalitions form with possible conflict among them.</p> <p>Members judge and evaluate one another and the program leadership, resulting in ideas being shot down.</p> <p>Task avoidance.</p>	<p>Engage in joint problem solving.</p> <p>Establish a norm supporting the expression of different viewpoints.</p> <p>Discuss group's decision making process and share decision making responsibilities appropriately.</p> <p>Provide resources to the extent possible (explain why if not possible)</p>

Stage/Activity	concerns	feelings	behaviors	Leader behaviors
<p><b>Stage Three: Norming</b></p>	<p>How close should I be to community members?</p> <p>Can we accomplish our responsibilities successfully?</p> <p>How do we compare to other communities?</p> <p>What is my relationship to the program leadership?</p>	<p>A new ability to express criticism constructively.</p> <p>Acceptance of membership in the group.</p> <p>Relief that it seems things will work out.</p>	<p>Members, with one another's support, can disagree with the program leadership.</p> <p>The group laughs, jokes, has fun, some jokes at leader's expense.</p> <p>A sense of "we'ness."</p>	<p>Members may not challenge one another as much as needed.</p> <p>Talk openly about your own issues and concerns.</p> <p>Have community members manage agenda items.</p> <p>Give and request positive and constructive negative feedback in the group.</p> <p>Assign challenging problems for consensus decisions.</p> <p>Delegate as much as members are capable of handling, help them as necessary.</p>
<p><b>Stage Four: Performing</b></p>	<p>Concerns of earlier stages have been resolved.</p>	<p>Members have insights into personal and communal processes and better understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Satisfaction with the community's progress.</p> <p>Constructive selfchange.</p>	<p>Roles are clear and each person's contribution is distinctive.</p> <p>Members take initiative and accept one another's initiatives.</p> <p>Open discussion and acceptance of differences among members in their backgrounds and modes of operation.</p>	<p>Jointly set goals that are challenging.</p> <p>Look for new opportunities to increase community's scope.</p> <p>Questions assumptions and traditional ways of behaving.</p> <p>Develop members to fullest potential through task assignments and</p>

	concerns	feelings	behaviors	Leader behaviors
			<p>Members seek feedback from one another and from leader in the spirit of continual improvement.</p> <p>Challenging one another leads to creative problem solving.</p>	<p>feedback.</p> <p>Develop mechanisms for self-assessment by the group.</p> <p>Appreciate each member's contribution.</p>
<b>Stage Five: Adjourning</b>	<p>Realization of group's ending.</p> <p>What next?</p> <p>Will I ever see these people again?</p> <p>How did we do?</p> <p>Accomplish goal?</p>	<p>Fear, uneasiness, stress</p> <p>For some, relief and joy</p> <p>Sense of accomplishment</p> <p>Sense of disappointment</p>	<p>Increase in conflicts at service site and/or with other members</p> <p>Fury to accomplish everything and/or</p> <p>Disengagement</p> <p>Preoccupation with "what's next"</p>	<p>Aid in transition through supplying resources if possible.</p> <p>Ask for final feedback.</p> <p>Encourage community to keep in touch, facilitate this if possible.</p> <p>Use rituals and celebrations to help them identify accomplishments/ recognize how much they were valued and to heal hurts (if needed)</p> <p>Invite members to help and participate in future program events.</p>

\* Adapted from Recruitment and Retention Cycle and the Team Stages of Development Resources of CNVS Training and Technical Assistance for AmeriCorps Ed Awards Programs