

Helping Out

A Cross-Disciplinary Unit on Volunteering
for Grade 3



Helping Out: A Cross-Disciplinary Unit on Volunteering for Grade 3.

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This resource is available at www.volunteernwt.ca

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Canada 

UNIT PLAN

Lesson 1: Who Helps?

The class discusses a set of questions about helping and being helped. Each student then reflects on and writes answers to these same questions on a handout. They draw a picture to illustrate one of the answers, and finish with reflection questions.

Lesson 2: Helping Out—It's Part of Our Culture

Students write a story about a picture from the book *The Bell With a Name* (without knowing the story of the book). They share their stories, then hear and discuss the real story of the picture. Students reflect on the traditional values, associated with helping, represented in the picture. They extend the ideas to their own life.

Lesson 3: What Does a Volunteer Do?

This lesson prepares the class for a guest speaker on volunteering (next/future class session). Students brainstorm about volunteering: Who volunteers? What do they do? Why do they volunteer? The class decides on a definition for “volunteer”. In small groups, students write questions about volunteering which they would like to ask the guest speaker. As a whole, the class decides on interview questions to ask the speaker.

Lesson 4: Ask a Volunteer

The class interviews a guest speaker about volunteering. After the interview, students summarize, discuss, and reflect on what the speaker said. The class follows up by creating and sending a class thank you card that shows how the community benefits from volunteers.

Lesson 5: How Can I Help?

The class brainstorms to identify needs in their school and community. Working in pairs, then individually, students find ways to help meet several needs, and reflect on what difference it will make if help is given. Students present their answers. Extension activities include making a “help needed” board for the classroom, or planning a class project to help out at school or in the community.

Introduction

This learning unit is intended as a resource to help you teach about the importance of volunteering—helping out—in our communities. It is a set of lesson plans linked to relevant curriculum outcomes, primarily in Health, Social Studies and Dene Kede.

Lessons can be taught together as a unit, or integrated individually into other relevant units in your teaching program. They are designed to be flexible enough to meet your scheduling and instructional needs, and to help teach existing curriculum outcomes, not add new ones.

Objectives

As a whole, this unit has the following objectives:

- to promote an appreciation for the importance of helping out as a way of sharing responsibility for healthy communities;
- to develop an awareness of the nature of volunteering, and the role of volunteers, in northern communities; and
- to encourage and assist students to be active helpers and volunteers at home, at school, and in the community.

Integration with curriculum

The lessons presented here are especially relevant for integration with Health, Social Studies, English Language Arts, and Dene Kede. All lessons in this unit can be used for teaching the curriculum outcomes outlined below.

NWT School Health Program

All lessons in this unit address the Major Goals of the NWT School Health Program. In addition, lessons in this unit collectively address the themes of *self awareness, relationships, and decision-making* in the *Grade 3 Unit on Mental and Emotional Wellbeing*.

Dene Kede

Lessons in this unit fit most closely with the Specific Cultural Expectations related to relationships of respect with *The People* (page xxxvii), in particular:

- 1) Learn from and respect elders;
- 2) Understand the importance of group identity and group cooperation for survival;
- 3) Understand ways in which family and tribal camps traditionally worked together.

Relevant units include *Family, Grandparents, Men and Women*, and *Elders*.

Social Studies: Communities of the World From *Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth. 2004. Grade 3 Social Studies*

All of the lessons in this unit can link, directly and through extension, with a number of the skills and themes in the Social Studies curriculum for Grade 3. Lessons fit most closely with the following Learning Outcomes.

Social studies skills

Active Democratic Citizenship

Students will:

- Collaborate with others to share ideas, decisions, and responsibilities.
- Interact fairly and respectfully with others.
- Consider the rights and opinions of others during interactions.

Managing Information and Ideas

Students will:

- Select information from oral, visual, material, print, or electronic sources.
- Organize and record information in a variety of formats and reference sources appropriately.

Critical and Creative Thinking

Students will:

- Consider advantages and disadvantages of solutions to a problem.
- Draw conclusions based on information and evidence.
- Revise ideas and opinions based on new information.

Communication

Students will:

- Listen actively to others to understand their perspectives.
- Present information and ideas orally, visually, concretely, or electronically.

Cluster: Connecting with Canadians

Knowledge

Students will:

- Describe personally significant aspects of their Aboriginal community.

Values

Students will:

- Be willing to contribute to their groups and communities.
- Respect positive leadership in their groups and communities and in Canada.
- Respect the teachings of Elders, leaders, parents, and community members.

Cluster: Exploring the World

Knowledge

Students will:

- Recognize that people around the world have basic human rights.
- Explain the importance of fairness and sharing in groups and communities.
- Give examples of concerns common to communities around the world.
- Identify ways in which community services can help people acquire their basic human rights.
- Give examples of personal decisions and actions that may positively affect people locally or globally.

Values

Students will:

- Support fairness in social interactions.
- Appreciate their connections to people and communities elsewhere in the world.

Cluster: Communities of the World

Knowledge

Students will:

- Identify the protocols within their Aboriginal culture.
- Describe characteristics of daily life in communities studied.
- Compare daily life in their own communities to life in communities studied.
- Describe diverse ways in which communities meet their members' needs.

Values

Students will:

- Value the contributions individuals make to their communities.

English Language Arts *Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education. 1998. The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12.*

All of the lessons in this unit can link, directly and through extension, with the ELA curriculum for Grade 3. Lessons fit most closely with the following Learning Outcomes.

General Outcome 1: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

1.1 Discover and Explore (express ideas, consider others; ideas, express preferences, set goals)

1.2 Clarify and Extend (develop understanding, explain opinions)

General Outcome 2: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print, and other media texts.

2.1 Use Strategies and Cues (prior knowledge)

2.2 Respond to Texts (experience various texts, e.g. short story, folktale, news story)

2.3 Understand Forms and Techniques (forms and genres, create original texts)

General Outcome 3: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to manage ideas and information.

3.1 Plan and Focus (use personal knowledge, ask questions, participate in group inquiry, create and follow a plan)

3.2 Select and Process (identify personal and peer knowledge, make sense of information)

3.3 Organize, Record, and Evaluate Information

Some background information on volunteering

Volunteering is choosing to help out without expecting anything in return. Volunteers give of their time freely, sharing their energy, skills and talents, exercising good citizenship, and taking responsibility to make their community a better place.

Volunteers play an important role in our communities. “Helping out” is the basis of the volunteer ethic in the NWT. Helping out is a shared tradition of northerners, regardless of their cultural background. Traditionally, everyone shared responsibility for the wellbeing of the community by contributing their skills and talents where they were needed. Helping out was essential for survival. Although the nature of volunteering might be changing, volunteers still benefit our communities in many ways. People help out informally, on their own, or formally with groups and agencies. However people choose to help out, volunteers improve our lives socially, culturally, economically, and spiritually.

As well as contributing to healthy communities, volunteering also provides many benefits to the volunteer, and can enhance an individual's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Volunteering can bridge the distances between people of different ages, abilities, genders, and cultures.

Encouraging children and youth to help out or volunteer ensures that we will have enough volunteers in the future, and that our communities will be vibrant and healthy places.

Lesson One

WHO HELPS?

Overview

The class discusses a set of questions about helping and being helped. Each student then reflects on and writes answers to these same questions on a handout. They draw a picture to illustrate one of the answers, and finish with reflection questions.

Objectives

Students will:

- understand that people help each other;
- think about occasions when someone helped them, and when they helped someone;
- reflect on how it feels to give help and receive help;
- realize the value of helping others.

Materials needed

- paper and pencils/markers for drawing
- worksheets 1 and 2

Preparation

- Make enough copies of worksheets 1 and 2 for each student.

Suggested approach

- Refer to the handouts for this lesson (worksheets 1 and 2). Begin by going through the worksheet questions with the whole class. For each question, share some possible answers.
- Distribute the handouts.
- Read through the questions again. Then give students time to write their answers on their worksheets. When they've finished writing, have them draw a picture that illustrates one of their answers—that shows them helping someone, or someone helping them. Ask them to include a “word bubble” with the words “I feel...(finish the sentence)” for each person in their picture.
- If time permits, have students share their drawings (or display them in the classroom).
- Introduce and guide a discussion on the idea that helping actions lead to other helping actions, especially when people feel gratitude.

- Finish with one or both of the following questions for discussion or journal-writing:
 - Why is it important to help others?
 - How can one act of helping lead to other acts of helping?
 - How does helping others make our community stronger?

Extension Activity

Make a “helping hands” collage for the classroom.

- Trace a hand print, then photocopy it. Make enough for each student.
- On the paper hands, ask each student to write the following:
 - I helped __ (who) _____ (do what) _____. For example, “I helped my little brother clean his room” or “I helped my grandfather shovel snow”.
- Display the hands as a collage.

Notes...

Handout: Student worksheet 1

Name:

Who helps?

Think of a time when someone helped you.

- Who helped you? _____

- What did they do? _____

- How did you feel? _____

- What happened because they helped? _____

Handout: Student worksheet 2

Name:

Who helps?

Think of a time when you helped someone.

- Who did you help? _____

- What did you do? _____

- How did you feel? _____

- What happened because you helped? _____

Lesson Two

HELPING OUT: IT'S PART OF OUR CULTURE

Overview

Students write a story about a picture from the book *The Bell With a Name* (without knowing the story of the book). They share their stories, then hear and discuss the real story of the picture. Students reflect on the traditional values, associated with helping, represented in the picture. They extend the ideas to their own life.

Objectives

Students will:

- recognize that people have been helping each other for generations;
- realize that helping out today keeps communities strong;
- be aware that the values of northern cultures are expressed through helping out.

Materials

- illustration from end of this lesson (from the book *The Bell With a Name*)
- worksheets 1 – 3
- Background # 1
- optional: copy or class set of *The Bell With a Name* by Wendy Stephenson (story by Eva and Hugh Colin), published by the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute and NWT Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Most school libraries have copies of this book, and it is available from the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute (<http://www.gwichin.ca/>).

Preparation

- Make enough copies of the illustration, and worksheets 1 – 3, for each student.
- Review Background # 1.
- Optional: read *The Bell With a Name*.
- Optional: assign writing of story (see Approach) as homework before this lesson.

Suggested Approach

- Distribute copies of the illustration and worksheet 1 to all students.
- Ask students to write a story about the illustration, using worksheet 1. Review and clarify the instructions as needed.
- Ask students to share their stories.
- Explain the actual story of the picture, using information in Background Page 1 and/or

the book. Discuss similarities and differences between students' stories and the real story.

- Discuss the idea that people in the north have been helping each other for **generations**. Explain that, by helping out, people practice values have always been part of northern cultures. Some of these values are caring, sharing, generosity (giving of yourself), and belonging to the community. Clarify and extend these ideas as needed.
- Distribute worksheets 2 and 3, and explain instructions.
- Have students work in pairs to answer the questions on the two worksheets.
- Share and discuss answers. Display students' stories.

Extension Activity

- Read *The Bell With a Name* in class.
- Make a list of all the people in the story who helped out with the wedding, and what they did to help.

Notes...

With your partner, think about this question and write your answers.
How are the women in the picture showing the values of...

• sharing _____

• caring _____

• generosity (giving of themselves) _____

• belonging to community _____

With your partner, think about this question and write your answers.
List other ways you can help out in your family, school, or community to show...

• sharing _____

• caring _____

• generosity (giving of myself) _____

• belonging to community _____



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Background # 1

Helping out: it's part of our culture

Story of the illustration from *The Bell With a Name*

- This is a true story
- The women are Gwich'in from Fort McPherson.
- They are cooking and making tea for the wedding celebration of a couple from the community.
- The wedding is takes place outdoors at a place near Fort McPherson that is special to the community.
- The story takes place in 1999.
- The women are doing what they've done for generations—helping out for the good of the whole community.

General background for discussion: The traditional importance of helping out in northern cultures

- In the past, survival depended on everyone in the community helping out.
- Each person in the community helped to make sure that everyone had food, shelter and clothing.
- Helping was everyone's responsibility.
- Helping was a part of day-to-day life.
- People expressed the values of their culture through working for the good of the community.
- Every person was expected to give back to the community using his/her particular skills and strengths.

Lesson Three

WHAT DOES A VOLUNTEER DO?

Overview

This lesson prepares the class for a guest speaker on volunteering (next/future class session). Students brainstorm about volunteering: Who volunteers? What do they do? Why do they volunteer? The class decides on a definition for “volunteer”. In small groups, students write questions about volunteering which they would like to ask the guest speaker. As a whole, the class decides on interview questions to ask the speaker. This lesson can be done as one or two class sessions.

Objectives

Students will:

- brainstorm and share ideas about volunteering;
- understand who volunteers are and what they do;
- define “volunteer”;
- identify what they want to know, and ask questions about volunteering.

Materials needed

- flip chart paper and markers
 - for class discussion
 - for groups of 4

Preparation

- Read Background #2 and Background #3 for this lesson.

Suggested approach

- Start by introducing the idea that there are people who help out at your school who don't get paid for their work. Help students to think of some of these people (not necessarily by name) and what they do. List the answers on flip chart paper, without writing a heading—yet. Examples include:
 - students: doing fundraising, helping to keep the school clean, recycling, organizing events, taking part in cultural groups or performances, helping younger students...
 - parents: helping in the classroom, on school trips, with sports events or special school events, cooking or baking, organizing fundraising...
 - community members: coming to school to speak to, teach, read to, or entertain students...

- Next, ask students to brainstorm about people in the community, outside of school, who help out without getting paid. (You may need to clarify or help distinguish between work for pay and volunteer work.) Make a list of these people and what they do—again, don't write a heading on the list yet. Examples include people who coach sports, lead youth groups and clubs, play the organ or sing in the choir at church, visit or help elders, organize and help out with community events and feasts, share their traditional skills and knowledge, look after young children, cook for or take care of people who are sick...
- Ask your class if they know what word we use to describe these people and what they do. Guide a class discussion to come up with “volunteer.” Now put the headings “Volunteers at school” / “Volunteers in the community” on your lists of examples.
- Facilitate a brief discussion about why people might volunteer. Summarize answers on a flip chart.
- Have students work in pairs to arrive at a definition of “volunteer” by completing the sentence: “A volunteer is a person who _____.”
- Ask students to share their definitions. Then decide on a class definition of “volunteer.” The definition should include the following ideas:
 - Volunteers freely choose to help out.
 - They don't expect money in return.
- Tell the class that they will have the chance to interview a guest volunteer in a future class session. What do they want to know about volunteers? Have students work in groups of four to brainstorm questions they would like to ask a volunteer. Ask them to write three or four questions on a flip chart page.
- Display all the groups' questions. As a class, decide on a list of 6 – 8 interview questions to ask the guest speaker. Questions should address at least the following ideas:
 - Why does the guest speaker volunteer?
 - How does s/he benefit from volunteering?
 - How does his/her volunteer work benefit or fill a need in the community?
 Refer to Background #3 for examples of questions.
- Decide who will ask each of the questions to the guest speaker. Display the list of questions in the classroom.

Notes...

Background #2: What Does a Volunteer Do?

Background information on volunteering

Who is a volunteer?

Volunteers are people who freely choose to share their skills and time without expecting anything in return.

Volunteers are people who:

- ◇ care
- ◇ try new things
- ◇ take a chance
- ◇ show respect
- ◇ share
- ◇ help out
- ◇ respond to needs
- ◇ meet new people
- ◇ work for someone or something they care about
- ◇ make a difference

“Helping out” is the basis of the volunteer ethic in the NWT. Volunteering *is* helping out. It is a shared tradition of northerners. Some people help out--or volunteer--in an individual, “informal” way, which may not even be noticed. Others volunteer in a more “formal” way through organizations such as sports groups, youth groups, clubs, religious organizations, cultural groups, or community service agencies. Northerners might volunteer informally or formally, on a regular basis or when there is a special need, to help individuals or groups. All forms of volunteering involve helping out to benefit the community, and are equally valuable and valued.

Benefits of volunteering

Volunteers can and do make a difference--in their communities and in the world. Volunteering is about giving and being rewarded, not with money but with good feelings. Volunteers often say that they feel enriched even if they don't get paid, because so many people benefit. Helping others is fulfilling and empowering. Volunteering brings self-satisfaction, appreciation, recognition, and respect.

Volunteering is also about giving back. As we grow through childhood, many people share with us their wisdom, experience, and skills. By giving us their guidance and support, they help us to find and nurture our own gifts. These gifts are meant to be developed—and given back—for the good of the community.

Volunteering helps others and the community, and also benefits the volunteer. Here's what some youth have said about the benefits they received from volunteering:

- They had fun.
- They connected with people.
- They felt appreciated.
- They felt good helping others.
- They became more aware of issues and needs in their community.
- They realized they could make a difference.
- They explored job and career possibilities.
- They learned new skills.

Background #3: What Does a Volunteer Do?

Sample interview questions

- Where do you volunteer?
- What do you do as a volunteer?
- Why do you volunteer?
- Who do you help through your volunteer work?
- How did you find out about becoming a volunteer?
- Did you notice volunteers in your community when you were young?
- How much time do you spend doing volunteer work?
- In what ways do you feel you're helping out?
- How long have you been a volunteer?
- What is the most important thing you've learned from volunteering?
- How do you feel when you help someone?
- What do you think is the most difficult thing about volunteer work?
- What has been your greatest reward from volunteering?

Lesson Four

ASK A VOLUNTEER

Overview

The class interviews a guest speaker about volunteering. After the interview, students summarize, discuss, and reflect on what the speaker said. The class follows up by creating and sending a class thank you card that shows how the community benefits from volunteers.

Objectives

Students will:

- participate in an interview by asking questions, listening, summarizing, and reflecting;
- learn what's involved in being a volunteer;
- appreciate how volunteers can contribute to the community;
- understand that volunteers benefit from helping others.

Materials needed

- List of interview questions prepared during previous class.

Preparation

- Plan the agenda for this lesson. You'll need enough time for the prepared interview and a few follow-up questions, as well as class discussion. If appropriate, you might consider using two class sessions.
- Review Background #2 from Lesson Three.
- Ask a volunteer from your community to visit your class to speak about her/his volunteer work. Explain that the talk will take the form of a class “interview”, where the guest will be answering students' questions. You may want to give the guest the list of prepared questions ahead of time.
- Display the list of interview questions where all students can see it.
- Review who will be asking which questions.
- Explain the procedure for asking questions.
- Prepare the class for welcoming and thanking the guest. If your guest is an aboriginal elder, check with an aboriginal educator or community leader about the protocol for thanking an elder.

Suggested approach

- Briefly introduce the guest speaker. Leave most of the class time for the interview and discussion.
- Have students ask the prepared questions. Leave some time for spontaneous follow-up

questions.

- After the guest speaker has left, lead a discussion to review and summarize answers to as many questions as time allows. Focus on the reasons for volunteering, and the benefits of volunteering.
- Finish by discussing, or assigning for journal-writing, several of the following reflection questions:
 - Think about three things you learned from the guest speaker. Write a few sentences about each.
 - Why do people volunteer?
 - By helping the community, does the guest speaker's volunteer work help you or your family in some way? Explain how.
 - Think about ways you might help out in your school or community. What are some of the ways you could help out now? How might you like to help out when you're older?

Follow-up

Make a class thank you card (or individual cards) for the guest speaker. Have students highlight the different ways that the guest (and other volunteers) make the community stronger by volunteering.

Notes...

Lesson 5

HOW CAN I HELP?

Overview

The class brainstorms to identify needs in their school and community. Working in pairs, then individually, students find ways to help meet several needs, and reflect on what difference it will make if help is given. Students present their answers. Extension activities include making a “help needed” board for the classroom, or planning a class project to help out at school or in the community.

Objectives

Students will:

- identify needs in their school and community;
- think of ways they can help out in their school and community;
- appreciate that they can make a difference by helping;
- participate in a volunteer project of their choice (extension activity).

Materials needed

- flip chart or white board and markers
- worksheet 1

Preparation

- Make enough copies of worksheet 1 for each student.

Suggested approach

- Guide the class in a brief discussion about the value and importance of volunteering. How do volunteers make a difference when they help in their community? Review the ways a community benefits when people help to meet each others' needs and the needs of the whole community.
- With your class, brainstorm to identify where help might be needed in your school. Here are some suggestions to get you started:
 - Are there people in school who need help (students, teachers, other staff)?
 - What can we offer? (for example, “We are readers who can help others learn...”)
 - How can we make our classroom a better place? Our school? Our playground?
 - Is help needed to organize or run any school events, assemblies, trips?

List the ideas on chart pages or white board under the heading “Help Needed”.

- Go through the same step for your community.
- Distribute the worksheets.
- Have students work in pairs. Ask each member of the pair to choose a different need (school or community) from the “help needed” lists. Have partners work together to answer questions 1 and 2 on their worksheets.
- Have pairs present their ideas. *Option:* Ask each pair to perform a very brief (about 2 minutes) skit showing how helping with the need can make a difference (for example, show one of the needs before and after help is given).
- Ask each student, working individually, to answer questions 3 and 4 on the worksheet.
- Have students share their ideas with the whole class.

Extension activities

Class Volunteer Project

- Choose one of the school or community needs from your “help needed” class list.
- Brainstorm a list of ideas / activities for helping with this need. Try to include ways of helping that require various strengths and skills.
- Explain that the whole class will work together on the same project, but that each student will help out in a way that suits him/her.
- Allow students to choose how they want to contribute to the project. Ask each to volunteer for a task that suits him/her. Several students may choose the same task and work as a group.
- Work with the class to develop a work plan to complete the project.

Volunteer / Help Needed Board

- Start a Volunteer or “Helper Needed” Board in your classroom or school.
- Develop a procedure for identifying and posting “help needed” tasks for the board.
- Develop a procedure for students to volunteer and complete the tasks.

Notes...

Resources for Additional Information:

Volunteer NWT

www.volunteernwt.ca

Energize (resources for leaders of volunteers)

www.energizeinc.com

Imagine Canada

www.imaginecanada.ca

Learning to Give (resources for teachers)

www.learningtogive.org

Municipal and Community Affairs, Government of the Northwest Territories

www.maca.gov.nt.ca

Volunteer Canada

www.volunteer.ca

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