



## LESSON PLAN

# The Importance of Volunteering

Topic: **Service Learning/Volunteering** | Grade Level: **Middle School**  
Subject: **Social Studies** | Time: **50 minutes class time plus time to volunteer**

### OBJECTIVE(S):

Students will enhance their understanding of the importance of volunteering and will plan and execute small-group volunteer projects.

*(April is National Volunteer Month. It is suggested that this lesson plan be introduced earlier in the school year so volunteer projects can be completed in April.)*

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *Bear Hug* video from the MilitaryKidsConnect.org website
- Volunteering Ideas List
- "Volunteer Project Planning" Worksheet
- "Volunteering Final Report—Talking Points" Worksheet
- Go to "Related Materials" in on-line version of this lesson plan to access all required links: [www.militarykidsconnect.org/p/lp/mid](http://www.militarykidsconnect.org/p/lp/mid)

### OTHER RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Computer with classroom display and Internet access

## LESSON

### Suggested Activity Set-up and Discussion (5 minutes)

- Teacher-led discussion
  - Discuss the meaning of the word "volunteer": a person who performs a service for someone else
  - Do students know anybody who volunteers? Who is the person and what service do they perform? Why do they volunteer?
  - Explain that people in the military are volunteering to serve our country, sometimes in distant and dangerous places. Do any students have family members or friends in the military?
  - Explain that students are about to watch a video about a boy whose father is in the military. His father's service inspires him to start a volunteer project.
  - As they watch the video, ask students to pay attention to who benefits from the boy's volunteer project.

### Video (4 minutes)

- Cue and screen the *Bear Hug* video

### Class Discussion (5 minutes)

- What motivated Gavin to launch his teddy bear project? Who benefited from his efforts? What meaning did it bring to his own life?

### Small-Group Work (30 minutes)

- Distribute the "Volunteering Ideas List" and the "Volunteer Project Planning Worksheet"
- Divide students into small groups with these instructions:
  - They are to select a volunteer project to perform as a small group
  - They can use the Volunteering Ideas List as a brainstorming tool
  - They should use the "Volunteer Project Planning Worksheet" to identify specifics about their project and how it will be executed
  - The project should be completed by the end of April, National Volunteer Month
  - Once completed, the group will use the "Volunteer Final Report—Talking Points Worksheet" to make a class presentation about what they did and how project went.

# Volunteering Ideas List

Examples of volunteer activities:

- Animals
  - Collect pet food and supplies for a local animal shelter
  - Work with a local shelter to organize a pet adoption event
  
- Children
  - Set up your own toy or book drive for military kids
  
- Disabilities services
  - Collect donations to purchase books on tape for the blind
  - Organize a group that will read to people who cannot see
  
- Environment
  - Arrange a “clean up our neighborhood” event
  
- Food and meal services
  - Organize a food drive for the needy
  - Volunteer with your area’s “Meals on Wheels” program to deliver food to people who are housebound
  
- Health and hospital services
  - Plan a performance (music, art) at a local hospital, veteran’s center, or nursing home
  - Organize a campaign encouraging local residents to write letters of support to injured service members
  
- Housing and homelessness
  - Participate in your community’s “Christmas in April” event to fix up homes for people in need
  
- Media
  - Record interviews with local veterans about their military service
  - Work with a local newspaper, radio station, or TV station to raise awareness about the needs of local military families
  
- Senior citizen services
  - Through the local human services agency, arrange a day when your group will visit with senior citizens
  
- Tutoring and mentoring
  - Form a “Reading Buddies” program with a younger grade
  - Contact a nearby Veterans Affairs center to find out how you can tutor or otherwise support military kids/families

# WORKSHEET

## Volunteer Project Planning

Group members (list your names): \_\_\_\_\_

Our volunteer project is to \_\_\_\_\_.

Our goal is to \_\_\_\_\_.  
*(Example: To collect 100 pounds of food and deliver it to our local food bank.)*

*(To be successful, all projects require planning. Use this chart to list the steps for your project. You may need more or less than five steps. That's okay. Every project is different.)*

<b>Steps</b>	<b>When will you do this?</b>	<b>List any resources needed</b> <i>(supplies or help from an adult)</i>	<b>How much time did you spend on this?</b> <i>(Number of hours per person.)</i>
Step 1:			
Step 2:			
Step 3:			
Step 4:			
Step 5:			

## WORKSHEET

# Volunteering Final Report—Talking Points for Class Presentation

1. What was your volunteer activity?
2. What was your goal?
3. How did you tackle the project? What steps did you take?
4. How many hours did you spend on the project (*calculate the number of hours each group member spent and add them together*):
5. Did you meet your goal? If not, what difficulty did you encounter?
6. Did you learn anything about your community through doing this project?
7. Did you learn anything about yourselves?