



One in Five . . . A Hunger Simulation Activity

Submitted by Katie Benton, Barrington Elementary School, Upper Arlington City Schools — Upper Arlington, Ohio

“To achieve our vision of a hunger-free America, we must build partnerships across the public and private sectors. Everyone can play a role.”

— Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org)

A few fast facts . . .

- ▶ More than 1 in 5 children is at risk of hunger. Among African-Americans and Latinos, it's 1 in 3.
- ▶ Households with children reported a significantly higher food insecurity rate than households without children in 2011. 20.6 percent vs. 12.2 percent.
- ▶ In the US, hunger isn't caused by a lack of food, but rather the continued prevalence of poverty.
- ▶ 50.1 million Americans struggle to put food on the table.
- ▶ 40 percent of food is thrown out in the US every year, or about \$165 billion worth. All of this uneaten food could feed 25 million Americans.

(Source: dosomething.org)

This publication was created by Partnerships Make A Difference. For additional resources and training opportunities, visit www.partnershipsmakeadifference.org.

Materials Needed

- Blue index cards (or strips of construction paper)
- Red index cards (or strips of construction paper)
- Four large bowls
- Cheerios
- M&Ms
- Raisins
- Goldfish crackers
- Small paper cups
- Safety pins or masking tape

Snack items above are suggestions and can be adjusted as needed (pretzels, Chex, snack mix, hard candies, mints, etc).

Background

(Do not share this with children until the end.) How many children in America today are living in poverty? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2010, an estimated 26.3 million children were living below the poverty line – 22 percent of all children, or one out of every five in the United States. To illustrate the number of children living in poverty, have students count off by five. Individuals numbered 1 through 4 receive a blue card. Those numbered 5 receive a red card. (You can also just hand these out randomly per every group of five children.)

Activity

Prepare a table in the room with the four bowls of food and a stack of small paper cups. Individuals with a blue card are invited to come to the food table,

A typical service-learning project includes five components:

Investigation: Teachers and students investigate the community/world problems that they might potentially address. Investigation typically involves some sort of research and mapping activity.

Planning and Preparation: Teachers, students, and community members plan the learning and service activities, and address the administrative issues needed for a successful project.

Action: The “heart” of the project . . . engaging in the meaningful service experience that will help students develop important knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and will benefit the community.

Reflection: Activities that help students understand the service-learning experience and think about its meaning and connection to them, their society, and what they have learned in school.

Demonstration/Celebration: The final experience when students, community participants and others publicly share what they have learned, celebrate the results of the service-learning project, and look ahead to the future.

Assessment is part of all activities to ensure that the learning and development that occur through service-learning can be measured, and to help diagnose student needs, provide feedback, and improve instruction.

K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit. Created by RMC Research Corporation for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

One in Five . . .

and are allowed to take a cup and fill it with any variety of the snacks, all the way to the top, if they desire. Tell students they may not yet eat.

After that, individuals with a red card are then invited to the food table but are told they may only choose the Cheerios (or one type of snack offered) – and may only fill their cups halfway.

Optional: You might pin or tape the red cards to each child’s clothing so they can empathize with the notion that others know those kids are different or stand out. Kids may translate this into kids being poor, like when children have to present their free lunch cards in the cafeteria, announcing their poverty to their peers. (Good for discussion at the end.) Some of these students may be frustrated or complain that it is

not fair he/she did not get as much as others and that he/she was not allowed to select from all available snacks. Tell students this is the way it is.

Once the distribution is made, kids are told “eating is allowed at this time” and kids may move around the room to sit with whomever they choose. (Or, you can simply tell the student it is time to eat and watch to see if any share, give some to others, move to sit with others, etc.) Another option: The individuals with the blue cards can be advised that they may share any of their food. Determine the best strategy to use with your group. Follow up with other forms of reflection as appropriate.

Allow students to eat/share for two-three minutes.

Reflection

Younger Students:

Begin a discussion. First let students react to the situation. Ask what they observed? What happened? How did students feel? How did students react? Continue to guide discussions with prompts as needed. How did it feel to be the one in five with the red card? Perhaps relate this to children that receive free or reduced-lunch? How did it feel to stand at the table spread with food but be allowed to only choose one item – and a lesser amount than available to the others? For the blue card group, what was your initial reaction when you saw others with less? If you were told you could share your food with the others, what was your reaction? For the red card group, did others freely share with you? How did it feel to have someone share with you? Remind students this is an accurate depiction of hunger statistics in our country – one in five children go hungry each day. Follow up with other forms of reflection as appropriate.

Older Students:

Have the group members write their reactions and reflections in a journal and then share their reactions with the class. How did it feel to be the one in five with the red card? Perhaps relate this to children that receive free or

A Hunger Simulation Activity

reduced-lunch? How did it feel to stand at the table spread with food but be allowed to only choose one item – and a lesser amount than available to the others? For the blue card group, what was your initial reaction when you saw others with less? If you were told you could share your food with the others, what was your reaction? For the red card group, did others freely share with you? How did it feel to have someone share with you? Remind students this is an accurate depiction of hunger statistics in our country – one in five children go hungry each day.

Notes: The USDA classifies households as “food insecure” if they report worrying about not having enough money to buy food, if they substitute cheaper foods, skip meals, or eat less for financial reasons. If they do these things frequently, they are classified as “very low food secure.” Slightly more than 21 percent of households are “food insecure.” This is the one-in-five statistic we hear from the media and advocacy groups. Currently, 31.7 million children, or thirty percent of all school children, receive free school lunches.

K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

Meaningful Service: Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service.

Link to Curriculum: Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

Reflection: Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one’s relationship to society.

Diversity: Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

Youth Voice: Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

Partnerships: Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Progress Monitoring: Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Duration and Intensity: Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

Source: National Youth Leadership Council (www.nylc.org)

One in Five . . . A Hunger Simulation Activity

Contact Info

Name:
Katie Benton

Position:
3rd /4th grade looping teacher

School:
Barrington Elementary School

School District:
Upper Arlington Schools

School Address:
1780 Barrington Road
Upper Arlington, OH 43221

School Phone:
614.487.5180

Email: kbenton@uaschools.org

For more information about Service-Learning, Project Based Learning, and the “Growing Together” Service-Learning Network, contact:

Ellen Erlanger
Kathy Meyer
The Legacy Group,
Partnerships Make A
Difference
1601 W. Fifth Ave., #106
Columbus, Ohio 43212
(P) 614.488.3459
(F) 614.636.4726
info@partnershipsmakeadifference.org
www.partnershipsmakeadifference.org

What Ideas Can You Add?

Please take a moment to share any of your ideas for raising awareness and supporting the issue of hunger with students. It's easy to do. Go to our website, <http://www.partnershipsmakeadifference.org/hunger-awareness-project-submission.html> and complete the form. Look around our full website for lots of great resources and ideas to support service-learning and project based learning.