

Lesson 1

Words In Service

Language Arts • Grades 3–5

Continuation of
NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE



Teacher Instructions

Goals: Discuss and explore the power of words to inspire, teach, and change the world

Time Required: 40 minutes, plus an additional 30 to 60 minutes for a small service project

Materials: [Legacy of Service](#) video, classroom dictionary

Getting Started:

1. Explain that words have power. They can inspire, teach, anger, and even change the world. **Ask:** *What are some words that might motivate you to make a positive difference in the world, your community, or your family?* Moderate a lively discussion about the power of words (for good and for bad). Discuss words such as love, environment, rights, war, hunger, family, etc.
2. Introduce Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to students by watching the short video, [Legacy of Service](#). Use Dr. King's story as one example of the power of words. ([Click here](#) for additional information and classroom resources about Dr. King and his legacy, including an audio link to the "I Have a Dream" speech.)
3. Explain that Dr. King felt it was the responsibility of every person to serve others. **Ask:** *When Coretta Scott King (Dr. King's wife) says that "the greatest gift that all people can give to Dr. King is service to your fellow man," what do you think she means by service? What does it*

mean to serve others? Working as a group, combine students' responses into a single definition of service. Reinforce the idea that service happens when we see a need in our community and use our skills to help.

Taking Action:

4. Explain that students will now have a chance to observe the power of words in action. **Ask:** *Do you know a person who has devoted his or her life to service? What are some ways that you can use words, reading, and writing to help others in your school or community?* Brainstorm a list of ideas.
5. Select a project idea from your brainstorming session that can be completed in 30 to 60 minutes.
6. Implement your idea!

Wrapping Up:

7. **Ask:** *How did you feel while you were serving others? How did your service make a difference? How do you think the people you helped felt? How could you tell?* On the board, write "Being of service to our community makes us feel..." along with students' responses.
8. **Ask:** *While you were working on your service project, did you think of any other ways you could help people in your community? Is there another project you'd like to do in the future?* Discuss students' ideas and encourage them to pursue additional service projects outside of school with the help of family and friends.



Quick Project Ideas!

- Donate books to shelters, after-school groups, hospitals, and nursing homes
- Write an article for the school newspaper about volunteer opportunities in your area
- Read favorite stories aloud for a story-time event at a local library
- Help adult language learners at a community center
- Send letters to American troops stationed overseas
- Become a reading buddy to a younger student at your school
- Interview elders in your community to create a book of oral histories

