

# MLK Day of Service Project

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is a perfect opportunity to engage students in a service learning activity to honor Dr. King's legacy. Use the lesson below to work with your class or school to identify a meaningful project that involves service to others.



## Lesson Instructions:

### Choose a Cause and a Service Strategy

- Brainstorm as a class: What do you think is the most important issue facing people in our community? (If possible, invite an issue expert, such as someone working for a local social services organization, to visit your class.)
- Distribute the Student Spark Activity Sheet to each student. Decide as a class, on a cause to focus on, and have students write a short response about why this cause matters to them.
- Introduce the following terms with the ASAP acronym: Awareness, Service, Advocacy, and Philanthropy. (Access the [Classrooms With a Cause Teacher Toolkit](#) for more information on each service strategy.)
- Using the Student Spark Activity Sheet, brainstorm examples of each service strategy with students. Vote on a project to complete as a class for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service.

### Identify Sparks and Skills

- Introduce the idea of a “spark”—a passion or interest that brings out the best in a person. Have students complete the Student Spark Activity Sheet to identify the interests and strengths that they can bring to the service project. Connect students' interests to the tasks you assign them. For tips, click [here](#).

### Take Action

Organize your class into teams with team leaders (assigned or elected). Assign tasks to each team:

- ❑ Build Partnerships—This team will contact potential partners in the community for support.
- ❑ Gather Resources—This team will research costs, access to free resources, and develop a budget.
- ❑ Tell the Story—This team will spread the word about the project using social media and through contacting local news media.
- ❑ Work With Volunteers—This team will decide on the need for volunteers, then recruit and train them.
- ❑ Organize Event Logistics—This team will create a plan for the event, including the schedule, facilities, equipment management, transportation, signage, and safety plans.

After the event, **reflect** with the class. Discuss: What impact did your project have? How do you know?

### Sample Project: Financial Mentoring

Student volunteers will teach a class of younger students about financial literacy and provide information to take home to educate their families and neighbors.

**Cause:** Financial Literacy

**ASAP Strategy:** Awareness

#### Step 1: Research and plan.

- ❑ Lead a discussion with your class about financial literacy. What do the students know? Why is it important? What happens when not everyone has access to this information?
- ❑ Have students conduct research about the key concepts that people need to know to make financial decisions. Get started with the financial literacy resources at [scholastic.com/regions](http://scholastic.com/regions) and [scholastic.com/mck](http://scholastic.com/mck).
- ❑ Invite a financial literacy expert to visit your class to discuss local resources.
- ❑ Work together as a class to develop a financial literacy lesson to teach to a younger class and educational materials to share with families.

#### Step 2: Recruit people to help.

- ❑ Coordinate with your school staff to identify a class for your students to visit.

#### Step 3: Promote the issue.

- ❑ Have students create announcements (via the school newsletter or social media feeds) to raise awareness about the program.

#### Step 4: Host the event.

- ❑ Help students complete tasks—presenting information to the younger class, sitting with younger students to help answer questions, distributing the educational materials.
- ❑ Use a sign-in sheet to collect data and show your efforts!

#### Step 5: Recognize and say thank you.

- ❑ Have students write thank-you notes to people who helped with the project.
- ❑ Assess the impact of the project—how many students and families were served?