

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 and 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?

Student Spark Activity Sheet MLK Day

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an important leader who stood for civil rights, nonviolent solutions to problems, individual empowerment, and equal economic opportunity for all. Use this activity sheet to plan your service project for the MLK Jr. Day of Service.



As a Class

What's your cause?

What community issue will be your focus? Circle one:

Financial literacy	Poverty & Homelessness	Education	Hunger
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What's your action strategy?

Hey, changemakers! Which ASAP strategy will you use to address this cause? Circle one:

- **Awareness:** Share information and teach others to change people's behaviors for the better (such as create brochures to share information about financial aid opportunities).
- **Service:** Directly meet a need in your community by donating your time and talent (such as lead a financial literacy workshop for families in your community).
- **Advocacy:** Speak out or write letters to persuade policy makers to change regulations and laws (such as persuade your school district to include financial literacy as a part of the curriculum at your school).
- **Philanthropy:** Collect and donate money and supplies to an organization (such as raise money to donate to a local organization that helps people access financial assistance).

We will lead through _____ to _____. Our class project is _____.

As an Individual

What's your spark?

Your spark is an activity or interest that inspires you to do your best. What are you passionate about? Circle one or more:

creative arts	sports	writing	nature	other: _____
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How will you use your spark to contribute to the class project? I will use _____ to _____.

What's your skill?

We need lots of different skills to make change in the world! Circle which skill is a strength for you.

Critical Thinking (looking at information to solve problems)	Creativity (coming up with new ideas)	Collaboration (working together to achieve a goal)	Communication (sharing questions and ideas)
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What skill will you learn through the class project? I will learn _____ by _____.