**Service-Learning Workshop**

***Introduce Presenter.***

***What does a servant heart look like?* How do we achieve a servant heart?**

Brainstorm in groups

Can each group share a couple of ideas.

***What is Service Learning?***

Swaner & Erdvig (2018) define service learning as “a powerful pedagogy that connects classroom learning with service opportunities in the community, in an iterative cycle where student learning is facilitated through structured reflection” (p. 17).

***Biblical Mandate***

There is no question from the reading of scripture that God desires for us to serve.

Isa 58

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice  
    and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
    and break every yoke?  
**7**Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
    and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
    and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Matt 25

**34**“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **35**For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, **36**I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

1st Timothy 6.17-19

**17**Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. **18**Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. **19**In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. This passage says that our generosity results in life that is truly life.

*\*What do you think it means when it says that our generosity results in life that is truly life?*

And there are many more passages which we don’t have time to go through today. My guess is that if you are here today you know the biblical mandate and you have a heart for seeing this passion manifest in the student you teach.

***Shallom***

All people are created for shalom—a sense of wholeness, delight in and flourishing of relationships that have been fully reconciled—with God, with our self, with others, and with creation. Shalom was God’s original design in creation and is His mission in redemption. The promise of shalom restored is secured at the cross and will be completed in full when Jesus returns.

Shalom then is our *telos*, informing why and how we ‘do’ service activities. This single telos of holistic peace and flourishing includes every learner irrespective of age and developmental stage. Shalom unites diverse curriculum narratives and enables students to know God’s order, do God’s work, and learn to live peacefully together. This commitment to holistic education is born out of the conviction that every person, as a bearer of God’s image, is designed to be filled and equipped by the Spirit of God in order to serve the communities of which they are a part (family, church, school, workplace). Accordingly, Christian schools seek to nurture personal responsibilities such as self-understanding, discipline, and emotional intelligence, as well as communal responsibilities, including a reverence for the environment, a sense of social justice, and an attitude that respects and celebrates difference. Service is embedded in the DNA of our role as agents of reconciliation and wise peacemakers in the world.

**Benefits of Service Learning**

1. ***Christian Formation***

Service Learning is an approach to Christian formation with strategies that seek to transform (not merely inform) students as biblical knowledge is ultimately intended for application and spiritual maturity is marked by a humble heart of service and a deep love for others.

“Service is not seen as an extracurricular activity, but central to a Christian vision of holistic education. Faith at work through service is the fruit of biblical literacy. As students grow in their understanding and love of Christ, the fruit of their maturity will be seen in their behaviour as God’s image-bearers, bringing healing, renewal, deliverance, justice, and peace to a world that is suffering” (Graham, 2009).

Service allows students to discover their role and purpose as they orient themselves within God’s redemptive story and plan, and ‘live out’ the calling in Ephesians 2:10: “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do

1. ***Learning through Service and meeting Curriculum Outcomes***

Research has found that learning through service leads to academic, social and developmental growth. Academically, service learning has been linked to greater levels of student achievement, as well as increased motivation and greater satisfaction with their learning experiences as students can apply content learned in class in the ‘real world’ (Warren 2012; Berson and Younkin, 1998). Service learning has also been linked to an increase in 21st century learning skills, such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, leadership, collaboration and communication (Goldberg, McCormick Richburg, & Wood, 2006).

Students will develop a sense of purpose and be wanting to be good citizens who contribute and give back to society.

The General Capabilities outlined in the Australian Curriculum, such as ‘Personal and Social Capability’, ‘Ethical Understanding’ and ‘Intercultural Understanding’, as well as all three Cross-Curriculum Priorities are easily aligned with a biblical worldview. As the Australian Curriculum calls for a “democratic, equitable, and just society”, Christian schools can also demonstrate how God’s redemptive and restorative plan will lead to this outcome (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

[ACARA], 2016).

* *Project the scope and sequence with curriculum links from Swan.*

1. ***Socially***

Service learning contributes to a students’ ability to work well with others and increases students’ desire for community involvement through the development of civic values (Eyler and Giles 1999; Prentice 2007). Students also feel an increased sense of connectedness with their peers, school faculty, and local community (Eyler & Giles 1999). Developmentally, service learning has been shown to increase students’ self-efficacy, agency, identity formation and their sense of well-being (Felten and Clayton, 2011).

1. **For the Teacher**

For staff, service learning encourages interactive teaching methods and lively class discussions, provides networking and professional development opportunities, creates additional opportunities for staff to guide student learning, supports research endeavors and strengthens relationships between schools and their local community.

1. **For the School**

* It gives credence to the name Christian on the front of our school. A strong service program demonstrates that we walk the walk not just talk the talk when it comes to being a light in our community.
* The school will get a good name in the community through its involvement in projects which help the environment and the marginalised.
* It builds a culture of others centeredness in the College.
* Developing of solid networks with parents, churches, and community organisations.

1. ***Exposing students to the real world***

It is hard for the heart to feel what the eye hasn’t seen. When our students see the situations close up, and meet the people, and hear their stories, it diffuses their prejudices, creates empathy, and motivates them to serve. I took a group of year 9 students out to do a clean-up of a yard and garden for a family in crisis. And when we arrived I could hear murmurs from the students and knew that they were directed at the state of the property. They were questioning, as I was, why the tenants had let things get so bad. To extenuate these prejudicial views even further, the family were Aboriginal people. We noticed a tree in the front garden was chopped down at its roots and surrounded by freshly cut flowers. We thought that was strange. Anyway the kids meet the grandmother was rented the property and were able to hear her story. She had just come out of hospital after having a triple bypass, her son who was also there had just come out of a serious car accident and was bound to a wheel chair and the tree in the front garden was chopped down because 2 weeks prior her nephew committed suicide by hanging himself on that tree. This was a lesson for all of us about not judging book by its cover. It also brought context to our experience and a reason to give that bit extra when we cleaned up her yard.

I could talk all day about experiences where our students and staff have been touched at a deep level by something they have witnessed which has motivated them out of compassion to serve. A group of students who I took to Zambia in 2018 were convicted to put their money together to provide a mattress for Sarah. A woman living in a small mud hut with a corrugated iron roof. Sarah was the victim of rape and domestic violence on numerous occasions. She struggled to find work because of the pain inflicted on her body through the abuse she suffered. The students provided a mattress for her and her 4 children to sleep instead of the mud floor of her tiny house. They felt good about delivering the mattress in person and witnessing the gratitude from Sarah for this token of love they showed to her.

This experience is now indelibly etched in the memories of these students and I am sure will influence how they view those experiencing hardship, poverty and violence.

When we stand back from the situation it is easy to judge and want the problem to go away.

But just as with the feeding of the 5000 story, Jesus wasn’t going to send the crowds away, he wanted the disciples to feed them. He wanted to disciple to get up close and personal with the people who they saw as a burden and meet their needs. It was in the context of this crisis that the power of God shone through and we saw a miracle as the loaves and the fishes multipled. and that’s what can happen when we get students out of the classroom and out of their comfort zones. God will often surprize us and reveal himself through the stuff that happens.

I took a group of yr 11 and 12 students to an outback community known as Wangkatjunka, and the students were serving the school through providing tutoring for Indigenous students. Well on the first day the Aboriginal ladies who cleaned the school saw Swan Christian College on our shirts, and invited us to join them that night at their prayer meeting. We arrived at 7.00pm and discovered that the prayer meeting was held in the cleaners front yard. They borrowed plastic chairs from the neighbours to sit us around in a circle in the red dirt under the bright star lit sky, dogs were running around and little children were crying. But these students from Swan Christian College, none of whom professed to be Christians, were blown away when these folks started singing and praying. It was a surreal and yet divine experience which made the hairs on your neck stand up. When we went back to the accommodation the students stood out under the stars and talk for over an hour about the things of God. Now this was not planned for as a part of the trip yet when the students were asked individually what they enjoyed most about the trip about half of them said that it was the prayer meeting.

Another time I had a group of students in Thailand at a ministry to people with leprosy. A Swiss German man by the name of Hans Hansma would cook meals three times a week and take them out on the back of his motor bike. These people had stumps for hands and stumps for feet and where often blind because of the effects of the leprosy. They could not cook or feed themselves because of their disability so Hans would help them. It was inspirational for our students to witness this man Hans who had dedicated his life to helping these souls. Our students went out in small teams to help Hans with his meal run and what happened next was to break their hearts open even further. An elderly lady with leprosy requested to pray for the students. The prayer was translated and it was so profound that the students were cut to the heart and tears were flowing from everyone in the room.

We also attended a Government orphanage in Thailand where there were 20 babies per carer. These women could barely keep up with feeding the children and changing nappies, let alone provide emotional support. We held the infants and they clung to us like they were starved for affection. We were shocked and perplexed when we had to go and tried to put the babies back in their cots. They gripped us so tight that we had to pry them away from us, they were crying in anguish, not wanting us to leave. Walking out of that orphanage to leave those children in that predicament was one of the hardest things that we have ever had to do. It was an experience that we will never forget.

1. ***Giving opportunities for Hands on service***

We need create opportunities for our students to serve with their hands. You might have heard the head, heart and hands model for transformative learning. I like to think about this as a cyclic model. If we recognise a need in the world through our cognition and engage our hearts through insight to the stories, then to help through hands on experience it takes our learning to a whole new dimension. This leads to deeper knowledge (head) a change in our values, attitudes (heart) and seeking other ways to serve more effectively (hands) .

**Activity Time**

***Time to get up for an activity. I have called this activity “ The truth is in the tension”.***

One end of the room is strongly agree and the other end is strongly disagree. Position yourself in the room based on your answer to the following statements. People will be asked to justify their position and think about alternative viewpoints.

* A true mark of a Christian is their capacity to serve?
* A school should prioritize supporting local charities over supporting overseas needs?
* Students should come up with the ideas of which charities and community needs the school should support?
* Kids don’t need to leave the school grounds to learn how to serve?
* The emphasis on service learning in a school depends on the level of support from the school’s executive team.
* Service-related activities should be optional so only those who are interested should attend?
* There is such a thing as serving too much and giving too much?
* The school should explore a wide variety of service partners rather than just a couple?

**When Service Programs are Counterproductive?**

* A food drive once a year for Salvos, or the school participating in a casual dress day to raise money for the bushfire victims, although worthy causes, they are not going to transform the heart of the child. An effective program will see a buy in from all the staff and a systematic approach which reaches across curriculum areas and year groups. We need to avoid tokenism as Christian schools but look at our community/ world needs and find curriculum links which compliment a deeper understanding of the issue. Are our texts and lesson plans challenging stereotypes, exposing injustice, creating empathy, getting students to think of solutions to real world problems?
* When we offer help we need to e careful that we are not patronising. We are not the savior from the west who is riding in on our white horse to fix all of the problems for these poor pitiful souls. Where is the dignity in that for the people who we are “saving”? We need to help them to help themselves. Ie teach a man to fish. But not in a patronising way. But in ways which demonstrate the mutual benefit of the relationship. They need to know that we can learn so much from them. We need to encourage them and celebrate what they have to offer us. After establishing a charity in Zambia and working with a local agency to build a primary school I have had to learn a few lessons the hard way. It is very easy to create a dependence mentality and I have had to work hard to change that mindset. We now have an 8 year plan to transition out so that the project will be completely autonomous.
* It is important that we do not do what they are able to do – eg. painting the orphanage in Mexico 22 times, each year a new group of American teenagers would come and feel like they were helping by painting this orphanage. We need the locals to either get the income from doing the job which needs to be done or to give of themselves to be a blessing to their community. If we keep paying for things or doing the work that they can do, we take away the opportunity for them to show who Christ is to each other.
* I tell students if they really want to make a difference them go back to Australia and get trained in an area of expertise that is lacking in some of these countries. I have seen students come back and get medical, nursing and teaching degrees as a result of these trips. I have organised numerous individuals over to Zambia and the Philippines to provide expertise in teacher training. Something that will value add to the project which they cant provide for themselves.

**5. Pillars of Service Learning**

***1. Be Intentional*** – It is good to have a plan and not a just a token approach which allows the school to tick a box that they have done the service component for the year. We want to compliment specific curriculum outcomes and we want to give our students a variety of opportunities which can give them a deeper appreciation of the value of service both for themselves and the world around them. We want to crystalize the students knowledge and skills through these experinces.

***2. Provide Meaningful Service****.* - the service should be age appropriate, engaging and purposeful for both the students and those whom they are serving. The activity needs to be meeting real needs in the world. Engaging students in service is best done in an age and developmentally-appropriate manner. At the beginning of their education, students’ understanding is often limited to their immediate surroundings, encompassing (at most) their family, school and church environment. As students move through school, these surroundings broaden such that they finish school already thinking and working as global citizens engaging in service.

***3. Develop Strong Partnerships****.* Michael Chen (2019) refers to this approach as ‘relationship-based service learning’, claiming that “service-learning is most powerful when opportunities intentionally facilitate the development of meaningful connections and relationships to deepen ‘knowing’ others in a lasting way” (para 7)

Some of the strong partnerships I have forged over the years have provided rich and meaningful service experiences. Some of these organisations are the Salvation Army, Youth with a Mission, Teach Learn and Grow, People who care, Good Samaritan industries, Keep Australia Beautiful, Regis, First Love International in the Philipinnes, Hagar International, World Vision and Immanuel Mercy and Reach Out Ministries in Zambia. Having strong partnerships means a greater level of trust. It is good it a project can be followed through so the experience is not just a one off, isolated experience, which can feel like a drop in the ocean. It is good for the students, the school and the organisation you are partnering with to reach some goals which are mutually beneficial. In the case on the Philipines we have been able to connect our trade training students with a school which has been established for a marginalized group known as the Ati people. The primary school runs Philippines day every year and raised about 12-15k which can be used for our trade students to help with the construction of this school. In Zambia we have been able to establish a school from scratch starting about 9 years ago. Now the infrastructure is complete and the first class of year 7’s has graduated and are about to start high school. With the Indigenous immersion trips to Wangkatjunka the fact that the college has gone to help the school over consecutive years has spoken volumes to the people. A level of trust has been built which has helped the community to lower their barrier and embrace the students and a part of their family. An elder allowed our team onto his sacred land and we were the first white people to visit his families sacred water hole and see the ancient cave paintings. Salvation army have been a great organization as we have been able to connect with them on may levels. They visit the College and run workshops for our year 7’s on understanding homelessness, we are able to cook soup for them each term through a group of student volunteers who met twice a term after school. We run a sleepout for the homeless to raise money and create empathy and our year 12 students can go out once a month and serve the soup on the streets of the city. I think a school would be better to have one solid partnership than to do lots of small fundraisers for groups in which the school has little of no connection.

While the process of building genuine relationships is hard work and takes longer, when relationships are placed at the fore of service, students are equipped to be effective, Christ-centred leaders full of empathy as they seek to address the deep needs of the world for the glory of God. Partnerships flourish as the strengths and passions of each partner are leveraged and applied strategically to the issue at hand (Lavey, 2017).4

***4. Give Youth a Voice***

*Group question: How can we encourage students to feel more involved in the Schools service leaning program?*

If a student comes to me with an idea, I will try not to squish it too quickly. I believe that if it can be done and, it’s not going to be a huge amount of work then let’s see what we can do?

My most recent one was giving a girl who wanted to raise money for the Ukrainian Refugees. She ran a bake sale and sausage sizzle and , with the help of her parents set up an online art auction. She raised over $5000 for the cause which was a tremendous encouragement for our year 7 student.

To get the whole cohort involved, and for them to feel like they had a voice, I arranged them into groups and look through the Tearfund catalogue for items that they can raise funds for . Over the past 2 years each group of year 7s have raised about $2000 made up of laying chickens, goats, teacher salaries, clean water etc. I had a representative from Tearfund come and speak so that the students understood the relevance of the task.

The more that these young ones can be involved in the decision making then the more likely they will be to commit to supporting the cause.

***5. Meaningful Reflection***

The strength of a Service-Learning opportunity’s will be determined by the capacity for reflection.

* For the students to see the relevance of the experience against other learning outcomes.
* For the students to have an opportunity to journal and consider the impact on them personally.

These might include: How they have grown through the experience?

What skills and new insights they have developed?

How this has impacted their world view? Or their priorities?

Will this experience change where they see themselves in the future?

And how they see the work of God in and through the experience?

The reflection time can also include goal setting. Ie:

What else can be done to help the situation?

What changes do they need to work on in

themselves to be more equipped for future

opportunities?

**Develop and Scope and Sequence from K -12**

***The scope of activity is to develop a holistic approach to service learning.***

If possible it is good to cover a range of local, national and international needs. This gives the students an appreciation of the complexity of problems facing the world. It is important that there is a variety ranging from supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community such as the elderly, who are often overlooked, to dealing with environmental needs through activities such as rubbish collection or tree planting. This is about ensuring a healthy environment for humans and animals into the future. If there is a local disaster which requires volunteers the school could get involved in helping in a tangible way. Through exposing students to a variety of service opportunities it will enable them to discover more about themselves.

Even if it’s once a year, I believe that it is better than nothing. At Swan Christian College I was given a mandate to develop a service learning program from K – 12 so that at least once a year the students would do something service related. Our kindergarten kids entertained the elderly at the local aged care facility, our year ones wrote to children at our school in Zambia and they wrote back, our year 4’s cleaned litter at a local park as a part of the Keep Australia Beautiful Campaign, Year 5 students made chocolates to sell and raise money for students at our school in the Philipines. Year 6 students interviewed elderly people and wrote reports about their lives, Yr 7’s did workshops run by the Salvos about working with the marginalised and then were encouraged to support their winter appeal or to join super soupers to cook soup for the homeless, or to participate in the sleepout for the homeless. Year 8- 10’s took a full day out each year to help with environmental groups, garden for pensioners, sort clothes at Good Sammy’s and a variety of other things. Yr 11’s and 12’s can participate in a range of local community service projects such as helping children read with the Smith foundation, serving soup of the streets or going on a mission trip to a developing country or a remote indigenous community.

The diagram below demonstrates how the knowledge and practice of service might build on and expand through the ‘spheres of service’ (see above diagram) across the years.

 

**Finally, testimony of the impact on past students.**

**Any Questions**