



## SERVE PARENT MEETING

The following outline can help guide your meeting with parents about SERVE. Also included is a PowerPoint presentation that you can use during this meeting. The words in italics are ready for you to use. All other text is information for you to read ahead of time. Grab a friend or ministry partner to share the responsibility. Two are better than one!

This information is condensed—just add passion. Feel free to adapt or change this as you need to for your setting and the time of year. You can also use this same information to recruit and educate prayer partners in your church.

### 1. Prepare for the meeting well ahead of time:

- Make sure your church leadership is informed of the trip and has approved the details you will share with the parents.
- Announce ahead of time that the meeting will be an introduction to the trip and that it will be brief. Keep it to 45 minutes. Any longer and you're getting into too many details.
- Set the room for an informal and relaxed meeting.
- Recognize that some parents come with anxiety and many questions. Others come with a sense of peace because their student has been on trips before. All want the basic information in a concise manner, which includes: who, what, where, when, why, how and how much. Watch out for that one parent (every group has one) that goes down the rabbit trail of "what ifs" or "remember the time when. . . ."

### 2. Open the meeting in a greeting and prayer:

- PowerPoint screen one: SERVE logo

### 3. About Youth Unlimited:

- PowerPoint screen two: Youth Unlimited website home page

*SERVE is a one-week mission trip that introduces high school students to spreading the gospel through service. Through working, students are introduced to missional living and issues of justice.*

- PowerPoint screen three: Youth Unlimited Mission Statement

*Youth Unlimited is unique in that it partners with churches. We will be one of 150 Sending Churches involved this coming summer who will be going out to about 30 different Host Churches.*

- PowerPoint screen four: Emphasis of SERVE

*SERVE is structured to emphasize these areas to our students:*

- *Opportunities to worship*
- *Pursuing a deeper walk with God*
- *Revealing God-given strengths*
- *Opportunities to serve*
- *Showing a broken world in need*

- *Strengthening adult & student relationships*

#### **4. Share the big vision of this trip and experience:**

*As followers of Christ, we are co-laborers with him, restoring a broken world. Our youth ministry is praying about where to serve and how to expand our view of what God is doing in this world. We want to serve and learn so that we can impact our own community for Christ and help inspire our congregation.*

*There are Church leaders in other communities in Canada and the U.S. that are praying for help with their community outreach. We'd like to be an answer to that prayer. Name the specific site you are going to, and share the site description verbally or hand it out at this time.*

*The Host Team in (site name) has mobilized their congregation to pray for and work in the community, and we want to help them for one week so that we not only serve them, but also learn from them. The impact on the Host Church and the community energizes the local body of Christ and shares the gospel in a loving and tangible way.*

*Here's what two Host Churches have said about the impact:*

*"Hosting Youth Unlimited's SERVE is a great extension of the ministry we do throughout the year, and it helps us continue and advance the Kingdom work that God is doing here." - Host Team, Midwest U.S.A.*

*"We are looking forward to hosting SERVE for a number of reasons. First, it has been monumentally important to the spiritual growth of our students individually, as well as a huge factor in the growth of our unity, community and the relationships within our student ministry. Second, we desperately want to share the spiritual experience that has impacted our students with the parents of our church, praying that this will be a catalyst for the growth of student/parent discipleship and relationships. Third, we want to use Serve as a new way of reaching into our community, capitalizing on the connections that we already have and developing more missional relationships that will allow us to live the gospel out practically and intentionally in our city." - Host Church, Ontario*

#### **5. Our students will learn from those they are serving:**

*There are people in every community praying that God would meet their needs. Some of those needs are tangible, work-related projects that have a significant bearing on that person's financial, social and emotional well-being. Meeting that need and sharing the gospel will impact them spiritually as well.*

*The typical schedule will include five to six hours of work per day. Our students will be put into work teams that double as their small group for discussion after the evening worship sessions.*

*Students will get up around 7:00 AM, eat breakfast, have personal devotions and go off to work, where they will work alongside and learn from the person or organization being served. The worksites are overseen by the Host Team and the adult leaders who have come along with their students.*

#### **6. Students will be doing meaningful work:**

- *PowerPoint screen five: Types of work in major categories*

*Groups may be assigned to rake a lawn for an elderly woman who lost her husband last year. They will get to meet her and hear her story. Other groups may build a wheelchair ramp that will be used by a young man who was in an accident. They will hear his story and be able to encourage him. It could be*

that they sort groceries or clothes for several hours, then spend time with people who live on the street or are underemployed and in need of a meal or something to wear.

The following are five areas that students could have the opportunity to serve in: (You can read some of the following examples, or cut and paste them into a handout.)

**1. Community Revitalization:** This may include light construction, maintenance, cleaning, demolition, general improvements to homes, non-profit offices, local government buildings and land, cleaning vacant lots, building wheelchair ramps, etc.

**2. Compassion for the Marginalized:** Those in need of food and clothing benefit when Serve participants sort and distribute these essentials with hope and joy. Also benefiting from this are persons in need of social acceptance and genuine affirmation, such as the developmentally, physically or cognitively disabled. The “working poor,” though they may not be destitute, often feel overlooked and have legitimate needs that a student workforce can help to meet. Tangible and non-tangible needs are addressed as Serve participants listen to and learn from the life stories of those receiving the work.

**3. Creation Care:** Some tasks in this category seem like mundane chores until we consider that God himself commanded that we be wise stewards of his world. Things like community gardening, cleaning up a park, repairing bike trails, feeding horses used for therapy and installing erosion fencing all have a profound impact and help to change lives.

**4. Recreational Ministry for Children:** Whether in a city park or a community outreach program, caring for children can help impact the entire family and the future. Games, crafts, songs and Bible stories can be used to educate and minister to children and their parents.

**5. Acts of Kindness Leading to Evangelism:** This goes way beyond busy work, turning the receiver’s thoughts and attention, even if only for a few moments, to the love of Christ. This also helps the Host Team/Organization boost their relationship with the community. With students’ help they can canvas an entire area and build Christ’s reputation by doing so.

## **7. Impact on our students:**

- PowerPoint screen six: Growing in thankfulness, generosity, prayer, justice, investigating their strengths, wrestling with current life issues.

*We want this to be more than just a short trip. We want this to become a significant part of students’ life journeys by helping them to connect their Christian life to actual transformation, both personally and in the community. The environment will be set for our students to grow in thankfulness, generosity, prayer, justice thinking, investigating their strengths and wrestling with their current life issues.*

## **8. Registration process:**

- PowerPoint screen seven: Registration process
- Raise \$\_\_\_\_\_ USD per person going. This includes the registration amount, a t-shirt, travel and expenses to get to the site. Additionally, students can bring money for souvenirs if they would like to.
- If funds are a concern, Youth Unlimited has scholarship funds available. Simply fill out the Scholarship Application found on their website, and return it to their office.

- *Register online.* You can either have each person register online themselves or you can distribute the Registration Form to gather their information and then register them later.
- *Provide one adult leader for every five students, including one adult for each gender represented. Adult leaders will receive a Leader Guide ahead of time and will be expected to lead small group discussions, supervise at a worksite and be a spiritual leader for the students. This is a great opportunity to show a Christ-like attitude to students while serving alongside them.*

#### **9. Q & A:**

*I won't have the answer to every question asked, but if I don't know the answer I will list your questions and make sure to get the answers later.*

- Found on the Youth Unlimited website is a list of Frequently Asked Questions. You can print those off ahead of time in case some of those questions are asked. Items like travel information and insurance are talked about there.
- Have the SERVE Planning Calendar along, and make sure that key people in your church leadership also have a copy.

Youth Leader: If there are any questions or additional information that we can get for you, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Phone: Youth Unlimited at 616.241.5616

Email: [missions@youthunlimited.org](mailto:missions@youthunlimited.org)

#### **10. Close in prayer**