

LESSON 2: Caring for Our Community



TOTAL TIME:
45–60 minutes

Objectives



Students will be able to:

- Identify their time, talents, treasure, and ties (4 T's) and connect them to a cause they care about.
- Observe their school or local community and name at least one unmet need.
- Plan one specific service action using at least one of their T's.
- Actively recruit at least one other person to join their service effort.

Guiding Questions

- What is service?
- Who in our community might need help?
- How can using the 4 T's help you care for the community?

Materials



- Whiteboard or chart paper and markers
- My Talent Tree handout
- Needs of the School handout

Differentiation Strategies

For younger learners (K–2):

- Use picture cards showing helpers to anchor the discussion.
- Focus on one specific person the child wants to help.
- Encourage students to use drawing to share their thoughts.
- Keep the service action immediate and school-based (e.g., “share my snack,” “welcome a new student”).

For older learners (3–5):

- Push for specificity: “I’ll be nicer” is not a service plan. “I’ll spend 20 minutes helping Mr. K tidy the art room every Tuesday” is.
- Encourage students to research whether a local organization already addresses the need they’ve identified.
- Challenge students to design a service action that could scale by considering what would happen if ten people did the action together.

For students who need additional support:

- Pre-teach the vocabulary: service, time, talent, treasure, and ties.
- Offer a completed action plan as an example before students create their own.
- When introducing the 4 T's, help students start with their Ties, thinking about who they want to help is often easier than thinking about what they can do.

Where could this fit?

- ELA: Read a picture book about a young person who helps others. For example, *Each Kindness* or *The Invisible String*. Discuss how the character used their T's.
- Social Studies: Map the local community and identify helpers in different roles, government, nonprofits, volunteers, and neighbors.
- Math: Calculate collective impact: "If every student in our class did their pledge, how many people would we have helped?"
- After-school: Make connections to what students are learning during the school day.
- At home: Connect with people in the community to hear their stories of service.



Extension

- Ask students to carry out their service pledge before the next session and report back. Ask, "What was easier or harder than expected?"
- Students can start a "Helpers Journal," noting every act of service they observe or participate in over the coming week.
- Invite a local community helper (librarian, food pantry volunteer, youth organizer) to speak briefly about their work.

Introduction

- Tell students that today's lesson is about service, and that service is one of the most powerful forms of generosity.
- Say: "Service means using what you have (your time, your talents, your treasure, and your ties) to help others. Today, we're going to talk about how you can make a service plan to help others."
- Ask: "Who is a helper you know? It could be someone in your family, your school, or your neighborhood, or even you!" Share your own brief story of a time you helped someone.
- Each student gets a sticky note or small paper. Have them draw or write the name of a helper and what that person does. Add all notes to a class "Helper Wall." Read a few aloud.
- Ask: "What do all these helpers have in common?" Listen for students to identify that helpers notice needs and take action.



15
minutes

Direct Instruction

- Introduce the 4 T's: Time, Talent, Treasure, and Ties. Write each on the board with a brief definition.
 - Time: the hours you choose to give
 - Talent: the skills and strengths that are uniquely yours
 - Treasure: giving money or material support
 - Ties: the people in your network, friends, family, and classmates who might join you
- Tell a brief story: "Last year, a girl named Ana loved to bake. She baked cookies and sold them to raise money for the animal shelter. She asked five friends to help sell. And she spent every Saturday doing it."
- Ask: "Which T's did Ana use?"
 - Ana used her talent to bake cookies. She used her ties when she asked her friends to help. She used treasure by raising money. She used her time when she spent every Saturday selling cookies.

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- Distribute the “My Talents Tree” outline. Invite students to draw or write one talent on each branch. Partners share and add one talent they notice in each other that the partner missed.
- Invite partners to share their trees and, as appropriate, suggest talents that they notice in each other.
- Ask: “Which T feels easiest to give right now? Which feels hardest? Why?”

Guided Practice

- Tell students: “Now we’re going to look at our school and community with fresh eyes, like a problem-spotter.”
- Have students use the “Needs of the School” notetaker. This notetaker has two columns: “Need I notice” and “One thing I could do.”
- After walking around the school and having students take notes, invite them to share observations. As a class, choose one shared observation and brainstorm: “What could we do about this, together?”
- Ask: “Why do some needs become invisible? How could we make them visible?” Students identify their top priority and share using: “The need I care most about addressing is ___.”
- Share that service doesn’t require money or special permission. It starts with noticing a need and deciding to act.



Handouts

- My Talent Tree
- Needs of the School



Independent/ Group Practice



- Say: “Now I want you to make a real plan, not a wish, but a plan with a specific action, a specific person you’ll help, and someone you’ll invite to join you.”
- Share that students will create a poster sharing how they will address the need they identified. Their poster should include:
 - What the need is
 - How it will be addressed
 - What the impact will be
 - A call to action for others to help
- Invite 2–3 students to share their posters. Ask the class: “What makes this plan specific enough to actually happen?”

Reflection



- Bring the group together. Ask: “What’s the difference between wanting to help and actually helping someone?” Invite students to share. Listen for students to connect intention to specific action.
- Ask: “What’s one way your Ties could make your service more powerful?” Invite 2–3 students to share.
- Reinforce the core idea: “Service doesn’t require money or special permission. It starts with noticing a need and deciding to use what you already have.”
- Preview the next lesson: “Next time, we’ll go deeper, exploring all four T’s and learning how philanthropy creates ripples far beyond what we can see.”
- **Optional closing challenge:** *Before our next session, try one thing from your service plan, even a small version, and notice what happens.*



My Talent Tree

Draw or write about your talents in the tree branches.



