

EDUCATION+



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY OF SERVICE IDEAS



**MLK
DAY**

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

MLK Day is a national day of service — a moment to honor Dr. King by advancing his dream. His “I Have a Dream” speech lasted just sixteen minutes, reminding us that even small moments can spark real change. This year, make your sixteen minutes count through service that uplifts your community. Below are a few examples, organized by time commitment, to help you brainstorm meaningful ways to serve.



16 MINUTES OR LESS SERVICE PROJECTS



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Write affirming notes or messages celebrating identity, belonging, or inclusion and share them with your community.
- Create multilingual labels or mini-guides to support neighbors or community members learning English.



Community & Service

- Spend sixteen minutes picking up litter in a park, neighborhood, or public space.
- Write a positive review for a local business you care about or recommend them to a friend or neighbor.



Mental Health

- Reach out to someone who might need connection—send a voice note, text, or handwritten card.
- Start a gratitude list or reflection and share it with someone.



Global Citizenship

- Write letters of appreciation to active-duty service members or veterans.
- Learn about an issue you care about and share a reputable resource to spread awareness.



Food Access & Sustainability

- Gather a bag of shelf-stable food or hygiene items to donate.
- Do a “no waste” challenge: organize your fridge, freeze food, or reduce waste for the week.



STEM, Creativity & Innovation

- Spend sixteen minutes brainstorming solutions for a community issue you care about.
- Use a creative skill—drawing, coding, woodworking—to make or start something small that supports someone else.



Tip! These service ideas can be lengthened or shortened to fit your needs.



1 HOUR SERVICE PROJECTS



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Label items around the school to support English Language Learners skill development of English.
- Buddy up! Create a buddy program pairing older students with younger students to do artwork, read together, or play games together.



Community & Service

- Make bookmarks with positive messages to leave at the library or a local senior center.
- Do a cleanup around the school or in the neighborhood.



Financial Literacy

- Create flash cards or a Bingo Board with pictures to help people learn about currency.
- Prepare a simple sorting worksheet with cut-out images for identifying needs vs. wants at home.



Global Citizenship

- Write a letter or card to service members telling them we appreciate their service.



Mental Health

- You Rock! Decorate rocks with uplifting messages to give to others.



STEM, Creativity & Innovation

- Create a digital slide show - one slide per student - with positive messages/cheery pictures to play at school for other classes.



Food Access & Sustainability

- Enhance food security and community engagement by cleaning up and revitalizing a local community garden and ensuring a bountiful harvest for those in need.

2 HOUR SERVICE PROJECTS



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Make a video or audio recording of a picture book to give to English Language Learners or those who may be working on their reading.



Community & Service

- Decorate and fill comfort bags for local police or fire department - chips, chocolate, socks, gum etc.
- Get a team together to collect non-perishable items for your neighborhood food bank.
- Take a sustainability pledge and plant a garden or walk to school.



Financial Literacy

- Students can host a workshop with interactive activities with their peers on financial literacy.



Global Citizenship

- Choose a topic such as clean water, pollution or access to education and research organizations that help with this issue. Then, design a project that you or your class could do in the future to raise money to support this organization, or write letters to political figures expressing your ideas.



Mental Health

- Partner with a younger class, read a picture book together and then do a Walk and Talk - walk outside while discussing the book.



STEM, Creativity & Innovation

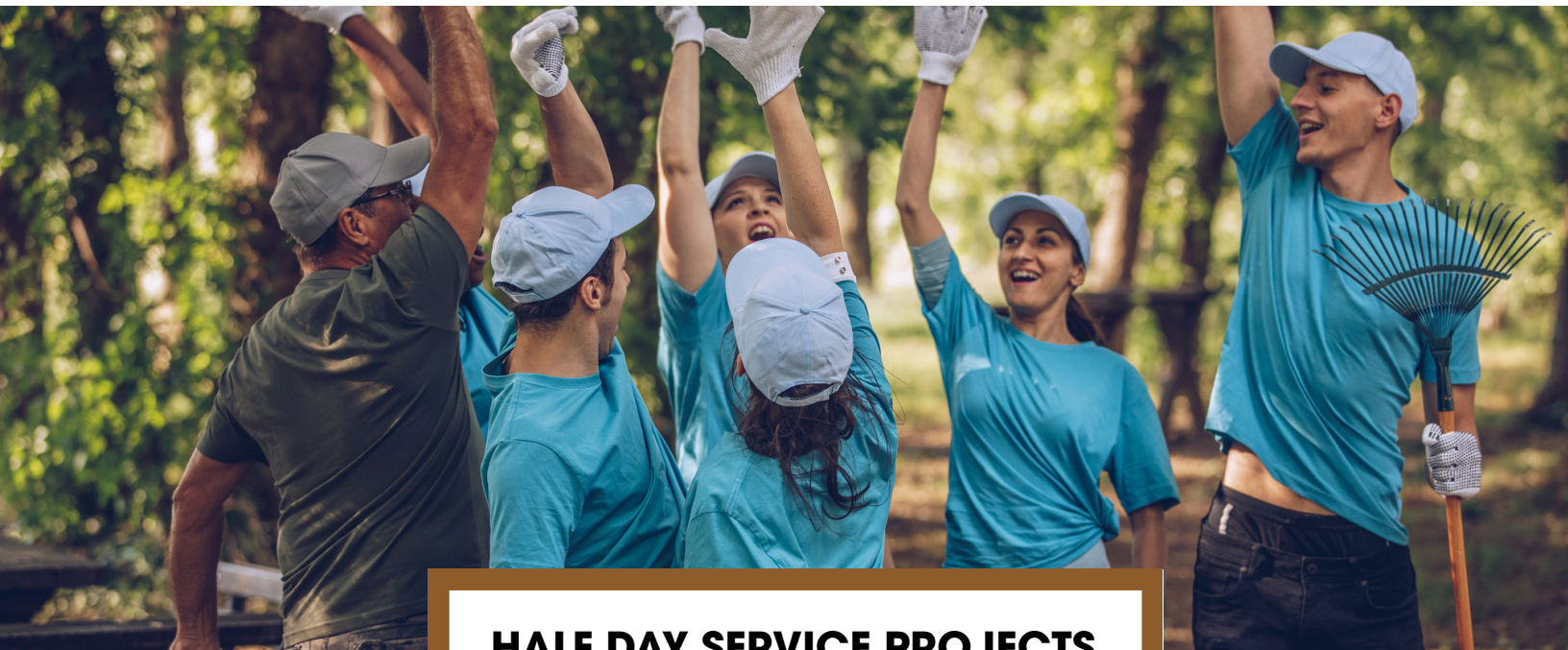
- Take burlap, draw a simple picture such as a smiley face or peace sign, and let students use yarn and a plastic needle to sew a design. These can be sold to raise money for a cause or just given to people to brighten their day.



Food Access & Sustainability

- Students can lead a food drive along with an awareness campaign to address food security within the local community.
- Take a pledge to reduce waste and pack no-waste lunches.





HALF DAY SERVICE PROJECTS



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Story Walk: Choose a picture book that's reflects the diversity of your community — using two laminated copies, mount them on board on a post and place them around the schoolyard for others to read while they walk around.



Community & Service

- Decorate and fill comfort bags for local police or fire department - chips, chocolate, socks, gum etc. Then go to the department when the workers change shifts and hand them out.



Financial Literacy

- Write a play or readers theater script to explain why saving money is important. Perform for another class or if done in groups within the class, perform for each other.



Global Citizenship

- Have a walk-athon either to raise money or simply to raise awareness by holding signs about a cause that your students are passionate about while walking.



Mental Health

- Visit with an assisted living community and have them share stories or memories with the students. The students can record them and then make a memoir book to give them later.



STEM, Creativity & Innovation

- Make stepping stones out of cement or plaster for a garden.
- Make pet toys for a shelter.



Food Access & Sustainability

- Organize and execute a community-wide Food Drive and Distribution Event, collecting non-perishable items and distributing them to local families in need, promoting food security and community support.



Tip!

Remember to log your hours in the [Realize the Dream tracking system!](#)

FULL DAY SERVICE IDEAS



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Research different disabilities or diverse groups. Create posters, pamphlets or digital slide shows. Set up informational tables around the classroom or in a bigger common space so that students or adults can learn about different disabilities or diverse groups.



Community & Service

- Find a food bank or organization that helps with food security and volunteer to pack boxes or organize shelves.
- Partner with a local non profit or organization to learn how you can best support them (examples include: shelving books at a library, filing papers at the village halls, spending time connecting with Veterans and learning their stories).



Financial Literacy

- Watch a documentary that touches on a topic helping with financial literacy and have a discussion afterwards inviting local bankers or non-profits that support financial literacy skill development, to give guidance to students.



Global Citizenship

- Hold a screening of a documentary that touches on topics students are passionate about and have a discussion afterward to continue thinking.
- Choose an issue the class is passionate about and research an organization that the class could raise money to help with that issue. If possible, take a trip to the grocery store to shop for ingredients for a home-made soup. Using an assembly line process, have students fill mason jars with dry ingredients. They can sell the soup-kits to raise money for the organization.



Mental Health

- Host a Mental Health Awareness Fair, featuring workshops, guest speakers, and interactive activities to destigmatize mental health, promote well-being, and provide resources for the school or community.



STEM, Creativity & Innovation

- Make pollinator boxes or bird houses for a local park or the school yard. If time, install them.
- Design a new garden for an area in the community or help in a local garden.



Food Access & Sustainability

- Create an urban garden. Transform a vacant lot into a sustainable community garden to address food security, promote local agriculture, and provide a lasting resource for those in need.

