

"Teach a child the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it"

Want to know what to do this summer?????

Well why don't we bring back values with fun! It's in you to decide and make some big choices with all the big chances right in front of you.

There are a number of things that can help bring us back values into families - playing a game, going for a hike, or cooking a meal as a family. One of the most satisfying, fun, and productive ways to unite is volunteering for community service projects. Not only does it help bring families together, volunteerism also sets a good example for your children and is helpful to the community as well.

This is a powerful approach to teaching that provides kids with authentic learning experiences in which they learn academic content in a real-life, real-world context. Properly implemented, service learning develops citizenship, responsibility, and many other positive character virtues, making it a highly effective character education program in and of itself.

Service-learning and character education can be combined easily. Because of its focus on learning through service, students participating in service-learning activities not only offer meaningful assistance to others, but grow personally as well. As a result of this process, the values that are central to a community's well being are reinforced, and good citizenship is thereby encouraged.

What Are Some Reasons to Get Involved?

Why should you get your family started in lending a helping hand?

- It strengthens your values.
- It feels good.
- It strengthens your community.
- It can strengthen your family.

What Can Kids and Teens Learn From Community Service?

If volunteering begins at an early age, it can become part of a child's life - something he or she may just expect and want to do. It may teach them:

- **a sense of responsibility.** By volunteering, children and teens learn what it means to make and keep a commitment.
- **the knowledge that one person can make a difference.** he or she is important enough to have an impact on someone or something else.
- **the benefit of sacrifice.** By giving up a toy to a less fortunate child, a child learns that it's good to sacrifice sometimes.
- **tolerance.** Working in community service can bring kids and teens in touch with people of different backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, ages, and education and income levels.
- **job skills.** Community service can help young people decide on their future careers.
- **how to fill idle time wisely.** If a child isn't involved in traditional after-school activities, community service can be a wonderful alternative.

Your volunteering will definitely help others and help you, too.

What Are Some Good Volunteer Jobs for Families and Children?

Families can do many volunteer jobs. Even the smallest child (with adult supervision) can pick up garbage at the park, playground, or beach. You don't even have to be part of a big effort to do this. *Get your family together, find some garbage bags, and head out.*

Or become involved in repair and renovation efforts for low-income residents. Younger children might not be able to do the big jobs, but helping out by fetching a paintbrush or holding the nails involves them just the same. Plant flowers or trees. The list of possibilities is endless.

Whatever you choose to do, always remember that you have **BIG CHANCES** but they are also **BIG CHOICES** you can now make!!!!

Dowshen, Steven. "Community Service: A Family's Guide to Getting Involved." KidsHealth. September 2007. The Nemours Foundation. 29 Apr 2008 <<http://www.kidshealth.com/parent/positive/family/volunteer.html>>.