

PARE Model: Preparation, Action, Reflection, Evaluation



Our mission brings us into contact with individuals and communities who experience many forms of marginalization. This work often moves us out of our comfort zones and inevitably challenges our view of the world and our role within it. With this reality in mind, CCSJ employs an educational model called PARE. This model connects the experience of service to critical reflection that addresses the intersections between service, development of personal values, spirituality or faith, and processes of decision-making that free us to make choices and commitments on behalf of those in need.

Preparation

Proper preparation teaches participants to approach a service experience with an open heart and critical mind, thus laying the foundation for learning to occur. Most service experiences include a training or prep session of at least an hour, and some—such as immersions—require much more in-depth preparation. Preparation is an opportunity to understand logistical details such as transportation, timeline for service, and safety information. Participants will also learn about the area in which they'll be serving—including strengths, assets, challenges, and social justice issues faced by community members.

Action

Action is the component of the PARE model traditionally seen as the “service” or “volunteer experience;” it is the effort undertaken in cooperation with or on behalf of a marginalized person or group. CCSJ gives volunteers three major types of opportunities for action: direct service, indirect service, and advocacy. Direct service means interacting

immediately with the individuals or groups concerned, for instance, serving meals.

Indirect service means serving a group of marginalized people from behind the scenes, often by providing goods, services, or infrastructure for their benefit (for example, fundraising for a community agency).

Advocacy means raising awareness or drawing attention to a group or individual's needs, or supporting a plan of action for addressing those needs or shifting power to those who are marginalized, for instance, writing letters to City Council representatives to support a particular bill. Reflection

Reflection

Or pausing to review, ponder, contemplate, analyze or evaluate a service experience, is crucial to the process of integrating the service experience into consciousness and providing a potentially transformative experience. Service often exposes participants to new realities that open their eyes and challenge what they thought they knew. We want our students to notice their

discomfort, discuss it within a supportive community, and finally consider how they might live their lives differently as a result of the experience. One structure for reflection that we use commonly is “What?/So What?/Now What?” In this model, students consider the experience itself, analyze the meaning of that experience in a broad social context, and finally identify action steps to take in light of new understanding.

Evaluation

Our volunteers are an integral part in making sure that the programs that we offer are truly educating our students and helping them grow. At the conclusion of every service experience (usually at the end of the semester or when a trip ends), we ask students to complete an evaluation form to help ensure that future volunteers have an enriching and positive experience.