



Session plans for DofE Leaders

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is simple. It's about choosing to give time to do something useful, without getting paid. It can be helping people, the community or society, the environment or animals.

The Volunteering section

As part of their DofE programme, a young person must regularly commit to a volunteering activity over a set period. The aim of this section is to inspire young people to make a difference within their communities or to an individual's life and develop compassion by giving service to others.

What is this resource for?

The following pages provide you with ideas for delivering 40-45 minute sessions with your DofE group to get them excited about volunteering and to help them plan their volunteering activity. There are three session plans, one to help your group understand the benefits of volunteering, one to help them explore different types of volunteering, and one session to help them plan their chosen activity.

Each session plan follows a set format – it sets out the aim of the session, suggests ways of getting started, gives ideas for group and individual work and suggests how to round off the session and summarise learning.

These are only suggestions and we encourage you and your group to adapt them as you see fit – the activity suggestions allow plenty of scope for individuality.

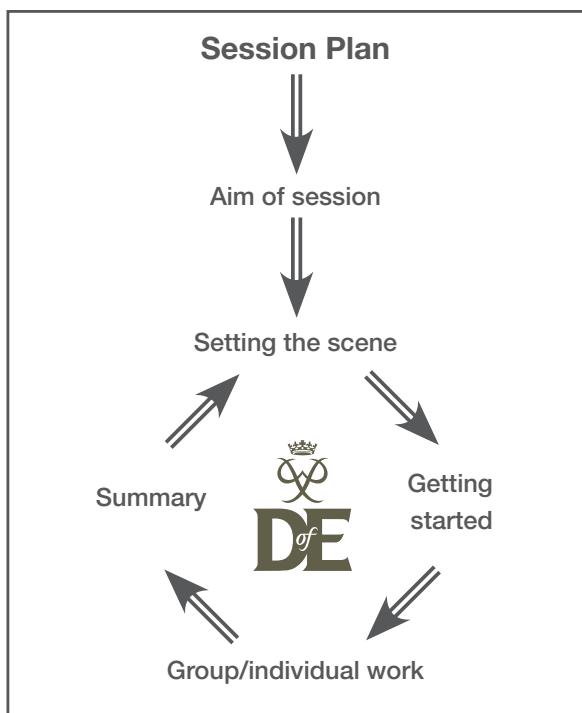
The sessions are flexible and could be run together or separately. To run them in succession you could choose one 'getting started' activity and one 'summary' activity from the three session plans and run the group and individual work activities in the shaded areas, alongside each other.

Setting the scene

Before starting these sessions, it is a good idea to set the right atmosphere so that excitement is created for the group.

Examples of how to do this are:

- Use the sectional colour, red, to theme the session e.g. balloons, cups, food and drink all in red!
- Play music chosen by young people or related songs e.g. *With a little help from my friends* (The Beatles), *99 Red Balloons* (Nena).
- Display resources e.g. logos from charities, photos of young people or quotes about volunteering.



"Helping the children at school gave me a real buzz as I knew I was also helping the community"
Thomas, DofE participant

For more information email info@DofE.org
To find out more about the Volunteering section and volunteering opportunities for participants go to www.DofE.org/volunteering

Session Plan 1: The benefits of volunteering

Aim:

For your group to understand the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer, to others and to the wider community.

Resources:

Flipchart, marker pens, someone from the community who has been a recipient of volunteering and/or adverts for volunteering opportunities from newspapers or the internet, the *Handbook for DofE Leaders* (6th edition).

Useful DofE facts:

To complete their Volunteering section, participants need to identify a local need from any of the following categories:

- Helping people
- Community action and raising awareness
- Coaching, teaching and leadership
- Working with the environment or animals
- Helping a charity or community organisation



Plan:

Timing	Section	Activity
10 mins	Getting started	<p>Icebreaker: Pass a toilet roll around the group asking everyone to tear off as much as they think they need, without knowing why. Everyone then tells the group a fact about themselves or opinion about something for every sheet of toilet roll they have ripped off. Encourage the group to talk about their past volunteering experiences and what they think is good about volunteering.</p> <p>Sharing aim: Explain that for the rest of the session the group will be working as a group or in pairs to think about the benefits of volunteering and why we should do it.</p>
10/15 mins	Group/individual work	<p>In pairs or as a group, discuss what volunteering is and give feedback. You could give examples of activities that are not volunteering e.g. first aid courses without practical volunteering, work experience or paid work.</p> <p>Introduce the DofE volunteering categories above. In pairs or threes, get the young people to write down as many different volunteering ideas as they can for each category in two minutes. As a whole group, use one example from each category and brainstorm what the benefits are for volunteers, others and the wider community and write up on the flipchart, e.g. raising money for a youth offending charity – young people get more support when leaving prison, volunteers learn teamwork skills and the wider community benefits from a potential reduction in crime.</p>
15 mins	Group/individual work	<p>Get the group to interview a recipient of volunteering who can explain how someone volunteering for them has benefited them. Encourage the group to discuss how this would have also benefited the volunteer and the wider community.</p> <p>For each pair or three, select enough adverts for volunteering opportunities from newspapers or the internet, making sure there is a good range of examples across all categories. Get them to take it in turns to 'sell' the volunteering opportunity to each other, showing the benefits.</p>
5 mins	Summary	<p>Find out from the group what they have learnt, what they enjoyed or did not enjoy e.g. from a group discussion, by voting with hands or feet on statements or by playing word association with all in the group with starter words like 'volunteering', 'community' or 'benefits'.</p>

Session Plan 2: What type of volunteering do you want to do?

Aim:

For your group to understand the needs of the community and what causes they care most about, to help them decide what type of volunteering they want to do for their DofE programme.

Resources:

Flipchart, marker pens, post-it notes, rolls of tin foil and a range of national and local papers.

Useful DofE facts:

One of the principles of the DofE Volunteering section is that young people are passionate about many things and should be encouraged to make a positive contribution to something they care about.

Plan:



Timing	Section	Activity
10 mins	Getting started	<p>Icebreaker: Write down names of the different members of communities on sticky notes e.g. older person, disabled young person, local councillor, animal shelter manager, young parent, child in Africa with no education. Stick a piece of paper on everyone's back so they cannot see who they are, but everyone else can. The group then has to treat each other as that person through actions and conversation and then each young person has to guess who they are. Individually, young people should think about who they'd like to work for or work with the most out of the people in the examples.</p> <p>Sharing of aim: Explain that for the rest of the session the group will be working as a group or individually to think about the needs of the community and what causes they care most about.</p>
10 mins (or 20 mins just on this activity)	Group/individual work	Using the five DofE volunteering categories as prompts, give each young person a set amount of tin foil and tell them to create a model that represents an issue or problem that they think is important. Place a time limit of either 5 or 10 minutes on the modelling and then get each young person to explain their creation and why they feel concerned about this issue.
10 mins (or 20 mins just on this activity)	Group/Individual work	<p>Select a range of stories with photos from local and national newspapers that show problems which could be helped through volunteering (e.g. natural disasters, knife crime, global warming, heating bills increasing). Make sure there is a range of examples covering all volunteering categories. Discuss these problems as a whole group or in pairs, covering what the issue is, who is affected and what can be done about it.</p> <p>As a whole group, rank the problems in order of importance to the local community and then to them as an individual (you could place the stories on the floor for them to move around).</p>
10 mins	Summary	Find out from the group what they have learnt, what they enjoyed or did not enjoy e.g. from a group discussion, by voting with hands or feet on statements or by playing word association with everyone in the group with starter words like 'need', 'problems' or 'causes'.

Session Plan 3: How to prepare for your volunteering

Aim:

For your group to know how to plan for their volunteering activity as part of their DofE programme.

Resources:

Flipchart, marker pens, *The Handbook for DofE Leaders* (6th edition), programme planner template, downloadable from www.DofE.org/volunteering

Useful DofE facts:

- Preparation is everything. Before starting their volunteering activity, participants must thoroughly research the charity, organisation or people they are helping and have an Assessor willing to support them. Their Assessor will usually be an adult in the organisation with whom the young person is volunteering.
- Team volunteering may be ideal for young people who cannot find an appropriate individual opportunity, especially if they are under 16.



Plan:

Timing	Section	Activity
10 mins	Getting Started	<p>Icebreaker: Ask the group to arrange themselves chronologically by a category e.g. age, shoe size or birthday without talking. Then tell them to arrange themselves by the number of times they've volunteered, but this time allow them a few minutes to prepare how they will communicate without speaking. Discuss the difference between the two activities, and the value of the time they had to prepare.</p> <p>Sharing of aim: Explain that for the rest of the session the group will work together to learn about the preparation needed to achieve the Volunteering section of their DofE programme.</p>
10 mins	Group/ Individual work	<p>Talk to the group about the benefits of team volunteering and that this is an option open to them. Display the five DofE volunteering categories on a flipchart around the room as 'stations' without examples. Divide the group into five and get them to write down at the different 'stations' one example of how they could volunteer as a team in the local community to match the category. Shout "Change!" and ask each group to go to a different category.</p> <p>As a group, choose one activity for each category and discuss what preparation would need to take place before they could start volunteering, in particular asking them how they would find out how they could do it locally, e.g asking family, researching on the internet, asking friends.</p>
10 mins	Group/ Individual work	<p>Discuss the importance of them having a goal for their volunteering activity and the role of someone to help them achieve their activity and assess them. Choose a different example from each category generated from the earlier exercise. As a group, discuss the following questions for each example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would you want to achieve? What would be your specific goals? - Who would support you? Who would assess you? - What evidence would you collect to show your progress? or:
10 mins	Group/ Individual work	<p>Introduce the Programme Planner to the group and give each young person a copy. Get them to practice filling it out in pairs, using one of the examples they brainstormed earlier, taking it in turns to pretend to be a mentor supporting them. You might want to display some example goals around the room.</p>
10 mins	Summary	<p>Find out from the group what they have learnt, what they enjoyed or did not enjoy e.g. from a group discussion, by voting with hands or feet on statements or by playing word association with all in the group with starter words like 'preparation', 'team volunteering' or 'goals'.</p>