

ServeTogether

(Formerly known as H.Y.P.E.)

What is it?

Started in 2010 by Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church's Stewardship Committee, the first Serve Together consisted of making no-sew fleece blankets for homeless youth, sandwiches for 363 Days Ministries, hug bags for Meals on Wheels recipients, and more. The first event was so successful in engaging participants of all ages that several more were added throughout the year and eventually included service projects off-site. This year's calendar of ServeTogethers has been published and consists of congregation-wide, middle school only, and even a few Friday nights. The goal is to make a difference in the lives of others by involving all members of the congregation, including (but not limited to) confirmation small groups and students and parents.

How does it work?

Each confirmation student is required to complete 2 ServeTogethers each year. This includes one ServeTogether with their small group and one ServeTogether with their parent/caring adult. Small groups are certainly welcome to attend more than one ServeTogether and students and families are encouraged to attend more than one ServeTogether. Small group leaders register their small group for a ServeTogether using the registration form on Wednesday, September 21st (when parents are present). However, if the group is doing a Saturday ServeTogether (congregation-wide) the guide must register the whole group online at www.sotv.org/events. Encourage parents to help with the small group service project as you may need help transporting the group AND because it's beneficial for faith formation to have students serving alongside their parents. Once your service project is complete, fill out a ServeTogether Reflection form (will be available after each event).

2011-2012 ServeTogether Schedule

***Sunday, October 9th, 10:30am-2:30pm**—6th Grade Worship and ServeTogether Celebration

***Sunday, October 9th, 1-3pm**—"Crop Walk": 7th and 8th grade groups interactively learn about the causes of global hunger and poverty while raising money for food shelves

Saturday, October 15th 9am-11am—Congregation wide Serve Together event will have several projects at SOTV and several in the community

Friday, November 11th, 6-8pm—Groups will serve at Feed My Starving Children or go Christmas shopping for children in need

***Sunday, December 11th**—Meet at 10:30am, worship together at 11am, lunch together at Noon, and serve in the community from 12:30-3pm (various sites)

Saturday, January 14th, 9am-11am-- Congregation wide Serve Together event will have several projects at SOTV and several in the community

***Sunday, February 12th**-- Meet at 10:30am, worship together at 11am, lunch together at Noon, and serve in the community from 12:30-3pm (various sites)

Saturday, March 17th, 9am-11am-- Congregation wide Serve Together event will have several projects at SOTV and several in the community

Friday, May 11th, 4:30pm-May 12th, 8am--"Left Out" is an overnight event to raise funds and awareness for youth homelessness. Students will sleep in cardboard boxes.

*for small groups only

Why Serve?

- Worship and serving others are expressions of our faith! Jesus came to serve and invites us to follow him.
- Data reflected in the *Effective Christian Education* study by the Search Institute showed that those who served the needs of others in adulthood could remember doing acts of service with their parents when they were children.
- This same study also found that “the particular family experiences most tied to greater faith maturity are the frequency with which an adolescent talked with mother and father about faith, the frequency of family devotions, and the frequency with which parents and children together were involved in efforts, formal or informal, to help other people.”

Can my group do both ServeTogethers together?

- Groups are welcome to participate in two ServeTogethers as a group. However, at one of the ServeTogethers each student needs to be accompanied by their parent/caring adult.

I served at Feed My Starving Children with my parent/school/scouts/etc. Does that count as one of my ServeTogethers?

- That's GREAT! The world certainly appreciates your service and we definitely thank you and encourage you to keep serving!
- However, each student still needs to participate in 2 ServeTogether events
- ServeTogether events are designed to help students engage more fully in the life of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church by serving alongside other members of all ages from the congregation. Also, by participating in a ServeTogether you might learn more about a ministry at SOTV that you didn't know much about before.

My son/daughter was unable to participate in their confirmation group's ServeTogether. Now what?

- Unfortunately schedules don't always align. While we value students serving with their small group we are aware that conflicts occasionally arise.
- Each student is still required to participate in 2 ServeTogether events.
- If a student has missed their group ServeTogether, they must complete 2 ServeTogethers with a parent/caring adult.

What happened to HYPE?

- Although HYPE is no longer a confirmation program, serving others as an expression of our faith is still at the core of our confirmation curriculum and we are certainly very thankful for the culture of youth service that HYPE has created.
- HYPE, which stood for “How Youth Praise and Exalt” was primarily linked to worship and service on Sunday mornings/afternoons. While we value worshipping and serving together, this schedule became very limiting to busy family, guide, and student schedules. Scheduling conflicts and finding adults to help also became a growing frustration among guides. ServeTogether events will offer the flexibility of serving on a Friday night, Saturday morning, or Sunday afternoon.
- Groups were required to participate in 2 HYPE Sundays, which was placing more pressure on guides. By making the requirement 1 ServeTogether with the small group and 1 ServeTogether with a parent/caring adult, this will hopefully relieve

some pressure felt by guides and place the primary role of faith formation where it is proven to be most effective: the parent(s).

- The ServeTogether events were very successful in engaging multiple age groups in serving others together. By participating in a congregation-wide initiative, our hope is that our students would build relationships with their small group and peers but also get to know others who attend Shepherd of the Valley and hear stories/see proof of their living faith in action.
- The goal of youth service initiatives is to help students live out their faith by serving others and we are aware that students who serve alongside their parents are more likely to serve the needs of others in adulthood (Search Institute, *Effective Christian Education*).