

# How We Serve Lesson Plan

This lesson is designed to help both military and nonmilitary students recognize their different experiences and shared values, especially the importance of service in all communities. It was developed based on the Harmony Curriculum in partnership with the National Military Family Association (NMFA), drawing on its Operation Purple® curriculum. The lesson was created for use in the April 2025 *United in Service* virtual event, but any educator may use or share freely.

## LESSON OVERVIEW (Total Lesson: 25-30 min)

Students will explore how to recognize similarities and differences in one another. They will participate in a class project to define service and create a “How We Serve” Medal to illustrate their commitment to helping others.

Educators can teach this lesson over one or two days. On Day 1, complete Steps 1 and 2. On Day 2, finish with Steps 3 and 4. Adjust as needed for your class schedule.



## Step 1: Get Ready (5-7 min)

### MATERIALS



- “How We Serve” Medal Worksheet (one per student)
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- iPhone or digital camera to capture photos and videos of the students in action

### PREPARATION



- Provide students with their own “How We Serve” Medal Worksheet

(2 min)

\*Materials at end of lesson



## Start With A Quick Connection!

You are encouraged to start the activity using the following Quick Connection Card (QCC). Conversation QCCs offer discussion questions that allow peers to get to know one another and explore commonalities and differences.

- When have you really helped someone else?

(3-5 min)



## How We Serve Lesson Plan

### Step 2: Get Set Recognizing Similarities and Differences (8-10 min)

**SAY:** April is the Month of the Military Child, a special month celebrating kids who have parents or another family member in the military—like some of you.



Today we are going to explore some of the similarities and differences between military and nonmilitary kids. For example, military kids move often and sometimes have a parent living far away, and civilian kids may stay in one place longer. Yet, we all know what it feels like to miss someone or to help a friend.

**ASK:** Have students share some of the ways that they are the same and different from people they know. Discuss similarities and differences. Ask students:



- How are you the same or different from other people you know?
- How does it feel to have the same interests as others?
- How does it feel to have different interests?

**SAY:** Now let's discover some similarities and differences among our class.

**DO:** Guide students in raising their hands or forming small groups based on shared experiences/interests.



- Military kids sometimes move as often as 1-3 years. Have you ever moved? Would/did you like it or not like it?
- When military kids move they have to make new friends. Do you like making new friends?
- Military kids are sometimes far from their parents for a long time. Have you been far from your parent? Was it easy or hard?

**WATCH:** Monitor group formations. Encourage students to help each other form groups and notice that the groups change based on interest. If one student is left alone, jump in or suggest joining another group that is similar.



**SAY:** We all have things that are the same about us and things that are different.



**ASK:** Why is it important to be friends with or know people who are similar and different from you?

**SAY:** As part of the Month of the Military Child celebration, we'll be joining a virtual event later this month with kids from classrooms all around the country, including some teenagers who are military kids.



**ASK:** What questions would you ask an older military kid?

## How We Serve Lesson Plan

### Step 3: Go! The Power of Service (8-10 min)

**SAY:** *Even though we are different in some ways, we all can make a difference. One way to make a difference is through acts of service—helping others in big and small ways. Service means helping others in ways that make them feel happy, safe, or cared for. An act of service can be something small, like sharing a toy or helping a friend, or something big, like making your school or community a better place. Military families serve in important ways, but all of us can serve too!*



*Service looks different for everyone. Military families serve by moving to different places, helping more at home when a parent is away, and making new friends wherever they go. Civilian families serve by being good friends, helping at home, and making their communities strong. Let's think about what service means to all of us!*

*And in the next few weeks, we'll get on a virtual event with kids from classrooms all around the country so we can share our experience with service and hear about what other kids think. We'll get to talk with kids from military and civilian families. I'm going to take photos and videos of your work so we can share it with other classrooms from around the country when we gather."*

#### DO:

Whole-Class Brainstorm: "How do we serve?"

- Write responses on the board.
- Guide students to consider different types of service (kindness, leadership, helping at home, supporting friends, etc.).

Creative Activity: "How We Serve" Medal Worksheet



- Students create a medal to represent their personal definition of service.
- Note: students can cut out their medals to wear during the virtual event

Share & Discuss:

- *Who inspires you to serve?*
- *How can you help in your family, school, or community?*

Note: one student or a small group will share your classroom's perspective with the class during the virtual event.

### Step 4: Stop and Reflect (2-3 min)



**SAY:** *Even if we may not have the same experiences, we all have ways to help others. We can all serve in different ways, big or small. Let's celebrate our medals and remember that we can make a difference every day!*

#### ASK:



- *As a military kid, what would help you most? How can you help military kids you meet?*
- *What is one way you can help someone this week?*
- *What kind of service do you want to do for someone else?*



# United IN SERVICE



<b>SERVICE MEANS:</b> _____		

