



STONE SOUP

Directions: Share this story during the Investigation stage to focus the class discussion on identifying and building upon their individual and community assets.

Guiding Question: How can a single stone feed a whole village?

There exists a tale, handed down from times long ago, of a poor traveler on a pilgrimage. Hungry and tired from a long day's journey, he comes to a small, impoverished, medieval village, where he decides to rest by the side of the road. He gathers some wood and builds a fire. After drawing water from the town well, he sets the pot of water upon the fire. Next, he places a simple stone in the pot. As he sits there by his fire, bringing the pot's contents to a boil, the local villagers become inquisitive about the curious antics of this stranger. Eventually, several townsfolk decide to investigate the matter and approach the traveler to engage him in conversation.

Shortly thereafter, the sounds of merriment can be heard around the campfire. It seems this stranger is quite friendly and has many amusing and interesting tales to share of the lands and people he has met throughout his pilgrimage.

Finally, a young boy asks the traveler, "But why, pray thee, are you boiling a stone?"

He replies, "So I may eat stone soup."

"It must be terribly bland!" says an old woman. "But I have a cabbage, which will add some flavor!"

"And I, some carrots, which will add color!" says another villager.

"Some potatoes!" or "an onion!" as various people continue to offer bits and pieces from their meager stores.

Soon, by the contribution of a little by many, a hearty stew was made, upon which the entire village and the weary pilgrim dines... and while doing so, all shared their tales, talents and camaraderie throughout the night.

The very next day, the traveler (who by now could be called a stranger no more) continued on his way, leaving behind the little town and its people. But the villagers never forgot him or the lesson they had learned. In fact, during the hardest of times, in such a time as this tale, that little village thrived because the townsfolk never forgot how to make "stone soup".

Such is the legend of stone soup.



Reflection Exercises

After listening to or reading the story Stone Soup, these may be completed as individual, small group or class group activities.

1. **What ingredients made the soup work? Veggies, water, seasonings. What about other ingredients, that are not items but character traits... (such as compassion, generosity, collaboration, creativity, problem solving)?**

“Today we will explore ingredients in each of us that we call **assets**. Everyone has them, from the homeless traveler entering our city, to citizens young and old, male and female, all going about their business each day. So we ask you:”

2. **What are your assets? What are the assets (knowledge/skills) we are learning in class that will help us? (Naming activity)**
3. **How might we combine the many individual assets (knowledge, skills) in our class or community to meet a problem in our community?**

Investigate!

Another word for investigate is to research. Reflection is invaluable in this stage as students explore the content and use a variety of methods to investigate the subject.

Researching a subject may include

- Reading text sets or the textbook or a journal article
- Discussions about a subject in class such as KWL or group Brainstorming
- Interview experts about the subject (preparing interview questions requires reflection)
- Survey the community to gather baseline data or assess need
- Observing a subject to collect data
- Use our Map it! Handout.

Next narrow your focus and prioritize the issues you have researched to determine the final goal/s. . Then make a plan using your assets.

Plan It!

Perhaps we do need a **plan**. Reflection exercises assist with effective preparation.

“The traveler didn’t know the hearts and potential actions of the villagers, but he had a plan and used his **assets** to help carry out that plan to meet his **goals**. He thought it through, using his wit and creativity; perhaps using past experiences to anticipate the outcomes. So we ask ourselves questions to create our plan and guide our actions.”

These are sample reflection questions that may be used in part or as a whole throughout the preparation and action stages in the project.

1. What are our goals?
2. What actions or service will we perform to meet the community need we identified?
3. What action steps need to be in our plan?
4. Who will be responsible for the tasks and oversight of the project?
5. What is the timeline for this project?
6. How will we monitor our progress and outcomes?
7. What will success look like? Complete this question. "We will be successful if..."
8. How will we convey what we have learned at the end of the service learning experience?



Key ingredients in a Service Learning Project...

YOU!

Service learning does start with you.

VISION!

Dream big even if you start small.

PREPARATION!

Planning is usually wiser than reacting to problems along the way.

ACTION!

One meaningful act can change a lifetime.

REFLECTION!

How does our service impact us and our community?

EVALUATE RESULTS!

Deep learning transforms.