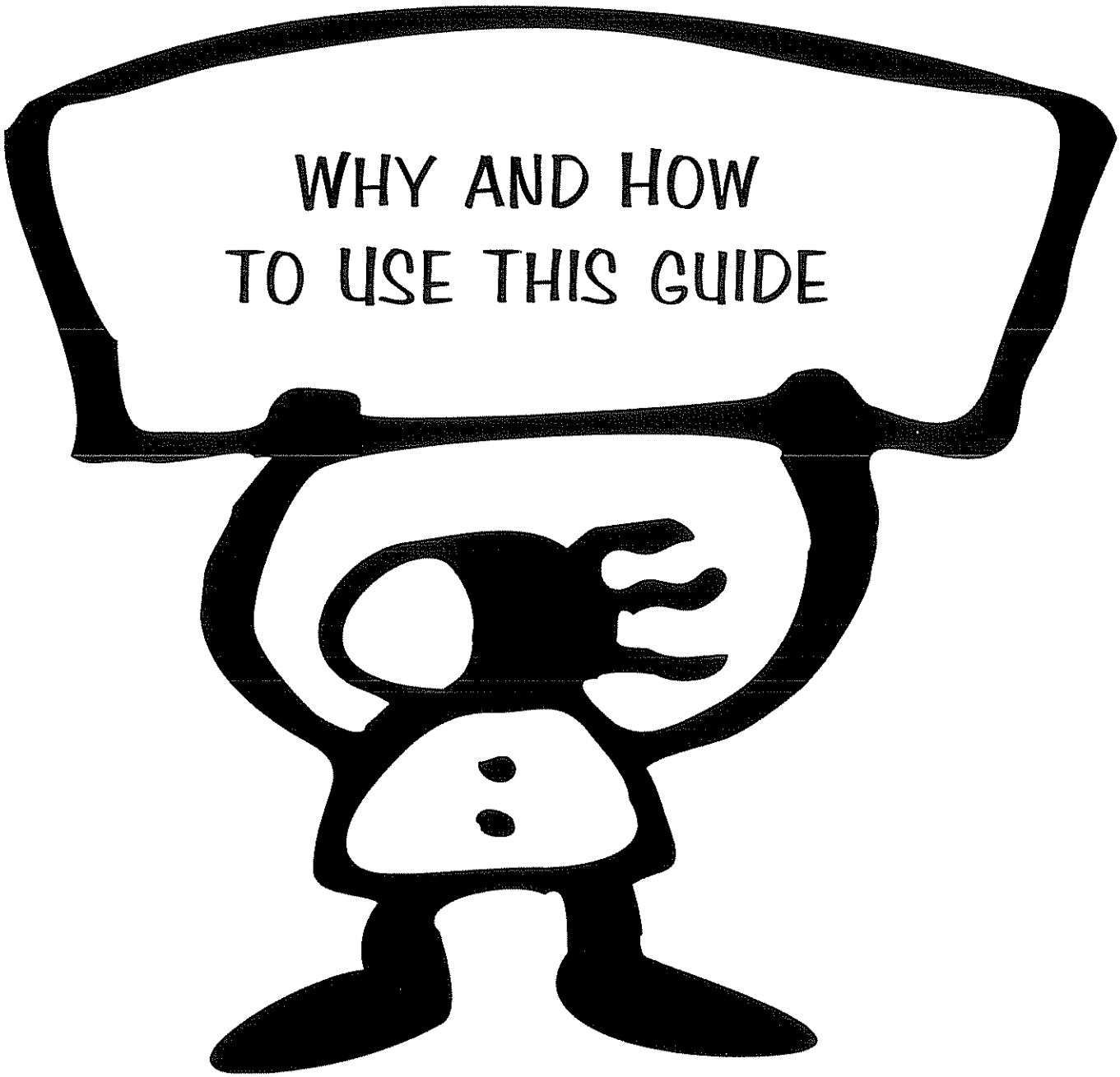
INTRODUCTION



WHY THIS GUIDE?

The story of our nation is one of struggle and hope. History's pages show us much to be proud of and much to overcome. We have inherited a complicated set of stories that can divide us, unite us or simply confuse us. Given that, making sense of what it means to be an American citizen is no simple task. Going about our day-to-day lives, there is not much time or incentive to ponder our civic identity — the part of us we hold in common with other Americans and the values and principles we build together. Rarely do we think about what it means to be a member of a democratic society. The very idea of *'building citizens'* sounds like a daunting and questionable task.

At the same time, we hear over and over how the United States leads the cause of democracy around the world. Nations around the globe try to model the "American way of life," which is now defined more by access to consumer goods than by civic engagement. Yet, Americans themselves seem less and less likely to cherish or uphold their democratic responsibilities. Voter rates appear to drop with every election, and polls show that citizens do not trust the government or their elected representatives. We seem to be falling short when it comes to performing the most basic responsibilities of citizenship.

Still our work as citizens is cut out for us. The problems we have inherited confront us on all sides. Cities are decaying. Poverty, inequality and violence are everyday realities. Our educational system struggles to meet new challenges. Environmental crises are a common occurrence. The list goes on. These challenges can in fact be opportunities to take ownership over our country's problems and to actually do something about them. In this way, community service opens up enormous opportunities for participants. By becoming engaged in public service, we can do something constructive about our society's ills and try to solve our nation's problems. By teaching a young person to read, cleaning up a polluted river or engaging in countless other community service projects, we also can become citizens - that is, active members of local and national communities.

Traditions of Community and Public Service

Service is deeply rooted in our culture. People getting together to address the problems in their communities is a tradition as old as the nation itself. From Native American approaches that honored and built holistic communities to the many volunteer opportunities that exist today, there is a long history of involvement in community life through service. People have always brought unique perspectives to their service. The motivation to serve stems from numerous beliefs and outlooks.

For example, many think of their engagement as a

way of enlivening religious principles. For them, service to others sustains social relationships that express love for God and God's unconditional love for humankind. Acts of kindness and mercy enable people to live their faith more fully. For others, service is one aspect of a broader set of commitments. Engaging in service as part of bringing about social justice and social change has long been part of the American political tradition. Many offer service to others while working at a broader level to ensure equal rights for everyone. Activists say that engaging in service "keeps them honest" about their values and reminds them of the everyday importance of their struggles. Still others engage in public and community service because they think it is their responsibility to help more disadvantaged members of society as a part of their social obligations.

Service and Citizenship

All of these motivations are important and all have contributed in significant ways to our society. But in this guide, we place the emphasis on connecting public service with reflection on what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society. We define a citizen *as someone who is concerned with things which transcend his or her personal sense of well-being.* Committed to public life and aware that individual well-being relies upon the well-being of others, citizens get engaged in public affairs and take democracy seriously.

While democracy today often gets defined in terms of voting for political representatives or writing letters to elected officials, these are not the only elements of citizenship in a democracy. We cannot rely on public officials to solve all the problems we face in our communities and the nation. There are local issues that demand for citizens to get involved, to be participants in addressing the important concerns that face a community. That is the truth behind Abraham Lincoln's famous statement that democratic government is government "for the people" and "by the people." Democratic government relies on citizens' activities. It relies on us.

We need to build a wider definition of democracy that celebrates and encourages civic involvement. And there's no better place to find it than in the ideas and writings of John Dewey, a famous American philosopher who wrote about the deeper meanings of American democracy throughout the early twentieth century. Dewey once argued, "A democracy is more than a form of government..." He explained, "Democracy is a name for a life of free and enriching communion..." That is, democracy is about community life — about associating with other citizens and solving our problems together. Democracy requires citizens to gather together publicly in order to solve their collective problems in a peaceful and egalitarian manner. Democracy does not happen only in the moment of voting; it happens every day when we work with others in meaningful ways.

Community service can open up the public world to us and allow us to enter into its demands and joys. That's what we mean by *public service* and why we don't call what your involvement in service *voluntary.* What you are doing by becoming an active citizen engaged in public service can never be voluntary. It is too important and too central to the foundation and necessary operation of a democratic society. We cannot exist without citizens performing their responsibilities and obligations to public life. Service is an enactment of the obligation all citizens owe their society.

Though citizenship demands of us certain things, it should not be seen as a boring duty that impinges on our freedom. It also makes life more interesting. There is something inherently enjoyable about working and learning from other people about ways to solve problems and give life to our ideals. Mary Parker Follett, a political philosopher who at the turn of the century thought the local urban neighborhood should be the cradle of democratic participation and responsible citizenship, argued that, *"My gospel is not for a moment of citizenship as mere duty. We must bring to politics passion and joy."* Public activities broaden our perspectives and put us in contact with different individuals we might otherwise never associate with. That is one of the many sources of its joy.

By now, you should have a better idea of why we call this booklet Building Citizens. We want to provide you with a tool to become citizens through community service. Rarely do we teach people what citizenship really is about. We educate ourselves for a job, but we rarely educate ourselves for citizenship. And yet, citizenship is something that needs to be learned and grown into — we learn to be citizens through interacting with others and solving problems. In this guide, we will highlight some of the *arts of citizenship* — the sorts of practices and skills necessary to become an active and engaged citizen.

If you want to become an effective citizen, you need to be able to do certain things. For instance, if you are going to come together to solve problems with others, you're going to need to learn how to work with people different from you. That's one of the skills that we emphasize in this booklet. In addition, if you are going to take leadership and try to get other citizens in your community to become involved in a project, you'll need to persuade them. Therefore, you're going to have to learn how to *listen* to people and how to *discuss* your ideas with others. You'll have to develop arguments and learn the best ways to make your case. Many sections of this guide will allow you to work on developing these skills in important ways.

Service and Reflection

We've just briefly mentioned a few necessary skills for democratic citizenship. If there is one thing which can help foster these it's reflection. This booklet is intended to help teach civic skills through a combination of reflection and service. By service participants coming together to reflect on the issues they confront, they can learn from their service and become more active citizens in the process. This is important in itself, but here it has a distinct purpose. By committing to a reflective service experience, you are committing to answering a very difficult question — a question we should all be asking: how can service help people come together to make their communities better places to live?

This process of reflection will take time. It will also demand structure and leadership. We realize that community service puts large demands on participants — including their time. That's why we've put together this booklet. It offers a clear cut way to plan reflection sessions and to make sure that your group members are learning from their service experience. It sets out for you a building block model of learning — starting with building good group dynamics and moving eventually into how to hold discussions about problems and issues that are common at service sites. If you use this manual the way we have designed it, towards the end of

your group's venture, you'll be discussing wider issues like "what's it mean to be altruistic?" and "what are *my* responsibilities to other citizens and what are the responsibilities of my *government?*" with fellow service participants. This book offers you structure and exercises in which to do all of these things. In essence, it hopes to help you learn from experience in a structured and meaningful way.

Learning from service isn't just a vague, tingly notion meant to make participants feel-good-all-over. At best, structured discussion and reflection should lead to the kind of community involvement that engages the root causes of social problems. Thoughtful, reflective service that takes into account different perspectives and ideas might not immediately solve the problems that confront a community. But it will force difficult and important questions, "Whose needs are we serving? Who wants this service and why? Is this the best way to go about changing things in this community? What might other ways be? Have we built on the strengths and assets here? How do other people judge success or failure in terms of this project? Who are we working with? How do we continuously evaluate our effectiveness?" This process should not simply help community service participants describe their efforts more clearly, or get things done more efficiently. It should press for service that is one supportive part of a larger framework for civic and community renewal.

Learning citizenship through service and reflection can be exciting precisely because of all the opportunities it provides for this kind of thoughtful community engagement. Unfortunately, this is not the prominent theme that guides public service programs. Today's service movement seems to put a premium on "getting things done." This in some ways reflects the sentiments of many members of Generation X (authors excluded) that the "old politics" of the baby boomer generation — symbolized in protests of the 1960s and political action — are now useless. Young people express an increasing urge to do something that is highly practical and concrete. They avoid weighty discussions about political principles. They want action that avoids becoming snarled in long analysis of political conflicts. Sick of "talk" and the seemingly endless posturing that often characterizes debate around social issues, they are more than happy to work concretely to address problems.

In some ways, their "anti-political" sentiments are quite understandable, maybe even honorable. But they cut against making connections between service and wider principles — precisely what we think is important. When doing workshops on the connections between service and citizenship, we have sometimes faced the glum, glassy-eyed looks of kids with their baseball hats turned backwards, seemingly bored by any discussion whatsoever. They

want action. This highly pragmatic outlook may reflect long-held beliefs among Americans, but it may be dangerous when it comes to service. While we don't believe in a return to 1960s protest politics, we do think that learning about conflicts and about political power through service is something that makes the service experience important and the work that gets accomplished meaningful.

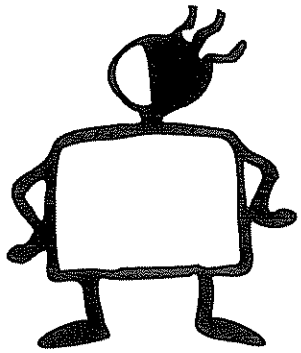
Much of what we set out here in this booklet confronts not the general "apathy" of Generation X (of which there's probably less than we might think, as seen in numbers about the amounts of young people volunteering today) but the "apathy" towards learning about the bigger issues which inform service. We agree that wanting to "do something" about social problems (homelessness, illiteracy, street violence, to name just a few) is important. But without at least trying to figure out if what you're doing is going to accomplish anything, you need knowledge. This guide tries to push service participants to develop this knowledge together.

Taking Stock of Evaluation

In addition to preparing service participants to become better citizens, we hope this module can also reorient some of the recent interest paid to "evaluation" of service programs. Today, due largely to the imperatives set by state and federal government, it seems that community service organizations are hungry to justify the relevancy of their programs — to show that they have accomplished something in plain, concrete terms. This desire is understandable, but it unfortunately puts a premium on things like "how many houses were built" or "how many young people were tutored" — thereby stressing the numerical and quantitative aspects of service. In the process of evaluating programs from the perspective of numbers, programs lose sight of the qualitative and process-oriented changes they should also be stressing. Sending volunteers into an after school mentoring program and counting the number of disadvantaged students served, we forget to ask: How did service efforts help strengthen the school environment? What did the students learn from their tutors? What did they learn from the relationships established? Even if all the math scores did not immediately skyrocket, was there something necessary and meaningful about the endeavor?

Any future evaluation of community service will have to ask what service taught people taking part in it and how that influenced the communities they served. Did it teach them anything about their obligations as citizens? If not, why? Did it force them to think about their role in contributing to a better society? But we cannot study community service participants as if they are objects from which we glean pertinent numerical information. Sending them a bunch of questionnaires with numbers to circle won't assess the qualitative issues service can and should provoke for people. Nor can we ask if service participants have come to understand or to strengthen their civic capacities without engaging them in questions about how their service did or did not reflect democratic qualities. We must turn the issue of evaluation around. We must not merely evaluate the *minds* of people doing service — we must help participants critically evaluate their service experience. Why not help service participants ask probing questions such as: Was your service democratic? Did it bolster community involvement or did it confine relationships to "server" and served?" Did it celebrate the complexities of community life or compartmentalize everything and everyone? Were decisions made collectively or was everything mapped out in advance? This guide will hopefully help you engage in a collective process that can address questions like these while encouraging participants to use the

tools of citizenship — listening, deliberating, debating, taking differences into account and acting together. It can also help them evaluate whether their service is teaching them anything of worth about democracy and citizenship. And if the answer is no, it can provide ways to think about changing their service so that it does.



Over the years, many people have asked us at the Whitman Center how we believe service relates to democracy. They have argued that the connection between service and citizenship is too abstract and unclear. Day to day details often overwhelm people so much that looking at the bigger picture becomes a luxury. And in the end, the connection is not always easy to make. *Building Citizens* helps make the connections by offering a structured way to build a reflective community service experience. In certain ways, we put our money where our mouths were previously. We show here just how people can make connections between what they are doing in a school, nature reserve or soup kitchen and their thinking about democratic responsibilities. In this way, we hope this work can make a contribution to revitalizing democracy. Only by providing ways for people to become thoughtful and engaged citizens will democracy become something more than a hollow phrase. This booklet is committed to that idea.

by Margo Shea and Kevin Mattson

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

This reflection guide is broken down into three main sections. In the first, we suggest exercises and games that can help you build good group dynamics that are based on mutual respect and the principles of free and open discussion. We won't load you down with a lot of "touchy-feely" exercises (like that "carry your partner on your back blindfolded through a mock tornado" team-builder you had to play). Our exercises focus on listening, thinking and communicating. It is important that as group members, you learn about each other and deepen the level of respect for one another, even if you don't like one another as friends.

In the second section, we'll show how individual members can talk about their experiences at community service sites, relating them to a wider context so that other members can understand and learn from them. This way, you can have collective discussions which provide all members new ways to think about service and the wider community.

Finally, in section three we provide you with short reading materials and exercises which can help you think more critically about the questions which your community service might raise. You'll have the chance to think and talk about the role of public and community service in our society, and the relationship between service and democracy.

Anyone who wants to go ahead immediately to a certain section can obviously turn the page, but we hope you'll read this introduction to understand what we've intended to do with this book. We also hope you'll consider using all three sections in the order we've set them out here. They work better this way, but if time does not permit you to do this, you can start with the section most appropriate for your group.

GENERAL FACILITATION NOTES

This book of exercises, games, readings and questions can make it possible for your group to engage in meaningful discussions about the service you are involved in and insights you have learned that are important for you, your community and society. However, it is important that you plan carefully how you will use the module. It will work best if you have a facilitator or a team of facilitators who take responsibility for preparing for and implementing the discussions. This person does not have to be the program director or program coordinator, but it must be someone or several people dedicated to the goal of critical and constructive discussions.

The facilitator's role is crucial in developing and maintaining group discussions that members can both enjoy and learn from. Of course, members of the group also have to be responsible for the learning and sharing that takes place during these discussions. But the success of reflection depends a lot on the facilitator's ability to encourage group members to learn from one another. In critical reflection discussions, a facilitator has a dual role: to make sure that the group is functioning well *and* to make sure that the group's discussion will result in a learning experience for everyone involved. In essence, the facilitator has to be very mindful of both the <u>process</u> and the <u>results</u> of these discussions.

Before you begin facilitating discussions, there are many things to think about. At the beginning of each section of the module, we provide you with facilitation notes that are applicable for the exercises and the ideas we raise in that section. The introduction to Part Two contains extensive notes on both facilitation and the roots of these kinds of reflective, informal learning traditions. In addition, the following section outlines sample courses of study to help you think about ways to organize reflection for your group.

Thanks for taking the time to check out this guide. Please call us to answer any general or specific questions about the module. Contact information can be found at the back of the guide.

SAMPLE COURSES OF STUDY

We have designed this guidebook so that users can have the most flexibility to choose the activities and exercises that are appropriate for their groups, while still adhering to a larger overall structure. While we understand that readers will want to pick and choose, we have also put together some sample courses of study.

Our work facilitating discussions with different community service groups has enabled us to make connections between different sections of the guide and between specific exercises and readings. The following samples, organized by time frame and specific objectives for reflection, may be useful models as you build a usable curriculum. You may even want to follow one of the timetables we have established.

Twelve General Reflection Sessions — Approximately 90 minutes per session

Week 1	Intro / Icebreaker ◎ *M & M's* Individual Reflection Exercise ◎ *Personal Time Line*
Week 2	Listening Exercise ◎ *Pairs* ◎ *Group Interviewing*
Week 3	Make Guidelines for Group Discussion Learning Exercise ◎ *Describe the Situation*
Week 4	Critical Incident ◎ *Different Notions of Public Safety*
Week 5	Discussion on Community Asset Mapping
Week 6	Practicing Mapping
Week 7	Discussion on Motivations for Service
Week 8	It Got Them Thinking ◎ Monty Black's "Living in the Spirit of SHAC")
Week 9	Personal Voyages ◎ Kean, et al's "Through the Trap"
Week 10	Service is Contested ◎ King's "On Being a Good Neighbor"
Week 11	Service and the Nation ◎ How We Define Service as a Nation
Week 12	Wrap-Up Discussion ◎ What Worked?

Sample Courses of Study

Twelve Reflection Sessions Focused on Developing the Writing Skills of Participants

Week 1	Icebreaker ◎ Mime the Lie Individual Reflection ◎ Self-Inventory Matrix
Week 2	A New Dictionary
Week 3	Want-Ads
Week 4	Critical Incident ◎ Accountability
Week 5	Write Your Own Critical Incident
Week 6	Models of Service
Week 7	Write About Models of Service ◎ Answer Questions Listed for Discussion
Week 8	It Got Them Thinking ◎ Suzanne Goldsmith's 'City Year'
Week 9	Writing Exercise Using Kolb's Cycle of Learning
Week 10	Service is Contested – Coles' 'Community Service Work' ◎ Illich's To Hell With Good Intentions
Week 11	Write a response to Illich
Week 12	Wrap -Up Discussion

Twelve Reflection Sessions
Focused on Developing the Public Speaking Skills of Participants

Week 1	Icebreaker ◎ Shake All Hands ◎ You Too?
Week 2	Word Storm
Week 3	Stand and Declare
Week 4	Guidelines for Discussions
Week 5	Debate or Fishbowl
Week 6	Who's In Charge? ◎ (Act Out the Confrontation)
Week 7	Present Critical Incidents to the Group
Week 8	King of the Hill
Week 9	Service is Moral / Service is Immoral
Week 10	Service Creates / Service Destroys Democratic Communities
Week 11	Have Participants Debate Points of View Raised by Authors in Week 9 or 10
Week 12	Barber/ Bullock ◎ Debate - Should Service Be Mandatory?

Twenty-six General Reflection Sessions

Week 1	Get To Know You ◎ Name And... ◎ Want Ad
Week 2	Individual Reflection ◎ Five Things You Are ◎ Personal Time Line
Week 3	Group Skills ◎ A New Dictionary ◎ Open Fist
Week 4	Group Skills ◎ Realignment ◎ Labels
Week 5	Guidelines for Discussion Explain Cultural Sharing
Week 6	Cultural Sharing Explain Interviewing an Elder
Week 7	Interviewing an Elder
Week 8	Want Ad Two Different Expectations and Role Plays
Week 9	Museum Piece
Week 10	Write Your Own Critical Incident
Week 11	Community Mapping
Week 12	Practicing Mapping

Twenty-six General Reflection Sessions contd.

Week 13	Models of Service and Discussion
Week 14	Conflicts Between Models of Service
Week 15	Is Your Service Democratic?
Week 16	It Got Them Thinking ◎ Toward a New Environmentalism
Week 17	King of the Hill
Week 18	Writing Exercise
Week 19	Personal Voyages ◎ Jane Addams
Week 20	Personal Voyages ◎ Myles Horton
Week 21	Service is Contested ◎ Coles' Service is a Learning Opportunity
Week 22	Service is Contested ◎ Service is Altruism/ Altruism is Slavery
Week 23	Service is Contested ◎ Service is Moral/ Service is Immoral
Week 24	Service is Contested ◎ Service is Therapeutic/Empowering or Destructive?
Week 25	Service and the Nation ◎ How We Define Service/ How Service Defines Us
Week 26	How Shall We Respond to National Service?