

Project Serve

Optional Intro Activity: Food Bank Faceoff

Here's one great option to help build anticipation for the theme of your *Project Serve* DNow event. This activity will get students connecting before the event begins—it's a great team builder and icebreaker.

Objective: Create a competition (among classes, small groups, or any natural division in your group of students) that requires students to engage and prepare for this DNow event. This competition requires teams to gather as many *food pantry approved* items before the event as possible. When students show up for the event, assign each team a parking spot where they can drop off their items. From there, give teams a time limit to assemble the most creative presentation of their items (giant forts, castles, cakes, or something even more imaginative). Each team's presentation should be judged by a panel of your choosing (host parents are a good option). End the activity by giving the winning team a prize and asking teams to prepare everything to go to the food bank.

1. When students sign up for this event, give them a set of instructions for the Food Bank Faceoff. These should include:

- A list of items accepted by the local food pantry.
- A breakdown of how the teams will be organized (classes, small groups, etc.).
- Brief instructions explaining the competition and how the winning team will be identified (creative presentation, amount of food, etc.).
- When and where to bring these items.

2. When students arrive at the event, have each team's parking space clearly marked off (probably using sidewalk chalk). Instruct students to drop off their food items in their designated space. After that, students should not be allowed to touch their items until the competition starts.

- Make sure you have your judges picked and ready to go. (You can even give them score paddles to raise for each team at the end.)
- Have a prize ready to go for the winning team(s).
- Place people in charge of counting the items for each team.
- This is a great chance to start your event with a ton of energy. Have music pumping. Announce everything through a megaphone or sound system. Make sure the small group leaders are there to greet students and answer parents' questions.

3. Give the instructions.

Say something like:

When I say go, your team will have 20 minutes to arrange your food items in a way that makes the judges do a double take. The judges will be rating your parking space on how creative your presentation is. This is a good chance to use what you know about your judges' likes and dislikes . . . just saying. When your 20 minutes are up, everyone must stop and step out of the parking space. Each group will be given 30 seconds to "sell" their creation to the judges, who will make the final call. Countdown . . .

4. When the 20 minutes are up, give each group a chance to promote their creation. The judges must decide which group was the most creative and declare a winner. Then have your counters tally the food items for each team and announce the winner of the most food items.

5. Have students load all the items into a van or truck headed to the food pantry.

6. When students have gathered inside and are ready to start the first session, debrief with them by asking the following questions:

- How does a food pantry influence a community? A family? A single person?
- If a family who eventually got the food never learned that you (or any Christian) donated that food, would your service matter? Why or why not?
- When is the best time to serve? Why?