**SkilledTradesBC Youth Discover the Trades**

**ACTIVITY IDEAS & TIPS**

## The overarching principle of the hands-on activity is to ensure younger students experience the satisfaction that comes from using trade skills.

**Also, here are some ideas for organizing the hands-on activity:**

Students are selected and/or invited to participate in a full-day or half-day workshop that engages them with the skills used in a variety of trades. Students could work individually, in pairs or teams.

Students can visit a variety of tradespersons at their place of work and participate in a hands-on activity at the site. This event can be as simple as students visiting an automotive shop where the owner, a qualified tradesperson, talks about their trade. Students have the opportunity to change a tire.

Expanded workshops could be scheduled in a touring sequence, such as over a two or three day period, or on an intermittent basis, such as once quarterly.

Post-secondary partners can provide each of the middle school students with “buddies/mentors” from the trade classes. The trade buddies can lead a simple lab or work with their student buddies on a fun task.

Be sure to emphasize a variety of trades that appeal to both male and female students and find female role models in the non-traditional trades

Consider adding Spotlight Sessions to reflect the skill shortages in your specific community

Hold Employer Information Sessions for hiring youth apprentices, in partnership with a business association or trade group, and the parent community.

Hands-on activities/projects could conclude with some fun “competitions” such as: most creative, most practical, safest, etc. Ideally, every group would receive recognition for success.

Participation certificates could be provided to all students along with a photo of each student/team with their project and their host tradespersons/ post-secondary buddies.

Other hands-on activity thought-starters may include:

* For carpentry: Building a cutting board using tools and/or equipment.
* For culinary arts: Preparing a food item using hand mixers.
* For trowel trades: Mixing concrete and placing bricks on a wall.
* For hairstylist: Using curling and straightening irons to style hair.
* For horticulture: Preparing ground and planting trees in the school grounds

## Contact with tradespersons in the community

The tradespeople in your community provide the expertise and real-life connections that students and their parents will value. Most tradespersons and/or industry associations are pleased to promote their career and will be keen to partner with you for this program. Here are some ways to get in touch:

Connect with Career Program staff in your school district as they commonly have industry connections through their Youth Train in Trades/ Youth Work in Trades Work Experience Programs. Career Program staff may be able to identify groups/individuals who are interested in getting involved.

Local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary clubs or industry associations may have people who are interested in becoming involved in working on the activity. Local employers whose business is in a trade sector may wish to become involved in an activity that promotes their sector.

Parents in the school who are working in the trades may wish to assist with the development of the activity and/or be guest speakers.

Alumni of your district’s trades programs are inspiring and relatable speakers for many youth.

**Pre-activity and post-activity ideas**

To help make the link between the enthusiasm generated by the hands-on activity and the trades as a viable career choice, pre- and post-activities are invaluable.

Here are some ideas for the classroom:

As a part of their classroom pre-activity, students can prepare questions about a trade career for a tradesperson guest speaker. The students could also give parents the chance to submit any questions.

Create an interactive “homework” assignment that involves both parents and students. For instance, students and their parents could create a list of the different tradespersons used in their family home and/or at a parent’s place of work over that past year and what skill was required.

A post-activity could include guest tradespersons from the community to wrap up the workshop and/or post-secondary buddy session with a talk about his/her trades career and answer questions.

Students can create a mini-presentation on what they learned and/or found most rewarding about their trade experience.

**Parental Involvement**

Parents are the primary influence of a child’s career choice and some parents may have misconceptions or lack understanding about a career in the trades. For this reason, a key feature of the Youth Discover the Trades program is to involve parents in the Youth Discover the Trades activity and/or host a parent event as part of the Youth Discover the Trades activity.

The primary goal of parent involvement is to ensure parents come away with an increased understanding that trade careers offer opportunities, advancement, financial and lifestyle benefits for their children.

In addition, it is essential that your parent groups are exposed to the transition pathways in your community as well as programs such as Youth Train in Trades and Youth Work in Trades are in place to help youth reach their career goal.

To generate parent involvement, some ideas may include:

Host a parent information night prior to the Youth Discover the Trades event to inform them about this special activity and explain what skills their children will be learning. Invite parents to attend the activity, if appropriate.

In addition or alternatively, a post-activity parent event could be held to hand out participation certificates or the fun competition prizes. At the same time, students can present the classroom work around what they learned or experienced.

Make sure tradespersons and post-secondary partners are included in the parent event and that the parent information handout is reviewed before distributing.

PAC and/or parents-by-grade meeting presentations are a good format to provide information and answer questions, as well as dispel myths around a career in the trades. This is another great place for distributing the parent information handout.

Survey parents who work in the trades to gain their support and interest in your event.

**YOUTH DISCOVER THE TRADES PROJECT EXAMPLE**

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| Trades Exploration Day  |
| School District | SD 53 – Okanagan Similkameen |
| Contact Name |  |
| Phone |  | Email |  |
| Stream | [ ] Experiences or [ x ] Expose & Inspire |
| Trade(s) | plumbing, construction, welding and electrical |
| Total Project Cost | $4,000 |  Funding Received | $4,000 |
| Number of Schools | 7 | Grade Level of Students | 6 & 7 |
| Number of Students | 360 | Number of Parents | 38 |

**Project description including details of your hands-on activities**

In partnership with SkilledTradesBC, local tradespeople and businesses, School District 53 held a Trades Exploration Day for over 300 grade 6 and 7 students. The event was hosted by the high school shop classrooms and four local tradespeople came to demonstrate their trades and facilitate a hands-on experience for the students.

This year, the event concentrated on builder trades, including plumbing, construction, welding and electrical. Students got the chance to create a PVC Marshmallow Shooter, build a simple shelf to hold the Marshmallow Shooter, use a MIG Welder to write their initials on a metal label for the Marshmallow Shooter, and wire an easy circuit. Additional activities (if time allowed) included:

- Plumbing: crimping, soldering and threading.

- Carpentry: nailing and framing competition to build a simple wall.

The students also heard about Youth Train in Trades, Youth Work in Trades and post-secondary options for further trade education and were taken on a tour of the high school shop facilities.

**Pre- and post-activity learning activities**

In preparation for the event, I visited each grade 6 and 7 classroom that participated in the event and talked about what a trade is with them and the shortage of skilled workers in BC. I showed them all the trades careers from the SkilledTradesBC website along with the promotional rock videos. I explained how the Exploration Day would work, including a description of the activity rotations and safety. After the event, an activity plan was sent to the participating classes – the teachers led a discussion about the day, what they liked and what they disliked. The students completed a survey to gauge the success of the event.

**Parental involvement**

Parents were invited to participate with a letter that was sent home following the pre-activity. Thirty-eight parents signed up to work side-by-side with their child. We spoke one-on-one with each parent who attended about the benefits of the Youth Work in Trades and Youth Train in Trades programs offered in our schools.

I spoke with more parents about Youth Train in Trades and Youth Work in Trades following the media exposure the Youth Discover the Trades Exploration Day – many approached me at outside activities that I am involved in.

**Partner involvement**

Partners included:

16 local tradespeople to lead the hands-on activities.

Representatives of local post-secondary institutions to talk about possible future education in the trades.

Secondary school shop teachers and career education coordinators for planning and practical assistance.

**Promotions and media**

The Youth Discover the Trades Exploration Day was covered by three local newspapers:

Osoyoos Times: front page photo of a local tradesperson assisting a student with his welding project and a page three article

Keremeos Review: photo and article

Oliver Chronicle: photo on the front page

**Best practices and suggestions**

Evaluation was an important aspect of our project and will inform future planning. We surveyed participating students following the Exploration Day and found the following:

95% enjoyed the event and think they have a better idea of what a trade is,

65% talked to their parents about careers in the trades,

75% are more interested in trades,

As a group they were able to list 30 different trades,

Trades they are most interested in are welding, carpentry, electrical and plumbing,

Trades they would most like to try are culinary arts and welding again.

**LESSON PLAN EXAMPLE**

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| --- |
| Tap & Drain Plumbing Demonstration |
| School District |  |
| Contact Name |  |
| Phone |  | Email |  |
| Stream | [ x ] Experiences or [ ] Expose & Inspire |
| Trade(s) | Plumbing | Grade Level of Students | 5 & 6 |
| Number of Students | 9 | Time Required | 20 – 30 minutes |

**Learning Outcomes**

Understanding of why plumbing is important,

Understanding of some tasks a plumber might complete as a part of their work,

Problem solving skills,

Increases mechanical aptitude by providing an opportunity to work “hands-on” with a plurality of pipes and pipe fittings that can be interconnected with one another to build a basic, yet fully functional fluid piping system.

**Required Materials**

The Tap & Drain Plumbing Demonstration was designed to be set up outside since it uses running water. Choose a spot that has a garden hose accessible and allows for drainage of water used during the demonstration (i.e. next to a playing field or close to a storm drain).

Tap & Drain Plumbing Demonstration kit contains:

Water distribution manifold

Supply hose

Distribution hoses (3)

Drain hoses (3)

Stand with water intake connection shutoff valve, spout/tap, funnel/drain, & drain connection (3)

Set of various pipes and connections (3)

Laminated schematic card (3)

**Activity Details / Instructions**

1. Presenter begins by discussing the importance of plumbing. They could ask students how they use plumbing in their everyday lives, and what the kids think a plumber does. After a short discussion about the ways we use plumbing and the kind of situations a plumber may find himself in at work, it’s time for some hands on plumbing.

2. Students are broken into groups of three to complete the activity.

3. Each group is provided with a schematic card for the desired outcome (i.e. connecting the water intake valve to the tap and the drain funnel to the drain connection).

4. Each group is tasked with using the connectors and pipes provided to them to assemble the system as shown on the schematic card. This will be made more challenging by the extra parts that are included in the connectors and pipes. Give students a certain amount of time to complete the project (i.e. 10 -15 minutes).

5. Presenter will assist when necessary to ensure that each group has accomplished the task at the end of the allotted time.

6. At the wrap-up of the activity, students are given a few minutes to disassemble their station in preparation for the next group.