



My Last Words: A Closing Reflection

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

BWBR Description: *Bonner Curriculum training invites participants to reflect on their time with the Bonner Foundation with simple exercises focused on skills, memories, and relationships.*

Overview: Participants in the Bonner program experience a lot over the course of their four years. This simple training focuses specifically on reflection around the skills students have developed, the memories they have formed, and the relationships they have built with each other.

Category: Reflection

Level: A training focused on final reflections of the Bonner experience. Strongly recommended for seniors or those leaving the program.

Recommended

Bonner Sequence: While this training has elements that might be helpful throughout the Bonner experience, it is strongly recommended for graduating seniors.

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will reflect back on their time with Bonner program so as to remember the all work they've done
- Participants will spend time thinking about what's ahead based on the skills and knowledge they acquired from their time with Bonner

Materials:

- Copies of the attached hand outs.
- Pens or pencils
- Washable Markers
- A flip Chart
- Post it Notes

How to Prepare:

To prepare for this workshop, make sure the handouts are printed and ready, as well as pens/pencils and washable markers. Additionally, read through this training guide to familiarize yourself with the flow of the training so that transitions through the various parts are smooth.

On a large piece of flip chart paper, draw a large circle ahead of time with two smaller circles inside. Label the three sections you have just created with “Skills and Knowledge” on the outside ring, “Memories” on the middle ring and “Relationships” on the inner circle.

*** Depending on the size of your group, you may want to slightly modify different elements of this training to account for time (for example, having participants write 4 word when the training calls for 5.) This training was designed for groups of 10-15. Groups larger than 15 should probably be broken into two.

Brief Outline:

This 1-hour workshop has the following parts:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Warm Up | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 2) Skills and knowledge | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 3) Memories | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 4) Flying Away | suggested time 20 minutes |
| 5) Closing | suggested time 5 minutes |

Part 1) Warm Up

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Have everyone get into a circle. They will remain in this circle throughout the training.

Introduce the reflection by explaining that sometimes being forced to work within tight constraints can produce creative results, and encourage more critical thinking. Use an example like a poem with a strict rhyme scheme. With this in mind, explain that today's training will ask participants to reflect on their time as Bonner Scholars using single, carefully chosen words. Remind participants of the value of reflection, and encourage them to take this activity seriously in order to get the most out of it.

Part 2) Skills and Knowledge

Suggested time: 15 minutes

During their four years with the program, Bonner scholars have developed and refined many different skills and experiences. Using attached handout labeled "Skills and Knowledge" have students respond to the questions.

When they are finished filling out the handout questions, distribute the magic markers and have them write all the words from Section I of the post-it notes provided. When they have finished have participants approach the flip chart and stick their notes on the ring labeled "Skills and knowledge." Though it's not crucial, it would be ideal if all the notes/words were placed in such a way that the pattern they create radiates out from the middle.

This action is meant to demonstrate that because all participants are part of a network, part of a circle, they are able to share and utilize each other's skills and knowledge, and so one person's skills really belong to everyone. A facilitator should explain as much (in their own words.)

When all participants have finished attaching their post-it notes, move on to Part 3.

Part 3) Memories

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Distribute the handout labeled Memories and give participants a few minutes to fill out the reflection questions.

After participants have finished answering the questions, ask them to flip their handouts over and draw a basic picture representing their favorite memory from their time as a Bonner Scholar. When they are finished, have participants reveal their drawings. Going one at a time around the circle, have the other participants try to guess what the picture represents. After someone has guessed correctly or a little time

has gone by, have the participant that drew the picture describe their favorite memory, and explain why it's their favorite.

When everyone has revealed their picture and everyone else in the circle has had a chance to guess what it is, have participants write a word that represents their favorite memory on a post-it note then add it to the ring labeled "Memories."

This is meant to demonstrate that like skills and knowledge, memories become communal when they are shared. It is likely that many of the memories posted are remembered by more than one person, and in this way they belong to everyone in the circle. Again, the facilitator should explain this concept in their own words, and then move on to Part 4.

Part 4) Relationships

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Distribute the handout labeled Relationships. Have participants write their names on the back of the handouts, then collect all of them and give them a quick shuffle. Next, redistribute the handouts and have participants fill out the questions based on the name written on the back of their new handout. If any participant gets their own name back, have them switch with a neighbor.

*** Participants should feel comfortable writing as personally (or impersonally) as they care to. Inform them that no one will read anything they write except the person they are writing about on their handout.

At this point, the facilitator should explain that even though participants may be graduating from the Bonner program as well as their college/universities, they've built a network together and made relationships with each other that will always go with them.

Now have participants stand in a circle. Going around the circle, have them say the name of the person that they wrote about on their handout. Next, have them share (briefly) a few of their hopes and expectations of where the person they wrote about will go after graduation. Statements might go something like:

"I wrote about Sam. I think Sam is going to use his incredible gift for making people smile and inspiring them to learn to be a great teacher."

After sharing, have participants write the name of the person they've just shared about on a post-it note, and stick it to the inner circle labeled "Relationships."

This demonstrates how even though skills and memories are important, the real center, the heart of social change, advocacy work, service, volunteering and activism is relationships. Everything else only serves to strengthen and develop meaningful relationships, and that the Bonner program is able to facilitate the development of so many important relationships (between students, between community partners and students, etc) speaks volumes about why it's so impactful for participants. Again, a facilitator should explain this, in their own words.

Part 5) Wrap Up

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Thank participants for their time, their energy, and their willingness to share during this activity. It is suggested that facilitator's close the training with a reminder that leadership and skill development doesn't end when Bonner does, and neither does the need for personal reflection. Encourage students to continue to think critically about themselves and their communities as they move forward into the world. Students that wrote to each other in Part 4 may also want to continue talking about what was written, so encourage them to do so.

Last Words: Skills and Knowledge

Section I: In the space below, write out at least five different words representing five different skills that you have either learned or improved during your time as a Bonner Scholar. Next, write at least five different words that represent at least five different pieces of knowledge you've learned during your time as a Bonner Scholar. These words can be as specific or general as you like.

Section II: Based on the words you've listed above, brainstorm a few different job/volunteer positions you're interested in where the skills and knowledge you've listed above would help you to be more effective at that job. Write them in the space provided. When you're finished, take a minute to reflect just how much you've learned in four short years, and all the new possibilities that lie ahead because of the skills and knowledge you now have.

Last Words: Memories

Section I: Thinking back over your time as a Bonner scholar, try to recall your **favorite** memory from each year that you participated in the program. Write one word for each year that represents that memory for you. Why was it your favorite memory? What about what happened was good? Are there ways to make more memories like those in the future?

Section II: Thinking back over your time as a Bonner scholar, try to recall your **least favorite** memory from each year that you participated in the program. Write one word for each year that represents that memory for you. Why was it your least favorite memory? What made that event so hard? What have you learned from that experience? Is there anything you can do in the future to avoid a similar experience?

Last Words: Relationships

Fill out the following questions based on the person who's name is written on the back of this handout.

I. What are five things you really admire about this person? Write five words in the space provided that represent these things.

II. What are five things this person has taught you or that you think you could learn from them. Write five words in the space provided that represent these things.

III. How has this person supported you during your time as Bonner Scholars together? How would your experience as a Bonner be different without them? Write five words in the space provided that represent these things.

* Feel free to write as much or little explanation of the words you've chosen on this sheet.