

Reflecting on the Bonner Program

Why Reflect?:

Reflecting helps you to process and understand the purpose, meaning, and effect of your service. Reflecting also helps you make connections between your service, academics, personal life and vocational goals. Furthermore, reflections are one important way of connecting with the Bonner Director and Coordinator and sharing high and low moments that should be celebrated and/or addressed.

How & When to Reflect:

Unless a Bonner Scholar is selected as a “Bonner Blogger” (in which case, he/she will have a separate agreement with the Bonner Office regarding reflection), Bonner Scholars are required to do a formal reflection every other month during the school year.

Reflection	Due:
September 2018	Fri., October 12, 2018, by 5:00pm
November 2018	Fri., December 14, 2018, by 5:00pm
February 2019	Fri., March 15, 2019, by 5:00pm
April 2019	Fri., April 26, 2019, by 5:00pm

Reflections are not to be merely fly-on-the-wall reports of what happened at your site or anywhere else. They should demonstrate your understanding of issues, the community, the world and yourself.

Care should also be given to ensure that reflections demonstrate high standards of comprehension, grammar, spelling and professionalism, just as if they were academic papers and projects. *The Director and Coordinator reserve the right to deem any submitted reflection unsatisfactory and request that a new reflection be resubmitted. The Director and the Coordinator will determine the new deadline and notify the student.* Each completed, approved reflection shall count for 1 Bonner hour and its satisfactory completion (or lack thereof) will go into the Bonner Scholar’s permanent record, which is reviewed each semester.

Reflections should be emailed to Jessalyn at StoryJW@wofford.edu before 5:00pm on the due date, listed above.

Acceptable Forms of Bonner Reflection:

Bonner reflections may take one of two forms:

- 1) **An essay** of approximately 750 words on one of the topics outlined below, or a subject of your choosing **for which you have gotten advance approval** from the Director or Coordinator (topics should relate to personal development, service work, common commitments, vocational discernment, etc.). Written reflections should be dated and pledged. Please also include either the words “personal and confidential” or “may be shared.” If coursework can be adapted to serve as a Bonner reflection or vice versa, that’s great.
- 2) **A 5-10 minute-long, produced video** on one of the topics outlined below, or a subject of your choosing **for which you have gotten advance approval** from the Director or Coordinator (topics should relate to personal development, service work, common commitments, vocational discernment, etc.). Video cameras are available for check out from the Bonner office. We welcome your ideas and will readily offer feedback on making your video better before you begin shooting, if you like.

Possible Reflection Topics (in no particular order):

1. Your vision of the world, nation and community in which you would like to live. Do not concern yourself with how realistic your vision is, how it would be implemented, or what your part in creating it would be. Simply write or demonstrate your vision as though you could wave a magic wand and have it manifest in one fell swoop. This is your opportunity to create your utopia.
2. Write or film & edit the story of your own spiritual path. What are the meaningful events of your spiritual journey? Have you stayed with the religion into which you were born? Share meaningful memories of religious instruction or ceremonies or rituals or joining a church or music or times when you were deeply, truly praying.
3. Who have you loved that has passed on? How has knowing him/her changed you? What helps you to accept and deal with the loss of this person? And, what did that person and his/her passing teach you about life?
4. Who have been models for you regarding how to serve and help others? Why have they been so?
5. Which historic figures inspire you? Why? What did they do? If you were to do something similar and/or equally inspiring to those who will come after you, what would it be?

6. Where do you feel most at home? What are the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings of that place? Why does this place speak to you so profoundly?
7. When have you stood up to someone or something, even at risk to yourself, for what you knew was right? What was it? How did it feel? What would have happened if you hadn't acted? How does it feel to acknowledge that?
8. What people living in the world today inspire you? Why? What do they do? If you were to do something similar and/or inspiring to others, what would it be?
9. What is your understanding or philosophy of God? Who is He/She/It?
10. What have you wanted very badly, but couldn't have? What did that experience teach you?
11. What have been the times in your life when you have been most committed (when you were deeply involved, emotionally committed, and determined to persist in spite of all obstacles). What were the times when you were the most decisive (when you knew exactly what to do - you knew you were right, and you acted deliberately and confidently, perhaps even in spite of the doubt & objections of others). Now, do times when you have been so absorbed in what you were doing, you hardly noticed the time. Now, recall the great accomplishments of your life. Now, the most exciting moments, when you felt most alive and most...you! Now, look for patterns, redundancies and events you repeatedly recalled. Write about or film the insights your answers suggest.
12. What experiences in your life have been defining moments – molding you into the person you are? Why? How?
13. What does the word “character” mean to you? Do you have it? Are you developing it? How?
14. What do you enjoy most about your current work? (Even if you dislike most of it, there should be at least one feature that you enjoy). What do you most enjoy doing when you’re not working (hobbies, recreational interests, etc.)? What do you most enjoy learning about? What do you most enjoy making (what do you enjoy as a beginning to end process)? If you were financially independent and money was not a factor, what kind of work would you do? What do your answers tell you about yourself?
15. What are your most precious and perhaps most audacious dreams? Publish a novel? Hike the Appalachian Trail? Visit the Moon? Develop a cure for cancer? Why? What would it mean for you if you achieved these dreams? Develop a plan for doing so.
16. What are your favorite traditions? Why?

17. What are you grateful for?
18. Think through your current & past course loads. In what ways could the things you are learning in your classes be utilized to help others? Be creative. Could physics principles be put into practice in building a cool, new playground in a socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhood? Could your statistics class compile some data that would help a nonprofit get a grant? Please also address any challenges or opportunities that would be present in an effort to add a community service learning component to that class.
19. There is a commercial on TV now for a financial planning firm that says something like, “Retired architects in the U.S. = 5,462; ...who want to spend retirement exploring National Parks = 2,145; ...in an RV = 989; ...with their grandsons = 384; ...who are triplets = 1.” What are the facts like that about you? What are the traits that you likely share with others, but when taken together, make you special and unique and one-of-a-kind? Your strengths? Interests? Traits you were born with? Communities to which you belong? What do you love to do? What are you great at? What are your weaknesses? What do you hate to do? What do these things tell you about your place in the world?
20. The Spartanburg Herald-Journal (or ETV, if you’re medium is film) is doing a story on “Ten People Who Have Made A Difference in Spartanburg.” They have chosen you as one. Write/Film & Edit the piece on your contributions for them.
21. Take this opportunity to declare your “Personal Bill of Rights & Responsibilities.” It’s what’s right for you, your personal standard of behavior. It includes what you expect of yourself, what you view as your responsibility to others, and what you will and will not tolerate from them. Why did you choose these items? Are you prepared to make decisions in life that support your personal bill of rights & responsibilities?
22. Select any community with which you are familiar (e.g., Bonner Scholars, online gamers, your church, etc.). What makes this a community? Is it governed by rules or unwritten understandings? What are they? Are there people who put in effort to build a sense of community? What do they do? What does it mean to build community? How is it done?
23. Select an important relationship in your life (family members, significant others, friends, etc.). Explain how your perspective on relationships and that relationship in particular has grown or changed, since you have been involved in service and reflection.
24. Select a personal quality you would like to develop and express in your life and in your service. Why that one? What would it mean for you if that quality were fully-developed? How might you begin to develop it in your service and in your life?

25. Select a favorite poem or quote or book. If it's a poem or quote, please include it. If it's a book, please include a synopsis and/or excerpt. Explain how this piece speaks to the community servant in you and why.
26. Relate what you are learning and doing at your service site to your vocational aspirations after Wofford. How will the work you are doing and the lessons you are learning help you? How could they be doing more to help you? What skills or lessons or exposure do you hope to have/learn before leaving Wofford that you aren't getting at your current placement?
27. Presto, Change-O: You are now the Executive Director of your service site. What was your predecessor doing well that you will continue? What are the problems and challenges you have inherited? What will you do differently and why?
28. Pick one or more of the Bonner Common Commitments (*Civic Engagement; Community Building; Diversity; International Perspective; Social Justice; Spiritual Exploration*). Discuss ways in which you see that commitment being played out in your life and decisions, on campus, in the Spartanburg community and/or in the global community. How well are things working? How could they be better? How could you improve the situation?
29. It's been said that one of the most important things that many nonprofits do is to restore a sense of dignity to the human beings. Relate this idea of restoring dignity to the work you do at your service site. How important is that? What does it even mean to have lost one's dignity? What does it mean to get it back? Are you able to relate to what it feels like to have lost dignity?
30. In your estimation, what are the most critical needs going unmet on the planet, or what are the greatest sources of pain and suffering in the world? How about in your nation? In your community? What will/can you and others do to improve the situation? What is the most cynical reason you can come up with for not acting? Are you going to let that stop you?
31. Imagine that you have just passed on. You have devoted yourself to your life's work and have been successful in its execution. What is the legacy that you have left behind? What contribution did you make to a better world? When all is said and done, what statement did your life make? What will you be remembered for? Please write (or portray on the video) this in the person of an article on your life or in the person of someone speaking at your funeral about you.
32. If you could share one bit of wisdom with the whole world, what would it be? Why is it so important? How did you come by this wisdom?
33. How does your race affect who you are? How does it affect your thoughts and feelings about people who share your race? People who don't? Have you ever been "in the

minority?” What did that feel like? Have you ever been “in the majority?” What did that feel like?

34. How does stress impact your life? Do you tend to get sick? Be mean to people you love? Withdraw? What ways have you found to deal with stress? What works for you? What doesn’t?
35. How do you define the role of the sacred in your life now? How do you define your relationship to the sacred? How is spirit measured? By attendance at mass, or temple, or weekend services? If we don’t participate in regular, formalized religion, can we still affirm that we are on a spiritual journey?
36. How do you define a healthy relationship? What elements does it include? What makes a successful one? What makes a toxic one? What characteristics do you look for in a friend? How about in a significant other?
37. Do you think or feel you have a specific calling, a mission in life? What is this calling; and when were you first aware of it? Has it revealed itself to you more than once?
38. Do you pity those in need? Is that what they want?
39. Do you ever have feelings of discontent, fear, worry, guilt, anger or embarrassment when you serve? What underlying attitudes or outmoded beliefs might be operating? Are you viewing your emotional reactions as learning opportunities?
40. Do you believe one form of service is superior to another? Are you avoiding certain kinds of service out of inertia or repulsion?
41. Consider your own physical appearance, both the things you can’t very well control (height, weight, skin color, etc.) and the things you can (hair style, clothing style, countenance, body art, etc.)? When people look at you, what judgments do you think they make based on your appearance? Are they right? Do you judge others on their physical appearances? Is that understandable? Acceptable?
42. Choose any issue from the upcoming presidential election (e.g., healthcare, social security, gay marriage, immigration, terrorism, global warming, genocide, nuclear weapons, etc.). What is your opinion? If you were President of the U.S., what would you do? What has informed your opinion? How will you make your voice heard?
43. Besides your scholarship, what are your reasons for wanting to serve others? How does being of service relate to your emotional well-being? Your spirituality? Your health? Your relationships? Your skill level? Your maturity level? Your coursework? Etc.?

44. Because volunteering usually doesn't pay the bills, many civic-minded people try to achieve an appropriate balance between doing well financially (making enough money) and doing good in the world. When you graduate from Wofford and have a job, where do you think the balance between these two will fall for you? What is your philosophy about money?
45. As you know, Bonner Scholars are encouraged to grow in their understanding of and responsibility for social issues throughout their 4 years. How has your outlook on and understanding of complex, social issues and your responsibility for improving them changed during your time so far? Please trace the evolution. How do you hope they will continue to change in the future?
46. As a child, what did you most want to be when you grew up? Why? As a child, what did you most want to give to the world? As a child, what situation in the world hurt you the most, and how did you respond to it? What insights do these answers give you?
47. As a Bonner Scholar, you are an ambassador to the entire Wofford campus on behalf of self-discovery, community service learning, and vocational discernment. How could Wofford do more to get more students actively engaged in these things? How could you, as a Bonner Scholar, help?
48. Are you expecting a specific outcome or result of your service (e.g., your service objectives, your learning objectives, recognition and praise, feeling good about yourself, etc.)? Are you in control of whether that outcome happens? What would it mean if that outcome didn't happen?
49. Are you aware of having received help in your life? In what ways do you feel you have been helped? What are your attitudes and beliefs about being helped by others?
50. Are you accusing those you serve of anything? Can you acknowledge that those qualities or attributes are also within yourself? Are you acknowledging the capabilities and strengths of the people you are serving?

***** These are only some ideas. You may have others. As long as they relate to your personal development, service work, common commitments, or vocational discernment, they will likely be accepted as reflection topics. **Please run them by Jess for approval before you write (or film) them, though.**