

Dignity of Labour

An activity of "Don't trap people in racial boxes"

Wherever you are living in Singapore, there are many adults around you who work hard to take care of common spaces. They do tasks that are essential — sweep and mop floors, wash toilets, maintain and repair buildings, garden, collect trash, guard property and so on. Such work is not always appreciated enough by the public. Sadly, people may even look down on those who do these jobs.

For one reason or another, many of our lowest-paid jobs are done by people in poorer communities. Read the article "Don't trap people in racial boxes" (page 15, *What's Up* March 2019) to find out how this can even lead to racial discrimination.

It is a complex issue. Part of the solution is to value all honest work and respect those who contribute sincerely. To truly appreciate all workers, we must first learn more about what they do. Start at your school. Do the following exercise in small groups.

1. List six jobs that are done at your school by adults. Exclude teachers, counselors, allied educators, the principal and other school leaders.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

2. Next, pick any one of these jobs by ticking against it in your list above. As a group, have a conversation with two individuals who do this work at your school. Then, answer the following questions on the back of this handout.

| | |
|----------|--|
| The job: | |
| 1 | According to those you spoke with, what is hard about this job? |
| 2 | From their viewpoints, in what ways can the work be satisfying? |
| 3 | Why did they choose to work at your school? |
| 4 | How does their work make your school a better place? |
| 5 | What is your wish for the people who do this kind of work at school? |
| 6 | In what ways can students respect and value those who do this job? |

3. Have a whole-class sharing of every group's answers. Use the PowerPoint slides provided to help you.
4. Next, discuss and agree on how your class would like to show your appreciation to at least six non-teaching adults at your school this month.