**BIG QUESTIONS**

1. Is difference a problem, an opportunity, a challenge or a gift?
2. When I give, what do I expect in return? What do I receive?
3. Should we love the people we serve?
4. What do those with more owe to those with less?
5. What is poverty, how should we respond to it?
6. Do one’s motives for serving or giving matter? How?
7. How should we respond to people and communities in need?
8. In what ways does having money give us power?
9. What is the appropriate response to privilege?
10. What are the limits of my ability to help or serve?
11. Do acts of service lead to social change?
12. Is my service effective? How do I know?

**Opening Exercise/Activity**

With both of the options below, the activity can be done first individually where each participant takes some time to reflect individually and then it can stop there or be shared in a pair or shared in the larger group.

*Option 1*

Have individuals or small groups read a portion of the poem that spoke to them and discuss it.

*Option 2*

Why did you join AmeriCorps, and what do you expect from your service?

Option 3

Think of a time when you tried to help someone and it didn’t go as planned. How were you trying to help? What didn’t go as you had imagined? Was it, all in all, a good experience or not?

**Clarification Questions**

1. Who are the members of the "Ladies Betterment League"? Who are these women?
2. What did the ladies of the Betterment League want to do? Why did they want to do it? What is the purpose of the Ladies Betterment League?
3. Who are the ladies there to see or help?
4. Where do you picture this happening?
5. Why does the poem have a double start – first, “The Lovers of the Poor arrive” and then “The Ladies from the Ladies Betterment League arrive.” Why this double start?
6. How would you describe the narrator's tone toward the ladies?
7. What do the ladies hope to accomplish, and why, in this case, do they seem to fail?
8. Who is the “citizeness” the ladies encounter? Why does the narrator call her a “citizeness”?
9. What does the narrator mean by the word “loathe-love”?
10. Why does Brooks make a point of letting us know about the ladies' life of luxury in the midst of describing their visit to a slum?
11. Is there anything “good” that happens in the poem?
12. Are the women from the Ladies’ Betterment League helpful or hurtful?
13. How do the intentions of the women affect the service they offer? Did their intentions affect the women themselves?

**Significance and Implication Questions**

1. "Are there volunteers who come to where you serve who just shouldn't be there?" Do you ever feel this way about yourself?
2. Have you ever experienced fear while in service this year or previously?
3. How does AmeriCorps resemble or differ from the Ladies Betterment League?"  How is it different?
4. "What criteria do we hold for 'good' or 'successful' service? Should we have criteria?"
5. How do we come to form our ideas of what is good or needed?

**Closing Exercise/Activity**

The below 3 options can be done 1) individually only; or 2) individually and then share in a pair, small group or large group:

*Option 1*

What was useful about this conversation?

*Option 2*

As you leave this conversation, what is 1 thing you are thinking about?