

Instructions for Christian Service Hours

Participation in quality Christian service will help you better understand your Christian call to a life of charity within your community. Students are required to obtain five (5) quality service hours each trimester through service events or activities on campus or in the community at large for a total of fifty (50) points each trimester in religion class. Students will be able to earn one point extra credit for each additional hour over the required five hours for up to five extra credit points.

Guidelines for Christian Service:

- Service for the trimester must be rendered within the same trimester. There are two exceptions:
 - Service rendered after the previous trimester's Christian Service Hours due date may be used for the next trimester. (Christian Service Hours are collected one week before the end of the trimester.)
 - Summer service hours can only count toward the first trimester's Christian Service Hours.
- Service must be rendered outside of the home and family.
 - No babysitting, yard/housework, working on the farm/ranch, filing, etc. will be accepted.
- Up to five service hours can be attained through volunteering at school-sponsored events and functions, such as sports tournaments, fundraisers, etc.
 - The exception to the five-hour cap is service rendered through the SAINTS program, a school service club. All hours of service rendered through the SAINTS program will be accepted. If interested in joining, please see Mrs. Garrett for a permission slip.
- Volunteering in the community at large must be done with parent approval.
- Christian Service Forms must be filled out completely. Students must type and print their responses to the questions that follow. Their responses should be stapled to the back of the signed Christian Service Hours Form.
 - How were you able to help or serve others? What did you do? Be specific.
 - What did you learn from your experience? How was it meaningful?
 - Did this service affect your faith and/or your relationship with God?
 - How does your service fit into your checked Catholic Social Teaching theme(s)?
 - Would you select this service activity again or recommend it to peers? Why or why not?
- Forms must be signed by the person overseeing the service (i.e., event/activity coordinator, teacher, etc.). Forms cannot be signed by a parent unless they hold the official title or function of coordinator for a volunteer event or activity.
- Service opportunities will be announced in class, in the Seventh or Eighth Grade Newsletters, and in the Tuesday Packet.
- The Christian Service Award is one of the two highest awards offered at Eighth Grade Graduation. Christian Service Forms are evaluated to determine the winner of this award.

Ideas for Christian Service Based on Catholic Social Teaching

“The Church’s social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society.” -United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

#1 Sanctity of Life and Dignity of the Human Person

- Some examples of service experiences that promote the life and dignity of the human person:
 - Volunteering at a pro-life center
 - Visiting the elderly at a nursing or retirement home
 - Writing and sending letters to legislators addressing topics of life and dignity

#2 Call to Family, Community, and Participation

- Some examples of service experiences that nurture community:
 - Helping with a parish or school event
 - Helping with Vacation Bible School
 - Assisting at a sports camp

#3 Rights and Responsibilities

- Some examples of service experiences that safeguard basic human rights:
 - Volunteering at Catholic Charities
 - Collecting food or personal hygiene items and donating them
 - Serving food at a soup kitchen (e.g. Poverello House)

#4 Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

- Some examples of service experiences that serve the poor and vulnerable:
 - Volunteering at a soup kitchen
 - Helping with Special Olympics
 - Volunteering for different charity fundraising events (e.g. walks/runs/relays)
 - Visiting the sick or the elderly at a local nursing home or hospital.

#5 The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

- Some examples of service experiences that protect the dignity of workers:
 - Volunteering at Catholic Charities
 - Writing to legislators about social justice issues affecting workers

#6 Solidarity

- Some examples of service experiences that create solidarity:
 - Going on a mission trip (locally or long-distance)
 - Sponsoring a child through Unbounded (<https://www.unbound.org>) or another charitable organization.
 - Participating in a Catholic Relief Services “Food Fast” (see www.Foodfast.org)

#7 Care for God’s Creation

- Some examples of service experiences that care for God’s creation:
 - Volunteering at the Humane Society or a local animal shelter
 - Volunteering to help with river clean up through San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust or Scout Island
 - Participating in litter removal
 - Volunteering to help out at a state or city park

Christian Service Hours Verification Form

For full credit, this form is to be submitted within two weeks of the completed service event or activity.

PART I:

Name/#/Homeroom: _____ Date of Service: _____

Description of Service Performed: _____ Hours Completed: _____

Event/Activity Coordinator's Name (PRINT): _____ Contact Number: _____

Event/Activity Coordinator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PART II: Which Catholic Social Teaching theme(s) connect with your service? Check all that apply.

- #1 Sanctity of Life and Dignity of the Human Person-** All human life is sacred regardless of age, ability, or state in life. This principle underscores the Church's teachings against abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem-cell research, cloning, the death penalty, and unjust war.
- #2 Call to Family, Community, and Participation-** The Church strives to nurture and protect the family above all, but also recognizes the importance of other communities: parishes, schools, teams, towns, etc. It is our responsibility to promote the common good of these communities and serve the needs of their members.
- #3 Rights and Responsibilities-** The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity is only upheld when basic human rights are upheld. Every person has a right to life as well as the things necessary to a good life: food/water, employment, health care, and education. (*Note: While we all have numerous responsibilities in life, this social teaching is focused on our responsibility to make sure that everyone enjoys the basic rights mentioned above.)
- #4 Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable-** "You can judge a society by how it treats its weakest members" is the often heard quote associated with this social teaching. Christ calls us to take care of our brothers and sisters, especially those forgotten in our country: the unborn, poor, handicapped, elderly, terminally ill, etc.
- #5 The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers-** Work should not just be about making money, but participating in God's work. Workers have basic rights that should always be respected: the right to fair wages, the ability to join and organize unions, safe working conditions, etc.
- #6 Solidarity-** We are one human family regardless of race, religion, language, or even location in the world. The Church reminds us that we are all brothers and sisters and that "loving thy neighbor" goes beyond our own family, school, or city.
- #7 Care for God's Creation-** If you read the first chapter of Genesis, you will see that the 2nd commandment God gave man and woman was to take care of the world He had just made. That responsibility has not changed. Though it is right to use the earth's resources, it is not right to abuse them whether by wasting water, electricity, filling the air with pollution, etc. By respecting creation, we respect our Creator. (*Note: Though it is true that humans are part of God's creation, this social teaching is focused on animals and the environment.)

PART III: Type your responses to all questions. Print and staple your responses to the back of this paper.

- A. How were you able to help or serve others? What did you do? Be specific.
- B. What did you learn from your experience? How was it meaningful?
- C. Did this service affect your faith and/or your relationship with God?
- D. How does your service fit into your checked Catholic Social Teaching theme(s)?
- E. Would you select this service activity again or recommend it to peers? Why or why not?