

# *Labor of Love*

## **Middle School Community Service Requirement**

1. As part of the Middle School religion curriculum, students are required to perform a reduced five hours of community service each trimester. This requirement is intended to show students that Christianity requires action. One can have knowledge of dogma and doctrine, can have heartfelt beliefs, can be a frequent and sincere participant in faith practices, but as James implies in verse 17 of chapter 2, to be a Christian is ultimately defined by *acting* like a Christian.

2. Requirement specifics:

a. Conduct ten hours of community service during each trimester for 7th & 8th grades, 5 hours for 6th grade.

b. Conduct at least two different types of community service, with no more than five hours counting towards the minimum requirement for any one type of service.

c. At least three hours (2 for 6th gr) of community service must be a corporal work of mercy. The corporal works of mercy are:

- (1) Feed the hungry
- (2) Clothe the naked
- (3) Shelter the homeless
- (4) Comfort the sick
- (5) Visit the imprisoned (generally not appropriate for our students)
- (6) Give drink to the thirsty
- (7) Bury the dead

d. For eighth graders, three hours each quarter must be a new act, that is, an act they have not previously done for their community service requirement (that includes what you might have done in the seventh grade).

e. Maintain a log that describes the act, the day it was conducted, how many hours the act took, and a parent's signature verifying the act.

f. Write a reflection describing the community service experience. This reflection will be graded and account for 20% of the student's grade for that trimester. The reflection requirement will be published each trimester. Due dates for final reflections are:

- (1) 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester -    November    \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester -    March    \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester -  
    8<sup>th</sup> Grade -    May    \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 & 7<sup>th</sup> gr -    June    \_\_\_\_\_

3. Concretely defining what constitutes community service is challenging; most importantly, this requirement should be approached out of a desire to love rather than accomplishing a legal minimum. But we, as a whole, appreciate the concrete so allow me to list some principles and prohibitions that should guide the students in choosing appropriate community service acts.

a. Acts should be sacrificial in nature. Normally this requires a sacrifice of time, but it also implies that the act is not something you would normally do or be expected to do.

(1) Acts must be done during non-school hours. Acts conducted from 8:30 am to 3 pm on school days do not count.

(2) No monetary compensation may be taken for the acts.

b. Acts must benefit the community at-large. This has been a confusing area for students and parents in past years. A “good deed” for one’s family or relatives, an individual, or couple does not necessarily constitute “community service” for this requirement. Let me try and illustrate this with a few specifics that have caused some problem in the past:

(1) Household chores and assistance for a student’s own family or relatives will not meet the requirement. Students should do these acts out of love and responsibility for their family. Allowing them would lessen the intent of encouraging students to serve in ways they might not have served before.

(2) Babysitting for a couple or an individual will not count. Babysitting for a group of parents for the sole purpose of socializing will not count.

(3) Any type of work for a for-profit business will not count as community service.

4. Students are responsible for finding their own community service opportunities.

a. I will try to publicize community service opportunities as they become known especially for our parish and school groups and events that need the extra support.

b. I will also try to publicize community service opportunities that may be available in the greater opportunity and attended by a group of students. The number of students allowed to participate may be limited dependent upon task or transportation requirements. These opportunities will not be St. Charles sponsored, parents will need to supervise but I will help facilitate communication and planning.

5. Acts of community service completed during this past summer may be used for up to 2 hours of the first trimester’s requirement.

6. In the last four weeks of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> trimesters students who have completed their trimester requirement but continue to serve the community may rollover up to 2 extra hours into the next trimester.

7. Please read this through with your parents. Sign it and date it along with your parents to show you understand the requirement. Do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Blessings,

Mrs. Hynes

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_