

St. Charles School
Christian Service Program
Guidelines



Goals

The goals of the Christian Service Program are based on the philosophy of St. Charles School: *"St. Charles School is a Catholic parish school dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for students. The faculty, in partnership with the parents, promotes a community of faith and endeavors to challenge students to reach their fullest potential. Inspired by Jesus' life, students are encouraged to become participating members of the Church and world community."*

The Service Program has been designed to achieve the following goals:

- To offer each student the opportunity to reflect on the teachings of Jesus Christ in relation to serving others.
- To foster awareness of the needs of others, coupled with the opportunity to make a difference in our community.
- To help students reflect on their own volunteer work and how it affects their lives and relates to concepts learned in religion classes.
- To underscore to the parents and students the importance St. Charles School places on service to those who are in some way disadvantaged.

Guidelines

The Christian Service Program has been established to enable students to become contributing members of society by reflecting on the principles of Christ in their daily lives. As such, we expect all students to willingly seek opportunities, and when volunteering, to appropriately represent St. Charles School and Parish. Consideration will be given to a student's level of commitment upon preparation of High School Letters of Recommendation. The extent to which a student managed this responsibility and contributed his/her best effort will be reflected in the recommendation.

To promote and monitor activities throughout the year, the following guidelines will be enacted:

- Students will be issued a Journal where they will document hours and write a brief reflections of their experiences.
- A presentation will be required of all service program students, in addition to the service journals. This presentation will provide students an opportunity to share their Christian service experiences with the school community. The presentation should include the highlights of an interview with one of the employees at the site that the student volunteered. (i.e., Center director, park employee). A PowerPoint presentation of 1-2 slides (no more than 1-2 minutes of speaking) is required. This presentation will be scheduled after the second collection of Journals.
- A Youth Guide featuring a list of agencies for Community Outreach activities will be available in the homeroom class, school office and on the school website.
- Throughout the year, the Student Council Service Commissioner will routinely provide students with service opportunities, both on and off campus.
- Journals will be collected three times per year and reviewed by any one or more of the following: Homeroom Teacher, Principal, Vice Principal, Pastor or Associate Pastor. Status will be reflected on the Report Card under "Service Program". **It is highly recommended that 66% (2/3) of the hours be completed by the January 23rd due date.** Incomplete hours, incomplete journal, or missed deadlines can affect the Letter of Recommendation. Likewise, exemplary effort will be duly noted.

Service Requirement

Activities	Required Hours	
	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
<p>Community Outreach</p> <p>See <i>Youth Guide for opportunities</i>. Activities which fall outside the suggested Youth Guide must be pre-approved by the Principal, Vice Principal, or Service Commissioner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hours must fall within the guidelines for the following two categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Elder Care, Youth, Hunger/Homelessness, Healing</u> “Hands on” work directly with people who are disadvantaged in some way and who are not friends, relatives, or neighbors. <u>Environmental Stewardship</u> Working for a cause that requires individual labor as a participant in an agency organized event (e.g. beach clean-up, trail clearing, San Carlos Community Projects, etc.) Students must not receive pay or other compensation. 	5	10
<p>School / Parish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be completed <u>outside</u> normal class hours. All activities must be pre-approved by a member of St. Charles School Faculty or Staff, or St. Charles Parish Staff. A maximum of 5 hours may be earned at the Fall Festival and Auction. (Five total hours for <u>both</u>.) A maximum of 5 hours may be earned for any combination of Scripture Camp, CCD assistance or weekend altar serving. (Five total hours.) 	10	10
<p>Other</p> <p>Volunteer efforts that fall outside the above guidelines can be documented in the journal and will be considered as part of the overall review of a student’s level of commitment to serving the community. These hours <u>will not</u> take the place of the requirements outlined above. Reflection write-up optional.</p>	0	0

Students are encouraged to volunteer and support our local community whenever possible, and their efforts in this area can be addressed in the Program Journal. However, the primary objective of the Community Outreach portion of our program is to involve the student with “hands on” work **directly with people who are disadvantaged in some way and who are not friends, relatives, or neighbors**. The exception is Environmental Stewardship projects where **individual labor as a participant in an agency organized event is required**. We hope to broaden our students’ awareness of the needs of the less fortunate around us, and expose them to the benefits of collaborating with others in their community for the common good.

We realize that this effort may push students outside their comfort zones, and may even at times be inconvenient, but it is this very effort that best serves their individual growth and the needs of others. As such, we ask that you guide your child in seeking opportunities that expose him or her to the true needs of others, and the true spirit of this program.

Eighth grade students may earn hours between July 1, 2008 and May 8, 2009 for the 2008-09 school year. Seventh graders may begin to earn hours after the start of the school year. The student will be given credit for the minimum number of hours required per category, per year. **Hours completed in excess of the minimum, or in the “other” category will be noted, but may not be carried over to the following year.** The extent to which a student demonstrates exemplary effort will be reflected in the High School Letter of Recommendation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to find my own activities?

- *Community Outreach:* opportunities may be found in the Youth Guide, available on-line, in your homeroom class and at the school office. These agencies have been selected based upon their suitability to the objectives of our program and our ability to meet their needs. Opportunities outside this list must be presented for prior approval, as noted above under the Community Outreach section. The Service Commissioner may routinely publicize other activities, including on-campus projects.
- *School/Parish:* hours may be found by asking by a member of St. Charles School Faculty or Staff, or St. Charles Parish Staff.

Community Outreach efforts that fall outside the list provided in the Youth Guide **must have prior approval**. School/Parish work such as Scripture Camp, Altar Serving or other on-campus help need only be authorized by the supervising adult (whose signature is to be obtained for the journal.)

The Senior Centers seem to be a popular opportunity. What happens at these places and what can I do?

Mostly, the residents of the various Senior Centers in our area need companionship. A visit and conversation is the best gift we can give. With prior approval and scheduling from the on-site Volunteer Coordinator students have also:

- Played bingo or other games
- Played a musical instrument, brought in a group to sing or dance
- Presented their Science Project or other topic of special interest
- Assisted with on-site events
- Assisted with manicures
- Organized a craft project
- Brought a pet

Who keeps track of my hours and when do my hours need to be completed?

Service Activities will be documented by each student in a personal journal provided at the beginning of the school year. Journals will be collected three times during the school year, and the hours reflected on each Report Card. Hours are to be completed and journals finalized and submitted to the Service Commissioner by the dates listed in the above table. **It is highly recommended that 66% (2/3) of the hours be completed by the January 23rd due date. Incomplete/late journals will be reflected in the student's profile and can affect the High School Letter of Recommendation.**

How far in advance can I do my hours?

Eighth graders may begin accumulating hours any time after July 1st. Seventh graders may begin after the first day of the new school year.

May I receive credit for working on the Fall Festival and Auction fundraising activities?

Yes. But the combined total amount you may earn is limited to five hours.

May I receive credit for Altar Serving, Scripture Camp or helping with CCD?

Yes. A combined total of five hours may be earned for these activities.

I belong to a dance troop/choir/scout troop, etc., can I get credit for our community outreach?

Yes. Organize a visit by your group to one of the Senior Centers or other pre-approved agencies and earn qualified Community Outreach or Environmental Stewardship hours.

Do I get credit if I volunteer for something that doesn't involve working directly with the disadvantaged, but does help my community, like refereeing a soccer game, helping at Hometown Days, helping my softball/baseball/soccer league, etc.?

Students are encouraged to lend a hand whenever possible. Hours such as these fall outside the specific requirements of the program (see Service Requirements above) but are deserving of credit. As such, students may document these efforts under the "other" category. **"Other" hours will not take the place of the program requirements**, but will be considered upon preparation of the High School Letter of Recommendation.

What would we do "on campus"?

Typical activities include assisting with parish or school mailings, office or class projects (under the direction of a member of Faculty or Staff) and campus improvement projects (clean-up, gardening, etc.). Work must be pre-approved by a supervising Faculty or Staff member and be completed outside the normal school hours.

Can I complete all my hours at once?

No. The student will be given credit for the minimum number of hours required per category, per year. **Completed hours will not carry over to the following year.**

What about parents who chaperone an event/activity?

Parents can earn credit for their time spent chaperoning or supervising an event under the Parent Service Hour Contract commitment.

The Community Outreach hours seem restrictive. Why does the program focus these hours so specifically on working with the disadvantaged or with an organized environmental stewardship project?

1. We hope to broaden each student's awareness of the needs of the less fortunate around us. We realize that this effort may push students outside their comfort zones, and may even at times be inconvenient, but it is this very effort that best serves their individual growth and the needs of others. As such, we ask parents guide their student in seeking opportunities that expose him or her to the true needs of others, and the true spirit of this program.
2. This program has been modeled after the most popular high schools attended by our graduates. Each requires between 50 and 100 service hours over the course of four years. For more information on these programs, visit the following school websites:
 - Notre Dame 100 hrs <http://www.ndhsb.org/Campus%20Ministry/Community%20Service.html>
 - Serra 80 hrs <http://www.serrahs.com/Campus%20Ministry/christianservice.htm>
 - St. Francis 50 hrs <http://www.sfhs.com/campusministry/christian-services.html>
 - Sacred Heart 70 hrs http://www.shschools.org/shp/service_learning/index.html
 - St. Ignatius 100 hrs http://www.siprep.org/christian_service/about.cfm
 - Bellarmine 100 hrs <http://greco.bcp.org/webs/csp/>
 - Riordan 60 hrs http://www.riordanhs.org/ministry/community_service.php

St. Charles School
Christian Service Program

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN

PARENT/STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- ▶ **We have read and reviewed the contents of the Christian Service Program handbook.**
- ▶ **We understand it is expected that all students willingly seek opportunities, and when volunteering, appropriately represent St. Charles School and Parish.**
- ▶ **Consideration will be given to a student’s level of commitment upon preparation of High School Letters of Recommendation. The extent to which a student managed this responsibility and delivered his/her best effort will be reflected in the recommendation.**
- ▶ **We agree to abide by the timeframes and guidelines set forth in this handbook.**

FAMILY NAME: _____ DATE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____
(FATHER)

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____
(MOTHER)

STUDENT SIGNATURES: (1) _____ GRADE: _____

(2) _____ GRADE: _____

**Please complete and return the Parent/Student Acknowledgement Form
by Friday, September 19, 2008.**