

SERVICE TO OTHERS

**"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
-John 13:34-35-**

"By the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witness of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word *and deed*."

- Catechism of the Catholic Church #1285 -

The **purpose of Confirmation service projects** is for the candidates to explore the many gifts and talents God has given them and the different ways they can use these gifts and talents to love and serve Christ, His Church, and His people. As confirmed Catholics, they will be called to a deeper level of responsibility in spreading Christ's love and truth to His people. As they prepare to be confirmed, candidates should reflect upon the ways that Christ is calling them to take on this responsibility to be living witnesses of their faith. Christ shows us through His own life that true love for others takes the form of self-giving service.

Service Requirements:

The requirements for all Confirmation candidates are as follows:

1. All candidates must complete a total of 4 service projects during their 1st year and 4 service projects during their 2nd year. There is no specific requirement on the number of hours, because we want the candidates to choose projects based on the type of service being done, rather than the number of hours it gives. Students are encouraged to stretch themselves outside of their comfort zones, and to go above and beyond the minimum requirements.
 - Each year, the student should complete:
 - ✓ 1 project serving his/her family
 - ✓ 1 project volunteering at the parish
 - ✓ 2 projects serving the wider community**Additional guidelines for each of these categories are included on the back of this page.*
2. Candidates must document their service projects on the Service to Others Reflection Form (attached) when each project is completed. These forms are to be **filled out by the student and reviewed and signed by the parent**. They will be available each week at the Religious Formation classes and also on the Confirmation website. Completed forms can be turned in to their catechist or the RF office.
3. Students should turn in each reflection form as soon as it is completed. **The first 2 projects and completed Service to Others Reflection Forms are due on or before December 11th, 2013. The remaining 2 projects and reflection forms are due on or before April 2nd, 2014.**

Service to Others Project Guidelines

Family:

When people would come to Mother Teresa to ask her what they could do to promote world peace, she often would respond by telling them to go home and love their families. She said, “*Sometimes it is harder for us to smile at those who live with us, the immediate members of our families, than it is to smile at those who are not so close to us. **Let us never forget: love begins at home.***” The purpose of completing family service projects is to recognize the needs of those who are closest to us – our family members – and to respond to those needs with love. Family service should be above and beyond normal household chores/duties. Examples of family projects that students have done:

- Volunteer to cook a meal and clean up afterwards.
- Mow the lawn or shovel snow for your grandparents.
- Help your aunt and uncle move to a new house.

Parish:

As members of His Church, God asks us to give of ourselves – of our time, talent, and treasure. During the middle school years, teens may not have a lot of money to give to the church, but they can begin to practice good stewardship by giving of their time and their talent to help meet the needs of the parish community. It takes much more than money to run a parish. Volunteers are needed in all of the parish ministries. Opportunities to serve might include:

- Sign up to be an altar server.
- Volunteer at Vacation Bible School.
- Sign up to be on the Children’s Liturgy team.

*Service to the parish should be more than volunteering for one fish fry or at one canned food collection. We want the candidates to develop a habit of recognizing the needs of the parish and seeing the ways they can respond to these needs by a gift of their own time or talent. This habit is not formed through a one-hour shift at one event.

Community:

The purpose of the community service projects is to help candidates identify those who are most in need in our wider community and to allow them opportunities to be creative and generous in the ways that they respond to those needs. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus identifies several groups of people who have great need of our love and service. These became known as the Corporal Works of Mercy. For the community service projects, candidates should select two projects that correspond to one or more of the Corporal Works of Mercy. Some suggestions are listed below. Candidates are encouraged to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zones, in order to explore and discover the ways that they can use their gifts and talents to serve God’s people, and to recognize the face of Christ in those who are most vulnerable in our society.

- **Feed the Hungry**
 - Help cook or serve a meal at a homeless shelter/ family shelter/etc.
 - Deliver turkey dinners to families in need
- **Shelter the Homeless**
 - Help with Omaha’s annual Paint-a-Thon
 - Volunteer to help flood/tornado victims
- **Clothe the Naked**
 - Help with a clothing drive, donating clothing to a shelter, etc.
 - Distribute winter coats to those in need
- **Visit the Sick and Imprisoned**
 - Visit a nursing home
 - Volunteer at a hospital
- **Bury the Dead**
 - Volunteer to help clean a cemetery

* Service should not have any financial rewards.

* Service should be done with a willing heart and carried out in a generous spirit.

* The projects listed above are **suggestions**. If you have a question about whether or not a project would fit the requirements, feel free to contact the Confirmation Coordinator to discuss your idea!