

# Practicing Christian Service

## ***What is Christian Service ... and Why?***

### **THREE COMPONENTS:**

1. **Serving God and our parish community at Sunday Mass (or Sat. eve)**  
*In the Gospel according to John (15:4-9), Jesus reminds us that we must be rooted in him. "Remain in me, as I remain in you ... I am the vine, you are the branches ... Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit." If we stay strongly connected to Jesus, he can accomplish great work through us. Our service to others should first and foremost stem from our love and relationship with God because it is this primary relationship which motivates us to love others. See details and guidelines for this component on following pages.*
2. **Cultivating the HABIT of Christian service in everyday life**  
*In school, with my friends, with my family at home – do I have “a heart for others”? Do I do small, everyday things to assist, to comfort, to put the needs of others before my own desires?*
3. **Participating in OUTREACH SERVICE PROJECTS individually or with others**  
*See details and guidelines on following pages.*

### **Guidelines for your Service:**

We ask Confirmation candidates to participate in service projects during their time of preparation for the sacrament to help them better understand why we serve others. This is **what Jesus asks of us**, not just to be nice or because it makes us feel good, but because it is what He would do. Our goal is to help candidates connect service with their Christian faith and to experience a sense of belonging and commitment to the Church community, particularly through participation in parish liturgical ministry and parish outreach projects.

Christian love is based on the spiritual and corporal **works of mercy** and, most of all, on the example of Jesus, who came to serve. Consider the following points when deciding how you will be of service.

- Your service is not a job to be done. It is part of the Christian way of life. It is selflessly and lovingly helping those in need.
- You should reflect on how your service is helping you take on the mind and heart of Christ, fulfill the needs of others, and build up the Christian community.
- Your Christian service should continue after your Confirmation and throughout your life.
- Christian service is not always easy. But you should choose service that you are able to do well.

## ***How much service is required?***

We find it difficult to request a specific amount of service hours. Stewardship does not end when a quota is met. It becomes a way of life. At a minimum, however, we require:

1. **a commitment to serving in a liturgical ministry of the parish, as outlined below, beginning during the summer or in September 2011 and continuing at least through February 2012.** (You will be assigned to serve in your chosen ministry approximately once every 6-8 weeks.)
2. **a minimum of FOUR outreach service dates between June 2011 and February 2012.**

## ***What are the details?***

Each of these requirements is outlined in detail below.

### **LITURGICAL MINISTRY**

**Service through liturgical ministry, beginning in June 2011 and continuing at least through February 2012**

Candidates may choose from the following options: Greeter/Usher; Lector; Altar Server; Musician; Children's Liturgy of the Word. Please note that some of these ministries may not be open for participation at all of the weekend Masses. Children's Liturgy of the Word, for instance, is only offered during the Sunday 10:30 Mass.

**You need to sign up via the following link (<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/ssfhc>) OR through the RE Office, and then you will be notified of the dates for which you are scheduled.**

1. **MINISTRY OF GREETER / USHER:** *Shortly after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and Mary, the gift of greeting or hospitality is mentioned in Saint Paul's letter to Romans 12:13, and in the first letter of Timothy 3:2, and in the letter of Saint Peter 4:9. Greeting and hospitality were among the first ways to show the love of Christ to all who came to hear the Word of God.*
  - Greet and welcome all who are arriving for Mass.
  - Listen for deeper needs (hearing –aids, bulletins, restrooms).
  - Participate at Mass by being attentive at Mass and responding to the prayers.
  - Receive the money gifts which are taken up during the Preparation of the Altar and the Presentation of the Gifts of Bread and Wine.
  - Help guide communion lines.
  - Hand out bulletins at the close of Mass.
  - Clean up the Church after Mass by checking the pews for discarded bulletins.
2. **MINISTRY OF LECTOR:** *Lectors speak the Word of God and tell how God has acted and is acting in our lives. Lectors strive to impart God's Word in a clear and compelling manner so that the congregation will be inspired by our efforts to ponder and meditate on God's words in their daily lives.*
  - Prepare and practice your readings in advance.
  - Arrive 10 minutes before the start of Mass.
  - Dress appropriately.
  - Lectors will be required to attend a training session to familiarize them with this liturgical role during Sunday Mass.

3. **MINISTRY OF ALTAR SERVER:** *Serving at the Altar assists the congregation and the priest before, during and after Mass. Just like during a family meal, various members help to make mealtime enjoyable for everyone. Servers especially have an opportunity to grow in appreciation for the Mass.*
  - Servers arrive 10 minutes before Mass and wear special robes. They carry the cross, light and carry the processional candles, present the bread, wine, and water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, assist the priest and deacon as necessary when Mass is over.
  - Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation. They also join in singing the hymns of the liturgy.
  
4. **MINISTRY OF MUSIC:** *There are many ways we can serve the Lord and our Christian family at FHC within the Music Ministry. Here are just a few of the ways that we can contribute to making Mass a more prayerful experience. Commitment and enthusiasm is particularly required for this ministry and it would definitely involve some advance preparation before Mass under the supervision of Mr. Stirling. Participating in the music ministry at church can be a really **fun** and fulfilling way of developing our talents for the benefit of others and for the Glory of God.*
  - **Playing an instrument.** If you have been playing a musical instrument for at least 2 years, there are opportunities to play during Mass. A solo instrumental verse during a hymn or song can really make it more special. There may also be opportunities for small groups of 2-3 musicians to play together.
  - **Singing in the young people's choir at the 10:30 a.m. Mass.** We are seeking young people to sing at this Mass and to help lead the congregational singing. The young people's choir sings at the first Sunday in every month.
  - **Cantoring at the 10:30 a.m. Mass.** This would be for more experienced singers and would involve 'one to one' coaching from Mr. Stirling or another one of the FHC cantors.
  
5. **MINISTRY of CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD:** *At times it is appropriate to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word with young children in a place separate but not too far from the main assembly. During the school year, the Children's Liturgy of the Word will be celebrated at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Masses. During Mass, after the opening prayer, the young children in the assembly (ages 4-7) will be called forth by the presider and then are sent forth to a separate space with a trained minister to hear and reflect on the Scripture readings at their own level. The children then return to the main assembly during the preparation of the gifts.*
  - Confirmation candidates may volunteer to assist adult leaders in facilitating the Children's Liturgy of the Word.
  - Assistants will help guide the children to their separate space, help them stay focused, and be sure they are safely returned to parents when Liturgy of the Word is finished.
  - Assistants may also help by proclaiming the Word of God for the children in their gathering or by leading the singing of the Responsorial Psalm and the Alleluia.

## **OUTREACH SERVICE PROJECTS**

**A minimum of FOUR outreach service dates between June 2011 & February 2012.**

- Each candidate may participate in outreach efforts on his or her own initiative and/or through group service opportunities organized by parent volunteers.
- Parent volunteers will be organizing group service projects for candidate's (optional) participation, and information about specific dates and times will then be distributed. We hope to offer some summer opportunities for service. See information on following sheets for descriptions of *possible* group service projects.
- **Each candidate is asked to participate in serving food at a soup kitchen at least one time during the preparation period.** We have found that service at a local soup kitchen or with a downtown ministry has a significant impact on young people who participate, and the need to feed the hungry in our community is always great. We are organizing several group trips, but parent volunteers are needed to help coordinate and supervise.
- Contact the Parish Sharing Committee (info on the parish website) to see how you might become involved in parish outreach activities.
- If candidates and/or their families are already involved in a service project which will help to fill a need in the lives of others – food, clothing, shelter, educational assistance – through school, scouting, or other community groups, we ask the candidate to reflect on it in light of Gospel values, and then to consider expanding their participation to make it part of a Confirmation Service Project.
- Candidates will write a **Service Plan**, detailing the outreach service they plan to do during the preparation process. Candidates will be asked to reflect on their service in a variety of ways – in religion class, in their Confirmation journals, in their faith-sharing conversations with sponsors. Finally, candidates will summarize these reflections by completing and turning in a written Service Reflection.

### ***Summary of Steps for Service:***

- Plan how you will participate in Christian service, both through a liturgical ministry and through outreach service projects.**
- Sign up for a liturgical ministry online at:**  
<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/ssfhc>
- Sign up for outreach projects** online (link to be provided when sign up goes live)
- Turn in the *Service Plan*** (for Outreach component) by June 15.
- Carry out your plan for Christian service.**
- Reflect on your service in light of your Catholic Christian faith and the example of Jesus.** Complete and turn in the *Service Reflection* by January 15, 2012.