

## COMMUNITY SERVICE GUIDELINES

According to our mission statement, “St. Mary Catholic Schools strives for a united community of academic excellence and stewardship by embracing the Gospel and carrying the light of Christ”. In accordance with this and with our Catholic identity, all St. Mary High School students are required to complete community service hours. In providing a well-rounded teaching of the Catholic faith at St. Mary Catholic Schools, we catechize in the classroom, we celebrate the sacraments together, and we send our students out to live their faith by serving others.

Students in grades 9-12 will be required to complete **20** hours of Community Service each year. The hours are to be completed in the following manner:

- **8 hours of service for a single organization as chosen by the class by a simple majority and approved by class advisors and administration (these hours will be done as a class and individually)**
- **4 hours each in the realms of Parish Community, Larger Community, and School/Neighborhood for a total of 12 hours**

The 8 hours of service for a single organization as chosen by the class can be hours that are done as a whole class, a small class group or individually. All 8 hours will need to be completed at or for the organization chosen by the class. Classes will choose the organization to direct their community services hours to by a simple majority.

Four (4) hours of service need to be completed in each of the following realms for a total of 12 hours.

Examples of approved community service activities in the realms of Parish Community, Larger Community and School/Neighborhood include:

- **Parish community:**
  - Serving as a reader, server, usher, singer, etc.
  - Assisting with parish activities (including the Turkey Bazaar)
  - Cleaning the church, decorating, etc.
  - Teaching and helping in the religious education programs (including helping with Totus Tuus)
  - Coaching or helping with parish athletic programs
  - Helping the Catholic Order of Foresters, Catholic Daughters, Altar Society, etc. in their activities
- **Larger community:**
  - Visiting convalescent centers, nursing homes, hospitals
  - Assisting in meal programs for the poor and elderly
  - Collecting for fundraisers such as Cancer Society, St. Jude, etc.
  - Helping at a local library, recreation center, etc.
  - Assisting in special town events
  - Volunteering at the Banquet
  - Helping at Diocesan events (prayer chain, etc.)
- **School/Neighbor community:**
  - Helping with school athletic and educational camps
  - Babysitting (does not include younger siblings or children of family members)
  - Cutting grass, shoveling snow (does not include your home or that of a family member)
  - Assisting with out-of-school activities (including the Carnival)
  - Tutoring of elementary students

\*\*Please note the following do NOT meet the requirements for Community Service:

- Service providing the student with any type of compensation
- Service mandated by the court
- Service performed for any family member (this includes extended members: grandmas and grandpas, uncles and aunts, married siblings, etc.)

**Service Hours Documentation:** Each student will have a service form that must detail the hours spent at the site, along with a signature from a site supervisor each time the hours are served. Forms for Community Service can be found on our web page. If you do not have web access or you have trouble printing, please stop by the high school office for a form.

**Reflection Papers:** In order to make service a true learning experience, students are required to complete a reflective paper. Students will compose a written reflection that asks them to consider their service within the context of what is taught in religion class. In these written exercises, students are encouraged to evaluate the ways in which their service experiences impact their faith journey. All essays must be academically acceptable or the student is asked to rewrite the reflection. Reflection papers must be a minimum of one page, double spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman Font. Essays are submitted to the High School Office by an announced due date and will be returned to the students at the end of the year.

Reflection Papers and Service Hours Documentation will be graded as a Pass/Fail for each semester and will be recorded on the student's high school transcript.

**Due Dates:** Documentation of Service Hours and Reflection Papers will be turned in twice a year.

- Ten (10) documented hours along with a reflection paper are due in **December before break.**
- Ten (10) documented hours along with a reflection paper are due **May 1<sup>st</sup>.**