

## *Guidelines for Christian Service Grades 10-11*

For Grade 10/11, candidates need to participate in **individual** Christian service project(s). This differs from Grades 6- 9, during which we ask them to participate in a group project with their catechist. Of course, some people perform individual service in those grades also.

For the Grade 10 service, although we have eliminated a specific hour requirement, in the past this has been **24 hours** of service, and we suggest that as a guideline. Obviously, this time commitment is significant and must be well-thought out and planned. The candidates should not wait until the last minute to start these projects. Parents are encouraged to touch base with their child on a frequent basis to see how they're doing, offer ideas and suggestions, etc. Anyone who is not doing well in this area should be referred to Donna Regan for help as early as possible.

Candidates may have either a **continuous commitment** to one program (e.g. I Am Special); **or a cumulative commitment** to several short-term projects. (e.g. visits to Fr. Bill's Place and a bottle/can drive for Young Church Ministry Outreach programs). At this point in time, if a candidate has not even started a service project and has not arranged for a summer continuous commitment, the cumulative commitment might be the only option.

If the candidate chooses the cumulative commitment, s/he may have a combination of direct service (interacting with people, as in going to Fr. Bill's) and indirect service (no personal interaction, as in collecting clothes for Fr. Bill's). It is not appropriate to have only indirect service. We make a special exception for participation in the Passion Play which occurs on Good Friday.

The rationale here is that we want the candidates to put a face to their service efforts – to actually make and feel the connection to others. Although indirect service is valuable, providing necessary funds, clothes, etc., it does not help the candidates establish this connection. Therefore, we would like the candidates to experience **at least** one direct service project, and preferable more. Good planning is essential if they want to do this.

There also seems to be some confusion about the difference between **Christian** service and **community/school** service. A good guide would be to reflect on whether the service brings the message of Jesus to others. Helping those in need, working for social justice, and direct or indirect ministry in the parish would be good examples of this.

Tutoring at school, babysitting for family or friends (even for free), coaching at a youth camp, etc. are examples of good *community* service. They are certainly worthwhile projects but they are not Christian service projects. Although there are many areas that overlap and will be accepted as service both for Confirmation and for the high schools, **not everything that the schools accept for service will be acceptable here as Christian service.**

We have found an increasing number of candidates who think that anything they do is Christian service. We have had candidates who have submitted forms stating that talking to their elderly neighbor was a form of Christian service. While certainly Jesus would approve of this polite nicety, how is this *service*? It is a challenge to help them recognize that even though they are doing something 'helpful', it is not necessarily a Christian service. It is sometimes hard for them to differentiate; this is an opportunity for us to help them grow in faith and recognition of their place as adult Christians in the greater world.

Before selecting volunteer opportunities to fulfill Christian service, ask yourself these important questions:

- Am I serving someone truly *in need*?
- Am I helping to make someone's life better?
- Am I doing this service without compensation?
- Do I realize the extent of the commitment I will be making and will I be faithful in my service?
- Will I enjoy my volunteer work and am I doing something that is important to me?
- Will I show a positive attitude while doing my service?
- Will I strive to be an example of Christian youth to those I am serving?
- Will this service not only fulfill my Confirmation requirement, but also allow me to feel good about myself and the work I have done? (it's not just about the hours!)
- Do I have my parents' permission to be involved with this service?
- Do they have any concerns about my safety or well-being?
- Do I have a back-up plan if an original idea falls through?