

A Word About Choosing Family Service Projects . . .

Service projects are meant to be learning projects for your family. They are meant to challenge your family to respond to the Gospel message with action. The Gospel message requires Christians to act. The action of Christian life is one of service. Jesus was quite clear about this when he talked about those who would enter into the kingdom of heaven,

“Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’” (Mt 25, 34-40)

A good rule for doing a service project is to reflect back on what it is about your faith or our Tradition that compels you to act. Try to prepare for a project by finding a scripture passage, prayer, or story that speaks to you and your family about what you anticipate experiencing.

Please remember that these are to be “Family” Service Projects. Children should not be left home while mom or dad shop, greet, serve, etc. Remember that as you select a family service project you need to choose projects that are meaningful and appropriate to the ages and abilities of all family members.

You are expected to complete two family service projects between now and May 3, 2008. We have provided you with two reflection sheets to help you, as a family, unpack your service experience. The reflection sheets should normally be completed and turned into the Faith Formation Office within a week or two of completing your service experience.

A couple of hints for finding and selecting family service projects:

- Read the parish bulletin weekly to find parish service opportunities.
- Read the local paper weekly to find community service opportunities.
- Choose projects that are of interest to your family.
- Choose projects that are age appropriate for all family members
- Try to do a project or volunteer at a place that you or someone in your family already volunteers at and do it as a family.

Please call the Formation Office at (715) 386-9209 if you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of an organization or service project you are planning.

Some Family Service Project Options at St. Patrick . . .

- For Families with Younger Children – Service at Church
 - Spend a month being Church Angels after mass, bring up the gifts once or volunteer to be greeters (Contact Terry Bopenhagen at 386-5120, for Greeter Information).
 - Go shopping as a family and include groceries for families in need when you buy your own food. Bring them to Mass for the Christian Cupboard Food Pantry (drop off by the elevator).
 - Volunteer to staff the Fair Trade Coffee Sales after masses. Contact Nancy Fier; nfier@hotmail.com, 386-1858.
 - Volunteer to Serve Coffee for one of the committees after mass on Sundays. Contact Committee or Group Chairs – see the parish bulletin.
 - Participate as a family in one of our Holiday Outreach ministries: Thanksgiving food drive and distribution, Adopt-a-family, Mitten Tree, or Toy Drive.
 - Help the arts and environment people clean and decorate the church, change banners, etc. for Advent, Lent, Christmas, and other liturgical seasons. Call Carol Landry 381-2729.

- For Families with Younger and Older Children – Service in the Community
 - Work with cub scouts, boy scouts, brownies, or girl scouts on their service projects.
 - Visit a nursing home or a home bound parishioner, give a senior a ride to mass on Sunday.
 - Work as a family stocking the shelves at one of the local food pantries. For contact info go to: <http://www.unitedwaystcroix.org/Pantries-Programs.htm> .
 - Volunteer to cook and/or serve dinner at Hudson Outreach Meals for Everyone (HOME) Contacts Jean Schneider - gkyna@yahoo.com or Alyce Ferguson 386-1521.

- For Families with Older Children – Working for Justice
 - Teach your children the difference between Christian social service and Christian social justice by writing letters as a family to your elected representatives about issues that affect the poor and marginalized people in our community and the world. Contact the Social Concerns Committee of St. Patrick, Chairs: Judy Freund - jannfreund@sbcglobal.net, Maureen and Ted Wegleitner - mwegleitner@bakke-norman.com, and ted.wegleitner@parknicollet.com.
 - Do a Google Search for Catholic/Christian/Interfaith web sites related to social justice issues such as those that promote human rights and work against injustices like child sweatshop-produced garments and other goods. Decide to support their work through donations, changing your buying habits, and letter writing to corporation who profit by exploiting the poor in third world countries.
 - Check out the resources for Families at the Institute for Peace and Justice, an interfaith resource for Christian Social Justice. They have a gold mine of ideas for justice work. at: <http://www.ipj-ppj.org>

- Find your own service opportunities right in your own neighborhood! Help the elderly or people with disabilities in your neighborhood with things like lawn work, grocery shopping. Check out the service organizations listed in the Hudson Star Observer.

Be creative and see your neighbors through Jesus' eyes. Because our eyes – and hands and feet and hearts – are the only ones He has on earth right now! Be Jesus to others!