

# St. Thomas More

## "God Is Love"



Small Group Service Projects  
Handbook for Confirmation

## The Service Component

*“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestations of the Spirit are given for some benefit.” 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7*

Christ’s life was a life of service. We who call ourselves Christian proclaim that we are followers of Christ. That is, that the words and actions of Jesus should make a difference in the way we live our lives. We should be trying to model our lives on that of Jesus. Thus, as we continue to become more like Jesus, our lives should become more like His: lives of service.

Jesus told his disciples—and they have told us—after he washed their feet, I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. (John 13:15) In teaching of what the final judgment would be like, he taught us to feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, befriend the lonely, visit the imprisoned, for “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40) And finally, we learn about Christian service in the Epistle from James, which was written as a collection of practical instructions to all people scattered over the whole earth to help them as they struggled to learn what it meant to live a life as a Christian. In the book of James, we are told “How good is it for people to say that they have faith if their actions do not prove it? Can that faith save them? Suppose there are brothers and sisters who need clothes and do not have enough to eat? What good is there in your saying to them, ‘Go in peace, Keep warm and eat well, ‘ if you do not provide them the necessities of life? So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead.” (James 2:14-17)

However, this is not simply a requirement of the Confirmation Process here at St. Thomas More, it is a duty that come from being Christian, a lifelong task. As we move closer to being fully initiated members of the Catholic Church through Confirmation, service should become a more integral part of our lives. Your service commitments will be invaluable to those you serve. You have the power to really make a difference to those who are less fortunate.

Small Group Service Projects can be fun, challenging, accomplish larger goals in terms of people’s needs, and deepen relationships in your group of friends as well as those you serve. It is so important to learn how to become responsive to others’ needs. We all tend to be self centered and unaware of how much we have in relation to how little others have. The planning, participation and reflection of your group project will give you a valuable experience working with others for the good of those you are serving. How many times did Jesus show us in him ministry the value of being together, serving together and loving one another!!

## Thoughts about the Process

1. Look within yourself. What are your gifts, talents and interests?
2. Discuss with small group: what are the gifts, talents and interests of others in the group?
3. Look through the suggestions of service project opportunities. See what ideas are listed. Which ones fit yours and your small group's interests, talents and gifts?
4. The chosen activity should meet the following criteria:
  - a. The activity should benefit someone other than yourself.
  - b. It should be something that you are not already expected to do (i.e. normal chore for family, expected service hours at school)
5. Remember that the Lord will guide you if you ask him.
6. Remember that service to others is not always pleasant. Sometimes making a difference is not overly enjoyable. Ask yourself this question: Are you always grateful to your parents and grandparents for all the good things they do for you? At times when service is hard, Christian service takes on a deeper dimension, as we can identify with the crucified Jesus Christ.
7. Remember that your attitude toward what you are doing is more important than what you are doing. Try to remember that this is more than a requirement for confirmation—service is what it means to be a Christian.
8. Remember who we are serving—Jesus!! So, as we do things for people, we are doing for Jesus Christ and God. Try to see Jesus in everyone you interact with.
9. Remember who you are representing. When you make contact with others, identify that you are completing this project as a requirement of ST. Thomas More. Keep in mind that you are representing the whole parish.
10. Service to others calls for presence, not just doing things for others. Take time to look the people you are ministering to in the eye, smile at them, greet and talk with them. In the words of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "Do all things with great love." It is not how much you do; it is how much love you put into it.

## Suggested Examples of Service

On the following pages are listed suggestions of small group service projects. This list is not meant to be taken as the only events to look for service opportunities. The list serves merely as a place to start in brainstorming projects. Consider this list as suggestions, but look around for yourself and your group. Check out your neighborhood, talk to adult friends, feel free to find a need where your time and talents can be used, and act upon it. Be creative—it is appropriate to come up with ideas on your own. If you have an idea that isn't listed here, but you think it would be beneficial, contact Becky Ready or Linda Bader.

### General Community Service Projects

- Create a homebound service. Adopt a Shut-in for four weeks under the guidance of Deacon Michael. Provide for their spiritual needs: write prayer cards, collect religious articles to be distributed, basket of toiletries, encouraging personal notes, parish bulletins, etc.
- Create food items for four Tuesdays to be given to our Social Justice commission to take to the Homeless Shelter.
- Create a Dinner event for our Senior Citizens.
- Create Care Packages for People in the Armed Forces
- Create College Student Care Packages
- Create Game Night at a Retirement Center.
- Create Thanksgiving Baskets for a Nursing Home
- Create a letter writing campaign to our government representatives about supporting the interests of the poor and the dignity of human life.
- Create a movie or game night for the parish. Charge admission of paper products, household items or usable clothing to give to the needy.
- Create a quilt (or some other creative/artistic product) with symbols and messages of hope for our parish to be auctioned off and proceeds to go to our debt.

- Create a Parents Day Out. Parents can use this opportunity to freely go about their chosen activity while you watch their children at the parish with craft activities, video entertainment, singing, etc.
- Create an intergenerational family event during Lent with activities to learn more about our Lenten practices offered to the families of the parish.
- Create your own group project with approval from Becky Ready or Linda Bader.

### Specific Community Service Project Agencies

Check out the following Social Service Agencies in Cincinnati for possible project ideas:

- Mercy Franciscans at St. John's - 1800 Logan Street, Cincinnati 513-651-6474
- Free Store - 112 East Liberty Street, Cincinnati 513-241-1064
- Our Daily Bread - 1730 Race Street, Cincinnati 513-621-6364
- The Drop Inn Center - 217 W. 12th Street, Cincinnati 513-721-0643
- Over-the Rhine Kitchen - 1620 Vine Street, Cincinnati 513-241-5121
- St. Francis Seraph Kitchen - East Liberty Street, Cincinnati 513-207-0924 or 513- 421-2547
- Walnut Hills Kitchen - 2631 Gilbert Avenue, Cincinnati 513-961-1983
- Working in Neighborhoods in South Cumminsville - 3726 Llewellyn Street, Cincinnati 513-541-4109
- Welcome House - 205 Pike Street, Covington, KY 859-431-8717
- Brighton Center - 375 Weaver Road, Florence, KY 859- 283-0903
- Mercy Franciscans at St. Raphael's - 610 High Street, Hamilton 513-603-8200
- Serve City / Chosen Shelter - 622 East Ave. Hamilton 513-737-9701 (Serve City) 513-737-8900 (Chosen Shelter)
- Salvation Army 513-863-1445
- Open Door Pantry - 800 South Front Street, Hamilton 513-868-3276
- Haven House - 500 High Street, Hamilton 513-863-8866
- The Food Pantry @ Grace Chapel - 406 Fourth Avenue, Mason 741 Senior Center - 570 N State Route 741, Lebanon 513-695-2239

## Service Projects via Internet

Here are websites that offer additional project ideas: (must have approval of Youth Minister or DRE)

[www.makeadifferenceday.com](http://www.makeadifferenceday.com)

[www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

[www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org)

[www.youthserve.net](http://www.youthserve.net)

[www.student-service-awards.org](http://www.student-service-awards.org)