

FAMILIES GROWING AND SERVING

Together



Why volunteer as a *family*?



Living the Christian life means caring for our neighbor. It's just that simple. Our faith is not intended to be private and passive, but rather it calls us into community and to be active contributors in the community. This holds true for Christians of all ages, from the smallest child to the oldest adult.

The starting point for service and the most important element is to remember our obligation as Christians to bring Christ to others. We should be reminded of Jesus' words to His disciples in St. Matthew's Gospel: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." Whenever we approach service in humility and with an open heart we make ourselves available to God and his people rather than basing our service on our own wants and needs. Rooting our service in humility allows us to be open to focus on those we serve.

Volunteering together, as a family, helps kids learn that they can make a positive difference in the lives of others. Family service also develops empathy and helps children learn to recognize the blessings they have. Volunteering together will help foster positive communication and strengthen family bonds. Introducing service when children are young helps to develop a habit that will last into adulthood.

Who can volunteer?

Children of all ages grasp the idea of helping others. Start at home by asking your children to help, like "help mommy pick up toys" or "please help dad sweep the garage." When people outside your family need help, kids understand that too. Many times children hear about other families who may be in need through school collections or news stories. A great way to start is to donate when there is a collection at your school or church and have children help pick out the donated items. These are great opportunities to talk to your child about volunteering and how you, as a family, can help make the world a better place!

St. Teresa of Calcutta said "Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the action that we do," so start by helping people in your immediate family, extended family, neighborhood, church, and school. The possibilities are all around you. You can start serving as a family when your children are young; but the service looks different depending on their age.

What should we do?

The starting point for your family is to recognize that your family and each member has something to contribute to improving the world, therefore we should do it. When considering what to do you need to take into account your children's ages, aptitude, capabilities, and attention span.

- Be sure to include your children in the decision to volunteer and tap into what they like and what will interest them.
- Change as your children age; what they liked to do at one age is not necessarily what will interest them later.
- Consider what your children like to do, what they spend time doing and what they are capable of doing. This will help you land on an appropriate activity.

All service does not need to be done through an organization, especially with very young children. Many times organizations have age limits for safety reasons but there are many things you can do without actually going to an organization.

There are a wide variety of needs in our communities that need our help. Regardless of the type of service required, they all have one thing in common: Needs are not seasonal; they exist year-round. Volunteering throughout the year not only fills these needs, but it helps develop a pattern of service.

HOW TO GET STARTED

This booklet is designed to help parents find ways to serve with their children. Some of these projects can be done for Catholic Charities but you can also choose to do them for another charity of your choice. Get started by recognizing that there is need all around us, that you have something to contribute and you should. Volunteering is important but it can also be fun.

Remember that small-scale opportunities present themselves on a daily basis, like assisting the elderly, moms with small children, the disabled, or picking up trash along your walking route or at your local park. Just be aware of your community and you can take the first step. The best motivator for your family is to root yourself in gratitude by reminding yourself and your family that “you are blessed” and it is the “right thing to do” to give back and help others.

Look to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as ways to serve

The Corporal Works of Mercy help us meet the physical needs of others:

1. Feed the Hungry
2. Give Drink to the Thirsty
3. Clothe the Naked
4. Shelter the Homeless
5. Visit the Sick
6. Visit the Imprisoned
7. Bury the Dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are concerned with the spiritual needs of others:

1. Instruct the Ignorant
2. Counsel the Doubtful
3. Correct Sinners
4. Bear Wrongs Patiently
5. Forgive Offenses Willingly
6. Comfort the Afflicted
7. Pray for the Living and the Dead



Tips for volunteering with children

Celebrate your service!

- Donate goods or money to a local charity. Deliver the items with your kids, in person, so they can better internalize how they helped make a difference.
- Be sure to talk about your family's service experience.
- Discuss what you did, why you did it, how it felt, and what you learned. Make a connection between serving others and your faith.
- Build on your kids' enthusiasm and right then choose your next service project together.
- Remember to start small and to be patient – making a difference can be slow. You may not change the entire world, but you can help change a small part of your community.

FEED THE *Hungry*

Program Highlight: Family Support Center & Hope Distribution Center

Purpose

Collect food, one of the basic human needs, for our neighbors in need. Did you know that 1 in 5 people in Kansas are food insecure? Individuals who are in need of food for themselves or their families, come to Catholic Charities food pantries for their groceries.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. Look in your pantry for items on our most needed food list (see below).
2. Consider purchasing a few items from the list the next time your family goes grocery shopping. No industrial sized items.
3. Box up the food items to be donated.

Expand

- Gather a small group of 3-4 families (ages 10+) and volunteer at Hope Distribution Center to sort food donations. Contact the Volunteer Engagement Team at 913.433.2104 or e-mail ccnekvolunteers@catholiccharitiesks.org
- Volunteer for our monthly Mobile Food Distribution. Sign up on our website at <https://catholiccharitiesks.org/volunteer/>
- Find out when your parish is having a Catholic Charities food drive from your bulletin or our social media platforms and volunteer to help.
- Ask your school or religious education program to participate in a food drive for Catholic Charities.
- Have a food drive in your neighborhood. Create a flyer to help advertise – include the food list!
- Recycle your plastic bags at Catholic Charities.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?

10 MOST NEEDED FOOD ITEMS

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Canned Meat, Tuna & Soups | 6. Canned Vegetables |
| 2. Peanut Butter (plastic container) | 7. Cereal (non-sweet) |
| 3. Canned Fruit (low sugar) | 8. Dry Beans (any type) |
| 4. Whole Wheat Pasta | 9. Enriched Rice or Pasta |
| 5. Canned Vegetables & Tomato Products (low salt, no glass) | 10. Oatmeal |
| | 11. Pancake Mix |

FEED THE *Hungry*

Program Highlight: Kids Summer Food Program

Purpose

This is a seasonal (late spring and early summer) project of assembling adult meals for parents who bring their children to one of our Summer Food sites. Catholic Charities provides summer meals to children in 27 different sites across the 21 counties of northeast Kansas.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. Make a shopping list and purchase the items needed for the lunches, see the list below
2. Assemble lunches, according to the requirements, one of each item per bag. It works best if heavier items are put in first.
3. Roll down the top of the bag and secure with a staple
4. Put the completed lunches in a cardboard box and label the outside with the number of completed lunches.

Expand

- Encourage your parish or school to participate.
- Before filling the bags, have your child decorate it.
- Volunteer with your family at one of our local Summer Food sites: www.catholiccharitiesks.org/kids-summer-food-program/

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?

EACH MEAL MUST INCLUDE:

- Brown paper lunch bag
- Eating utensils (fork and spoon)
- Napkins (2 per sack)
- 1 whole grain item (e.g. crackers or pretzels)
- 1 protein item (e.g. chicken/tuna salad kit, shelf stable hummus, peanut butter — **canned items must be a pop-top**)
- 1 small bottle of water (8 oz.)
- 1 snack item (e.g. individually packaged raisins, granola bar or trail mix)
- 1 fruit cup — **must be an easy open top**

GIVE DRINK TO THE *Thirsty*

Program Highlight: Resource Bus

Purpose

Provide either winter or summer necessities to help individuals in our rural communities. This simple care package will also give individuals reusable items to help keep them warm or cool during the summer and winter months.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. See the list below for options you can collect for either the winter or summer season.
2. Place all drink items in a separate ziploc bag to prevent a spill or tear. Bag all items in a reusable bag to deliver to those in need.
3. Include a nice note of encouragement or hope for the particular season.

Expand

- Keep some of these care packages in your car and pass out to those in need as you drive.
- Host a neighborhood hat and warm gear drive, collect items to donate them.
- Go through your own clothes and see what items you have grown out of and donate these.
- Visit your local TurnStyles Thrift store, receive a tour and help sort and merchandise their clothing.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?

CHOOSE A SEASON

Winter

- 2 packages of hot chocolate
- 2 packages of tea
- 1 travel thermos
- 1 pair of large wool socks
- 1 adult winter beanie
- 1 pair of large gloves

Summer

- 2 packages of electrolyte powder
- 2 packages of single serve lemonade
- 1 travel thermos
- 1 large baseball cap
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- 1 full size sunscreen

CLOTHE THE *Naked*

Program Highlight: TurnStyles

Purpose

Provide clothing and household items for our neighbors in need. TurnStyles Thrift Store is a ministry of Catholic Charities that offers discounted items to shoppers. Through TurnStyles, Catholic Charities is able to provide vouchers for basic needs to refugees and low income households. All proceeds go back to support our programs and services.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. As a family, clean out your closets and box up any clothing, toys, books or household items that you no longer need. Encourage each family member to participate by choosing at least one item to donate.
2. Pick a date to drop off the items at TurnStyles and self-tour the store with your family.
3. TurnStyle locations & donation hours can be located on the last page.

Expand

- Ages 10+ Volunteer at TurnStyles on Saturday with your parents, check out our website: <https://catholiccharitiesks.org/volunteering/turnstyles-thrift/>
- Ages 14+ Volunteer at TurnStyles on your own, check out our website: <https://catholiccharitiesks.org/volunteering/turnstyles-thrift/>
- Hold a clothing drive at your church, school or in your neighborhood.
- Participate in your neighborhood garage sale. Donate proceeds to a charitable organization.
- In lieu of presents, at your child's next birthday, have each guest bring a new or used clothing item to donate.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?



INSTRUCT

Program Highlight: Family Support Centers

Purpose

Collect gently used or new books in English and Spanish for children served by Catholic Charities and create a bookmark. We give a book to every child whose family uses our Family Support Centers or Resource Bus.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. Clean out our your bookshelves and look for gently used or new children's books. You may even decide to purchase a new book or two. Books for young children, young readers and middle school aged children in English and Spanish are most needed.
2. Find a box or reusable bag and add the books.
3. Complete the Bookmark Activity. Print the attached bookmark template, located on the last page. Decorate it with messages of hope, some examples are included to the right.
4. Gather as a family to read together and talk the importance of reading.

Expand

- Host a book drive in your neighborhood, church or school.
- Choose one of your favorite books to donate, write a note explaining why you like the book.
- Hold an annual book drive with family and friends.
- Contact your local library, after school program or nursing home and volunteer to read to a group.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?

Bookmark Activity

1. Example phrases:
 - *Let Your Light Shine*
 - *You are Special!*
 - *Dream Big!*
 - *Reading is Fun!*
 - *¡Me encata leer!*
 - *¡Leer es poder!*
 - *¡Leer es divertido!*
2. Consider using stickers, paint, glitter and markers to decorate the bookmarks.
3. Use a hole punch to make a hole at the top of the bookmark. Loop thread or ribbon through the hole and tie.

INSTRUCT

Program Highlight: Summer Food Program

Purpose

During late spring or early summer help the Summer Food Program which travels to places most in need to give students meals during the week we recognize how important it is to also feed the mind. Therefore, this seasonal project is perfect to help keep young minds active during the summer months.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. Decorate a small card with 'Happy Summer' to include in the bag.
2. Place in a ziploc or reusable bag the following list
 - book
 - word search
 - coloring pages
 - crayons or markers
 - small game or puzzle
 - journal
 - decorated bookmark (see last page for template)

Expand

- At your next summer gathering invite others to bring supplies to make activity packets together.
- Look through your old children's books and see if any could be donated.
- Print off some kid friendly word searches or crossword puzzles to include in the activity packets.
- Volunteer with your family at one of our local Summer Food sites:
www.catholiccharitiesks.org/kids-summer-food-program/

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?



INSTRUCT

Program Highlight: Resource Bus & Family Support Centers

Purpose

Fill a backpack with school supplies for a child in need. This helps offset the cost for a family who may be struggling financially, allowing them to focus on providing food, clothing and shelter.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. When shopping together for your child's school supplies, pick up one of each item from the list below.
2. Fill the backpack with the supplies.
3. Have your child make a "Have a Good School Year" card for the child who will receive the backpack.

Expand

- Connect with the Catholic Charities Outreach team to do a drive at your school or church.
- Each year when you go back to school shopping, purchase extra supplies to donate a complete backpack set.
- Add a bag of new socks or underwear, hand sanitizer, barrettes, Kleenex or other things children need to begin the new school year.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?

SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

1–24 count Crayola crayons
1–8 count Crayola markers
1–24 count colored pencils
2 pink erasers
Pencil box
24–#2 pencils

1–2" 3-ring binder
2 packages wide-lined notebook filler paper
5–wide-lined single subject spiral notebooks
5–3 prong/2 pocket plain folders

1 pair of Fiskars scissors
1 ruler with centimeters & inches
1 package of glue sticks
1 box of Kleenex
1 new backpack

WELCOME THE *Stranger*

Program Highlight: Pregnancy Support Services

Purpose

Provide aids, support and additional resources to the women who are a part of the Pregnancy Counseling services and those who have newly adopted children.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. Purchase the following items:
 - Baby shampoo
 - Baby wash
 - Baby lotion
 - Newborn diapers
 - 1-12 month new or gently used clothing
2. Take these items and place them in a gift bag to be given as a welcome gift to the women or families when they begin working with the pregnancy counseling and adoption center.

Expand

- When you are shopping for baby items, purchase an extra set of wipes or diapers to donate to those we serve with our Resource Bus.
- Pray for those who are expecting and are making a decision between parenting and placing their child up for adoption.
- Host a donation drive in your neighborhood, or at your church for school to support expectant mothers and their families.
- Pray for families who are discerning adopting children into their home.
- Make an advertisement to share to help support a local pregnancy center.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?



SHELTER THE *Homeless*

Program Highlight: Family Support Centers & Shalom House

Purpose

Provide the men and women who are without housing that visit our Family Support Centers with basic hygiene items in a simple, reusable package.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. Purchase the following items:
 - Men's tube socks (large)
 - Bar of soap
 - Travel size (shampoo, lotion and sunscreen)
 - Toothbrush/toothpaste
 - Razor
 - Mini bottled water (8 oz.)
 - Protein Bar
2. Begin filling the sock, by taking one sock and placing it in the bottom of the other. Continue filling with one of each item you purchased. Tie the sock or secure with a rubber band.

Expand

- Create several extra socks and keep in your car. The next time you see someone who is without housing, give them one.
- Pray for those who are without a house.
- As a family, read a few books about homelessness:
 - *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting
 - *The Family Under the Bridge* by Natalie Savage Carlson
 - *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by DyAnne DiSalvo
- Include a short note of Hope or colorful drawing in your transitional housing pack.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?



COMFORT THE *Sick*

Program Highlight: Resource Bus & Family Support Centers

Purpose

Provide the men and women who are without housing that visit our Family Support Centers and those we serve with our Resource Bus with basic first aid items in a simple, reusable package.

Prayer

Loving and generous God, many of your children live in need. Help us to see the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to work together to take care of the poor and needy. We thank you for those who help us to have a healthy life. We ask this through Jesus, who came to show us how to love. Amen.

Activity

1. When shopping purchase these items to build a basic first aid kit. **Do not include any medication.**
 - Band aids
 - Antiseptic wipes
 - Gauze
 - Hand Sanitizer
 - Neosporin
 - Q-tips
 - Nail clippers
 - Mini pack of tissues
 - Thermometer
2. Fill the Ziploc bag with these supplies and include a note of Hope for the individual who will receive it.

Expand

- Instead of a ziploc bag place all of the items in a small 'First Aid' bag purchased at a local store.
- Invite your friends to purchase these supplies in bulk and put the kits together with several families helping.
- Add any other travel size hygiene items to help those in transitional living.
- Keep a few extra 'First Aid' kits in your car and pass them out to a person in need.

Reflect

1. Why was it important to do this project? How do you think you helped others?
2. What did you like? What was hard? How did it make you feel to help someone else?
3. What volunteer activity would you like to do next?



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Contact a member of the team before donating these special projects.

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WHERE TO DONATE ITEMS

Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas

9720 West 87th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:30 pm

TurnStyles 135th Street

11310 West 135th Street
Overland Park, KS 66213

Donation Hours:

Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm;
Saturday, 10 am – 5pm

TurnStyles 87th Street

9750 West 87th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212

Donation Hours:

Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm;
Saturday, 10 am – 5pm

TurnStyles Mission

5304 Martway Street
Mission, KS 66205

Donation Hours:

Monday – Friday, 10am – 6pm;
Saturday, 10 am – 5pm

DOCUMENTS FOR YOU

BOOKMARKS

WELCOME SIGN