FAMILIES GROWING AND SERVING
Together

catholic charities
OF NORTHEAST KANSAS
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.
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

- 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 SPOTLIGHT: CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOOD PANTRIES & 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.
3. Box up the food items to be donated.

EXPAND
• As a family, or as an individual (ages 14+), volunteer at Hope Distribution Center to sort food donations. Contact the Volunteer Department at 913.433.2104 or e-mail ccnekvolunteers@catholiccharitiesks.org
• Volunteer for our Mass Food Distribution. Contact the Volunteer Department at 913.433.2104 or e-mail ccnekvolunteers@catholiccharitiesks.org
• Find out when your parish is having a Catholic Charities food drive 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?

TOP 10 MOST NEEDED FOOD ITEMS

1. Canned Meat, Fish & Soups
2. Peanut Butter (plastic container)
3. Canned Fruit (low sugar)
4. Whole Wheat Pasta
5. Canned Vegetables & Tomato Products (low salt)
6. Cereal (non-sweet)
7. Dry Beans (any type)
8. Enriched Rice or Pasta
9. Oatmeal
10. Pancake Mix
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: KIDS SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM

PURPOSE
Assemble adult meals for parents who bring their children to one of our Summer Food sites. Catholic Charities provides summer meals to children in 30 different sites across the 21 counties of northeast Kansas.

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-3

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.

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?

ACTIVITY
1. Make a shopping list and purchase the items needed for the lunches, see the list at right.
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.

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
**PURPOSE**

Provide garden tools and organic seeds to the farmers participating in the New Roots for Refugees Program. This program teaches refugee farmers how to grow and market their produce in Kansas City.

**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. Collect garden tools or organic seeds, tools may be gently used.
   - **Garden tools:** hand trowels, small shovels, garden hats, garden gloves, stakes, twine.
   - **Organic seeds:** garlic, tomatoes, lettuce, onions, carrots, cucumbers, peppers, herbs.

2. Place supplies in a wicker basket, farmers will use the baskets to display their produce at the market.

**EXPAND**

- Ask a local garden store if they would be willing to donate organic seed packets or garden supplies.
- Host a neighborhood Seed Drive. Create a flyer to advertise the project. Pick a day to collect the packets.
- Plant your own garden. Share your bounty with neighbors or donate some of it to a local food pantry.
- Visit the New Roots for Refugees farmers at a local Farmers Market. Find a market near you: [www.newrootsforrefugees.org](http://www.newrootsforrefugees.org)

**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?
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: REFUGEE & IMMIGRATION SERVICES

PURPOSE
Help us welcome new refugee families to Kansas City by providing basic household essentials.

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.

EXPAND
- Help with a refugee move-in.
- Attend World Refugee Day held each Spring, check our website for the date: www.catholiccharitiesks.org/volunteer
- Looking for other projects that benefit refugees? Consider our backpack and New Roots for Refugees project ideas.
- Volunteer for our “Back to School Program” in August.

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?

1. Decide what kind of welcome basket you would like to create, choose from the list below.

2. Create a shopping list to purchase the items for your basket, items may be gently used.
   **Tip:** To cut costs, purchase items from Dollar Tree or Dollar General.

3. Assemble the items in the appropriate basket, see below. Make cards or a welcome sign for the family to put in their home. Please no religious items.

**CHOOSE A BASKET**

**BATHROOM SET**
- Set of Towels (4-6)
- Set of washcloths (4-6)
- 1 bottle of shampoo
- 1 bar of soap
* Assemble in a laundry basket

**CLEANING SET**
- 1 package of sponges
- 1 bottle of bathroom/kitchen cleaner
- 1 bottle of dish soap
- 1 container of laundry detergent
* Assemble in a bucket

**KITCHEN SET**
- 1 set of dishes (4-6)
- 1 set of glassware (4-6)
- 1 set of silverware (4-6)
- 1 set of mixing bowls
* Assemble in a trash can
CLOTHE THE Naked
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: 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 basic needs to refugees and low income households. All proceeds go back to support our programs and services.

EXPAND
- Ages 10+ Volunteer at TurnStyles on Saturday with your parents, check out our website: www.catholiccharitiesks.org/turnstyles/volunteer
- Ages 14+ Volunteer at TurnStyles on your own, check out our website: www.catholiccharitiesks.org/turnstyles/volunteer
- Hold a clothing drive at your church, school or neighborhood.
- Participate in your neighborhood garage sale. Contact TurnStyles to pick-up remaining items.
- In lieu of presents, at your child’s next birthday, have each guest bring a new or used clothing item to donate.

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.

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?

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.
INSTRUCT

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: RESOURCE BUS, FOSTER GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM & REFUGEE CHILDREN

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.

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.

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.

EXPAND
• Each year when you go back to school shopping, purchase extra supplies to donate a complete backpack set.
• Have your child make a “Have a Good School Year” card for the child who will receive the backpack.
• Add a bag of new socks or underwear, hand sanitizer, barrettes, Kleenex or other things children need to begin the new school year.

MATERIALS NEEDED
• A backpack
• A complete set of school supplies, see supply list below. Make it your goal to fill one backpack completely.

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
INSTRUCT

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: CATHOLIC CHARITIES EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CENTERS

PURPOSE

Collect gently used or new books for children served by Catholic Charities and create a bookmark. We give a book to every child whose family comes to Catholic Charities.

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 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 readers and middle school aged children are most needed.
2. Find a box and add the books.
3. Gather as a family to read together and talk the importance of reading.

BOOKMARK ACTIVITY

1. Use the attached bookmark template to decorate bookmarks with messages of hope. See below for examples of phrases to write on your bookmarks.
   - Let Your Light Shine!
   - You are Special!
   - Dream Big!
   - Reading is Fun!
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 through the hole and tie.

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?
**PURPOSE**
Provide the men living at Shalom House, Catholic Charities’ men’s homeless shelter, 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.)
   - Granola 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 homeless, give them one.
- Pray for those who are homeless.
- 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
- Make a meal for the men living at Shalom House.

**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?
PURPOSE
Create care bags for senior citizens served by Catholic Charities. The completed bags will provide them with basic essentials and brighten their day.

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.

MATERIALS NEEDED
- A canvas bag (can be purchased at most stores).
- 10 items for the care bag, from the list below.

ITEMS TO INCLUDE
- 8.5 x 11” Calendar (for appointments)
- Pill box
- Handtowels (for the kitchen)
- Flashlight
- Hot tea, honey and mug
- Lotion
- 75-100 piece puzzle, Word Search book (large print) and/or deck of cards
- Stationary and writing supplies (with postage stamps)
- Washcloths
- Socks

ACTIVITY
1. Purchase items for the care bag.
2. Decorate and fill the bag with the items. Create a tag that lists all the items included in the bag. Secure to the handle of the bag.
3. Create a card for the recipient and tuck inside the bag.

EXPAND
- Visit a nursing home, Villa St. Francis is supported by the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.
- Visit an elderly neighbor.
- Help an elderly neighbor with a household chore, such as raking the leaves, shoveling their sidewalk, bringing their mail to the house, etc...
- Send a card or call your grandparents.

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?
WHERE TO DONATE ITEMS

Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas
9720 West 87th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212

TurnStyles
9750 West 87th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212
Donation Hours:
Monday-Saturday: 10:00A-5:00P

TurnStyles
11310 West 135th Street
Overland Park, KS 66213
Donation Hours:
Monday-Saturday: 10:00A-5:00P

TurnStyles
5304 Martway
Mission, KS 66205
Donation Hours:
Monday-Saturday: 10:00A-5:00P

DOCUMENTS FOR YOU

BOOKMARKS