



***St. Maria Goretti Catholic High School
Christian Service-Learning Program***

PURPOSE:

The St. Maria Goretti Service-Learning Program will help students to complete the following objectives: 1) learn about Catholic Social Teachings; 2) identify a need in the community; 3) perform a service for a non-profit organization that addresses the need; and 4) respond to reflection questions.

PHILOSOPHY:

St. Maria Goretti's philosophy states, "Through the integration of worship, academics, extracurricular activities, and community service, students are prepared to assume the role of responsible leaders. From Christ's own example, we learn that those in leadership positions must be willing to serve others. The Catechism states, "It is incumbent on those who exercise authority to strengthen the values that inspire the confidence of members of the group and encourage them to put themselves at the service of others" (CCC 1917). We take seriously our commitment to educate students to be responsible citizens and active participants in the faith.

REQUIREMENTS:

The Christian Service-Learning Program requires that students complete 25 hours of service per year with a non-profit organization. Students must complete a minimum of 100 hours of service in order to graduate. Service hours are divided into two components: 1) Service Learning Project hours; 2) service hours.

The Service-Learning Project includes advanced planning, service, and an evaluation. During the academic year, each student must identify one project with a non-profit organization and commit a minimum of 15 service-learning hours to this project. A service-learning project is mandatory for each academic year that the student attends Goretti.

Service Hours include any other community service activity. For example, service activities that only happen once annually would count towards the minimum requirement of 10 service hours each year. Examples include: helping the Weekend Warriors, volunteering at an Open House, etc. While the SL Project is mandatory, service hours are flexible. Thus, they may be part of a +15 hour SL Project or they may be service hours from an assortment of short volunteer events.

Hours may be earned during the school year or during the previous summer. Hours are due at the end of each academic semester in order to receive credit in Religion class.

OVERVIEW OF THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT:

The Process:

- 1) Religion teachers will use a minimum of one class per month to dedicate to the service learning project.
- 2) The student will identify a need in the community.
- 3) Through direct service, the student will:
 - a) deepen his/her faith and understanding of Catholic Social Teachings;
 - b) become a responsible servant leader; and
 - c) develop an understanding of his/her role in the world community.
- 4) Upon completion of the service project, the student will have his/her parent and service supervisor sign the Service-Learning Form. Be certain to complete the Reflection questions on the reverse side of the form.
- 5) Freshmen should turn in their forms to their Religion Teacher for guidance. All other students should turn in their forms directly to the Campus Minister.
- 6) Students will not receive credit for Religion for the Semester unless they accomplish the following:
 - a) Turn in the Service-Learning Project form (1 per year) and any additional Service Hours completed.
 - b) Complete a minimum of 10 hours first sem.; 15 hours second sem.
 - c) If over 100 hours have been reached, students must complete a 15 hour project each year. Seven-and-a half (7.5) hours per semester will be required for such students to achieve a credit hour.

What Counts?

Service-learning activities that address human needs such as faith formation, education, health, housing, or the environment.

Service-learning activities that embody Jesus' command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, provide welcome to the stranger, and care for the ill (Mt. 6: 31-46) are all excellent projects. Projects could include: a soup kitchen, a food pantry, a homeless shelter, a nursing home, a hospital, a senior center, a library, or being a tutor. The seventh theme of Catholic Social Teaching, as well as Pope Benedict XVI, have called on us to remember that we are stewards of God's creation. Thus, environmental projects could be helping at a recycling center, designing a wetland, cleaning up litter, etc.

What Does Not Count?

- Activities for family and neighbors, such as babysitting, mowing lawns, yard work, and walking dogs, while commendable, do not meet the criteria for service. Both service-learning projects and service hours should be service done for the greater community, and not for the benefit of a specific individual.
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- primary mission is to increase profit for itself and/or its shareholders, will not be counted. For example:
 - mission is to create revenue from its daily business transactions.
 - Volunteering at a hospital or nursing home is an exception. While such an organization may not be classified as a non-profit, the mission of the medical practice is to care for the sick and dying, and these themes are also faith-based themes.
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If you have any questions regarding the Christian Service-Learning Program at St. Maria Goretti Catholic High School, please contact Mrs. Nees in the Campus Ministry office at 301-739-4266, ext. 159.

Addenda:

- Grandfather Policy – Beginning with the class of 2012, students will be required to complete a service-learning project for each academic year. Students graduating prior to 2012 will be grandfathered under the former community service program.
- Transfer Students – Students transferring from another institution may ask the former school to forward service hours to St. Maria Goretti Catholic High School for approval. Transfer students who begin in the fall semester will be required to complete a 15 hour service-learning project and 10 service hours, like any other Goretti student. Transfer students who begin in the second semester will only be required to complete 10 service hours for that school year. Service requirements for transfer students at the time of graduation are as follows:
 - Freshman – 100 hours; 2nd sem. transfer – 75 hours + 10 service hours
 - Sophomores – 75 hours; 2nd sem. transfer – 50 hours + 10 service hours
 - Juniors – 50 hours; 2nd sem. transfer – 25 hours + 10 service hours
 - Seniors – 25 hours; 2nd sem. transfer – 10 service hours
- The Service Award – Any student who completes more than 200 hours of service during his/her high school career will receive the Service Award during Senior Night. He/she will also wear a special cord during the graduation ceremony.
- Training Hours – If the Volunteer Coordinator at your service site requires that you attend a training session, you may receive up to 3 hours of training to count towards your 15 SL hours. However, a minimum of 12 hours must be direct service. Any additional hours accumulated through the SL project may be applied towards your service hours.
- Additional Hours – Students may accumulate additional service hours to be applied towards upcoming school years. Service-learning projects are mandatory for each school year. Even if a student has accumulated 100 hours of service by his/her sophomore year of school, he/she will still be required to complete a 15 hour service-learning project for each remaining school year.
- Reasoning for an Annual SL project – Service hours should not be viewed as a goal that, once completed, is not needed anymore. St. Maria Goretti hopes to instill a sense of compassion and a desire to serve in each student. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, and becoming servant leaders, is a life-long endeavor. Therefore, a service-learning project is mandatory for each year.
- The Mission Trip – Goretti's annual summer mission trip presently awards 50 hours of community service to students. Mission trips are commendable experiences as they require advanced planning, time, and energy. Students who will be entering their sophomore, junior, and senior years during the summer that they attend the mission trip will be allowed to design their service-learning projects around that trip for the upcoming year's 15 hour service-learning requirement. However, the additional 35 hours awarded through the trip cannot be applied towards a separate year's service-learning project. These hours will be applied towards the student's service hours. Each student is required to complete a service-learning project each year that he/she is a student at Goretti.