



Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Shrine

Faith Formation Office

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2026- 2027

Dear Current 7th Grade Students and Families,

Congratulations on completing 6th grade! In the 7th grade, you will begin the Confirmation program at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. This first year of preparations will go by very quickly. In the 7th grade, your teachers and catechists will begin to focus on the classroom lessons on the Holy Spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit in Baptism, but are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

As we prepare to be fully initiated in the Church, parishes ask their Confirmandi to complete service hours. The church does this because service is the action of Christian life. That may be obvious when reading the gospels, but there is a difference between reading about helping the poor and doing something to help the poor. The Catholic Church feels that serving others is not an option, but our responsibility. In the gospel of Matthew 25:40, we read that Jesus says, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Attached are the guidelines for completing your service hours in the 7th grade. Please note that the guidelines will change in the 8th grade. After reading through the guidelines or throughout the Confirmation preparations, please do not hesitate to contact me in the parish office at 856-627-2222 extension 109 or through email at ghernandez@guadalupeshrinenj.org with any questions you may have.

I have also attached a page of ideas that you may consider regarding your service hours.
Thank you.

Blessings,
Gelen Hernandez
Faith Formation Director

7th Grade Service Project Guidelines ~ 2026-27 School Year

-All candidates are required to complete a minimum of **15 service hours** between June 1, 2026, and July 2027, during their 7th grade of school.

All reflection forms are due back to the parish office or JPPII School on or before June 1, 2027.

-Candidates cannot accept money or gifts for service work completed. All Service hours must be based on the Corporal Works of Mercy.

-In 7th grade only, you are allowed to do up to 10 of your service hours for a senior citizen (grandparent, neighbor, or family friend) who needs help. Appropriate hours for helping a senior citizen would be to complete yard work, house maintenance projects, and housework/cleaning. *This project should only be done with a parent/guardian's permission and supervision.

-Service cannot be done for a business that makes or charges money. Except for the 10 hours listed above to help a senior citizen, all other service hours must be completed for a nonprofit organization/charity, a nonprofit school, or the Church; they cannot be done for an individual person.

-A Service Hour Reflection form must be filled out for each project completed. If you are doing service for a senior citizen, they should sign the form for you as a supervisor. All Reflection forms are due back to JPPII School or the parish office on or before June 1, 2027. The Reflection form is 2-sided, and all questions should be answered by the candidate. You can print additional Reflection forms from the Faith Formation page of the parish website.

-Candidates are encouraged to do some service hours with their sponsor and/or your family. Candidates are encouraged to participate in as many different types of projects as possible to experience a variety of opportunities.

-The Faith Formation Program offers specific service projects/hours as an option for students to participate in. Due to space constraints, these projects usually have a limited number of participants. Information will be emailed to the families as projects become available.

-Please take note, babysitting, family chores, and taking care of family pets are not eligible for service hours.

If you have a question about an idea for service hours that are not on the attached list, please contact Gleen Hernandez in the Faith Formation Office at 856-627-2222 ext. 109 for guidance.

Service Ideas

This first section of suggested service projects is things that you would sign up/research on your own on how to participate.

-Animal Adoption Center 501 Berlin Rd. N, Lindenwold, NJ 856-435-9116

To see their volunteer opportunities, go to www.aacnj.org/volunteer/ ***All 7th-grade volunteers must have their parent /guardian's permission as well as an adult volunteer with them.**

-Become an altar server for our parish. Contact coordinator Donna Freiling for more information at 856-842-2378. ***Please note this is a minimum commitment of 1 full calendar year.**

-Special Olympics volunteer (bowling, basketball, baseball, track). Google local programs to volunteer for.

-Assist at the local St. Vincent DePaul Food Bank. Help bag up food and hand out bags/check food for expiration dates. Your contact person is Donna Freiling. Please call her at 856-842-2378 to volunteer. Limited to 2 students per session, the program currently runs on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of most months. The Food Bank is located at 13 E. Evergreen Ave. in Somerdale. Distribution time is from 10 am to 12:00 pm. Help may be needed before and after those hours for setting up and clean up.

-Ronald McDonald House, Camden, NJ www.ronaldhouse-snj.org
Parent/guardian permission and supervision are required.

-Assist a senior citizen with yardwork, house maintenance, or housework/cleaning (please see guidelines - a maximum of 10 hours)

-Help at your school during the summer months with cleaning, organizing, and/or getting the school ready for the new school year in September.

-The Unforgotten Haven in Blackwood is a grassroots charity organization that helps people in need with food, clothing, and special requests. Check their website, unforgottenhaven.org, for their weekly hours and their current project list. They appreciate and usually take walk-in help. They are located at 100 South Black Horse Pike in Blackwood. They appreciate having blessing bags, chemo snack bags, and sandwiches made and donated. Each August, they hold a weekend event to fill backpacks with school supplies for less fortunate children. Each year in the spring, they hold an event to make Ester Baskets for less fortunate children. Sign up for these projects through their website as signups are opened. This is a great place for the whole family to serve together, and there is always something that needs to be done!

-**Philabundance** in South Philadelphia has family volunteer opportunities on 2 Tuesday nights of each month. You must sign up through their website, and they fill up quickly. They also have times that individuals can sign up, but all minors must be chaperoned by an adult. Visit their website philabundance.org for more information. This is a good thing to do during the summertime, as there seem to be more openings. (Parents who have done this before told me that it is very easy to get to, even though it is on Packer Ave. in South Philly.)

-Volunteer at **Joseph's House** in Camden. Joseph's House strives to provide a hospitable environment for homeless people who need a safe and warm place to stay overnight. The primary goal is to build relationships with the guests that will lead to pathways out of homelessness. A parent/guardian must volunteer along with their child. Taken from their website: "The ideal volunteer is hospitable, non-judgmental, compassionate, and open to the volunteer experience".

Outline of Volunteer Duties:

- Assist the JHOC team with greeting guests and serving a meal for 80 people.
- Assist in the kitchen with simple food preparation, service, & clean up
- Meet the guests and engage in conversation.
- Assist with the various needs of our guests.
- Assist with general cleanup.
- Volunteer hours are 8:30 PM-10:00 PM

To find out more about how to volunteer, contact Shaniqua Nobles at 856-246-1087 or email sn@jhoc.org. A training session may be required for volunteering. The building is at 555 Atlantic Avenue, Camden, NJ 08104.

-Assist a **Boy Scout** with his Eagle Scout project for the community, church, or other nonprofit charity.

-Participate in **local community clean-up days**. Help clean up the township ball fields and snack stands at the beginning and end of the seasons.

-Assist with the set up or clean-up of the annual **JPII carnival** in May 2026.

-Ask a family member, neighbor, or family friend, with parent permission, who works or volunteers for a nonprofit organization, how you can volunteer for them.

-Arrange with a **local assisted living facility/nursing home** to bring your dog for a visit with the residents in a common area. Each assisted living/nursing home has individual rules for bringing in an animal, and not all facilities will allow this, but many do. A parent/guardian must stay with their child and the dog throughout the entire visit.

This second section of suggested service projects will be offered by the Faith Formation office throughout the year as details become available. All signups will be done through email on a first-come, first-served basis.

-Assist the Monday afternoon Faith Formation program as an aid in our 1st and/or 2nd grades. This project will run from mid-September through the beginning of April. You can sign up for 1 week or up to 4 weeks to help. They do not need to be consecutive weeks. Volunteer hours will be from 4:00 pm-5:30 pm. Signups will begin in late August.

-Assist the Knights of Columbus with the annual fall bake sale weekend. Information will be emailed home in early fall.

-Assist the Knights of Columbus with setting up/cleaning up for their fundraising events.

-Help decorate St. Luke Church for Christmas. The date and times will be emailed home in early December.

-Help set up the JPPI School gymnasium for the annual Christmas Eve Children's Mass.

-Help set up for Confirmation in spring 2027.

-Help distribute program booklets at the parish Confirmation in spring 2027

-Help set up for First Holy Communion in spring 2027

-Help to set up/clean up before/after parish fundraisers and events.

-The Faith Formation Office will offer a few service projects beginning in October. These projects will be offered for after-school hours for just the 7th grader to participate in, and on Sunday mornings for the entire family and/or sponsor to participate in. These projects may include activities such as making sandwiches, utensil packs, centerpieces, and placemats for the Cathedral Kitchen in Camden, making blessing bags for the homeless at St. Joseph House in Camden, or making chemo snack bags for the Unforgotten Haven in Blackwood.

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If you become aware of a community group, nonprofit organization, or charity that would welcome 7th and 8th-grade volunteers, with or without a parent's supervision, please let the Faith Formation office know so we can look into offering that opportunity to all families in the program.

Your child may choose to do a service that is not on this list, as these are just suggestions that others have made in the past. If you have a question about an idea for service hours that is not on the attached list, please contact Mrs. Gelen Hernandez at the parish office for guidance.

Blessings,
Gelen Hernández
Director of Faith Formation
ghernandez@guadalupeshrinenj.org