

St. Christina

7th & 8th Grade Service Opportunities

Why We Serve

As Catholics, we are called to put our faith into action by recognizing the needs of others and responding with compassion, generosity and love. Service is an important part of Confirmation preparation because Confirmation is not only about what we believe, it is also about how we live as Catholics. The Archdiocese of Chicago requires Confirmation preparation to include service that encourages missionary discipleship, community outreach and care for others. At St Christina, service gives candidates an opportunity to look beyond themselves, use their gifts to help others and begin to understand what it means to live as a disciple of Christ. The goal is not simply to complete a certain number of hours, but to develop a habit of noticing where help is needed and choosing to respond.

Family & Neighbor Service Hours

Up to 4 service hours may be completed by helping a family member, neighbor, or someone in your community who genuinely needs assistance. These hours should go beyond your normal household chores or responsibilities.

Examples could include:

- Raking leaves, shoveling snow, mowing the lawn or doing yardwork for an elderly or disabled neighbor
- Helping a grandparent or older relative with cleaning, organizing, groceries or other tasks they have difficulty doing on their own
- Bringing garbage/recycling cans in and out regularly for a neighbor who needs assistance
- Helping an elderly relative learn to use a phone, computer or other technology
- Walking a neighbor's dog or helping care for pets while they are ill, hospitalized or otherwise unable to do so
- Preparing a meal or baked goods for someone who is sick, grieving, recovering from surgery or going through a difficult time
- Helping a neighbor pack, unpack, move or organize when extra assistance is needed
- Reading to or spending intentional time helping an elderly or homebound relative
- Helping with childcare for a family experiencing a difficult circumstance, when appropriate and supervised
- Assisting someone with errands or household tasks because of age, illness, disability, or another genuine need

Routine chores in your own household such as cleaning your room, doing your normal laundry, washing your family's dishes or caring for your own pet, **DO NOT COUNT AS SERVICE HOURS.**

Altar Serving

Becoming an altar server is another meaningful way to serve both the parish and the larger Church community. Altar servers assist the priest during Mass and help the liturgy run reverently and smoothly.

For Confirmation candidates, altar serving can count toward required service hours because it is a real commitment of time, responsibility and service to the parish community.

Students who are interested in becoming altar servers should contact the Coordinator for Religious Ed for training information and scheduling.

Once trained, time spent serving at Mass can be counted toward Confirmation service hours.

Service in the Religious Ed

Opportunities may include:

- Helping set up or clean up for RE retreats, sacramental meetings, First Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation, parent meetings, or parish events
- Assisting with younger Religious Education classes as a supervised classroom helper on Sundays or Tuesdays
- Helping assemble rosaries, prayer cards, saint materials, or student packets
- Helping with hospitality setup and cleanup
- Decorating or preparing parish spaces for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, sacramental celebrations, or other events
- Helping with parish grounds cleanup, gardening, planting, or seasonal beautification
- Assisting with parish mailings, bulletin inserts, event packets, or other non-confidential office projects
- Helping with setup, cleanup, greeting, or other supervised roles at parish events

Sister Ann Vincent Ministry

Please contact Sister Ann at sisterann@stchristinaparish.org or call 773-445-6779.

Opportunities include:

- Making cards for homebound parishioners, seniors, first responders, or parishioners who are ill
- Helping with parish food drives, coat drives, hygiene collections, school-supply drives, or other outreach projects
- Sorting and organizing donated items
- Writing cards for seniors, hospitalized children, veterans, first responders, or homebound parishioners

Additional St. Christina opportunities will be shared throughout the year.

Community Service Opportunities

- Oak Lawn Public Library — Oak Lawn
A particularly good option for this age group. The library specifically allows children ages 11–14 to volunteer in Youth Services, and current opportunities include helping with children’s programs and Youth Services cleanup. Registration is typically required.
- Evergreen Park Public Library — Evergreen Park
Students entering grades 6–12 may earn community-service credit by helping with library activities. Students must live in Evergreen Park or attend school there.
- Greater Chicago Food Depository — Chicago
Youth ages 11–15 may participate in regular volunteer sessions. One adult age 18+ is required for every 6–8 youth volunteers. This is an excellent option for families or a future RE group service project.
- Chicago Park District Community Stewardship Program
Projects may include litter pickup, trail mulching, invasive plant removal, native planting, and habitat restoration. Children under 13 must have a parent/guardian present. Youth 13+ must have a parent present for their first visit.
- PAWS Chicago Junior Volunteers
Animal-loving students ages 12–17 may participate with a parent or legal guardian. Parent and child attend orientation and training together.
- Burrito Brigade Chicago
Students can help with food-service projects supporting people experiencing food insecurity. Families should review current youth participation requirements before registering.
- Lake Katherine Nature Center — Palos Heights
A strong option for environmental service, cleanup, restoration, and other outdoor projects. Families should review current age and adult-supervision requirements when scheduling.
- Evergreen Park Youth Department
The Youth Department works with young people from roughly middle-school age through high school and periodically offers community-service projects, drives, and neighborhood activities.

Other Service That May Count

Students may also complete meaningful service such as:

- Participating in a neighborhood cleanup
- Organizing a food, hygiene, coat, school-supply, or similar collection
- Helping at an approved school, Scout, sports, or community service project
- Supporting a nonprofit or charitable event

Contact First for Current Youth Opportunities

These organizations are still active, but I would have families call or email before counting on them, because current middle-school volunteer opportunities or age requirements are not always published.

- Children's Museum in Oak Lawn
5100 Museum Drive, Oak Lawn
708-423-6709
The museum is active and serves young children, so it could be a great fit if they are currently accepting youth volunteers. Their current website does not advertise a standing middle-school volunteer program, so families should contact the museum first.
- Evergreen Park Food Pantry / Village Pantry Coalition
The pantry is active and accepts volunteers, but families should contact them directly about appropriate roles for 7th- and 8th-grade students.
- Operation Blessing of Southwest Chicagoland — Alsip
Contact the organization regarding current food-pantry, sorting, packing, or event opportunities and age requirements.
- Ronald McDonald House near Advocate Children's Hospital — Oak Lawn
Ask specifically about family or youth-friendly projects such as meal-service programs, donation projects, or other service opportunities.
- Pat's Pantry / Mount Greenwood Community Church
Contact the pantry directly regarding current food-drive, sorting, collection, or other youth-friendly service opportunities.
- Mount Greenwood Business Association
Watch for neighborhood events, cleanups, seasonal activities, and other opportunities where students may be able to help.

Before You Volunteer

Outside organizations may change their age requirements, registration process, schedules or adult-supervision rules. Families should always contact the organization or review its current volunteer information before arriving.

Additional opportunities will be added throughout the year as they become available.