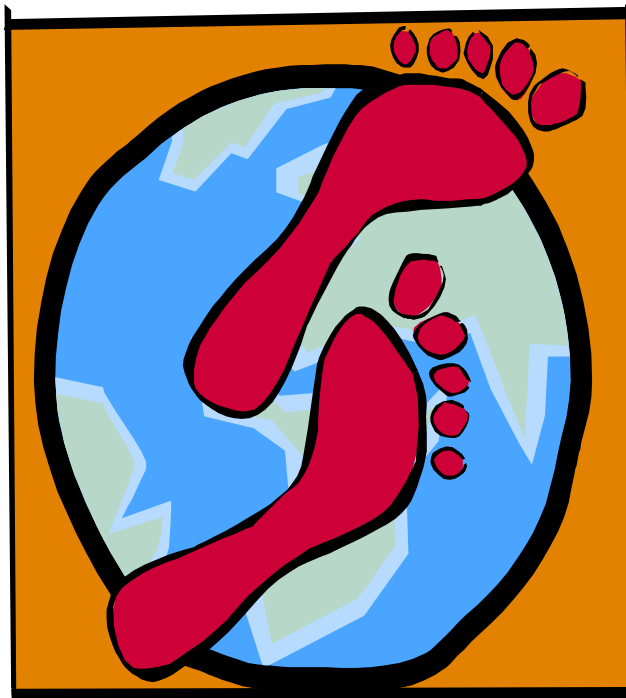


CHRISTIAN SERVICE INFORMATION MANUAL

*"I . . . your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet...
I have given you an example that you
also should do as I have done to you."*

-John 13: 13 - 15



Walking the Path of Christian Service

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INTRODUCTION: CREATING A CULTURE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE WITHIN THE HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The Tradition in Hamilton Catholic Schools

Serving others is at the heart of Catholic education, and has always been a central part of Catholic schools in Hamilton-Wentworth. Helping others, both close to home and across the world, reflects both the example of Jesus and the teaching of the Church.

The Biblical Call to Service

Jesus' Parables of the Good Samaritan and the Last Judgement, along with the story of his washing of the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper, give us powerful examples of the importance of Christian Service to others.

The Gospel also challenges us to work toward a community and a world where justice prevails and where the dignity of every human being is safeguarded. This is revealed through Jesus' words when he began his ministry, "He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight; to set the oppressed free and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (Luke 4:16-22).

Faith Context

Christian Service is based squarely on the lived example of Jesus. Within Religious Studies courses, and throughout the secondary curriculum, students will be provided with the reasons that Christian Service is a central part of Catholic education. Both the Bible and Church teaching provide a wealth of background in this area. Examples of service at various levels, stories about Christian Service and exemplary role models will be shared with students.

While they are engaged in doing their Christian Service and after they have completed it, students will also be provided with opportunities to share their experiences with their peers, and to reflect on its meaning and importance in the light of all that they have learned.

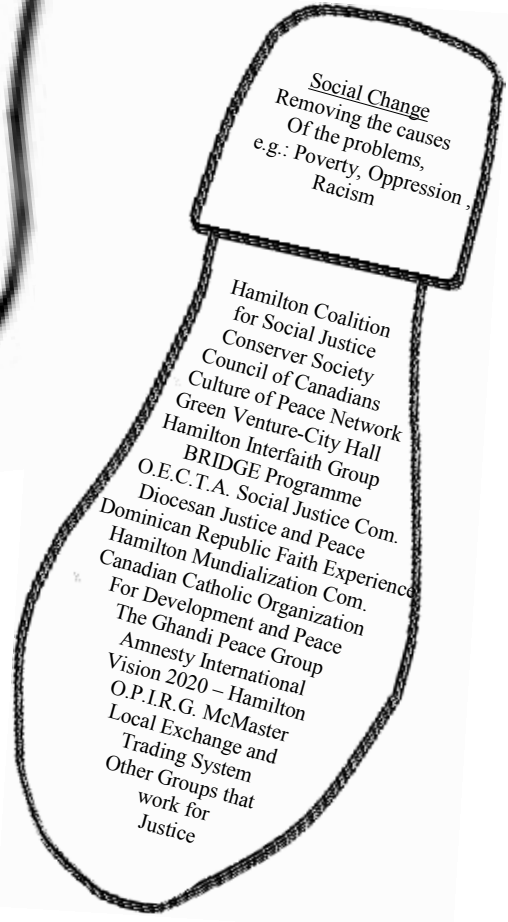
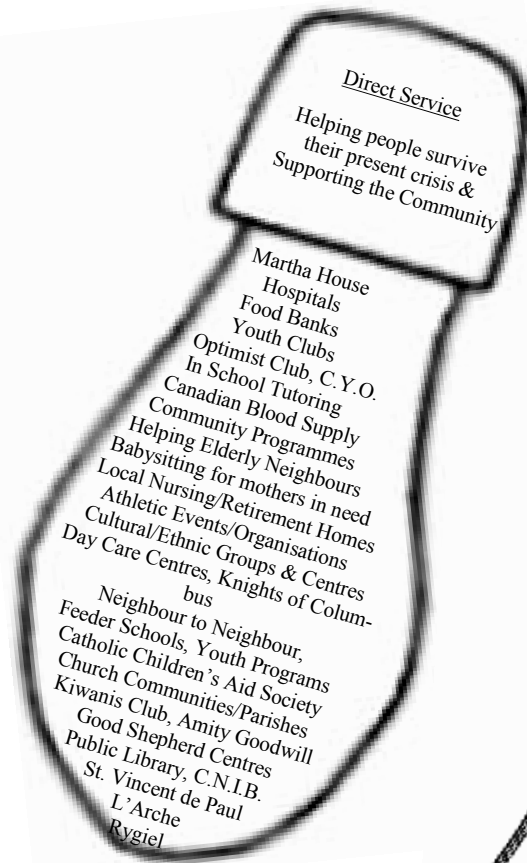
The Two Feet of Christian Service

It is important that teachers and the Christian Service Animator explain to the students that Christian Service involves two elements: the call to Charity and the call to Justice.

The *call to Charity* consists in responding to the needs of others and in alleviating their suffering and hardship. Mother Teresa is probably the best-known example of someone who lived out the Corporal Works of Mercy, and her holiness was shown by how she was able to transcend her own needs and to care so lovingly for others in their daily struggles and difficulties. It is not surprising that the religious order she founded is called the “Sisters of Charity.”

The *call to Justice* is more challenging but equally necessary. It has to do with changing the actual conditions that cause and contribute to suffering and the hardships of others, for example, unjust laws and institutions; unfair and dangerous working conditions and trade rules; abuse of human rights and the oppression of marginalized people. People like Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker movement in New York City, Bishop Dom Helder Camara of Brazil, Bishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador and Nelson Mandela of South Africa are all examples of working for justice and bringing about the biblical Jubilee. As Bishop Weisgerber of Saskatoon points out, “To feed the hungry will always get the Nobel Peace Prize. To ask the hard questions about why people are hungry and to try to change the situation so they’ll no longer be hungry, that upsets the social order and is never very popular”. Yet authentic Christian discipleship entails the ministries of both charity and justice.

The Two Feet of Christian Service



To walk - - both are needed!

GUIDELINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM

I Christian Service Graduation Requirement

The Ontario Ministry of Education requires of every high school student a minimum of 40 hours of community service. The voluntary Christian Service requirement within our schools fulfils this graduation requirement. As Catholic schools, we encourage and promote community service within a Christian context.

The Christian Service Hours Graduation Requirement has a fourfold purpose:

1. To nurture an ethic of service in all students that will inspire them to go beyond the forty hours of required service and to show solidarity with people who are in need and require assistance through a life-time commitment to service;
2. To provide students with an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth and put into practice the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church;
3. To foster an understanding of civic responsibility and participation which allows them to share their gifts and skills with others in the wider community and throughout the world;
4. To fulfil the graduation requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

The Ministry of Education states that the Community Service must:

- begin the July 1st after Grade Eight Graduation
- be completed outside instructional time
- remain voluntary
- not be part of a credit course
- consist of a minimum of forty hours of service, and
- be completed by the end of Grade Twelve

It bears emphasis that the HWCDSB and the Catholic community consider the 40 hours of service during the secondary school years as a minimum.

The Christian Service experience endeavours to build a culture of service within the schools and with the student body. Ideally this culture will foster a lifelong commitment.

This ministry requirement is not mandatory for students who work towards the Ontario Secondary School Certificate or the Certificate of Accomplishment. However, all students, regardless of their academic accomplishments or exceptionalities, are encouraged to engage in voluntary Christian service as an extension of their Baptismal calling or as an expression of their solidarity with others.

II The Actual Service Provided to Others

Responsibility

**Students and Parents
Christian Service Animator
Religious Education Teachers
Chaplaincy Leader**

Note: Choosing the type of service that the student will engage in and screening the sites and people connected with that form of service is first and foremost the responsibility of students and their parents.

The school will promote and encourage service sites and activities that are in keeping with Christian discipleship. Students and their parents can look to this manual, the Christian Service Animator, teachers and Chaplaincy Leaders as resources to help them choose services and sites that will provide the student with meaningful experiences.

Staff members will continue to remind students of the Christian call to serve others. They will provide assistance, encouragement and guidance to students to choose services and sites that bond them with those who are disadvantaged: the poor, the illiterate, the homeless, the handicapped - the ones whom Jesus identified as "the least among us". Efforts will also be made to encourage students to help build the kingdom of God on earth by engaging in activities that critique unjust structures, institutions, practices and laws by promoting justice for all people.

III Post Service Reflection

Responsibility

**Religious Education Classroom Teacher
Chaplaincy Leader
Christian Service Animator**

The classroom provides an ideal environment to engage students in sharing their volunteer experiences, giving examples of what they have learned and, in general, telling their story. Students will be provided with simple, open-ended questions that will guide them, in their reflective activity, to see the connection between their service experience and their Christian discipleship (p.15). Students will also be encouraged to read and reflect on the definitions of:

- a) Christian Service in its authentic and primary sense;
- b) Christian Service in its broader sense;
- c) Community Service.

In the light of these definitions, students will be helped to reflect on their activity and identify the definitions that best describe the service they provide. For example, regularly coaching CYO basketball could be regarded as a Community service or, at best, Christian service in a broad sense. Coaching physically challenged players in any sport is surely closer to the authentic and primary sense of Christian service.

Resource material containing stories, anecdotes, examples and role models, that highlight service to others, will be shared. These resources will affirm those students who have been or still are engaged in the voluntary service, and will encourage others to engage in this kind of activity.

The goal in all this is to invite a change of heart and mind in the students so that service to others will not be perceived as an appendage to their school curriculum. Rather, service to others will be recognized as an essential component of who they are: disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Post Service Reflection and commitment need reinforcement from other members of the school community. Hence, the Religious Education classroom teacher and the Chaplaincy Leader will support the post service reflection when the opportunities to do so present themselves. Examples of such opportunities are:

- * Current media events that draw attention to the Justice and Charity models of Christian service, (e.g. the response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti; the campaign to make fresh, accesible drinking water a basic human right; etc.);
- * incidents and people that promote or raise the issue of service and/or justice to others;
- * liturgical seasons that call for special activities/events in support of the disadvantaged;
- * other teachable moments that present themselves; student retreats; assemblies etc.;
- * public recognition of students who manifest outstanding service to others.

The Catholic School Council can also be a strong ally in nurturing a spirit of generosity in the students and in assuring a successful experience. The Council will be made aware of the nature of and the school's official protocol concerning Christian Service.

In order to further promote a culture of service, the Christian Service Animators will obtain the respective student's permission to share some of their reflections for the purpose of both inspiration and prayer. Every year, the Animators will select approximately three reflections from each school and print them in a booklet. These will be shared with Trustees and Board officials, as well as with the rest of the Board staff and schools.



ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES



Examples of eligible activities include:

- An event or activity designed to be of benefit to the community;
- An event or activity to support a charitable agency, institution or foundation that conforms to Catholic standards;
- Any structured non-profit program that promotes free tutoring, mentoring, visiting or coaching, or whose purpose is to assist others who require the benefit of that assistance;
- Participation in global humanitarian initiatives/projects that do not conflict with Catholic values;
- Participation in an event or activity that promotes positive environmental awareness and action;
- Participation in activities that promote the human rights and well-being of all groups in society, as long as the values of these groups are in harmony with Catholic teaching;

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES



The Ministry of Education has produced a list of activities that do not meet the requirement for community service.

An ineligible activity is one that:

- is a requirement of a class or course in which the student is enrolled (e.g., co-operative education portion of the course; job shadowing; work experience);
- takes place during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day. However, activities during the student's lunch breaks or spare periods are permissible.

- would normally be performed for wages by a person in the workplace;
- involves the operation of a vehicle, power tools, or scaffolding
- involves the administration of any type or form of medication or medical procedure to other persons;
- involves handling of substances classed as “designated substances” under the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- requires the knowledge of a trades person whose trade is regulated by the provincial government;
- consists of duties normally performed in the home (i.e. daily chores)
- is a personal recreational activity;
- involves a court-ordered program (e.g., community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board has determined that the following sites/activities are also ineligible:

- any activity that provides direct financial benefit or other gain (political, social etc.) to the student or to the student’s immediate family
- **any profit-making business**
- any association with an organization or an organizational activity that conflicts with the ethical standards and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- any informal activities, such as child care or yard work, unless special circumstances are involved.
- working for a political party or a candidate during an election.

DEFINITIONS

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Christian service obtains its defining qualities from both the Old and the New Testaments. It is clear from these sources that, in its strict sense, the service in question is directed towards those who are less fortunate: the sick, the weak, the disadvantaged, the under-privileged, the neglected, the marginalized; i.e. those who lack personal means and those who find themselves on social assistance or lack access to it. The Scriptures provide clear indication that the service to the underprivileged requires both **charity**: immediate support, alms giving, direct service, etc. as well as **justice**: economic and structural change to eliminate the causes that perpetuate the suffering and injustice of the marginalized. (Isaiah 58:1-12; Luke 4:16-22).

The Church has traditionally distinguished between the spiritual and the corporal works of mercy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2447) defines them as follows:

“The spiritual works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently.”

“The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is a work of justice pleasing to God”

Accordingly, Christian service is part of the “caring” ministry, inspired by Jesus’ teaching and example, extended to those who are in need or who suffer in any way, and offered in the spirit of human solidarity that reflects Jesus’ statement that “whatever you do to the least among you, you do to me”.

People “in need or who suffer in any way” could include:

- young children
- other students in need of help/support, academic or other
- physically or mentally challenged people
- elderly people
- those who are neglected/lonely
- the poor and dispossessed
- the sick/weak
- the disadvantaged, under-privileged or marginalized
- those who are vulnerable, lack personal means and/or access to institutional benefits/welfare.

In a **broader sense**, the concept of Christian service also includes one's self-giving to those activities which advance the Kingdom of God on earth. These activities include different kinds of community work or action on behalf of the natural environment, the cause of peace, justice and disarmament, non-violence, racial harmony, and other causes which are community-building and, to this extent, further the reign of God on earth.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service, as the expression itself suggests, consists in the type of voluntary service one gives to the community in its different levels of existence. It is service spent on community projects which could be of a cultural, humanitarian, athletic or fund-raising nature. The community could be a club, a parish, an organization or a public institution (e.g. the public library). The community or organization for which the work is done must be a non-profitable one, and the public in general must remain the beneficiary of the voluntary service offered.

Students and parents should ensure that the activities engaged in are not on the Ministry of Education's or the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's list of ineligible activities, and that the activities fall within the Board's guiding principles and are identified or similar to those on the Board's list of examples.

GETTING STARTED

Step #1

Students under the age of eighteen should choose and plan an activity in consultation with their parent(s)/guardian(s). A list of activities/sites reflecting genuine Christian Service and approved Community Service will be provided to the students. Additional activities/sites will have to be approved by the principal. ***Students are reminded that it is their responsibility that the activity site chosen meets the Board's requirements for eligibility and insurance purposes (See pp. 10-11; 18).***

Step #2

If students are unsure as to whether or not their activity qualifies, they should check with their Christian Service Animator.

Step #3

Students should confirm the details of the activity with the person or institution with whom they will be working.

Step # 4

Students are to complete their planned activity and should have the Completion of Christian Service Activity Record Sheet signed by the service organizer and parent/guardian

Note:

These steps should be repeated until the forty hour minimum requirement has been fulfilled. In order for data to appear on their Report Cards, students need to submit their Completion of Christian/Community Service Activity Records by the second Wednesday of December and the second Wednesday of May.

After they have been checked, signed and entered, it is recommended that the forms be placed in the student's Ontario Student Record.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASSIST STUDENTS' REFLECTION ON THEIR SERVICE EXPERIENCE

- ▶ In what way, if any, does my voluntary activity reflect Jesus' example to serve others?
- ▶ How would I describe my volunteer service?
 - a) As service modelled on the Corporal Works of Mercy (Mt. 31: 35-37);
 - b) As service that serves to enhance life, protect the environment and, in general, advance the Kingdom of God on earth;
 - c) As a voluntary service given to the community in its different levels of existence (See pp. 12-13);Why do I choose this description?
- ▶ Do I see a connection between the Christian service I performed and unjust social conditions, situations and mind-sets (e.g. discrimination against, or neglect of, the poor, the homeless, refugees, minority groups, marginalized people etc.) . See pp. 5-6, 12-13.
- ▶ How does the person, group or agency I worked with benefit the community?
- ▶ How did my efforts help the group or agency and the community?
- ▶ Who was the most memorable person I met during my service?
- ▶ How did I feel during and after my service?
- ▶ What did I learn about myself, others and the community from the experience?
- ▶ What, if anything, would I do differently, next time?

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS

Students are responsible for selecting an appropriate involvement and for completing all required documentation according to the Board requirements. Students also are responsible for completing their hours of service in a manner that demonstrates a positive work ethic and respect for others.

The following checklist of behaviours is recommended:

- ▶ the ability to follow through on commitments
- ▶ punctuality
- ▶ appropriate dress and grooming
- ▶ the use of good manners
- ▶ a willingness to listen to instructions
- ▶ a willingness to seek clarification of instructions if in doubt
- ▶ the ability to respond to unsafe working conditions
- ▶ the ability to maintain confidentiality

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

It is vital that parents/guardians support the school in the promotion and nurturing of a culture of genuine Christian service by encouraging a spirit of generosity and solidarity with people who are less fortunate. Accordingly, parents/guardians should assist their children in the selection of voluntary work that reflects Jesus' mandate to help those who are "least among us" or that reflect the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

Parents/guardians also are encouraged to communicate with the community sponsor and the school principal if they have any questions or concerns. A parent must sign the Activity Record Sheet if

CHRISTIAN SERVICE ANIMATORS

Christian Service Animators are responsible for motivating, encouraging and assisting students individually and in groups to offer their services to people who are in need and who require assistance. Animators will clarify for students eligible and ineligible activities. They will also check and verify incoming activity sheets. The animators frequently act as the liaison between community agencies seeking volunteers and the individual schools. The animators will help students to recognize both the Charity and the Justice models of Christian Service.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Principals are responsible for sharing information and documentation with students, parents and the broader community. Principals are responsible for forwarding special requests to the Board for consideration. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that completed hours of service are entered on a student's official transcript, according to the Board protocol.

SCHOOL BOARDS

School Boards are required to share information with students, parents and the broader community. Boards are required to develop a list of approved activities/sites. Boards are required to develop appropriate forms and documentation protocol. Boards are responsible for ensuring the collection and storage of personal information related to service performed.

COMMUNITY SPONSORS

One of the purposes of the Service involvement requirement is to develop strong ties between students and their community which will foster valuable and long-term relationships. Any training, equipment, or special preparation that is required for the activity should be provided by the person or organization. Students must be guaranteed a safe and healthy environment for the fulfillment of their Christian or Community Service. The person overseeing the student's activity must verify the date(s) and the number of hours completed on the Completion of Christian Service Activities sheet.

INSURANCE

- Students and parents are encouraged to purchase Student Accident Insurance which is available through the schools.
- The School Board expects that all community sponsors will provide students with appropriate instructions, put in place safety precautions, and train and supervise student volunteers.

Students enrolled with the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board are protected by the School Board's liability insurance while they are performing their hours of Christian/Community Service. Community sponsors are also protected by the Board's liability insurance for claims that arise out of students' volunteer activities for organizations.

For example, if a student, in the course of his/her volunteer duties, causes damage or injures a third party, and this results in a lawsuit against the student and the community sponsor, the Board's insurance will protect both the student and the community sponsor.

Community sponsors will be responsible for ensuring that their liability insurance will protect them for their involvement in this program. As with other programs, such as "Take Our Kids to Work", the School Board's insurance does not provide coverage for the negligence of the community sponsors.

Community sponsors also should be aware that, like job shadowing and other similar work-experience programs, students do not have accident insurance, or Workplace Safety Insurance coverage through the School Board. **It is recommended that students involved in the program, purchase Student Accident Insurance.**

The School Board expects that community sponsors ensure that student volunteers are provided with safety instructions, and are trained and supervised to ensure a safe and mutually beneficial volunteer experience.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about *The Ontario Secondary Schools, Grade 9 - 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999 (OSS)*, please contact the following:

- ◆ Ministry of Education
Mowat Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2
Tel.: (416) 325-2600
Fax: (416) 325-2608
E-mail: www.edu.gov.on.ca/

- ◆ Program Leader for Religion and Family Life
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Nicholas Mancini Centre
44 Hunt Street
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 3R1
Tel.: (905) 525-2930 Ext. 2884
Fax: (905) 523-0247

- ◆ Your local Secondary School Principal

Personal information provided to The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board as part of the Christian Service/Community Involvement requirement is collected and stored in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information Act, and may be used for administrative and other purposes of the Board pursuant to the Act.

“Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick, or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

- Mt. 25:34-40

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