

Ideas for Service

The following are some suggestions for service that an average 7th grader could perform.

1. **Walks** – One of the easiest and healthiest way for junior high students to be involved is to pick a cause, find out when they are having a sponsored walk, get people to donate to the walk, collect the money and walk. The nice thing about this is that it is a group project and easy to involve friends and family in the service effort. There are many walks in the Fall for a variety of causes – walks for hunger, diabetes, MS, cancer, heart disease and other health issues. Watch your newspaper or go online and choose a cause that fits your circumstances and interests.

2. **Service Learning** – The parish/school have adopted certain organizations here in Louisville to serve in a variety of ways. You do not have to stick with the “mission” assigned to your grade. Look at other organizations and brainstorm how you can become involved. For instance, if the Schuhmann Center appeals to you since it serves the homeless population, go to yard sales and collect blankets and coats to donate to the center. The 7th grade school mission is Kid’s Café and there will be many opportunities to volunteer to serve there. There is a Dare to Care Backpack Program to provide food to low income families and two food drives – one near Thanksgiving and one during Lent

3. **Environment** – Environmental issues are an opportunity you can get involved with on a large or small scale. Start a recycling program in your own home by designing containers for paper, plastic, glass, etc. and then find out where to take the various items. There is a recycling center on Hubbards Lane. Gather friends and go to any park or public space in the city with garbage bags and gloves and pick up trash. Join with Beargrass Creek Clean Up. A section of Beargrass Creek’s banks and the actual waterway will be assigned to you for clean up on a designated day. Join your school’s efforts at recycling or cleaning up.

4. **Parish Opportunities** – Receive training and be put on the schedule as an assistant for Children’s Liturgy of the Word on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings. Join the choir. Get your family to sign up with you to be Hospitality ministers. Get trained and become an altar server. Volunteer to make treats for a parish meeting. Volunteer to write cards or notes to parish shut-ins especially at holiday times. Sign up to help at Vacation Bible School or the parish summer picnic. Sign up to help with children’s activities during the Lenten Fish Frys by staffing a game or helping set up or clean up. They really need your help in order to offer organized activities for the young children.

5. **Special Olympics** – There are several ways to become involved with Special Olympics, which provides sports activities for mentally challenged children and adults. St. Mary's Day Center in Middletown deals specifically with mentally challenged adults, but they can match you up with someone who needs a friend to bowl with or to coach or encourage in a sport such as basketball or ice-skating. Pitt Academy is a school for Special Needs students with ongoing Special Olympics events for their clients, both children and adults. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and ask if they can your help.
6. **The Cathedral of the Assumption** – The Cathedral Soup Kitchen feeds the homeless every day. Call and see if you and a friend can volunteer to work in the dining hall on a weekend. Make it an encounter by sitting down to eat with a client and building a relationship with them.
7. **Your neighborhood** – Look around your neighborhood. Is there a Mom you could help by playing with her toddler for an hour while she fixes supper? (No pay of course!) Is there an elderly person who lives alone you could help sweep out the garage, wash windows, clean out flower beds for winter, etc. (again, no pay or it isn't service). How about your own grandparents – could you help them clean house, grocery shop, straighten cabinets, etc.?
8. **Read the paper** – Every week, especially in the Neighborhood section, there is a list of events happening around town. Look for those events that need help, call the number and see if a junior high student can help.
9. **Office Help** – Right to Life and other non-profit organizations will sometimes allow junior high students to help with tasks such as filing, sorting, labeling, stuffing envelopes, etc.
10. **Nursing Homes** – there are many nursing homes in our area and every one could use help with various activities they provide for the elderly residents. Especially at holiday time, they tend to welcome a youth to attend parties, pass out favors, entertain residents, call Bingo numbers, etc. Call a nursing home and request to speak to the Activities Director. Ask if there is a way you can help!
11. **Salvation Army** – Volunteer to stand outside Kroger and ring the bell for the Salvation Army Christmas collection. This requires an adult who is willing to help you do this, maybe your sponsor. Call the Salvation Army and see how you go about helping.

The key to service is always to find a cause that appeals to you and get involved. Whether it is a fundraiser you organize, a clothing drive, or physical assistance, you make the cause happen. Look around you for the things that are unjust and see if there's a way for you to help.

Service is a way of life for disciples of Jesus. Start NOW to get in the habit of matching your gifts with the needs of others so you can make a difference for good.