



Welcome to Santa Margarita Catholic High School! As you know, all students are required to do service in order to graduate. Santa Margarita believes that doing service is an intrinsic part of our program of spiritual and character formation. But just as certain academic subjects are required, the real goal is to immerse a child in the language, ethos and values of the school's culture, so that they may know themselves as a part of something larger than themselves. This introductory flyer is an effort to make very clear certain ways that we, as a school culture, guide the child through this experience.

- Freshman students will be asked to do 20 hours **each year** that they attend SMCHS. 15 hours will be dedicated to what is called "direct (core) service", that is service in which the student is actively engaged in one of three types or categories of service: (1) helping the disadvantaged through a non-profit organization (feeding, clothing, teaching, comforting the sick/elderly/disabled); (2) teaching their faith (retreats, VBS, CCD); working with non-profit organizations to restore the health of the natural community. 5 hours will be for indirect (support) hours. Examples of indirect service are: serving your faith community in a non-teaching capacity (Eucharistic minister, lector, choir/music ministry, altar serving); fundraising activities (setting up/serving at a fundraising event, walk-a-thons, food/clothing drives); serving your school community (assisting in the bookstore, assisting coaches, setting up and serving at a school function, participating in club fundraisers, meeting and preparing for a retreat or service club activity).

- Freshman students will have the opportunity to go with their Religion class to Loaves and Fishes, a non-profit soup kitchen operating on the grounds of St. Joseph's school for 22 years, during the first semester of the academic year '09-'10. This group service experience will be planned between the Religion teacher and the Christian Service coordinator, introduced in class, supervised by the two faculty members and concluded with a service reflection project which will be part of the first semester Religion grade. The Loaves and Fishes visit will take care of 8 out of the 15 hours of **direct** service. In their second semester, freshman students will complete 7 of the 15 direct service hours on their own. There is a published list of approved non-profit service organizations on the Christian Service website, under "service opportunities". There will be SMCHS sponsored service events in the second semester, such as SMCHS Special Olympics, Next Step, and Catholic Lobby Day. As in the first semester, students will do a service reflection project as part of their second semester Religion grade.
- Service can be done during the summer, using the direct/indirect guidelines described above.
- A link to a freshman service verification form can be found on the SMCHS/Christian Service website. Please make copies of all forms and papers associated with service for your student' personal records.

Please feel free to contact me at my e-mail address with any concerns or questions.

Caritas Christi!
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