

FAQ about Senior Christian Service

Who am I serving?

Senior year you have the option to perform DIRECT Christian service hours for the poor/marginalized (like junior year) OR to your faith community (like sophomore year). Persons to serve include the elderly, disabled (physically or intellectually), sick, homeless, poor, or those in your faith community.

Why am I serving the poor/marginalized or my faith community?

By Senior year you have served your family, your faith community, and the poor/marginalized. It is now your decision to pursue that Christian service which either you enjoy the most, or you see the people you serve as benefitting the most from your presence. Thus, as Seniors you have the privilege to choose between serving your faith community or the poor/marginalized.

What does it mean to do DIRECT service?

It means you are interacting face-to-face with the poor/marginalized community you have chosen to serve. You are building relationships with those you are serving.

What are some examples of places I could do my service hours?

- Parish
 - Altar serving, ushering, or singing in the choir may only count for 10 of your required 20 hours
 - Teaching religious education, running Bible camps or classes, and serving at hospitality breakfasts are all acceptable ways of fulfilling your requirement
- Hospitals
 - Often require medical testing to ensure your health before accepting you
 - Often requires more than a 40 hour commitment
- Nursing homes/assisted living centers
 - One in nearly every neighborhood
 - Most popular placement
 - Usually flexible schedules
 - Good for people who enjoy working one on one
- Soup kitchens
 - Usually require scheduling a time slot to volunteer far in advance
- Homeless shelters
 - May occasionally require parent supervision
- Tutoring students at low-income schools
 - Usually involves one on one interaction
 - After school hours available
- Coaching kids with physical/mental disabilities
 - Great for students with an interest in sports

May I do service at an animal shelter?

No. Our goal is for you to build relationships among our human community.

Can I box food/books for shipment to poor countries? What about fundraising? Or doing paperwork for a homeless shelter?

No. While this is service, it is NOT direct service. You are only indirectly helping the poor.

How do I know if the position they assign me qualifies for my required hours?

If you are getting paid, it does NOT count. The required Christian service hours are volunteer (i.e. free). If you are simply taking the place of a paid employee, the hours will not count.

How many hours do I need?

20 hours.

Must I complete them all at the same service placement?

Yes.

Why?

Not only does it require a significant amount of time to build relationships, you are also making a commitment to the organization. St. John's has high standards for students honoring their commitments.

What if there is a problem at my service site – can I switch?

Any potential switching of organizations MUST be approved by Campus Ministry. Only certain rare circumstances justify switching once you have made a commitment. For example, if the organization is not providing you with DIRECT service opportunities, then you may switch to ensure you fulfill your requirement.

May I complete them over the summer prior to my senior year?

Yes. The site must be pre-approved by Campus Ministry in 201. A signed Preapproved Summer Service Proposal must be completed prior to beginning the service at the end of the current school year. The log sheet and reflection assignment are due on the first day of school in the fall. If you fail to finish your hours or to complete the essay by then, you will be required to start over.

May I split my hours between the summer and during the school year?

No. Hours must be completed in the summer OR during the year. No combinations will be accepted.

May I continue doing service at the same site as during my junior year or do I have to switch?

You may continue to volunteer with the same organization. However, a new Christian Service Agreement needs to be submitted. Hours completed before the end of the junior academic year will not count toward senior hours.

What are extracurricular hours?

Extracurricular hours are service hours that are beyond what is required in any given academic year. If you perform more hours than the required 20, which may be direct or indirect, you may submit an Extracurricular Hours form to Campus Ministry in 201. The form is available for printing on the website.

Why would I want to record those?

Extracurricular hours will be recorded on your transcript and colleges will know that you went above and beyond what is required in terms of serving the community.

How do I find a place to do my hours?

There are several options:

- If you know the type of service you are interested in, do an internet search for placements in your area.
- See Campus Ministry – We can make suggestions based on your interests and location requirements.
- If you are not sure what you'd like to do – see Campus Ministry! We can figure out what might be a good fit for you.
- Talk to other students – ask where they did their service and what placements they recommend.
- Check out the SJC website – it has a (non-comprehensive) list of potential placements.

How do I get my Christian Service Agreement signed?

DO:

Politely call and ask for an appointment to talk or meet with the Volunteer Coordinator or other person in a position of management.

Leave a message if no one answers with your name, contact info, and reason for calling.

Show up to an appointment on time and well dressed.

Ask what volunteer opportunities are available.

Show your enthusiasm for serving the population that the organization serves.

Ensure they have 20 hours of volunteer work available for you.

Ask when and how often you can volunteer.

Ask for someone to be your supervisor, who can verify the hours once you've completed them.

DO NOT:

Demand a meeting.

Have your parents call or set up meetings for you.

Show up late or disheveled to appointments.

Hand over the form without explaining the purpose of your interest in volunteering.

Use an organization's failing to call you back as an excuse not to turn in your form.

How should I conduct myself at my placement site?

DO:

Show up when you sign up.

Be courteous and follow instructions from staff.

Bring your log sheet and have your supervisor sign it each time you volunteer.

DO NOT:

Fail to show up at your scheduled time for volunteering without calling and letting the organization know. They are counting on you.

Wait until the last minute to complete your hours.