

SERVICE CORPS PROGRAM

"The fruit of silence is prayer, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service, the fruit of service is peace."

(Blessed Mother Teresa)

Program Description

The Service Corps is a summer volunteer program offered by the Apostolate for Family Consecration (AFC) for high school youth who desire to minister to families and grow in their faith. During the 10-week program, Service Corps will live with either Catholic Corps men or women, giving them an experience of authentic Christian community. They will focus on prayer, spiritual formation, development of personal skills, and friendship—in addition to serving families.

Relationship with Christ

"Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5)

Union with God is the goal of Christian life. For this reason, every aspect of the Service Corps program—apostolic service, formation, and community life—focuses on fostering a deeper relationship with Christ in each participant.

Service Corps are nourished in their relationships with God by committing to an intense sacramental and prayer life. Holy Mass, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and morning prayer are included in the Service Corps' daily schedule. In addition, Service Corps have the opportunity to participate in frequent Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, and spiritual formation throughout their time of service.

Apostolic Service

"Work honors the Creator's gifts and the talents received from him. It can also be redemptive. By enduring the hardship of work in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish." (CCC, 2427)

Work has always been part of God's plan for man, even before Adam's Fall. Consequently, Service Corps are encouraged to fulfill their daily duties with joy and enthusiasm, recognizing that they are collaborating with Christ's redemptive work and building up God's kingdom on earth.

As youth who have attended Holy Family Fests in the past, the Service Corps want to spend a summer giving back to the AFC by joyfully serving wherever they are asked. Their service varies depending on the AFC's specific needs, but Service Corps actively participate in the ministry of the AFC during their time of service.

The Service Corps' apostolic work may include assisting with child care, youth programs, sports tournaments, pony walk, waterslides, food concessions, gardening, event registration, cleaning, outdoor grounds work, office work, and various other activities.

Community

"There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship." (St. Thomas Aquinas)

Living in community with those who share a common purpose offers the opportunity for personal growth, sharing and support, and the development of lifelong friendships. A fruitful community is a place of encouragement, joy, learning, and support for each individual.

However, community life does come with challenges. Understanding and forgiveness are essential when community members must reconcile differences. Ultimately, community living challenges each person to grow in understanding of and service to others.

The Service Corps live in community with the Catholic Corps men or women and share in their way of life. Community time with the Catholic Corps includes prayer, recreation, meals, formation, and outings. In this way, Service Corps are introduced to the beauty and joy of a life consecrated in service to Christ and His Church.

To be more open to the creation of authentic, dynamic friendships, Service Corps should not bring electronic devices (i.e. laptops, iPods, tablets) with them for the summer. Cell phones are allowed, but usage time will be limited by the Service Corps Coordinators. Removed from distractions that the media brings, Service Corps can better focus on the present moment and deepening their relationships with Christ and each other.

Formation

"Learn the heart of God from the word of God." (Pope St. Gregory the Great)

Ongoing Christian formation deepens an individual's knowledge and love for Christ as they continue to journey toward Him. Service Corps and Catholic Corps gather regularly throughout the summer for spiritual formation and discussion. During these times of formation, they seek to grow in understanding of the Lord and His plan for their lives. They take the knowledge they have gained and apply it, that they may better serve God in daily life.

The formation that Service Corps receive nourishes them as they deepen their relationships with God and gives them a foundation for continuing to learn about their faith when they return home.

In addition to regular formation with the Catholic Corps communities, Service Corps may participate in the evening session of the Holy Family Fest youth programs, where dynamic speakers will address many teachings of the Catholic Faith.

Missionary Spirit

"The Church which 'goes forth' is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative; he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads, and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy." (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 24)

After experiencing the depth of God's love for them—a love which changes things—Service Corps go forth and boldly share His love with every person they meet, including those in their own community. Service Corps respond to Christ's call to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19-20) by seeking opportunities to bring others to an encounter with Jesus Christ. By fulfilling their duties with joy and generosity, Service Corps can be faithful witnesses to Christ.

To encourage openness to a deeper relationship with Christ—which will lead to missionary zeal and love for souls—Service Corps may not pursue romantic relationships during their time of service. Since Service Corps will be living with either the Catholic Corps men's or women's community, this period of single-hearted service gives them an opportunity to discern whether God might be calling them to a celibate vocation.

Missionary Qualities

- **Servanthood:** A servant is humble, like Christ, and ready to serve the needs of others. *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him." (John 13:14-16)*
- **Teachability:** A teachable person values authority, is open to new thoughts and ideas, and sees the influence that other people and experiences have on personal growth. *"I exhort the students to use earthly knowledge as a stepping stone to heavenly things—virtue and its practice." (St. John Bosco)*
- **Professionalism:** In the work environment, a professional communicates in an effective and timely manner, dresses appropriately for the task at hand, is punctual and productive, and is conscious of how they treat others. *"If he doesn't try to learn his trade well, or doesn't give his full attention to it, he won't be able to sanctify it or offer it to Our Lord. The sanctification of ordinary work is, as it were, the hinge of true spirituality for people who, like us, have decided to come close to God while being at the same time fully involved in temporal affairs." (St. Josemaria Escriva)*
- **Team Player:** A team player is willing to work with others to get things done. A team player is flexible and willing to compromise, but above all, sees the gifts that others bring to a project. *"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things." (Mother Teresa)*
- **Leadership:** A leader is not focused on self-advancement, but rather on the good of all. A leader is humble, self-motivated, encouraging, sacrificial, and attentive to

the little things. *"You will be a leader if you are ambitious for the salvation of all mankind."* (St. Josemaria Escriva)

- **Dependability:** A dependable person is hardworking, trustworthy, obedient, selfless, and unafraid of failure. A dependable person is committed to the common mission and responsible in completing their tasks. *"Do not forget that holiness consists not in extraordinary actions, but in performing your duties towards God, yourself, and others well."* (St. Maximilian Kolbe)
- **Zeal for Souls:** A Christian who is zealous for souls possesses a burning desire to share the love of Christ with others. *"You have to act like a burning coal, spreading fire wherever it happens to be; or at least, striving to raise the spiritual temperature of the people around you, leading them to live a truly Christian life."* (St. Josemaria Escriva)

Qualifications

Youth applying for the Service Corps Program must meet the following qualifications:

- 16-18 years old
- Have attended at least one Holy Family Fest with their family
- Practicing Catholic and excited about growing in faith
- Able to complete physically strenuous tasks
- Able to serve for full 10-week program

Compensation

The Service Corps Program is a 100%-volunteer position, meaning that Service Corps do not receive any compensation for their work. However, the AFC provides Service Corps with room and board and pays for their basic needs, such as personal hygiene items.