

POWER HOURS

“True power is service.” -Pope Francis

Dear Parents and Students,

I am excited to tell you about a life-changing opportunity for students to practice living out the good news of the gospel: student volunteer hours at St. Mary’s, also known as Power Hours.

Throughout 6-7-8th grade, students are asked to perform 12 hours of service each trimester. This may seem like an ambitious goal, but I feel that asking our students to dedicate an average of one hour each week serving others is a great way to encourage our students to develop a habit of generously sharing their gifts and talents as disciples of Christ.

- Students may start accumulating hours the summer before their sixth grade year.
- Typically, hours are to be turned in at the end of each month (the due date will be on the **POWER HOUR** form). *However, any hours completed over the summer may be turned in the first week of school. These hours will count toward a student’s first trimester total.*
- All hours should be recorded, reviewed, signed, and turned in on the official **POWER HOUR** form and placed in the grade level assignment basket in Mr. Smith’s classroom.
- **All hours are volunteer hours and are not paid hours.** If students do get paid, they can donate the money to charity and still count the activity as service!
- **Household chores do not count!** Helping aunts and uncles, grandmas and grandpas does count as **POWER HOURS**, but helping mom and dad does not- they should be doing this anyway!
- Official **POWER HOUR** forms can be found in Mr. Smith’s classroom, on Mr. Smith’s “Generosity” classroom wiki page, in the main office, and in weekly email updates sent to parents. A copy is also included with this letter and can also be found on the True Power website. <http://www.stmarys-owatonna.org/give/true-power-service-opportunities/>
- Any extra hours of service beyond the 12 recommended hours, up to 12 additional hours, will result in extra credit points for religion class (5 points for each additional hour over 12) as long as all other religion assignments are completed.

There are three general categories in which students can perform service. Listed below are the categories with some examples for each. More examples will be provided on Mr. Smith’s “Generosity” classroom wiki page and given to students when school begins.

- School
 - Student Council
 - Liturgy Band and Choir
 - Altar serving at SMS Masses
 - Assisting a teacher
 - Bingo tent at the Steele County Free Fair
 - Sweeping and cleaning after school
 - Auction set-up/clean-up
 - Yearbook
 - Volunteering at SAC
- Community
 - Food Shelf
 - Clothesline
 - Assisted living facility
 - Helping a neighbor
 - Babysitting for free
- Church
 - Altar serving at weekend Masses
 - Singing in church choir
 - Helping with Sunday school, Children’s Liturgy of the Word, or the nursery

>>When students volunteer, people are counting on them to provide that service at that time. When they do not show up, other people are often inconvenienced by their irresponsibility. Therefore, if students fail to show up for a scheduled duty in the school category, they will be docked the hours they would have earned by performing that service. For example, if a student volunteers for a four-hour shift at bingo and fails to show, they will be docked four hours. *Please keep in mind that **POWER HOURS** can go into the negative and make it increasingly difficult to earn the requested hours.

Each year, St. Mary’s School recognizes students who live the gospel by volunteering their time and talent to help others. There are two possible awards that students can achieve by the end of eighth grade.

St. Mary’s School Service Award

Benchmarks:

- 108 or more hours of total service
 - 18 hours of school-related service

Jerry Kent Spirit of St. Mary’s Service Award

Benchmarks:

- 216 or more hours of total service
 - 36 hours of school-related service
 - at least 12 hours of service each trimester in 6-7-8th grades

**Hours will be pro-rated for newcomers to our 6-7-8th grade program.*

I am very excited to begin this year of service with your family. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Mr. Christopher Smith

