

## **Service Projects**

by Nina Wiczorek

There are a couple of avenues to take when it comes to service projects. There are hundreds of places where we can encourage our teens to serve, though not all of them work as well when we try to take a group. We should of course plan big group projects that the teens can come participate in, but we also should provide service ideas that they can do at home so that they start making service a habit and building up a lifetime of service. Below are a couple of ideas to get started.

### **Projects to do within your youth ministry:**

- Go fruit/produce gleaning (More information: <http://www.endhunger.org>)
- Help prepare and serve a meal at a shelter, such as Christ House ([http://www.cdda.net/programs\\_christhouse.php](http://www.cdda.net/programs_christhouse.php))
- Stock food at a food bank. (Capital Area Food Bank: <http://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/>)
- Help put together food baskets, especially during the holidays.
- Organize/help with a clothing drive.
- Collect toiletries and other needed items for the prison ministry
- Help distribute furniture and goods with S.H.A.R.E. ([https://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/share/ /](https://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/share/))
- Go to Workcamp! (<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/workcamp/>)
- Write cards/letters to those in hospitals, nursing homes, rehab centers, or those in the military
- Participate in the Water Project (<http://www.thewaterproject.org/>)
- Prepare entertainment or holiday parties for nursing homes or child care centers
- Do minor building/repair projects at places such as Lift Me Up (therapeutic riding center- <http://www.liftmeup.org/>)
- Help prepare soup for Lenten Suppers

### **Individual Service Project Ideas**

- Babysit for single teenage moms at Borromeo Housing (<http://www.borromeohousing.org/>)
- Assist with chores or go shopping for senior citizens
- Visit and/or read to the elderly in nursing homes
- Prepare a meal for a family who is dealing with a serious illness or who just had a baby
- Help with Religious Education programs as a student teacher or student aide
- Tutor after school at a local elementary school

**Ways to spread the service further (ideas for home)**

- Make Rosaries (<http://www.olrm.org/>)
- Clip Coupons for the Military  
(<http://www.grocerysavingtips.com/expiredgrocerycoupons.htm>)
- Every time you go to the store pick up a non-perishable food item to drop off at a local collection site

*Nina Wieczorek served as the Coordinator of Youth Ministry at Saint Luke Catholic Church from 2006-2009 and as the Director of Youth Ministry at Saint Leo the Great Catholic Church in Fairfax, VA from 2009-2012.*