



Living the Faith Guidelines

Revised May 15, 2012 and in accord with the Student Handbook

1. What is the purpose of *LIVING THE FAITH*?

The Church has always understood that what she believes is expressed not only in the way she prays but also in the way her members live. Therefore, every student at The High School of St. Thomas More is expected to demonstrate that they have not only *learned* the truths of the faith, but have also *lived* up to its demands. *LIVING THE FAITH* is one way in which this latter objective is measured.

2. What exactly is expected of the student?

Before one can be eligible to graduate, each student must demonstrate a living faith by documenting 150 hours of service (20 hours as a Freshman, 30 hours as a Sophomore, and 50 hours as both a Junior and a Senior). The ultimate purpose of these hours of service is to help the student realize that one's faith ought not to be confined to the church or chapel but should permeate every aspect of one's life such that faith becomes the guiding principle of every action.

3. How are these hours to be documented?

1. First, a project must be chosen.

Fundamentally, the project should incorporate one or more of the works of mercy delineated below.

2. Second, the student must formally propose the project to the chaplain for approval. [See "#1"]

The "*LIVING THE FAITH* Proposal" is to be submitted to the high school chaplain before work begins and it *must* be signed by the student, parent or guardian, and the project supervisor before said work begins. No project will receive credit unless this guideline has been followed.

3. Third, hours must be documented. [See "#2"]

As service is fulfilled and hours are accumulated, this information can be documented using the "*LIVING THE FAITH* Timesheet." Regardless of whether or not this form is used, the project supervisor must verify that these hours have been completed. Hours should be submitted to the chaplain once a semester so that they can be documented on the student's report card. In addition, the student is advised to keep a photocopy for his or her own records.

4. Fourth, the project supervisor must verify that service has been completed. [See "#4"]

At the completion of the project, the project supervisor must submit the "*LIVING THE FAITH* Verification Form" directly to the chaplain. The student is not to hand this form in. If the supervisor was unsatisfied with the student's service, some or all of the hours may not be accepted. No credit will be given until the "*LIVING THE FAITH* Verification Form" has been received by the chaplain.

5. Fifth, the student must evaluate his or her experience. [See "#3"]

In order to help the student realize the impact of his or her service, a self-evaluation is to be completed. No credit will be given until the "*LIVING THE FAITH* Student Evaluation" has been submitted to the chaplain.



4. What are some criteria for a good service project?

1. It incorporates one or more of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (n. 2447) teaches:

“The *works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. . . Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.”

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are:

- To counsel the doubtful;
- To instruct the ignorant;
- To admonish sinners;
- To comfort the sorrowful;
- To bear wrongs patiently;
- To forgive injuries;
- To pray for the living and the dead.

The Corporal Works of Mercy are:

- To feed the hungry;
- To give drink to the thirsty;
- To clothe the naked;
- To shelter the homeless;
- To welcome the stranger;
- To visit the sick and imprisoned;
- To bury the dead.

2. It can be understood as furthering Jesus’ mission (i.e., his message and ministry).
3. It brings the student into direct personal service of another person or persons.
4. It provides an educational experience for the participating student that will challenge the student beyond what is known and comfortable.
5. It can be easily verified by a supervisor and thoroughly evaluated by the student
6. It is well supervised.
7. It leaves the student with the knowledge that another person’s life has been enhanced due to his or her selfless generosity.

5. What are some other things to note?

1. The project cannot provide material compensation of any kind to the student (e.g., one cannot be paid for service) nor can projects be done for a family member.
2. All things being equal, a project which has a commitment of at least one year is to be preferred to a project which lasts only a short time. A project with a four year commitment is even more laudable. However, regardless of length, a new contract [**See “#1**] must be submitted by the student at the beginning of each academic year.
3. Projects, as long as they have received the chaplain’s approval, may be worked on at any time, even during the summer.