

Our Lady's Honor Guard

In a Nutshell

Our Lady's Honor Guard is a challenging, inspiring, and rewarding program for youth ages twelve and up, encompassing four areas of concentration: The World, The Church, The Diocese, and The Family. The program molds youth into true defenders of the faith. Participants strive toward the Crown of Distinction by earning pins in each of the four areas. Participants are encouraged to work in groups, supporting one another in completing each area of concentration.

This program, designed for teens, implements the spirit expressed by the late Pope John Paul II when speaking to the youth of the United States prior to the 1993 World Youth Day in Denver, Colorado: "Dear young people, with a spirit of generous self-giving, recognize that you are directly involved in the new evangelization, which demands the involvement of all of us. Proclaim Christ, who 'died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and was raised up' (2 Cor. 5:15)."

Outline of the Program

The program presently covers four areas of concentration. The structure is entirely flexible, designed so that the teens can go through the lessons at their own pace, exploring the treasures of Catholic principles as much as possible according to each club's needs and desires.

◆ The Family ◆

Skills in Housekeeping, Skills in the Garden, Skills in the Kitchen, Skills with Children, Skills with Animals, Skills with Free Time, Skills with First Aid, Skills with the Tool Box

◆ The Church ◆

Love of Mary, Love of the Pope, Love of Scripture, Love of the Eucharist, Heart of a Saint/Martyr, Heart of a Pilgrim, Heart of a Missionary, Heart of an Apologist, Heart of an Historian

◆ The Diocese ◆

Historian, Parish Life, School Life, Philanthropic Work

◆ The World ◆

Vocations, Information Media, Environment, Social Justice, Arts (Literature, Drama, Film, and the Fine Arts)



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www.eccehomopress.com

Our Lady's Honor Guard

The Four Clusters of the Honor Guard Program



Check the website for Honor Guard shirts and pins!



For secure online ordering:
www.eccehomopress.com

The Family

“The family is the original cell of social life...Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations of freedom, security and fraternity within society”
- CCC 2207

So important is the family to our faith that the catechism covers it in Part III, Life in Christ, from #2201 to 2233 and in several other sections. Everyone came from a family, whether good or bad. Being an active and vital part of a family improves it, allows it to impact positively in the Church and on the society as a whole. We are called after all, through the fourth commandment to honor our mother and our father, the heads of our family. It is hoped that through this honor Service bar skills are brought forward that will allow this obedience to become easier and, perhaps, even enjoyable.

SERVICE BAR LAYOUT:

There are seven activities for each Service bar – two required (▶) activities and then a list of five activities of which two must be chosen for completion. Unlike The Church Service Bars, there is no pattern to the activities but they are very practical and hands-on. The Scripture verse can be recorded in the handbook or creatively written down within a song, poem, poster, or other media. Each Service Bar will have opportunities for writing, artistic demonstrations, computer investigation and creation as well as constructing something of lasting value. In a reflection that families can extend outside the four walls of a home, one activity will include an opportunity to reach out to someone in need. To truly reflect the corporal works of mercy, there will be a chance to actively assist the elderly, invalid, children, and others in need. It is hoped that every teen will find an activity that will reflect and strengthen their own talents as well as grow in virtue.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

In addition to already mentioned websites and books, other useful titles and websites include: The “Dummies” series of books, the “Everything You Need to Know” series of books as well as “KISS” series of books and similar titles would be helpful.

The books/websites of “Hints from Heloise” or Don Aslett. Websites that include such words as tightwad, frugal, and budget as well as:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html>

www.tightwad.com

www.frugalshopper.com

www.stretcher.com

www.mypyramid.gov

www.flylady.com

Skills in Housekeeping

Sirach 29:21-23

Skills in this area are necessary regardless of your vocation or call in life. Whether one is called to be a spouse, religious, or single, knowing how to manage and maintain a good home is both a key to simple happiness but also as a witness to God's love and providence. Being able to take care of what you have been given (either freely or purchased) shows proper respect for material treasures.

► Scripture Verse:

► Spend one day with the primary housekeeper in your family (typically the mother). Follow their day, sharing in all their activities from waking up until bedtime. Take notes about all they do in a normal day. Be their assistant for the day, providing them both help and company. Finish the day off in prayer together in thankfulness for the work they do to help your family run smoothly.

Upon completion of the two previous activities, select two others to attain this Service Bar.

1. Choose an area of your home that requires organization. Research tips, techniques and advice in this area from books or the internet. With permission from your parents, re-organize that area so that it will be better utilized by everyone in the family. Upon completion of this job, share what you did with the family and ask for their help to keep the area working well and looking great.
2. Create a family SOP book. SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) books are used in almost every industry from construction to business giving in detail what needs to be done and how to do it well. In discussion with your parents, go from room to room and create a checklist or similar tool to detail how to clean that room in proper manner. For example, list everything from vacuuming to dusting and how it is expected to be done. Create a binder for these pages that can be kept in a central location for both referral and for use in teaching younger siblings how to do the job when old enough.
3. Finding and using good tools, helps make housekeeping easier. Go throughout your home

and help a parent clean out and properly dispose of no-longer used cleaning supplies, create safe places for storing cleaning supplies, and ensure that you have all the supplies needed to do every job well.

4. Discuss the chores done in your home with your parents. Decide if the manner in which they are being done is working well. If not, develop another method for a better distribution of the work. Construct a creative chart, job jar, or other method of sharing the work to hang in a prominent place.

5. Seek someone who could use help with their housework and offer your services: an elderly neighbor, a mom with a new baby, someone recovering from an injury. Gather friends to assist you if the job is big. Bring along a surprise of flowers, a gift of a meal, or other extra to brighten their day.

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The Church

The Service Bars have six activities that will follow a similar layout in each Service bar. For each focus, there is a Scripture verse. The first requirement is to find that verse and record it for reflection and study. Feel free to copy this verse as creatively as desired, either within the handbook or in a Scripture memorization book, as a poster, poem, or in song lyrics.

Further Scripture study will be next and usually the required project. As our Catechism says, “In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word ‘but as what is really is the word of God’” (CCC #104). By studying Scripture one cannot only learn about Christ Himself, but the why’s and how’s of much of our faith. A firm knowledge of Scripture serves not only to increase our love for Jesus, but also for our faith itself. Therefore, the first activity will be to explore (where appropriate) the specific topic in Scripture, which should always be our focal reference point for our faith and life.

If not answered in the first activity, the second activity will be an inquiry into the 5 W’s – the where, when, who, what, and why of a specific topic. This will allow for some research into the background of a topic, or into how a tradition or activity came to be done in a particular manner. These “investigative reporting” ventures will demonstrate how background history supports Catholic teachings. Understanding the teachings, traditions, practices, and methods of our faith is vital to defending it. Apologetics is not an opportunity to apologize for our faith, but rather a charitable opportunity to say “we’re sorry you didn’t know or understand.”

The third activity will be a concrete history investigation. Knowing the background of a teaching, tradition, or sacrament helps you to better understand your faith. Our Church exists in human history, and its place of importance cannot be understated. As written in the Catechism, “all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is His body...” (CCC #846). Knowing how the Church has acted through history will help us to better understand both the Church’s history and our own.

The fourth activity will be to investigate some of the wealth of writings within the Church. Whether it is the writings of a Pope, a Doctor of the Church (such as St. Thomas Aquinas), or just from a reliable and faithful book, exploring the vast wealth in the writings of our Church will be a great benefit to us. We have thousands of years of writings waiting as a treasure to discover. Becoming treasure hunters of the written word will be a great adventure.

The fifth activity will ask for what we have learned to impact positively on the parish. Being a part of a parish is important to every Catholic, as it is within this family that we receive the sacraments and learn our faith. Although it is true that no parish is perfect, becoming leaven in the bread is important. “The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of

the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love..." (CCC #2179). Taking to heart Jesus' call to "go preach to the whole world;" sharing with a local parish or community is probably easiest way to do so. It is here you will be challenged to create something, or organize an activity that takes your faith out of their home and into other people's life.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES SPECIFIC TO "THE CHURCH"

Previously mentioned books and websites along with the following:

A Still, Small Voice, Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, CFR, Ignatius Press

Pope Fiction, Patrick Madrid, Basilica Press

The Catholic Church and The Bible, Rev. Peter Stravinskias, OSV

Where We Got the Bible, Bishop Henry Graham

Faces of Holiness: Modern Saints in Photos and Words by Ann Ball

Young Faces of Holiness: Modern Saints in Photos and Words by Ann Ball

Catholicism for Dummies by John Trigilio and Kenneth Brighenti

History books by Anne W. and Warren Carroll, Fr. Philip Furlong

San Juan Catholic Seminars

www.cmswr.org – Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious

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Love of the Eucharist

(Jn. 6:48-56)

St. Thomas Aquinas has taught us about the Eucharist, “all the other sacraments are ordered to it as to their end.” It is, as the Catechism tells us, “the Sacrament of sacraments.” It is a source of strength for Catholics and a source of grave misunderstanding for those outside the Church. Developing a love of the Eucharist is paramount to developing a deeper love of Christ.

► Scripture Verse:

► Jesus Christ seems to make belief in the Eucharist quite clear, doesn't he? Search through Scripture for Christ's own words about this most important sacrament. Look at parallels to Christ's giving of his own Body and Blood in the New Testament to God's feeding of His people throughout the Old Testament. Develop an apologist's attitude toward the Eucharist and be able to defend our love and devotion to it from a Scriptural point of view.

Upon completion of the two previous activities, select two others to attain this Service Bar.

1. The where, when, who, why, and what of the Eucharist appear easy – The Last Supper where Jesus Christ himself, in a desire to always be with us, gave us the bread and wine which becomes his Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. However, the way the Last Supper became our Mass is another story. Answer the 5 W's for rest of the story. Where did the Mass begin, when did it begin to be celebrated as we now know it, who (Popes, Councils, etc.) were instrumental in this development and what/why brought about these changes? How did the Church develop its current appreciation and reception of the Eucharist? Develop a timeline from the Last Supper to now. Make special note of the Church's teaching on the reception of the Eucharist for those who are Catholic and those who aren't.
2. For Catholics, every opportunity to participate in the Mass is an opportunity to participate in a miracle – bread and wine becoming the true Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord and Savior. God – in his love and mercy for us – has, throughout the centuries, provided us with Eucharistic miracles that demonstrate this reality to any doubters. Investigate Eucharistic miracles.

Create a globe or world map of these miracles, making note of some specifics such as date, location, and witness(es).

3. Many scholars and artists have written or created displays of their own love of the Eucharist (including the above-mentioned St. Thomas Aquinas). These writings have included songs, poems, and more. Choose one type of writing and create your own letter, poem, song, or artwork. Host an art show or display to share what you have created with others. Show Christ your love through your God-given talents.

4. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a truly remarkable way we are able to be with Jesus Christ here on earth. Many parishes and dioceses have Adoration on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis. Find such an opportunity and take part in it. Invite family and friends to accompany you to spend some time, remembering Jesus' words to Peter: "Could you not watch with me one hour" (Mt. 26:40). If possible, arrange for such a time at your own parish if it is not already available. There are many Adoration societies in the Church who can give you the resources and information to begin it in your own area.

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The Diocese

“The phrase ‘particular church’ which is the diocese (or eparchy), refers to a community of the Christian faithful in communion of faith and sacraments with their bishop ordained in apostolic succession. These particular Churches are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists.”

- CCC #833

Dioceses of the Catholic Church transcend state lines and political areas. They consist of churches old and new, rich and poor. Some parishes within a diocese have parishioners enough to support a school on their own while others have come together by history or necessity to support each other in a school. Each parish provides a place for faith formation regardless of what school is attended – private, public, or home education. While your family home is where you first learn your faith, it is in your parish – within a specific diocese – that this education is developed, sometimes put to the test, and always put to work.

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Recommended Resources:

Catechism of the Catholic Church (abbreviated CCC)

Bible (NAB Translation)

Local Diocesan website

www.usccb.org

www.ewtn.com - Encyclicals

The World

“I gave them your word, and the world has hated them for it; they do not belong to the world (any more than I belong to the world). I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to guard them from the evil one”

- Jn. 17:14-15

As Catholics, we are in the world but always called not to be “of the world.” Jesus’ prayer for his apostles at the Last Supper is a prayer for us as well. How we as Catholics function in the world has been a struggle from the persecutions in the Roman coliseums to modern theologians bringing our truth to the internet. Investigating our works within the world is encouraging and exciting, as we can see all that is being done in Jesus’ name. We can be assured of Christ’s promise, “I will build my Church, and the jaws of death shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18). You will read the Catechism of the Catholic Church in every area here because knowing what the Church teaches in these areas is vital. The required (▶) element for this category often will be reading of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to see what the Church teaches in this regard.

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RECOMMENDED READING:

Previously mentioned websites and books as well as the following:

Seven Steps To Becoming Financially Free, and other financial materials by Phil Lenahan

Lifework by Rick Sarkasian (and his other books)

Mission from God, MaryBeth Bonacci

Peter on the Shore, Fr. Anthony Bannon

Social Justice

Throughout Scripture, Christ challenges us to see all that we are given as coming from His Father's hand. It has been said that what we have been given by God is His gift to us, whereas what we give back to God is our gift to Him. Social justice has many dimensions – from the political arena to the needs of the worker and the family. Knowing how to engage the world in these areas is important, not only to ensure that the Christian truth is made known but, sometimes, to protect us from evil.

- ▶ Read over the Catechism of the Catholic Church in this regard #2419-2425. Re-write what you have read in your own words for better understanding.
- ▶ Contact your local diocesan (or parish) office for a Social Justice Ministry and ask for a selection of their materials to read and review. What are the social justice issues specific to your area? Commit yourself to a month of prayer and sacrifice for these efforts.

Upon completion of the two previous activities, select two others to attain this Service Bar.

1. Christ is often misquoted in regards to wealth and riches. Read the catechism in regards to economic justice (#2426-2436) and review the document *Populorum Progressio*, an Encyclical Letter on the Development of Peoples, by His Holiness Pope Paul VI, promulgated on March 26, 1967. Write your own document of belief of money in light of the Church's teachings and the world's needs. OR Make a list of the parables within Scripture where people deal with money – either wisely or foolishly. What are the lessons you can learn from Christ's teaching? Make a list of those lessons, developing an attitude that reflects Christ and His Church, resolving to put them into practice.
2. Catholic Relief Services (<http://crs.org>) is one of the largest and most effective charities in the world, secular or religious. Answer the 5 W's and 1 H – who, what, when, where, why, and how. Look at their website and create a map of the places in the world where they have worked. What have we, as Catholics, done to better the world through this wonderful ministry? Contact your diocese to see if they have a local group in your area and see if there is some way you might be able to volunteer. If nothing is readily available, commit yourself to earning funds to donate along with a spiritual bouquet of prayers to help support them spiritually in their good works.
3. There are many organizations seeking to impact on social justices issues throughout the world from a Catholic perspective. These organizations speak for the Catholics and the Church via the legal system, political organizations, the United Nations, and social programs from pro-life work to the homeless. Find one such Catholic organization and investigate their history and the work they have done to educate the world. How have they been effective, and in what ways have they struggled? Commit yourself to a month of prayer and sacrifice for their efforts. Write them a letter of support for their work.

4. Becoming financially prudent is important as you get older. Getting a job, making purchases on your own, and readying yourself for college or the workforce as an adult is harder than you might think. Investigate and read on managing money from a Catholic/Christian perspective. Talk with your parents about tithing, saving, and spending for yourself. If they feel it is prudent, discuss your own family's budget. Create a budget for yourself in light of your own goals. What can you do to help yourself both save money wisely and share it wisely as well?

5. The Catholic Church, and many of its members, have always been committed to supporting society when it comes to health issues. Investigate how the Church has bettered society in this area of social justice. Choose one of the following and research the 5 W's and 1 H (who, what, where, when, why, and how):

- What religious orders have been established as medical orders?
- What is the Church's place in the historical creation of hospitals?
- How does the Church help in time of need – famine, disease, war?
- Choose one third world country and research and discover how the Church is helping its people have a better life.
- How does the Church help the orphans via international adoption?

Contact one organization that works in that area and write them a letter of support, offering your prayers for their continued success.

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