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It is Better to Give than Receive

Service is one of the most important tasks that Jesus has given us. He has challenged many hearts to do good for the sake of others. Our actions do not just affect us they also affect others around us. That is the point that Jesus is trying to make when he tells us to do good to others. He is saying that our good deeds touch the hearts of others. That is how I wish to live my faith, serving others, just to see their hearts change by my actions. In the past, I have worked to do just that, participating in an annual mission trip to McKee, Kentucky for 3 years, and participating in and making rosary bracelets for the St. Augustine Church giving tree.

My family has made it a tradition to go to McKee, Kentucky with Blessed Sacrament parish for five days during the summer. We have been visiting for three years, and each year is a new experience for not only me but also everyone around me. The first year that I went to McKee, I was given an assignment to assist others from the parish in remaking a kitchen for a woman named Julie and her three-year-old daughter, Jessica. For most of the time, I sat with Jessica and played games with her. She was so bright it was like looking at the sun! She could talk in full sentences, knew her ABC's, and could count as high as the sky! It felt amazing to know that I not only helped her by making her a kitchen, but she helped me. She helped me by showing me the love and kindness that you can give to others, just by talking to them for a few minutes. At the end of the day, we had both been given a taste of God's love. The third year

we visited, I had the opportunity to go back to Julie's and Jessica's house to see how they were doing, and plant some flowers in their yard. It was amazing to see her again and to witness how much she had grown in two years. Even though she did not remember me, seeing her touched my heart just like it had the first time I saw her. Then, the other young girls and I went to visit women and men at an elderly day care center. We made bracelets with them and were able to talk to them. I was touched when one of the women had come up to me and told me that I reminded her of her granddaughter. Helping so many people who do not have many essentials, gave me a whole new perspective on life. I love helping out, and getting to know the people who live in McKee because they show me how even though they might not have everything materialistic, the bond that God has given them with their families is stronger than ever.

Another activity my family and I participate in is the giving tree at St. Augustine Church. We have been in charge of the giving tree for ten years, and every year I am able to help by sorting gifts, hanging tags on the tree, and delivering the gifts. It feels wonderful to see the happy faces of the children as they look at the bag of gifts we have for them. It brightens not only their day to see us there, but it also brightens mine, knowing that these families will have a wonderful Christmas. This year, I decided to make rosary bracelets, and tie one on the top of each bag of gifts, so each family has their own rosary. Now I knew that each family had the opportunity to grow closer to Mary and God through praying the rosary. I even enlisted the help of my family and friends, and together we made twenty-one bracelets!

Overall, service is the key part in making one's day the best that it can be. Even if your action is as small as holding the door for someone, it is still a service, and you are the cause of one more smile in the world.