

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ST. MARK PARISH



GIFT CARD PROGRAM

PARISH OFFICE ~ 215-788-2319

WHAT IS THE ST. MARK GIFT CARD PROGRAM?

It is a fundraising program sponsored by St. Mark that earns you, and St. Mark Parish, money simply by purchasing gift cards from major retailers. It is a 1:1 match resulting in a win-win for you and the entire St. Mark Parish community.

WHY IS ST. MARK ACCELERATING THE GIFT CARD PROGRAM TODAY?

With Gift Card fundraising, St. Mark Parish families and friends, simply do their regular weekly shopping with gift cards from America's favorite retailers. With each purchase, participants will earn cash rebates, recorded as credits, that can quickly add up to hundreds and thousands of dollars a year – money that can be used for tuition assistance, travel, field trips or whatever your needs.

St. Mark recognizes that the Gift Card Program is a powerful fundraising tool because our parish families can generate revenue through purchases they would make anyway. Groceries, clothing, toys, gifts and gasoline can be purchased with the Gift Cards.

Here is a simple example of the potential of the Gift Card Program here at St. Mark Parish:

- a. 200 families easily spend between one and two million dollars per year on food, clothing and other essentials.
- b. If these families used the St. Mark Gift Card Program for these purchases, they can raise as much as \$40,000 to \$80,000 per year for St. Mark Parish --- without spending an additional penny.

HOW MUCH DO I EARN?

It is a 1:1 match. Earnings vary and range from 2% up to as high as 10% or more depending on the retailer. For example, Giant (the Grocery Store) is a participating vendor and offers a 4% credit. Purchasing a Giant Gift Card in either a \$25.00 or \$100.00 denomination would result in a 2% credit to the buyer and a 2% credit to St. Mark. For example, a \$400.00 grocery bill would result in a \$16.00 credit divided equally between the Gift Card buyer and St. Mark. The Gift Card participant would receive an \$8.00 credit and St. Mark would receive an \$8.00 credit. This is a win-win for everyone.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

You establish an account with St. Mark and purchase gift cards for normal everyday shopping; the percent of earnings for each card is split evenly between you and the parish.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY EARNINGS?

Earnings can be accumulated and applied to school tuition or disbursed directly to you by check.

CAN OTHERS APPLY THEIR EARNINGS TO MY ACCOUNT?

Yes, anyone can designate their earnings to other accounts.

WHERE CAN I BUY MY GIFT CARDS?

Gift cards are available during normal business hours at the Parish Office and after all weekend Masses. Students attending St. Mark School are also able to bring a completed order form to school as long as a current permission slip is on file. But, any order transported by a child to the school and home cannot exceed \$200.00.

CAN ANYONE BUY GIFT CARDS?

Yes. Friends, family, anyone can participate; you don't have to be a St. Mark parishioner.

IS THERE A MINIMUM AMOUNT THAT I MUST PURCHASE?

No, there is no minimum amount but most cards are sold in denominations of \$5, \$10 or \$25 depending on the retailer.

CAN I PAY BY CREDIT CARD?

St. Mark is unable to accept credit card orders because of the high overhead cost. All purchases must be made by cash or check.

HOW DO I COLLECT MY EARNINGS?

Request an account summary from the Parish secretary. Account summaries will also be printed and provided with each order.

HOW DO I APPLY OR COLLECT MY GIFT CARD EARNINGS?

Visit or call the Parish Office. The Parish secretary will assist with how you manage and administer your credits. Anyone wishing to have a check issued for their credits, must notify the Parish Office at least one week in advance of receiving a check.

WHAT RETAILERS PARTICIPATE?

Many familiar grocery stores, fast food, convenience stores and major retailers participate. Most national and regional retail stores and restaurant chains participate. A complete list of the hundreds of retailers and vendors that participate can be found at glscric.com. Lists are also available in the vestibule of the Church or at the Parish Office.

CAN I RELOAD MY GIFT CARD?

Currently we don't have reloadable cards. If you reload with the retailer, you will lose the benefit of the earnings.

WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

Participation is an easy way to earn money for you and St. Mark Parish simply by purchasing everyday items such as food and gas. If you have children in school this is an excellent way to reduce your tuition costs. If you are so inclined you can stretch your credits by asking family and friends to participate.

CAN I USE THE GIFT CARD CERTIFICATES ANYWHERE?

Yes, the Gift Cards are accepted at all participating retailer locations.

DOES IT COST ANYTHING TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT?

No. There is no cost, and no obligation to buy anything. Just complete your first order using the envelope provided and an account will be established for you.

IS THERE A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF GIFT CARDS THAT I HAVE TO ORDER?

There is no minimum order amount.

DOES IT COST A FAMILY ANYTHING TO PARTICIPATE? DO THEY HAVE TO SELL ANYTHING?

There are no membership fees or application fees. You simply pay the face value of the Gift Cards you wish to order. The beauty of the Gift Card Program concept lies in the fact that participants raise money for St. Mark by using their existing household shopping budget. Some families may enlist relatives, friends and neighbors to buy Gift Cards. But unlike other fundraising programs, participating families do not have to "sell" anything to raise money for in support of this St. Mark fundraiser.

CAN I USE GIFT CARDS TO PAY DEPARTMENT STORE CHARGE ACCOUNT BALANCES?

A few retailers allow you to pay charge account balances with a Gift Card, but generally speaking, most do not.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE ST. MARK GIFT CARD PROGRAM?

There are several benefits. First, if you have a child in St. Mark School, a Catholic secondary school, or any two or four year college of any denomination, you can apply your accumulated credit toward tuition. Engaging families and friends to participate will accelerate the value of your credit reducing your out-of-pocket tuition payments should your family and friends apply their credit to your account. Second, you can establish an account, watch your credits grow and request a check for something special such as Christmas, teacher recognition or your family's vacation. Third, you can apply your credits to the Church. Should you decide to apply your credits to St. Mark, contact the Business Manager to receive a letter confirming your gift as a contribution to St. Mark. This is considered a charitable contribution and, we encourage you to see your tax professional regarding any specific advantages that may apply to you, as St. Mark cannot offer any tax advice.

ARE THERE ANY IRS IMPLICATIONS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE ST. MARK GIFT CARD PROGRAM?

None of the credit rebates are considered taxable to the individual by the IRS.