

# THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

AGES 6-8

## Reflection for the Catechist:

I have asked the Church in this Jubilee Year to rediscover the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us. Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence. Hence the commitment to live by mercy so as to obtain the grace of complete and exhaustive forgiveness by the power of the love of the Father who excludes no one.

Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis, According to which an indulgence is granted to the faithful on the occasion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (September 1, 2015)

CCC 2447: The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. 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:

He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?



## Materials Needed:

- A copy of the Holy Bible (NRSV)
- Pencils and/or pencil crayons
- Copies of worksheets (1 per child)

## Gathering

1. Begin by asking the children to gather around and sit quietly for a moment.
2. Tell the children that you are going to read a bible passage about mercy.
3. Ask the children to tell you (infer) what they think mercy is. The children may say things like: forgiveness, helping others, kindness, something Jesus did, etc.

## Listening

4. Read Mathew 25: 31 – 46 aloud to the group.
5. Ask the children to give examples of mercy from the passage. Have them describe the examples to you.
6. Explain to the children that this passage shows ways that we can be merciful. We call these Corporal Works of Mercy.
7. What is meant by Corporal Works of Mercy? Corporal Works of Mercy are the ways in which we reach out to the most needy to serve them and help them to live according to their God given dignity - eg. feed the hungry.
8. Give examples of Corporal Works of Mercy to the children, and ask the children to identify them:
  - Danielle went to the hospital to visit her grandmother (**visit the sick**)
  - David shared his water with one of his classmates who had no water (**give drink to the thirsty**)
  - Katie shared her lunch with a friend who didn't have anything to eat (**feed the hungry**)
  - Jonah's parents welcomed into their home a family whose house had burned down (**shelter the homeless**)
  - Eliza brought clothing to the Salvation Army (**clothe the naked**)
  - Mrs. Smith helped to plan the funeral mass for her cousin (**bury the dead**)
  - Father Peter went to see someone at the jail (**visit prisoners**)

## Doing

9. Using the worksheet on the following page, ask the children to draw an image to illustrate each of the Corporal Work of Mercy being acted upon.

## Going

10. Pray the prayer (provided on page 4) aloud to the group at the end of your gathering.



# The Corporal Works of Mercy



Feed the Hungry

Give Drink to the Thirsty

Clothe the Naked

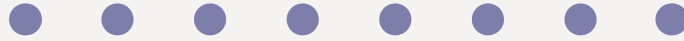
Shelter the Homeless

Visit the Sick

Visit the Imprisoned

Bury the Dead

# PRAYER FOR MERCY



Merciful Father,

I pray that you will continue  
to help me to be merciful to others.

Give me the strength to forgive those  
who have caused me pain.

Help me to be kind and helpful to all those  
who are wounded, troubled, hurt, or in pain.

You have lifted us up and forgiven us;  
please help me to do the same for others.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.

