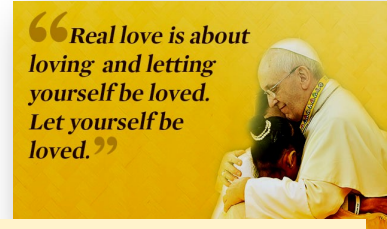


The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy

BE the difference

A few things to try at home



Feed the hungry



- Let children help in preparing food for your family and friends. Although children will learn the importance of cooking meals to feed the family, you can show them how to feed the hungry in other ways, too. *Avoid wasting food;*
- Serve a meal at a soup kitchen or take them to donate to a food bank. *Have children help prepare a meal at your church, or for a family, or for an elderly person at home then take them along to deliver the food.*
- Remember that people can also be hungry for acceptance and friendship, too!
- Pray meal time prayers with thanks and pray for those with no food to eat

Give drink to the thirsty



- Stress the importance of having water for survival & be aware of the water you use at home
- Use reusable water bottles & refill it with water from the tap as you need it
- On hot days give a bottle of water to your postie or bin man! They'll be grateful for it.
- Watch Trocaire's film: *Drop in the Ocean? Ireland and Climate Change* <http://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/climatejustice/drop>

Clothe the naked



- Let the children help sort out clothes to give to charity - remember if it is not in a condition that you would wear yourself don't donate it!
- Teach your children to knit and sew! A great skill to have.
- In Winter hold a *winter coat, hat & mitten drives* by turning in some gently used winter gear to help others get through a bitterly cold winter and if there IS no drive going on in your area, maybe you would like to try starting one!
- If you know a family at your school or area who is struggling to make ends meet talk to them and reach out to help.

Shelter the homeless



- Fundraise for a homeless shelter or collect used blankets etc. to donate to the shelter.
- Instead of giving money carrying around Ziploc bags with things like socks and toiletries in your car or handbag can be a great way to help.
- Let the children help you & neighbours to care for their homes and do repairs

Visit the sick



- Pray for sick people around the world & for the sick in your community/ homes – link with parish sick notices.
- Send cards email or call friends, family or neighbours who are sick or in hospital letting them know you are thinking and praying for them.

Visit the imprisoned



- Pray for imprisoned people around the world.
- Donate books, etc to prisons for the inmates and maybe talk to the local Chaplain with your child about their work

Bury the dead



- Help them remember & pray for their family and friends who have passed on, using prayers, flowers, memory box etc.



As a family, try to live the Corporal Works of Mercy. When you go grocery shopping, don't forget to pick up an extra can of green beans, a jar of spaghetti sauce, or some peanut butter for the Saint Vincent DePaul or leave it with your local church. If your children are given pocket money, teach them to take a bit of their money and buy something, possibly monthly, for the poor. A can of green beans, peas, or corn are very inexpensive. Your child can purchase a can for about 50 cents. Make a big deal about how he or she fed some very hungry people out of pure generosity.



Remember to donate clothing that is good, but too small for your children to local charities such as St Vincent de Paul. Involve your children in this process. Keep in mind that there may be families in our own parish church who could use the clothing that your children have out grown.

As your family gets older you can all become involved in charities such as "Habitat for Humanity" if you like. They build homes for families in need and are always looking for help. It is a great experience for your children to understand that they are building a home for a needy family.

Make a poster of the Corporal Acts of Mercy, and hang it in your kitchen. Encourage your children positively: Catch them "doing good." Eg. "Thanks for bringing me my coffee; do you know you've just performed an Act of Mercy by giving drink to the thirsty?"



Keep a "good deed" jar in your kitchen. As you notice children doing small things for others, drop a bead in the jar. As the jar fills, this becomes a visible encouragement to growth in kindness for the whole family, rather than for just for one individual. It provides a symbol for how our good deeds help others.

Make a lapbook of the Corporal Works of Mercy. A lapbook can be as simple as a manilla folder with some flaps - one for each Corporal Work of Mercy. Your children can add concrete ideas and suggestions for practicing each of them, draw a picture, etc. By seeing, doing and reviewing Works of Mercy through this activity, the children will never forget them.

There are a number of organisations and chaplains who visit people in prisons. Although children are not allowed to go into the prisons, some families do bake cakes and brownies for the prisoners. This is a great way to involve your children in caring for the imprisoned without actually taking them to the prison. They can help bake cakes and cookies and know that they are going to people who are in prison. In their small way, they helped to brighten the life of an inmate.

Sometimes we may be walking down the street and people ask us for a bit of money for food. One thing families can do is to buy coupon books from local fast food chains to give out to people who are hungry. Just keeping a coupon book in your car or purse for such an occasion sends a very clear message to your children that you care about those who are less fortunate than you. What a great lesson to teach. Example is always the best teacher!



Be the message you want to pass on!!