



The Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy



Mercy is the virtue of showing compassion for, and, if possible, relieving the suffering of another person. Mercy is God's love in action in the world.

Jesus, the face of God's Mercy, teaches us in the Gospel of Saint Matthew how to show mercy when He says, ***"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me...As you did this to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me."*** (Mt 25:35-36, 40) Every time we show mercy to other people in need, we represent Jesus Christ to them and directly share His love .

Here are the ***Corporal Works of Mercy***, and some practical suggestions for putting them into action! Use these ideas or come up with one of your own.

Feed the Hungry

- Make sandwiches and pass them out to the homeless, e.g. with Lunchbreak.
- Pick up leftovers at a local grocery store, bakery, or restaurant and deliver them to a food bank or homeless shelter (You may need to ask your parents for help with this).
- Keep a list of local food banks and soup kitchens on hand to pass out to those you encounter around your town who could use such services.
- Volunteer at a food bank or soup kitchen, or sponsor a food drive in your neighborhood.
- Prepare and take a meal to someone in your community who is seriously ill or welcoming home a newborn.

Give Drink to the Thirsty

- Have a "donations only" lemonade stand and use the proceeds to an organization like Catholic Relief Services that works to improve water supplies in poor countries.
- Organize a drive to collect and donate baby formula to a local pregnancy help center.
- Work a drink station at a local charity race.

Clothe the Naked

- Organize a clothing drive and donate the items.
- Knit, crochet, or sew baby blankets for your local pregnancy help center., or scarves, hats, and gloves for your local homeless shelter, senior citizen center or cancer treatment center.
- Make fun quilts to donate to a local children's hospital or pediatric cancer ward.

Shelter the Homeless, Show Hospitality

- Keep a list of local homeless shelters on hand to pass out to those you meet on the street.
- Organize an effort to put together care packages with special treats to send to orphanages here or overseas.
- Invite people in school who you know usually eat alone to come and sit with you and your friends.
- Be an Altar Server and/or Minister of Hospitality at Mass on the weekend (10 hrs. max)



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Visit the Sick

- Volunteer at a hospital, nursing home or a seriously ill member of your parish.
- Organize a group of friends to make/send cards to people you know are in the hospital.
- Make a list of the homebound in your community who would like to receive the Eucharist and give to the Parish Center for follow up.
- Once a week, get a list of the homebound and ill members of the Parish and organize a group of your friends to say prayers for them.

Visit the Imprisoned

- Collect and donate bibles and/or spiritual reading materials to a prison.

Bury the Dead

- Help a widow or widower in need with yard work or errands. Ask them to tell stories about how they met their spouse, their courtship, wedding day, marriage, children, etc.
- Spend time with or do something special for a friend or classmate who has experienced a death in the family.
- Go to local cemeteries to clean graves, leave flowers on them, or place flags on the graves of veterans.

The ***Spiritual Works of Mercy*** are also a part of the rich heritage of the Church and its mission of justice and charity. Too often we think of charity as something else “to do.” Prayer is also a work of mercy when performed as an act of intercession for others. It is just as important that we be people of prayer.

The ***Spiritual Works of Mercy*** are: *instruct the uninformed; advise those who have doubts about their faith; warn and correct wrong-doers; pray for people who hurt you and don't respond in kind; forgive others for their acts of wrongdoing; give comfort to people who are hurting or sad; pray for the living and the dead.*

Some suggestions for service activities based on the Spiritual Works of Mercy are:

- Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation once a month, invite a different friend or family member to go with you each month, and offer your penance for the souls in Purgatory
- Organize a group of friends or join family to pray a Rosary or Novena each week to relieve the suffering of souls in Purgatory
- Organize a group of friends or join your family in praying the Rosary or Novena each week for someone in your school who is ill, for persecuted Christians, for victims of violence, war or natural disasters
- Be a student aide for Religious Education programs at Saint Leo's
- Organize an anti-bullying or discrimination awareness campaign in your school
- Pray a Rosary or Novena each week for vocations to the priesthood or consecrated life.

Candidates who organize prayer groups must have a parent sign their Service Hour Log. Candidates are honor-bound to complete their projects.