



Jubilee HOLY YEAR OF MERCY Ideas for the Classroom

Rejoice! The Year of Mercy began on December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Misericordiae Vultus, the letter of Pope Francis officially proclaiming the Year of Mercy, sets forth his vision for the Jubilee Year. The motto of the Year of Mercy is “*Merciful like the Father.*” It is in mercy that we find proof of how much God loves us. Day in and day out, we are touched by the mercy of a loving God. And it is through that love and mercy, we are able to be compassionate to others (see 14).

Pope Francis reminds Catholics about the call of Jesus to live mercy. “The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person.” (12) Mercy is who we are or, mercy is what we offer as disciples of Jesus. All of us are called to be people of mercy. Truly, “mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life” (10).

The vision of Pope Francis for this Jubilee Year of Mercy is both comforting and challenging. Integrate some of the following ideas at home or in the classroom, helping young people to grow so we can all be “merciful like the Father” (13).

Jesus Christ is the “face of God’s mercy” (1).

The life of Jesus made mercy visible to us. The Gospel is filled with accounts of the miracles and parables telling of the incredible mercy that Jesus showed to all people. The core of the Gospel and of our faith is found in the three beautiful parables of mercy in chapter 15 of the Gospel according to Luke — the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the father with two sons. These parables portray a loving God who never gives up. In the Gospel, mercy is a joyful call; mercy is the call that reawakens us to new life; mercy is a force that overcomes everything (9).

Pope Francis highlights some of these Gospel events where Jesus responded with mercy to the needs of others in paragraph 8 of *Misericordiae Vultus*.

- **Matthew 9:36**
Jesus felt compassion for the crowds who followed him.
- **Matthew 14:14**
The compassionate love of Jesus led him to heal the sick.





Take time to slowly read the miracles and parables of Jesus that focus on mercy. Reflect on these events in the life of Jesus. We are called to act as Jesus did.

- **Matthew 15:32-39**
Jesus feeds the crowd.
- **Luke 7:11-15**
Jesus feels compassion for a grieving mother and widow.
- **Mark 5:19**
Jesus frees the demoniac, and gives the mission to tell others of how Jesus had mercy on him.
- **Matthew 9:9-13**
The call of Matthew: Jesus looks on Matthew with merciful love and chooses him.
- **Matthew 18:21-35**
The parable of forgiveness, and being merciful as God is merciful to us.

The Old Testament — The Psalms

The Old Testament often describes God as patient and merciful. Throughout the history of salvation, God's loving kindness and goodness prevails over punishment. This is evident in the Psalms, which continually sing of the grandeur of God's mercy. Pope Francis lists some of these Psalms in paragraph 6 of *Misericordiae Vultus*.

- **Psalm 103** — he crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.
- **Psalm 146** — the concrete signs of mercy.
- **Psalm 147** — expressions of the mercy of God.
- **Psalm 136** — the continuing refrain
“For his mercy endures forever.”

Take time to pray the Psalms that focus on the mercy of God. Since the Psalms are songs, listen or sing some hymns that are based on these psalms, like the song, “Amazing Grace.”



The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures

Amazing Grace

The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Pope Francis challenges all Christian people to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. This will lead us more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience with God's mercy. Matthew 25:31-45 gives us the criteria upon which we will be judged for we cannot escape the words of Jesus spoken to us. (15) This is reinforced in the Gospel according to Luke, when Jesus returned to Nazareth and went to the synagogue. There, he read from the Scriptures to proclaim a year of the Lord's favor or mercy (see Isaiah 61:1-2). Again, we are called to witness to our faith through our actions.

Learn the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Make a commitment to practice the Works of Mercy in your life. Click on [With My Family: The Corporal Works of Mercy](#) for some ideas on ways that families can live the works of mercy today.



Pilgrimage

Making a pilgrimage is a sign of the journey each of us makes in this life. Truly we are on a life-long journey of faith. A pilgrimage can be the sign that mercy is also a "goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice" (14).

The official Holy Door is at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. There is also a Holy Door designated in each (arch)diocese. Plan to take a pilgrimage to pray and walk through the Holy Door in your (arch)diocese. Consider visiting the Holy Door in other (arch)dioceses that may be near to you, or when you travel on vacation this year.



Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed people who are hungry.
- Give drink to people who are thirsty.
- Clothe people who need clothes.
- Visit prisoners.
- Shelter people who are homeless.
- Visit people who are sick.
- Bury people who have died.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Help people who sin.
- Teach people who are ignorant.
- Give advice to people who have doubts.
- Comfort people who suffer.
- Be patient with other people.
- Forgive people who hurt you.
- Pray for people who are alive and for those who have died.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Many people are returning to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and discovering the power of this Sacrament. Pope Francis asks us to place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the center so that people can touch the grandeur of God's mercy in their own hands(17).

Encourage the habit of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. Many parishes have Penance Services especially during Lent, which provide a great opportunity for receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



The Mother of Mercy

Pope Francis asks the Mother of the Son of God, Mary, to watch over us during this Holy Year of Mercy. We are to address her in the prayer Hail, Holy Queen, "so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make

us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus" (24).

Pray to Mary with the words of the Hail, Holy Queen, a prayer "ever ancient and ever new" (24). Click on the link for a [prayer card of the Hail, Holy Queen](#).



Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy:
Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To you do we cry, poor banished
children of Eve.

To you do we send up our sighs, mourning
and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this our exile

show unto us the blessed fruit
of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.
Amen.



The Apostle of Mercy

Not only do we pray to Mary, but our prayers extend also to the saints who made divine mercy their mission in life. Saint Faustina Kowalska is especially remembered as the great apostle of mercy.(24)

Click on the link to learn more about [Saint Faustina, the Divine Mercy Saint](#).

At the beginning of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis says "let us allow God to surprise us" (25). How can we not be totally overwhelmed at the boundless mercy of a loving God, a mercy that never ends? Let each of us go out and proclaim God's mercy. "Wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident" (12). May this Jubilee Year of Mercy be a time to remember, celebrate, and live God's mercy in our lives. "The Church feels the urgent need to proclaim God's mercy" (25). May we share that mercy with others as we go out and proclaim God's mercy.



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