**A** **Holy** **Year** **of** **Mercy**

**December** **8,** **2015** **to** **November** **20,** **2016**

*“Every* *time* *someone* *is* *in* *need,* *he* *or* *she* *can* *approach* *it,* *because* *the* *mercy* *of* *God* *never* *ends.”* *Pope* *Francis*

**Home Lesson** **2015**

This lesson has been prepared for your family to learn and grow in faith. Families that spend time together in sharing faith constantly are truly blessed.

**Materials** **Needed:** 1. Small piece of material, candle & Bible; 2. Copy of the lesson; 3. Markers/Crayons; 4. Supplemental materials off the Pinterest board if needed

**Prepare** **in** **Advance**

1. Read Lesson before beginning so that you are prepared to lead.

2. Set up a prayer space in the table centre with a cloth, candle & Bible. 3. Instructions for Lesson:

a. Ask each person to cut a Love Card from the lesson. Write on the back of the card something you have done that needs forgiveness or someone you need to forgive. Add the card to the prayer space.

b. Begin with the Opening Prayer, and then introduce the Works of Mercy. Cut out each square and staple the left edge together to make a book. If they choose, they can color the books.

c. Talk to your children about the Works of Mercy and what each means. Discuss some ways as a family you can participate in each of the works.

d. Have each child write on the back of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy how to live that work.

e. Keep the books in your family room or by your child’s bed and talk about the Year of Mercy through the year [Dec 8, 2015 to Nov 20, 2016] and how you are doing living a Year of Mercy. Suggestion: Maybe each month as a family reach out and complete one of the works you discussed and wrote about.

f. Close in Prayer together. Take time receive Reconciliation and Eucharist as a family.

g. Check out our Pinterest board “Year of Mercy” for tons of ideas to do together during the Holy Year (https://www.pinterest.com/sjcyc)

**What’s a Jubilee?**

Ancient Hebrew tradition celebrated a jubilee every 50 years (Leviticus 25:8‐13). A Jubilee was a year of rest and restoration. During this year, captives were set free, debts were paid and land was not sown or harvested. No work, no bills, no stress…only rest for a whole year!! Our world certainly needs a jubilee right now! The Catholic Church celebrates a jubilee every 25 years as an “ordinary” jubilee. Our last one was 2000. However, there is also a Catholic tradition of proclaiming an “extraordinary jubilee” outside the 25‐year cycle. So this year Pope Francis called for an “Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy”

On December 8th, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis opened a Holy Door in St. Peter’s Basilica that remains sealed except during jubilee years. When he crosses the threshold, this door will become a “Door of Mercy,” then throughout the world other Holy Doors will be opened for the Year of Mercy. (To learn more about the Theology of a Holy Door here or type in <http://www.odw.org/Portals/199/Year%20of%20Mercy%20Holy%20Door%203.pdf> and *scroll to page 4 of the document* to read.)

**Why Mercy?**

Mercy is acts of love by which we care for the bodily and spiritual needs of others. Being merciful frequently includes forgiveness of others, just as God the Father demonstrates forgiveness of our sins through love. There is a tremendous need for mercy in our world today. Pope Francis is calling all Catholics to become more merciful in our lives and to bring God’s mercy to others.

Focusing on the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, families can become involved in this Holy Year. Ultimately, the Year of Mercy is to help us change our hearts and our lives so we can become conduits of God’s mercy in everything that we say and do.

Mercy is a virtue that influences a person’s compassion for another. Mercy inspires the will to ease another’s misfortunes or suffering in either body or soul. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are charitable actions that extend God’s compassion and mercy to those in need.

However, the works of mercy are more than gestures or obligations. To gain merit in heaven, the actions must be performed as acts of love for our neighbour as a response to our deep love for God. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy work together as paths to a greater understanding of our faith, bringing us closer to God. They give Christians ways to live according to Jesus’ Great Commandment. And they are particularly important to pay attention to now as we prepare for the Holy Year of Mercy, called for by Pope Francis.

**Opening Prayer: A Family Prayer**

**Children:** **Adults:**

Praise be to God who made us a family Praise be to God for the love that we share Praise be to God for sending us Jesus Praise be to God for teaching us to care

Help us Lord fill our lives with your Spirit Help us Lord teach us how to forgive Come Holy Spirit fill our lives with your gifts Come Holy Spirit help us serve other’s needs Be with us God may we respect one another Be with us God may our hope never fade Hear us Jesus watch over our family

Hear us Jesus help our faith to grow strong Spirit, we praise you may we find you in all things Spirit, we praise you all day and all night.

**All:** **AMEN**

**With your children:**

Talk about how special this Jubilee Year of Mercy is. Help them to look at the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy and have a family discussion on how you can show mercy through the different works:

**Spiritual Works of Mercy:**

Forgive offenses willingly

Bear wrongs patiently

Admonish the sinner

Instruct the ignorant

Pray for the living and the dead

Comfort the sorrowful

Counsel the doubtful

Clothe the naked

**Corporal Works of Mercy:**

Shelter the homeless

Give food to the hungry

Give drink to the thirsty

Comfort the sick

Bury the dead

Visit the imprisoned

**Closing Prayer:**

**Leader:**   Lord Jesus Christ, You have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees You sees him. Show us your face and we will be saved.  Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy.

*Give each family member a moment to say which work of mercy they liked learning about.*

In your name, Lord Jesus, we pray

**All:     AMEN**

**Family Actions:**

Receive Reconciliation and Eucharist together as a family.    Attend Mass together as a family. Attend the Parish Reconciliation Services; e.g.: reconciliation services for the whole community, individual confessions available in the church. This is a wonderful way to experience the mercy of God while celebrating during the Jubilee Holy Year of Mercy.







