



APOSTOLIC BRIEFINGS *and* COMMUNICATIONS

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary | Villa Maria House of Studies | Immaculata, PA 19345



“Education
is the most powerful weapon for
changing the world.”

-Nelson Mandela



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♥ Love ♥ Creative Hope ♥ Fidelity ♥ Love ♥ Creative Hope ♥ Fidelity ♥ Love ♥ Creative Hope ♥ Fidelity ♥

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Proclaiming the Gospel Message in the Spirit of Jesus the Redeemer



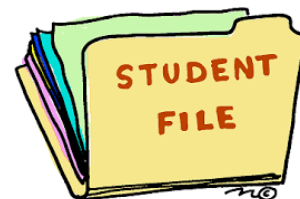
IHM Best Practices

Tips for a successful School year

Frontload Work to Save Time Later

If you are reading this paper in August, regardless of where you teach in the United States, you have two weeks to five weeks before the opening bell. If you frontload your work – spend more time now preparing – you will save yourself time in the long run. Get your class list and ask to examine the student records and consider the following:

- See which children are the oldest or only in their family. These parents will have more questions than veteran parents. When you speak with them, you will need to be more specific and make sure they understand what you are saying.
- Who in your class had a formal educational evaluation completed? Ask to read the reports. What recommendations were made and how will you implement them? If necessary, schedule a parent meeting early on to understand the child's needs.
- If your school is predominately Catholic, make a list of the non-Catholic parents. You may be surprised that many non-Catholics feel like outsiders in Catholic school even though you were totally unaware of their religion. Be mindful when you speak to non-Catholics that they may not feel a part of the school community.
- Determine the academic ability of the students in your class through their report card grades and standardized test results. Make a seating chart for the first day. Do not allow students to pick their own seats because if you do, children save seats for their friends making other children feel unaccepted. With the seating chart, place your slow learners front and center. Place your above average students on one side and your average students on the other side. This will allow you to quickly assess students' ability and allow you to provide for their needs. Once you know the class, rearrange the seating.
- Make several pages of labels with the students' names. Place a label on the spine of the consumable books that you give children and ask that they are covered in clear contact paper. While it takes time, it will save you time and frustration trying to find out whose book you are holding.
- Have all books and school supplies ready for distribution or actually placed on the students' desk when they arrive.



Procedures, Procedures, Procedures

Harry Wong's book, *The First Days of School*, lists many great practices. He tells teachers to spend the first days of school setting up and practicing your procedures for the year. While it may seem that you are losing time, it will save you in the long run. Consider the following:



- How will you say prayers? Remember that prayers should be said in the morning, before and after lunch, and at the end of the day. If you have a prayer leader each week, this prayer routine becomes invaluable for those days when something unexpected happens first thing in the morning. Ask your religion coordinator what are the required prayers for your grade.
- How will the children unpack their book bags and hang up their book bags, lunch boxes, and coats? Assigning each child a hook for their use will help you react when a child needs to go home quickly. You will know exactly where to go. Show them how to place the items so they do not fall down all over the closet.
- What is your routine for lining up for recess, the bathroom, and lunch? Have a procedure for lining up, such, as calling rows or tables and insist that the students are quiet in the hallways. Remember other classrooms are actively engaged in learning and you do not want to interrupt them.
- Once you determine your procedures – practice, practice, practice. If the children do not line up correctly, have them sit down and try again. Continue to do this the first days until they get it right. Occasionally during the school year, you may need to remind them of your procedures.
- Remember: children thrive on routine and structure.

Pacing

If you want to teach everything that you are expected to do in a year, pacing is essential. Take your guidelines/textbooks. If you are in quarters, divide the content into fours; if you are in trimesters, divide the content into threes. Check yourself periodically to see if you are on target. Take into account that Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine Day, and Easter will affect your pacing.



Religion requires special pacing in order to keep your lessons aligned with the liturgical year. You may need to supplement some weeks' lessons that are generally found in the back of the book. Teach the liturgical year within the season. If you come to Advent in your book before the season, take some time to teach about the saints or the church. Lent comes later this year so plan accordingly.

Veteran teachers find it helpful to keep previous plan books to see where they are compared to prior years. Start out with strong consistent teaching because autumn does not have as many interruptions as December and the end of the year. January, February, and March also tend to be better teaching months. Keep in mind that once day light savings time comes, children are involved in many after school sports activities and tend to spend less time on school work. Making a good pacing schedule for yourself prior to school opening will greatly benefit you.

In Pursuit of a Paperless Society

When you are taking the time to plan for a successful school year, consider what you can do to save the trees and decrease paper consumption. If you have a smart board in your class, use it to its fullest capacity and save those papers. Technology provides an invaluable tool. Consider harnessing the power of Google using the following:



- If you set up a Google classroom, students may submit their work electronically. The work goes directly into a folder giving the teacher immediate access to who did and did not submit the work.
- Google Forms now allows the teacher to give online quizzes and tests that actually grade the work. The teacher has the option to let the child know if they got the individual question correct right away, or to wait until the quiz/test is completed to grade it. If you think about it, our students will be taking standardized tests online very shortly. The more we allow students to test in this manner, the better they will be able to do it in the long run.
- Create and update your personal school website to include assignments, class news, and parent information. This saves paper that students will not lose, and it also allows the students to know where to go to create the work.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

The more you communicate with your students and parents, the easier your life will be. Consider the following:

- Prior to school opening, send some sort of welcoming message to the students in your class. While a personal phone call or written note to each student is best, you may have access to make a group phone call or a group email. Introduce yourself to the student and parents and let them know how happy you are to have the child in your class.
- At the Back to School Night, or in another communication, share your college degrees, professional certification, and educational teaching experience. If parents are confident that you know what you are doing, they are less apt to question your decisions throughout the year.
- If you have a negative encounter with a student during the course of the day, connect with that student before they go home to let them know you care about them. For example, if Johnny keeps talking despite your several attempts to ask him to be quiet and you correct him publically, at the end of the day say to him, "Johnny, I regret that I had to correct you today in class. You are a very nice boy who I know wants to learn. When you talk continually in class it disrupts the class, and also your learning. I know that tomorrow will be a better day. I care about you and that is why I needed to correct you." Be proactive; diffuse the situation before the child goes home.



Hold High Student Expectations

Author and teacher Ron Clark encourages teachers to hold high expectations for all students. In methods courses, teachers have been instructed to teach to the average child in your class. Ron Clark disagrees and suggests that you teach to the above average learners, and you will be surprised that you will raise the learning level of all students. A study was done in which a group of teachers were told that all the children in their classrooms were gifted with exceptionally high IQ's when the class actually was a heterogeneous mix, and another group of teachers were told they had a heterogeneous mix. The teachers who thought all the students were academically talented challenged and stretched the students resulting in high student achievement for all as opposed to the other group of teachers where students performed at an average rate. The link to the article is listed below.



Get Ready . . . For . . . Edcamp IHM



Edcamp IHM is coming our way on **Saturday, November 19, 2016** to be held at **Villa Maria Academy Lower School**, 1140 King Road, Immaculata, PA 19345. Starting with registration at **8:30** and going until around **3:00** it will be a great, free, professional development day.

Edcamp is an organic, participant-driven, grass roots, computer and educational learning opportunity created by educators for educators. Edcamps held throughout the United States provide a professional development experience like no other and they are posted at www.edcamp.org. Teachers register free of charge and converge on a given location on a non-school day. Because it is the teacher's choice to attend, a synergy arises where everyone tries to help each other learn. While there, some educators post a topic that they will present. A schedule is produced of several workshops and participants head to the class of their choice. If teachers do not like the topic or are not learning, they are encouraged to get up and leave to go find another workshop. At the end of the day, everyone gathers to share what they have learned. It is well worth exploring the concept and if you attend one, you will not be disappointed; however, you will be amazed. AND, just think, **Edcamp IHM on Saturday, November 19th** at **Villa Maria Lower School** in Chester County is that opportunity for you!

Sources:

Internet

Common Core Checklist: <http://teachershavemerit.wikispaces.com/Common+Core+State+Standards> Checklists of the Common Core State Standards for each grade for ELA and Math. Download and keep in your plan book for the year.

Edcamp: <http://www.edcamp.org>

NCEA: <http://www.ncea.org> This site contains the Catholic Schools Week logo along with other pertinent information.

Student Expectations Study: <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2012/09/18/161159263/teachers-expectations-can-influence-how-students-perform>

Books:

Clark, Ron. (2011) *End of Molasses Classes: 101 Extraordinary Solutions for Parents and Teachers*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Wong, Harry K. and Wong, Rosemary T. (2013). *The First Days of School: How to Be An Effective Teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications, Inc. (This book is excellent for all teachers and it is a great gift for principals to give to new teachers.)

For additional information regarding the IHM Best Practices contact Sister Margaret Rose Adams, IHM at smgtadams@gmail.com. 8-16

BEST STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN MATH INSTRUCTION



I'm on a crusade: a one-nun crusade! In IHM schools there has always been the practice of opening every math class with a quick oral drill. We all know it takes many repetitions for us to remember anything. Research confirms that by telling us that the brain loves patterns. We all want our students to stop counting on their fingers. So why have we let this vital part of math class drift into oblivion? Let's bring back drill. Please join me in my crusade.

You already know many ways that this can happen. Most of them can be done cheaply. All you need is a good dollar store! So let's return to the practice of a *short* (2-2 ½ minute) warm up. Follow that drill with either the IHM maintenance or Simple Solutions.

Here are some easy (and cheap) ways to accomplish this:

A set of flash cards can serve all year for instant recall of fact families, multiplication tables, percents to fractional or decimal equivalents, area/total surface area/volume rules. Use the same drill for a week so that the brain picks up the pattern. Then put it away for a month or so while you use other drills for a week at a time. Then bring back a previous one.

I just learned a new opening exercise called *Salute*. Here's how it's done:

You need 3 students at a time and a deck of playing cards. For younger children remove the face cards. One player is the *caller*. The other two are the participants. They split the deck between them (with cards face down). The *caller* says, "Salute". That's the cue for the other two players to raise the top card on their decks up to their foreheads. (They can see each other's card, but not their own.) The *caller* tells the sum of the two numbers. The players must give the addends. This can be used for multiplication as well. In that case, the *caller* announces the product and the contestants give the factors.

Many teachers have individual wipe-off boards for their students. If you don't, you can use plastic plates from the dollar store. They're dry erase too! The kind that are partitioned into three sections are great for *part-part-whole* drills. The two smaller sections are used for the *parts* (addends or factors), the larger section is used for the *whole* (sum or product). The teacher calls out the *whole* and the students write down the *parts*. For a variation, the teacher can call out the *whole* and one *part*, the students must write the other *part*. Or the teacher can give both *parts* and the students supply the *whole*. (To avoid excessive doodling or drawing, tell students that you want to hear the caps on their markers **click** so that you know they are finished.)

Here's another warm up. This one can be as simple or as complex as you wish. Say, "Start with the number of halves in a whole (2). Double it (4). Add the number of sides on a triangle (7).

Triple that number (21). Write your answer.” Students write their answers on the plate or wipe-off board, and turn it face down while you give some wait time. Then say, “Answers up”! Check students’ answers.

Do you know the “I Have...Who Has?” activity? You can find many of these at mathwire.com for all sorts of skills and concepts. The best part is they’re free! In a nutshell the activity goes like this:

First student reads the statement on his/her card (e.g. “I have 16. Who has this number doubled?”)

The student with 32 on his/her card says, “I have 32. Who has this minus 4?”

The student with 28 on his/her card says, “I have 28. Who has...?” etc. *A big advantage to this drill is that all students must pay attention, because no one knows whose card will contain the next answer!*

The website www.adrianbruce.com has other review drills for basic facts.

Here are a few more: Use seven large blank index cards. Write the numbers 0 through 4 on individual cards. (Save the other two for a comma and a decimal point.) Make a second set in a different color. Distribute both sets to students at random. Call out a number. The first color team that can come to the front of the room and display that number so that the rest of the class can see it is the winner. It becomes harder when zero is a place holder; harder still when the comma and decimal point are introduced.

Flexi-straws: Give each student two flexi-straws. The student collapses the end of one straw so that it fits into the end of the other. Tell the class that the flexible part will be the vertex of an angle. Say, “Form an acute angle with your straws. Hold them up when you think you have one. Put your index finger in the mouth of that angle.” Require an obtuse angle, right angle, reflex angle. You know instantly if they understand! In the upper grades you can give each student three straws and have them construct parallel lines cut by a transversal. As you walk around to check say, “When I come to your desk I want to see index fingers in a pair of alternate interior angles”. Change it to alternate exterior, supplementary, complimentary, corresponding and vertical angles. It’s such a quick and easy assessment!

24 Game: Many of us use this as part of First-in-Math, but there’s something to the kinesthetic and tactile value of using the actual cards. Students can compete with their table partners. When someone thinks of how the four numbers on the card can result in 24, she/he slaps the card with two fingers, says “Got it” and justifies the answer to the group.

Some primary quick drills:

Skip count by 2s; 5s; 10s

Hold up a playing card and say, “Count out cubes on your desk to match the number on my card”.

Give each child a card. You hold up another and say, “Add the number on your card to the number on mine”. Later this could become a subtraction drill as long as the teacher’s number is a high card. When grade appropriate, use the same activity for multiplication. ***Upper grades:*** Red cards become negative, black ones are positive. Use for addition and multiplication. (Subtraction might take too long to use as a drill.)

I recently learned of a website: www.mathraps.com. It’s a series of jingles, memory tricks and rhymes for all grades to help students remember various concepts. They are not drills *per se* but I thought I’d pass it along.

Keep the drills short and quick. ***Be consistent*** with them. Good luck!

In the next issues we will examine methods to strengthen problem solving. In the meantime...



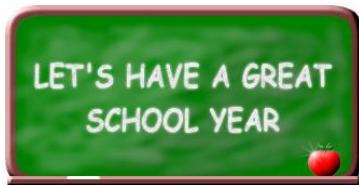
PLEASE JOIN IN MY CRUSADE!

PRIME TIMES



Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Immaculata, Pennsylvania 19345

August, 2016



Classroom Management Strategies

When the teacher is prepared and the classroom has easy rules to follow, and students know what is expected of them, there are fewer problems in the classroom. Here are a few suggestions that might help your classroom to run smoothly.

Give each student a number. You can do this alphabetically. A student whose last name begins with A is # 1 mix girls and boys. . Students put their name and number on everything they do. Whatever teachers collect can be alphabetized faster when using numbers. Number the hooks or cubby holes where students place their things. That is their space and others need to respect that space.

Three rules for the classroom.

**Respect yourself, Respect others, and
Respect your School**

Discuss the word respect to make sure everyone understands what the word means.

Have a **DROPBOX**. One you can make yourself and cover in contact or purchase a container from the Dollar Store or Discount Store. Make sure it is long enough to hold 8 1/2 by 11 objects. On the front place a sign that reads DROPBOX. Underneath the words print: Please put any notes, messages, or papers you need to give me inside this box. Thank you.

Then, when you have time, you can look at what's in the box.

Another way to cut down on noise and chatting in the classroom is to teach the children poems and songs that can be used when changing subjects. These activities can be used later in the year if you have an end of year program. Simple songs and poems are included to help you get started.

Prayer Time

When you are getting ready for prayers or having a special time with Jesus, this song may help bring a sense of calmness to the children.

Let's Talk to Jesus



Tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb

Close your eyes and bow your
head

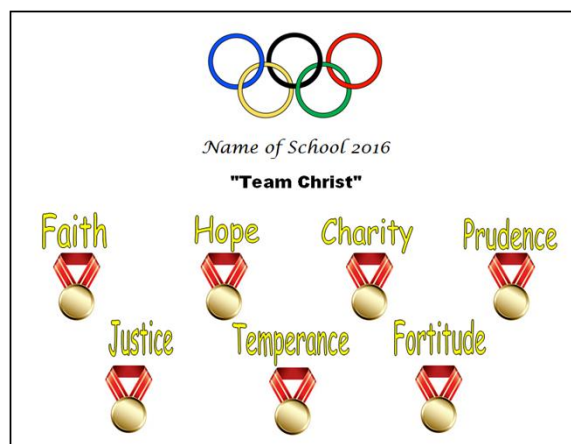
Bow your head, bow your head.

Close your eyes and bow your head

It's time to talk to Jeus.

Gold Medals in Virtue

Use this bulletin board to connect the Olympics with virtue education. The "location" of these Olympics can be either your school or class name. Instead of Team USA your students are a part of Team Christ. Under each virtue a gold medal can be added either with the definition of the virtue or a student's name who has exemplified that virtue.



Pen Pals with Parents

Teach letter writing and create special memories all at once. Once a month have your students write a letter to one of their parents. Make sure to stress to the parents, at Back to School Night, the importance of them writing back. Your students will enjoy receiving mail at school and it will motivate them to keep writing.

Happy Birthday, Mary, Our Blessed Mother September 8th

Tune: London Bridges

Happy Birthday, Mary, Mary, Mary.
Happy Birthday, Mary.
Mother of Jesus.

You are mother of us all, of us all, of us all.
You are mother of us all. Your home is
heaven.

We Have Rules Rhyme

We have rules. We have rules.
Rules to keep us safe in school.
Inside voices, walking feet.
Don't touch or bother
The friends we meet.
Follow directions, listen too.
Rules will make you cool in school.

Rules Are Important

Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle...

Here are some rules for you and me,
See how important they can be.
Always be honest, kind, and fair,
Always be good and willing to share.
These are rules we all should know.
We follow these rules wherever we go.

Thank You, God

Thank you, God for this new day,
I come to school to work and pray.
Please be with me all day long,
In every story, game, and song.
May all the happy things we do,
Make you, Our Father, happy too.

Apple Poem

Up in the apple tree high off the ground.
I see an apple so big and round.
I climb up the tree and hold on tight.
I pick the apple and take a bite!
m-m-m-m-m-m Good!

Angel Poem

Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle...

Little Angel hear me pray,
Guard me, watch me, all the
day.
Be with me when night grows
deep,
Bless me; keep me, while I sleep.
Angel, angel hear me pray.
Be my guardian night and day.



I Made a Jack-O'-Lantern

I made a jack o' lantern
I made him yesterday.
I made two eyes like big round wheels;
I made his nose this way.
I made his mouth into a smile
With every tooth in place,
And then a candle lighted up
My jack o' lantern's face!

When The Leaves Are On The Ground

When the leaves are on the ground
(point to the floor)
Instead of on the trees
(hands clasped over head)
I like to make a great big pile of them way up
to my knees
(hands on knees)
I like to run and jump in them
(jump once)
And kick them all around
(kicking motion with foot)
I like the prickly feel of them and the crickly,
crackly sound.
(click fingers)



This House Must Be Haunted

Tune: Skip to My Lou

Bats in the attic, what'll I do? 3X
This house must be haunted.

Ghost in the closet, what'll I do? 3X
This house must be haunted.

Cat in the cellar, what'll I do? 3X
This house must be haunted.

Bats in the attic, shoo, bat,
shoo.

Ghost in the closet, shoo,
ghost, shoo.

Cat in the cellar, shoo, cat, shoo.
This house is not haunted.



Five Little Pumpkins

Five little pumpkins resting near a gate
The first one said, "Oh, my it's getting late."
The second one said, "There are witches in
the air."
The third one said, "But I don't care."
The fourth one said, "Oh, let's roll around."
The fifth one said, " It's cold on the ground."
Wooooooooo went the winds
And out went the lights
And the five little pumpkins rolled out of
sight.



Saints – Go

A saintly twist to a trending game. Introduce your students to Holy Men and Women of the Church by having them "catch" saints with "Saint-Go". Print out your own trading cards with a picture and information or download premade cards from a website like www.happysaints.com. Assign different saints to various tasks, locations, subjects, and school functions. For example, Saint Clare could be a prize in the prize box; Saint Alphonsus could be "caught" after a certain number of homework assignments are handed in; Saint Kateri could be "caught" by knowing a certain number of sight words; Saint Nicholas can be "caught" at the Christmas program. The possibilities are endless. Students can store their cards in plastic card collector sleeves or a container. This way they can be transported safely between home and school to share about the saints where ever they go.

Prayer before a Test

Help me Lord to do my best,
To remember what I have learned.
So when I hand in my test,
It shows how much I've grown.



Turkey Time

I'm a little turkey; I'm round and very stout.
The farmer gives me freedom so I
can run about.

But when the weather changes
and frost is on the ground,
I look for a good hiding place, you
won't find me around.



What Goes in a Circle?

To develop categorizing skills, play this game with your students. Begin by drawing a large circle. Think of a category – for example, even numbers, long/short vowel words, yellow things, mammals, states, seasonal words, or color words. Without telling your students the category, write or draw 2 or 3 items inside the circle that fit in the category. Then ask, "What else belongs in the circle?" Write correct answers inside the circle and incorrect outside the circle. Continue to play until most of the students have figured out the category, and then ask someone to explain the pattern. Once the students catch on, just use 1 or 2 words or pictures.

I Can Learn

(Tune: Sing A Song of Sixpence)

When I think of Jesus
I'm happy as can be.
I love Jesus dearly –
Jesus loves me.
Even though I'm little, Oh,
I can learn to do
Helpful things to please my Lord
The same as each of you.

Birthday Prayer for Classmates

After singing Happy Birthday on a child's birthday, as a class this prayer can be recited.
Dear Lord, please bless
(student's name)
On this his/her special day!
Thank you for the gift he/she is
To all in every way!



Are You Ready for Some Basketball?

This is an activity that can be played using different subject areas.

Vocabulary Basketball

Materials: over the door basketball net or a basketball net with suction cups – small, soft basketball

Divide the class into 2 teams.

Put vocabulary words on the board. Teacher gives a

definition – the first team

member earns 1 point if

he/she can find the correct

word. Another point can be earned if student can make a basket. Teacher sets up line showing where to stand to make a shot.

Team that earns the most points after the last student plays – wins.



How Many Patterns in 100?

Exploring a hundred chart can reveal countless patterns. Display a hundreds chart. Give each student a laminated copy of the hundreds chart and a zip lock bag with bingo chips, small foam shapes or other objects that can be used to cover the numbers. Invite students to follow oral directions and find the patterns.

Examples:

- Cover the numbers 10, 20, 30, 40, and then ask, "What number comes next?" Ask a volunteer to come and point to the next number and tell the pattern. Students can then finish the pattern.
- Cover number 11, 22, 33, 44, 55, What comes next? What is the pattern? What numbers will finish the pattern?
- Cover even numbers to 20. Check. What will be the next 5 numbers?
- Cover odd numbers 21 to 39. What number comes next? What number comes before 21?
- Cover the numbers 5, 10, 15, 20,..What is the next number? Follow the patter to 50? Explain what you see.

Sentence Patterns

Here's a five minute oral language activity.
Put a sentence pattern on the board. Then
ask for a volunteer to supply words to create
a sentence.

_____, _____ _____ .

Examples: Yes, I like my dog. Mom, my lunch
is missing.

_____, _____ _____ ?

Examples: Jack, where is your pencil?
Dad, can you help me?

Question Anchor Chart

Some children have a difficult time
understanding what makes up a question.
Create a poster with a large question mark
that you can write in. Leave the circle under
the question mark separate. Inside the
question mark print these words: Who,
What, When, Where, How, Why, Does, Will,
Are. Inside the circle print Could, Do, Did,
Can. When students want to ask a question
or are asked to create a question, they can
check the Question Anchor Chart. In the
beginning you may wish to use a few question
words and then add on as needed.

Subtraction Poem

from theinspiredappleblog.com

More on top?	58
No need to stop.	- 5

	53

More on the floor?	55
Go next door...	- 8
And get 10 more	_____
	47

Numbers the same?	58
	-8

Zero's the game	_____
	50

Beginning of School Prayer

We give you praise, O God,
for everything that is new and beautiful,
for everything which holds promise and
brings us joy.

Bless us as we start this new year
with our friends and teachers
Help us to make the most of every chance we
have to start afresh.

May we show love to one another and to all.
May the new beginning of this school year
remind us that you give us chances to start
over again and again.

Help us to forgive others
as we receive your forgiveness.
Help us to learn and to work together.
Help us to listen when we should
and to know the best words when we speak
and when it is better not to speak.

We thank you for our friends
Help us to be good friends this year.

Help us to be patient
with ourselves and with others.
Bless our school and keep us safe.
Be with us as we travel each day.
Help us to be aware of your love
shown to us in the people around us.

May the Blessed Mother Mary protect us
And help us to live as well as we can
Giving thanks and glory to God as she did.
Amen!

(DeanneLane)

We're Going Back To School



May this school year be one of peace and joy
as you bring Christ into your classroom each
and every day!

Save the Date



WHO:

Passionate educators who want to share best practices with others.
Life-long learners who want to expand their Professional Learning Community.
Teachers/Administrators/Anyone involved in helping children learn

WHAT:

An organic, participant-driven professional learning experience.
A community created by educators, for educators.
The leading edge of professional development in education.

WHEN:

Saturday November 19, 2016

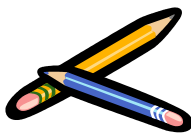
WHERE:

**VILLA MARIA ACADEMY LOWER SCHOOL
Immaculata, PA**

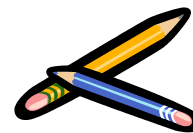
Arrive CURIOUS



Leave INSPIRED



IHM GOOD WRITERS CLUB



RATIONALE FOR THE CLUB

1. To assist teachers in providing motivation
2. To develop skills of legible handwriting; provide means for a sense of achievement; foster pride in daily work

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Select a definite objective for each lesson.
2. Allocate a specific item for penmanship each day.
3. Study techniques outlined in your Teacher's Manual, noting the letter formation peculiar to your series (Palmer, Noble, Zaner Blozer, etc).
4. Provide thorough instruction by demonstrating formation, size, shape, and slant.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. SHAPE | correct formation of letters |
| 2. SIZE | uniform, correct height and width of letters |
| 3. SLANT | uniform, diagonal slope of strokes |
| 4. ALIGNMENT | tangency to baseline with down-strokes |
| 5. APPEARANCE | neat, clean work; proper margins; specified arrangement of papers |

Classes should come to an accord on one alphabet.



IHM Good Writers Club



Grades 3 & 4

OCTOBER

Letters and shapes are important
Make them round and neat.
So everyone will see
Your writing can't be beat!

NOVEMBER

God gives us beauty
God gives us food.
God gives us all things
Peaceful and good.

(Nora Duffy)

Grades 5 & 6

OCTOBER

Knowing is not enough;
We must apply.
Willing is not enough;
We must do.

NOVEMBER

Thanksgiving is a special time
For us to pause and say
Thank you, God, for all the blessings
You send us every day.

Grades 7 & 8

OCTOBER

Reputation is what other people
know about you.
Honor is what you know
about yourself.

NOVEMBER

For food we eat and homes we love
And for our loved ones dear,
We bow our heads and thank you, God
For blessings of the year.

(Louis McMaster Bujold)

DECEMBER

Grades 3 & 4

See the stars up in the sky
Hear the angels sing
Thank you, God, for sending us
Jesus, our newborn King.

Grades 5 & 6

O how shall I keep my Christmas
As they keep it in heaven above?
I'll keep it with peace and thanksgiving
And kindest deeds of love.

Grades 7 & 8

While shepherds kept their watch
Over the flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shown a holy light.

The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in *His* 
presence

PROFICIENCY IN PENMANSHIP



This certifies that

has attained that level of proficiency in penmanship
required by the IHM GOOD WRITERS CLUB
for Grade _____
and thereby is entitled to this

Certificate of Merit

awarded by the IHM Good Writers Club

Date _____

Member of the official Board of Evaluators _____

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION...Cover Sheet
I.H.M. ABC NOTES -- FALL, 2016

THE JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

USCCB CATECHETICAL THEME, 2016 – 2017
“PRAYER: THE FAITH PRAYED”

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Sister Patricia M. McCormack, I.H.M.

We are very grateful to those who contributed creative Religious Education ideas to this *Fall Issue*. Their creativity has certainly enhanced this publication!

Order of Prayer ~ Celebrating God's Mercy

The Year of Mercy: December 8, 2015 – November 20, 2016



Leader Let us recall the mercies of God, in our past and in our present.

The light of God	All	surrounds us.
The love of God	All	enfolds us,
The power of God	All	protects us,
The presence of God	All	watches over us.
Where we are	All	God's abundant mercy is.

Leader Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
All As it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.

Hymn	<i>There's A Wideness in God's Mercy</i>	<i>Open My Eyes, Lord</i>
	<i>Glory and Praise to our God</i>	<i>Jesus, Come To Us</i>

A Reading from Scripture

Lector I A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to Titus (Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7)

Beloved:

The grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good.

When the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but **because of his mercy**, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord. **All** Thanks be to God.

A few moments of silent, personal reflection . . .

Lector II A Reflection on the Year of Mercy ~ Catholic Relief Services

The Year of Mercy is for all of us. To deliver God's mercy, we must first seek to fully experience it ourselves. This can be done by renewing ourselves through the sacraments, particularly confession. A pilgrimage is also a special way to experience the renewal.

Holy Mother Church encourages us to practice the **corporal and spiritual works of mercy**:

(over)

Feeding the hungry
 Sheltering the homeless
 Clothing the naked
 Visiting the sick
 Ransoming the captive/
 Visiting the imprisoned
 Giving drink to the thirsty
 Burying the dead

Converting sinners
 Instructing the uninformed
 Advising the doubtful
 Comforting the sorrowful
 Bearing wrongs patiently

 Forgiving injuries
 Praying for the living and the dead

Personal Reflection on God's mercy in your life
 and the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

(The reflection below may take several minutes and it may be followed by sharing).

*(First, take a few moments and consider your own experience of God's mercy in your life . . . Next, slowly re-read the **corporal works of mercy** and reflect upon which ones you have practiced for the good of God's most abandoned poor ones in your community. Can you choose one additional one to add to your list? And now re-read the **spiritual works of mercy** and identify the ones you already practice in your relationships with family, colleagues, associates, students, parents and administrators. Again, which one could you add to your list at this time? This reflection could lead to sharing with the person beside you.)*

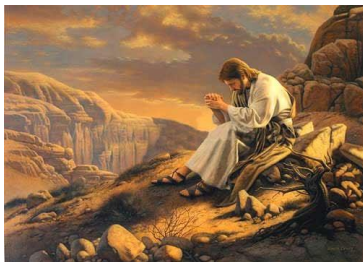
Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy (adapted)

Lector III	Lord Jesus Christ, You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
All	Let the Church be your visible face in the world, its risen and glorified Lord.
Lector III	You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:
All	Let everyone who approaches your ministers feel loved and forgiven by God.
Lector III	Send your Holy Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,
All	So that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a Year of Grace from the Lord.
Lector III	And may your holy Church, with renewed enthusiasm, bring good news to the poor,
All	Proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.
Lector III	We ask this, O merciful God, through the intercession of our Savior, the Son of Mary, Mother of Mercy, Who live and reign with You, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.
All	Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader	Let us pray in the words that our merciful Savior gave us as the model for all prayer:	
All	"Our Father . . ."	
Hymn	<i>Loving and Forgiving Prayer of Saint Francis</i>	<i>We Are Called Now Thank We All Our God</i>
Leader	Let us share with one another a sign of the Father's mercy and Christ's peace.	

FACULTY / STAFF PRAYER for ORIENTATION DAY



***Based on the 2016 -2017 Catechetical Theme
“Prayer: The Faith Prayed”***

Call to Prayer

In a renewed spirit of mission, we embrace another new year in the treasured ministry of Catholic Education, both in Catholic Schools and in Parish Religious Education Programs. This year the Church in the United States will focus on the Catechetical Theme: “*Prayer: The Faith Prayed.*” As mentioned in the USCCB Catechetical Sunday Welcome Message of Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, “This year’s theme invites all the baptized -- especially catechists and Catholic school teachers -- to devote themselves to a deeper study and practice of prayer, for their own spiritual good and for the good of those they serve.” No doubt, in our conflicted world today, this Catechetical Theme offers us a powerful challenge, as well as a wonderful opportunity to deepen our gratitude for the gift of prayer in our lives. Jesus so often taught us the power of prayer by His own example. May we, like Jesus, humbly strive to do the same.

Hymn: *Center of My Life* (v. 1,2)

Psalm 86

Antiphon: Lord, you are kind and forgiving.

R Hear me, Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and oppressed.

L Preserve my life, for I am loyal; save your servant who trusts in you.

R You are my God; pity me, Lord; to you I call all the day.

L Gladden the soul of your servant; to you, Lord, I lift up my soul.

R Lord, you are kind and forgiving, most loving to all who call on you.

All Glory be to the Father...

Reading: Gospel of Luke 10: 38-42 (*Martha and Mary*)

(Please pause for silent reflection)

(over)

Sung Response: *Center of My Life (Refrain only)*

Intercessions: Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For all of us, that we discover and welcome more opportunities of quiet for prayer and reflection, let us pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all of us, that we delight in prayers of Adoration, as we offer to God the glory and honor that He so deserves, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all of us, that we show humility in prayers of Contrition, as we experience God's loving gift of forgiveness, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all of us, that we express gratitude in prayers of Thanksgiving, as we remember our dependence on God and others, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all of us, that we seek God's help in prayers of Supplication, as we confidently present our needs and the needs of others before Him, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all those with whom and for whom we minister, that we may faithfully witness to the power of "Prayer: The Faith Prayed" in our lives, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all those for whom we have promised to pray, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

From the Gospel of Luke we read:

(Luke 11: 1 - 4)

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Our Father"... (please pray in unison)



Closing Prayer: (in unison)

Heavenly Father, we are about to begin our day's sharing in Your Name. Bound by charity to one another and to our students, may we be penetrated by an apostolic spirit, and may we give witness to Christ, the unique teacher, by our lives as well as by our teachings. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Closing Hymn: *Center of My Life (Refrain only)*

Music in the Religion Class
*Suggestions for Catholic School Religion Teachers
and Religious Education Program Catechists*



“Music is love in search of a word.” - Sidney Lanier

Music offers wonderful opportunities to touch hearts and express that which words alone cannot express. The purpose of this page is to give religion teachers and catechists some ideas and resources for incorporating music into religion classes.

Starting and Ending with Music

Beginning or ending religion class with the refrain or a verse of a hymn is a wonderful way to set the time apart from all the other times of the day. If you are comfortable leading your class in singing you can use many songs from the Music Issue hymnal which is used in most parishes. Songs of praise, thanks and faith are good choices. If your students will tell you songs they like you are truly blessed! If not, some general suggestions would be:

- All the Ends of the Earth
- O Bless the Lord
- We Praise You



- Alle, Alle, Alleluia
- Give Thanks to the Lord
- Center of My Life

Praying with Music

Using music can add to the prayer experience. One way to do this is to incorporate music as part of prayers of intercession or gratitude. We often encourage children to share concerns, people they'd like to pray for, or things for which they are thankful. To intersperse each few intentions with a short refrain can add to the intimacy of the prayer time. Great songs for this are:

- We Praise You (in the Music Issue)
- Open My Eyes (in the Music Issue)
- Óyenos, Señor/Listen to Your People (www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_5pIHt9k5I)

The Standards

Teaching and using any of our traditional Catholic hymns is another great way to use music in religion class as well as a way to pass on our Catholic Tradition. If you are not comfortable teaching them, just ask the music teacher to teach the song, then you can use it in your class. Some of the “old standards” I would suggest are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| • Holy God We Praise Thy Name | • Come Holy Ghost |
| • Soul of My Savior | • Hail Holy Queen (<i>not</i> the Sister Act version!) |
| • To Jesus Christ Our Sovereign King | • Immaculate Mary |

Music
Is the prayer the heart sings

Using Recorded Music

For those who are less comfortable leading children in song, there are CD's which are pitched comfortably for children and are sung in a way that is inviting to children.



Primary and Intermediate: My favorites for Grades K-5 include anything by Janet Vogt and/or Mark Friedman. **God Shines on You** is a great place to start. It comes in an expensive 2 CD set, but the full audio for most songs is available for free on YouTube if you have internet access. The entire CD or single songs are available on iTunes and Amazon if you find particular songs you like! This link will give you access to listen to the songs: <http://www.ocp.org/products/10904#tab:contents>, or you can use iTunes or Amazon*.



PreK-Primary: For the little ones there are 2 songs from the CD **Kids Sing for Jesus** (by The Rennas) which I'd highly recommend – **Hail Mary** and **Angel of God**. They are song versions of the traditional prayers and are done in a style which will invite young singers to sing along and which they will learn quickly. Both songs are available on iTunes and Amazon*.

Intermediate and Middle School: **John Burland** has many CD's which have “upbeat” songs (and not so “upbeat”) that appeal to many ages – even middle school! All his music is available to sample or purchase on iTunes and Amazon*.

Middle School Resource

I know it can be hard to get middle school children to sing. A suggestion is a CD called **Never Too Young: By Request**. It is a sample CD of songs included in the hymnal *Never Too Young*. The description of the full hymnal reads “Offering more than 280 contemporary songs for use in prayer, liturgy and the classroom, *Never Too Young* is just right for children in grades 4-8. All songs have been carefully selected to fit their particular voices, musical skills and catechetical needs.” You can hear the songs on the sample CD here:

<http://www.spiritandsong.com/products/20759>



Web Resources

- Catholic Mom Music Spotlight – lists other Catholic music CD's, mostly for younger children
http://www.catholicmom.com/music_kids.htm
- Catholic Music.us – a website listing many great catholic music CD's for various ages, including all Hi God albums for up to grade 5. The website is:
<http://www.catholicmusic.us/catholic-childrens-music-cds.aspx>
- OCP (Oregon Catholic Press) – This is one of the major Catholic music publishers. Search for your general topic, such as “children reconciliation” to see the books and CD's they have. <http://www.ocp.org/>

*You need an Amazon or iTunes account to purchase songs at those sites, but you can then play them from your computer or burn them to a CD. Most individual songs are around \$0.99.

Religion Bulletin Boards

As noted in the past, Bulletin boards have an important place in every classroom. They should be interactive as they provide a way to introduce new concepts or display student work related to the concept. Every classroom in a Catholic school/PREP program should have at least one bulletin board dedicated to increasing student awareness of faith values. They should be changed/updated on a regular basis throughout the school year.

Teachers and catechists should create boards that are equally engaging and educational. The use of interactive boards in the classroom ensures that students recognize the importance of the posted materials.

This year's initial bulletin Board ideas have as their source, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

Additional resources related to the Works of Mercy can be found on the following web sites. This will enable teachers to use their bulletin boards as “teaching tools” as well as provide them with meaningful faith-based classroom decorations. The web sites are: <http://www.usccb.org>, www.ocfphilly.org

The Works covered in this edition of *ABC Notes* are:

- *September-Open the Doors of Mercy*
- *October- Spiritual Works Of Mercy* We can ask our students to reflect on how they can be faithful to the mission we have been called to as Catholics. World Mission Sunday is celebrated in October.
- *November- Corporal Works Of Mercy* Our focus during November on God’s gifts to us can create opportunities for generosity and outreach to others.

As we move forward in to the year 2017, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. Our Bulletin Boards for the remainder of the school year will focus on Mary—her qualities and messages.

December-Mary, Model of Mercy (“His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.”)

January- Mary, Model of Faith (“Do Whatever HE Tells You”)

February-Mary, Model of Love and Joy (“My Spirit rejoices in God My Savior.”)

March – Mary, Model of Hope and Trust (“Be It Done to Me as You have Said.”)

April – Mary, Model of Concern for Others (“Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”)

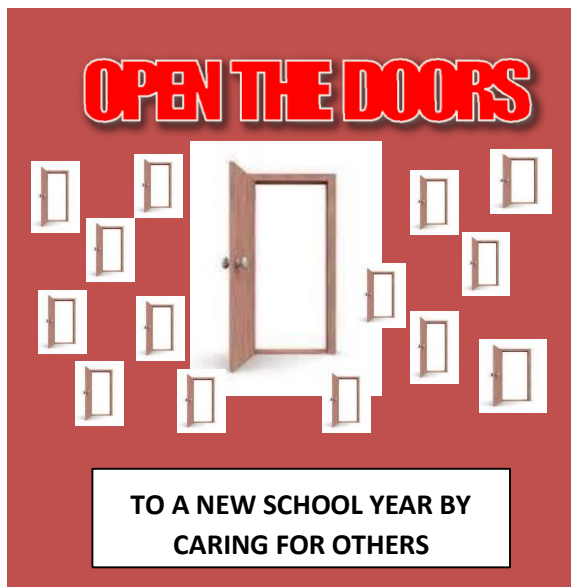
May- Mary, Model of Prayer (“Pray the Rosary.”)

September

September-Open the Doors of Mercy

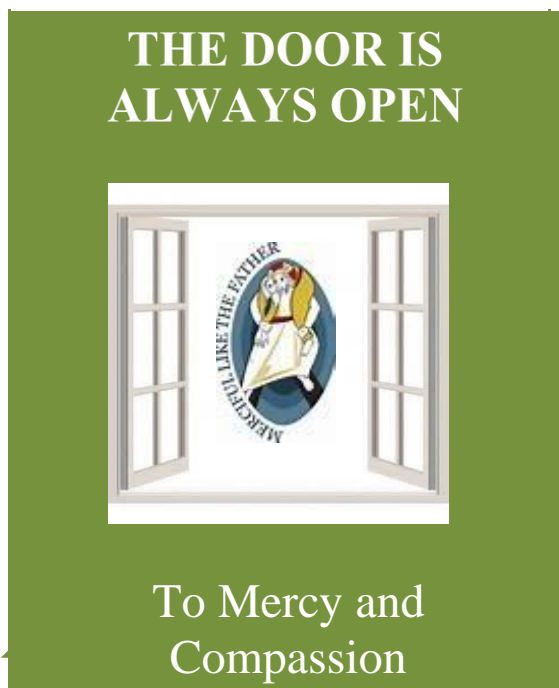
As we open the doors to a new school year, it is appropriate to share with the students the significance of the Doors of Mercy in this Year of Mercy. With three months left in the holy year, it is good to focus on the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy which are actions we can perform that extend God's compassion and mercy to those in need.

Primary



At the beginning of the school year help students to establish academic and personal goals for the year. Talk to them about our Holy Father's request that we spend some time this year doing things to show that we can help and care for others. Using simple terms, share with them the Works of Mercy as ways that Jesus asked us to care for others. Have the students write sentence/draw a picture showing a "caring" goal they could put into practice during this school year.

Upper



Review with the students Our Holy Father's intention for this holy Year of Mercy. On the bulletin Board, place the **logo for the Year of Mercy and explain it** to them. The explanation can be found at <http://catholic-link.org/2016/01/11/6-things-you-didnt-see-the-year-of-mercy-logo-explained/>

Using the template on the next page, have the students set a personal goal for practice during the remaining months of the Year of Mercy. Have them keep in in their Religion notebook as a reminder to be faithful to the practice.



During this year of mercy, I can show God's compassion and mercy by _____

October—The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Primary

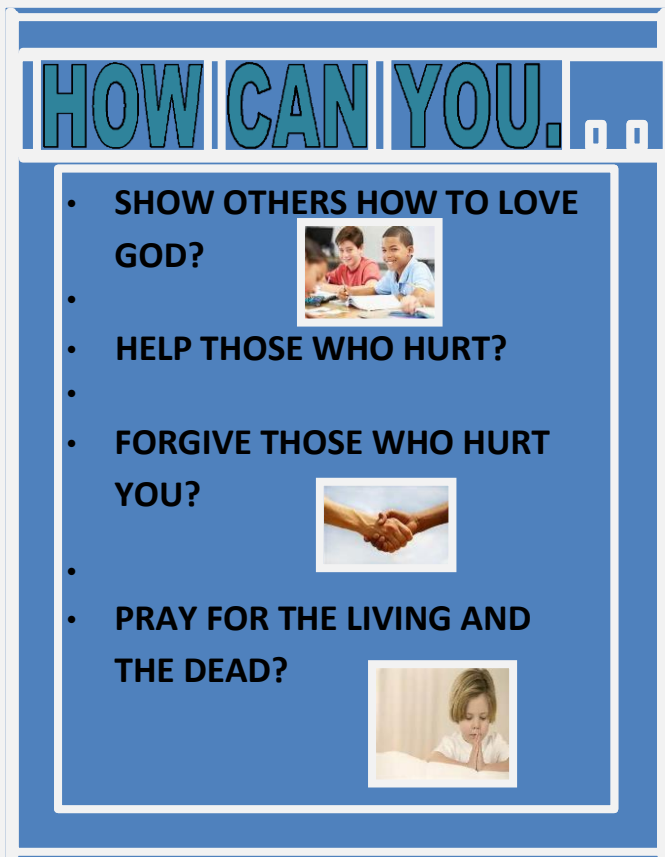
The Spiritual Works of Mercy are acts of compassion by which we help our neighbors with their emotional and spiritual needs.



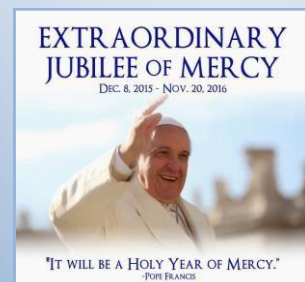
Use a bulletin board to teach younger students a simpler way to understand some of the works of mercy. Convey to them that they can sometimes do many of these things by setting good example to others rather than telling about these things. Have the students assist in finding pictures for the bulletin board showing some of the works of mercy.

check their understanding--Have students draw a picture of children practicing one of the works of mercy. Then have them explain their picture in writing and share it with the rest of the class.

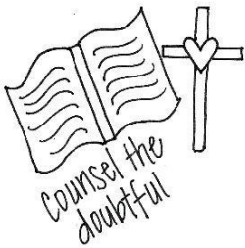
The list on the following page can serve as a reference



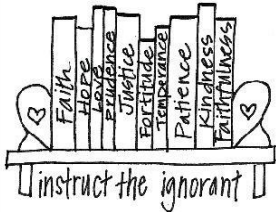
Use the bulletin board and the list on the following page to increase awareness of the spiritual works of mercy. Have the students create original slide shows or video clips for each of the works of mercy. Encourage them to highlight a person who exemplifies in real life the Work of Mercy they are focusing on. Have the students share their work with the class and, if possible, another class of students.



The Spiritual Works of Mercy



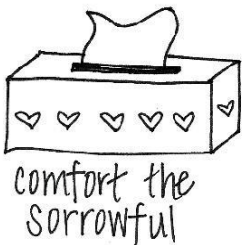
- ☐ Point someone to the good decision
- ☐ Be encouraging
- ☐ Willingly explain things
- ☐ Share why you have hope
- ☐ Encourage someone to talk to an expert, like a priest, teacher, etc.
- ☐ Pray that people would have faith
- ☐ Pray for people with suicidal thoughts



- ☐ Give people more time- don't rush them
- ☐ If you are good at something, be willing to teach that skill to others
- ☐ Be willing to tell stories that you know about the Bible, the Saints, etc.
- ☐ Don't think you are better than someone else because of your knowledge
- ☐ Don't be prideful or arrogant when you know something



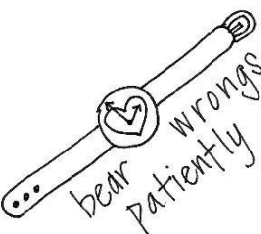
- ☐ Kindly and privately talk to the person about the problem
- ☐ Suggest that they go to Confession or get advice from a priest
- ☐ Help them understand why something is wrong
- ☐ Lead people towards the good choice in a situation
- ☐ Stop the problem before it happens
- ☐ Consider the causes and effects of the problem
- ☐ Help them to know that even little things are a big deal



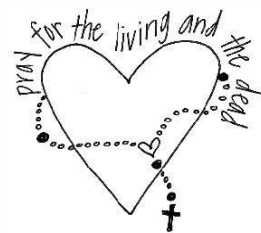
- ☐ Pray for families that have lost loved ones
- ☐ Offer comfort by baking them cookies, making a meal, sending a card
- ☐ Go and visit someone who is sad, spend time with them, pray with them
- ☐ Do things that make another person happy



- ☐ Always be willing to forgive someone
- ☐ Don't hold a grudge
- ☐ Give people a second chance
- ☐ Accept other's apologies with kindness



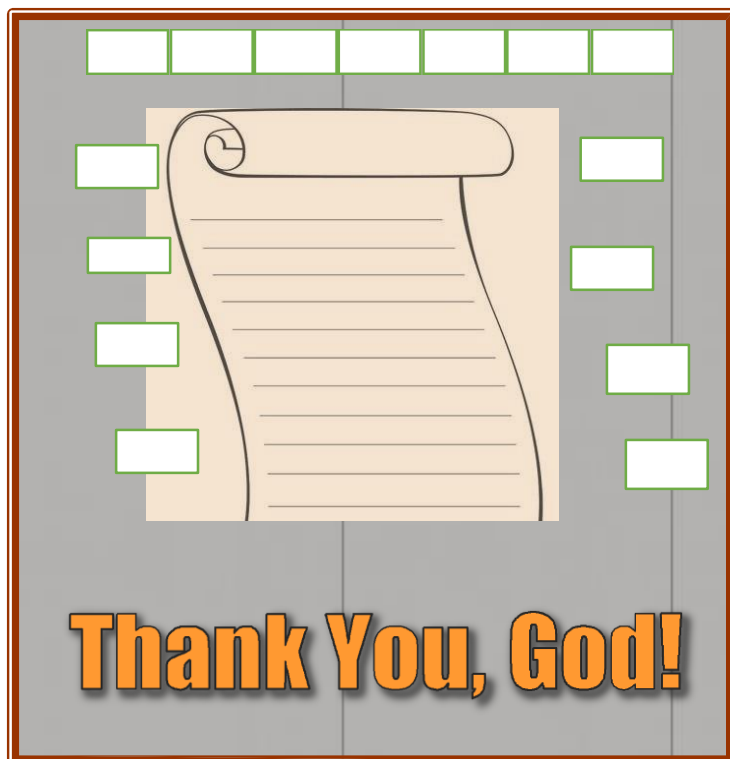
- ☐ Be patient when you trying to help someone and they don't want your help
- ☐ Don't help people expecting a thank you
- ☐ Be kind to people who make mistakes
- ☐ Let people learn from their mistakes
- ☐ Don't be mean back



- ☐ Pray with people who are going through hard times
- ☐ Ask your friends how you can pray for them
- ☐ Memorize the "Eternal rest" prayer and pray it for those who have died
- ☐ Pray a Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Mass, Holy Hour for a specific person
- ☐ Remember especially: soldiers, those who are sick or dying, pope, bishops, priests, deacons, and babies who are in danger of abortion

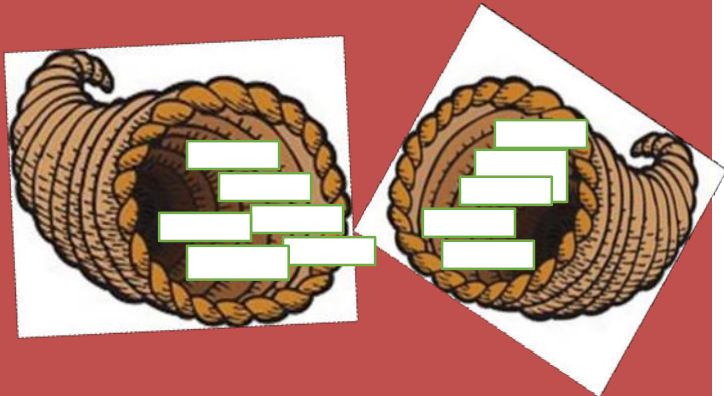
November— Corporal Works of Mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy are these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs.



WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN

WE CAN GIVE



**We have been given
much...What can we
give in return?**

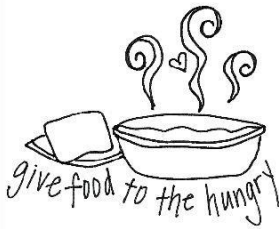
The Year of mercy concludes during the month of November. November's usual celebrations also provide an opportunity for us to reflect on God's Goodness to us while at the same time increasing awareness of those who are less fortunate than we are: It provides us with many opportunities to practice the Corporal Works of Mercy:

- All Saints Day—Saints who modeled the Works of Mercy in their own lives.
- All Souls Day- Recalling those who have died
- Veterans' Day –Remembrance of the selflessness of those who fought for freedom and peace.
- Christ the King—reminder to consider all of the Works of Mercy as established by Jesus.
- Thanksgiving – Recalling all of God's gifts to us—What can we give in return? What can we do for those less fortunate than we are.

Place a blank scroll on the bulletin board. Have the students list all of the things that they are grateful for. Have them write on an index card a way in which they can use an act of Mercy to thank God in return. Place these alongside the scroll.

As an alternative place two blank cornucopia on the board. Instead of fruit, fill them with gifts and acts of mercy they can do in return. See following page for ideas.

The Corporal Works of Mercy



- Give food to a homeless person
- Donate to a food drive/pantry
- Pray for the person behind you in the drive through
- Bring meals to someone who is sick/recovering
- Volunteer to serve food in a shelter or home
- Set the table, do the dishes, or help cook dinner for your family
- Go shopping and deliver food to someone



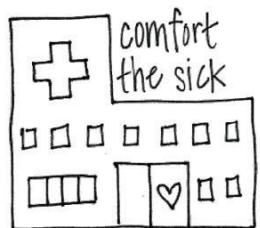
- Donate water to shelters or an emergency situation
- Offer to get drinks for your friends or family members
- Run a lemonade stand and donate the profits, or just give drinks away for free
- Take water/drinks with you to a sporting event and share



- Volunteer for organizations that build homes for people or have a fundraiser to help
- Donate old furniture, pillows, blankets, etc. to those that need it
- Know where safe places are and tell people about them
- Help someone fix up their house that needs it
- Invite people you know to stay with when they need a temporary place to stay (traveling, buying a new house, in an emergency, foreign exchange student)



- Buy and donate coats for people who need them
- Clean out your closet and donate to an organization or even a family that you know
- Collect baby items for moms in need
- Take your own things to donate-hats, scarves, etc.
- Have a garage sale and donate the money



- Ask the priest to visit the sick person
- Make sure that someone brings Holy Communion to the sick
- Make a card, call them, bring a thoughtful gift like pillows, game, books, etc.
- Bring someone who is sick a home cooked meal
- Spend time with a sick person, especially if they are stuck at home or in the hospital
- Ask the priest to visit the sick person
- Make sure that someone brings Holy Communion to the sick



- Encourage the priest to visit someone in prison
- Go and visit someone in prison, send care packages
- Visit someone who is homebound, send cards, call them
- Visit someone who is hospitalized or who is in residential care, go caroling, play instruments, play games, read out loud



- Attend funerals and wakes
- Send cards and flowers to a grieving family
- Donate to a cause that is special to the family of a deceased person
- Make food for the family
- Visit a gravesite to pray
- Go visit the family of a deceased person and comfort them
- Help clean out the home of the deceased

CATHOLIC TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Instruct the wise and they become wiser still. Proverbs 9: 9

Catholic Saints

<http://www.catholic.org/saints/>

The Saints and Angels page of this Catholic online website contains a wealth of information about saints and angels. In addition to using its simple search engine to research saints, the user can browse saints by alphabet, month, patron saints and category. The page also features links to sites where one can purchase patron saint merchandise.

Pflaum Gospel Weeklies

<http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/catechists-teachers/>

Pflaum Publishing Group has revised their website to make it easier for teachers and catechists to locate religious education materials. The site is organized by grade level and Sunday liturgy. Each includes teaching guides in English and Spanish, seasonal activities resource manuals, early start and late close lessons, and assessments.

The Catholic Toolbox

<http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com>

The *Catholic Toolbox* website is a blog written by a catechist who desired to share resources she used in her classroom. The site contains links to activities, worksheets, lesson plans and classroom management ideas. The materials are arranged by topic as well as by type.

Apps for Ipad, Iphone, Ipod

3-Minute Retreat App

The Loyola Press *3-Minute Retreat* app offers a simple and profound prayer experience for each day. The user has control of the pace of the prayer which includes scripture, reflection questions, and a concluding prayer with meditative music in the background.



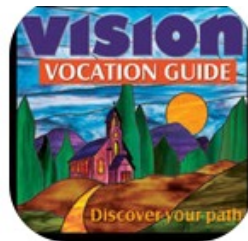
Mercy-ing App

The *Mercy-ing* app is a reflection tool for those who are trying to grow in the practice of mercy. Each day begins with a morning reflection to help the user to focus on a specific way to show mercy. The evening reflection provides the user the opportunity to contemplate how he/she experienced mercy during the day. There is an archive containing all reflections since the beginning of the Year of Mercy.



Vision Vocation Guide App

The *Vision Vocation Guide* app contains the articles included in the current issue of the *Vocation Discernment Guide* of the National Religious Vocation Conference. Each article in the magazine can be downloaded to make it easier to share. In addition to the current issue, the app includes the same features for the past five years.



Shared Wisdom

Two heads are better than one. Please submit your favorite technology resources for Catholic religious education at s.carment@yahoo.com. Submissions will be included in upcoming issues. Many thanks to those who shared tools for this issue.



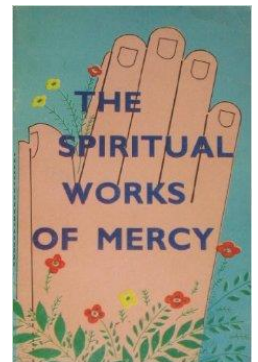
Jubilee of Mercy

Merciful Like the Father

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

New beginnings always fill the heart with joyful anticipation, creative hope and renewed enthusiasm for those things which matter most in our lives. As Catholic educators, during this Year of Mercy, our minds and thoughts should center on engaging our students in the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Most probably, you have already delved into the many aspects of the Corporal Works but the 'where and how' of introducing the Spiritual Works may present more of a challenge. The following procedure may be of some help:

- After asking your students what they understand about the Works of Mercy, list both the Corporal and Spiritual Works on the board. Explain that the Corporal Works of Mercy pertain to the taking care of our neighbor's *bodily needs* while the Spiritual Works guide us in helping care for those needs which affect our *neighbor's soul*.
- Take time to introduce each Spiritual Work, explaining to your students how they can place their understanding of each particular Work in their '*heart bank*', to think about, remember and do throughout the year.
- Referring to a saint who demonstrates this particular Spiritual Work might also help your students better understand how they can imitate this good work in their daily lives.
- **COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL**
Introduction: Take some moments to explain to your students that there are times when someone might have doubts about their faith. Encourage them to spend time with that person and invite them to pray to the Holy Spirit to guide them in understanding our Catholic faith.



Saint John Neumann's gift of speaking at least seven languages enabled him to comfort many of the immigrants who were struggling in their faith as they made their home in America.

➤ **INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT**

Introduction: Explain to your students that as they study and learn about their Catholic faith this knowledge will equip them later on to inform others about God's great love for them and how to follow His way of love.

Saint John Bosco took orphaned and neglected boys into his care and not only cared for their bodily needs but also taught them about God and how to be faithful followers of the Lord. One of the boys he taught was St. Dominic Savio.

➤ **ADMONISH THE SINNER**

Introduction: Explain to your students the saying, *"Actions speak louder than words!"* Tell them that often times what we say and do will teach others the correct way to act or react to a certain situation.



Saint Padre Pio spent many hours in the confessional helping others understand how they could renew their friendship with the Lord and lead lives of love and service to others.

➤ **COMFORT THE SORROWFUL**

Introduction: Help your students understand that there are some hurts that cannot be seen but are on someone's heart and mind. Encourage your students to be good listeners, offering to do something for that person to cheer them up. When they say their prayers at night, remind them to pray for that particular person...

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was a young man who enjoyed life, loved mountain climbing, and had fun with his friends. He was also very aware of the physical and spiritual needs of the poor around him, giving them help any way he could. Pope St. John Paul II called him, "The Apostle of the Eight Beatitudes."

➤ **FORGIVING INJURIES**

Introduction: Take time to discuss with your students about times they may have been hurt but failed to forgive that person. Remind your students that Jesus, himself, showed us how to forgive even the greatest hurts when dying on the cross, He said, "Father forgive them."

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha was a Mohawk Native American who lived in what is now Auriesville NY. Her mother was a Christian who taught her about the faith. The people of her tribe ridiculed Kateri for believing in the one true God. She accepted these insults and prayed for those who harassed and offended her.

➤ **BEARING WRONGS PATIENTLY**

Introduction: Begin a conversation with your students and ask if they were ever able to put up with wrongs, whether small or large. Remind your students to pray to God to give them the grace that they need to accept these hardships in life.

Saint Josephine Bakhita as a young child was kidnapped and sold as a slave. She was cruelly treated, beaten, and abused numerous times. Eventually she was brought to Italy and worked as a nanny. Josephine learned about the Catholic faith and later entered the convent. She served others quietly and joyfully, answering the convent door, greeting visitors with kindness and often teaching them about her good God.

➤ **PRAYING FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD**

Introduction: Discuss with your students the important practice of praying for others and remembering those who have died. Include this practice during your Morning Prayer routine as an Intercessory Prayer.

Saint Therese of the Child Jesus learned from her parents the important practice of praying for others. Once she prayed for a criminal soon to die, asking God to turn his heart and to ask forgiveness for his grave sin. She found out later that he did ask God for forgiveness. St. Therese also promised that she would spend her time in heaven doing good for those on earth.

Many stories about the saints can be found at <http://www.loyolapress.com/saints-stories-for-kids.htm>



"In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us."

- Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 25



Seek First the Kingdom

Parents in Partnership with God – Sharing Faith with Children

A Ministry of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Immaculata, Pennsylvania

PARENT ADVICE FROM POPE FRANCIS -- PART 1 of 6

The Joy of Love (Apostolic Exhortation), Chapter 4: “Love in Marriage”

Quality family life is the hope of the future! Following the *World Meeting of Families* in Philadelphia (September 2015) and an Extraordinary General Assembly of the Bishops – the *Synod on the Family* (October 2015) – Pope Francis issued a post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation titled, *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*). It is no happenstance that Francis chose March 19, 2016 – the feast of St. Joseph and the third anniversary of his papal inauguration – to focus on love, marriage and family. The ***Joy of Love*** spotlights love in the family. In chapter four Pope Francis tutors us on what love looks like in marriage by reflecting on St. Paul’s “love homily” (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7).

LOVE IS PATIENT

Patience is the virtue of showing restraint; holding back the bitter remark, responding respectfully and gently so that the door is open for repentance and the offender can save face. “[*A patient person*] ***does not act on impulse and avoids giving offense.***” (#91).

A patient mindset recognizes that all people have a right to live according to their insights even when their ways are different. “[*It does not matter if they hold me back, if they unsettle my plans, or annoy me by the way they act or think, or if they are not everything I want them to be.*” (#92) Patient love accepts others as they are.

Parent Ponder-Points:

- “Accept” and “Approve” are not synonyms. You may disagree with or disapprove of a child’s opinion, decision, or behavior. Parent voice, volume, mannerisms, body language and eye contact can communicate approval for the person of the child while correcting behavior that is unacceptable and in need of change.
- Avoid speaking from your own parent-need or ego. Make correction a “teachable moment” that focuses on the child and the negative effects that the behavior has on the child and others. Engage the child in brainstorming solutions to apply in the future.

Reflection Questions:

1. When do you find it easy to be patient, and when is it most difficult?
2. Have you ever been reproofed in a manner that made it easy for you to accept the correction and eager to improve? Explain what made it so.
3. What are the essentials in your family life? What are the optionals?
4. Read *The Joy of Love*, #91-92. With what thought do you most resonate?

LOVE IS AT THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

“Love” and “Like” are not synonyms. Love is more than a feeling. It is an action; a choice; a decision to do “the good” for another person whether or not you “like” him/her. For example, including him/her in conversation or activity, asking help, inviting an opinion, speaking respectfully, providing for needs. Love benefits and helps others. *“Love is ever ready to be of assistance.” (#93)*

[Love] “shows it fruitfulness and allows us to experience the happiness of giving, the nobility and grandeur of spending ourselves unstintingly, without asking to be repaid, purely for the pleasure of giving and serving.” (#94)

“Actions speak louder than words.” The attitude, body language and facial expression that accompany our action is possibly more important than the actual task. A person giving Christian service safeguards the human dignity of the receiver by communicating joy or enthusiasm for the opportunity to help with no hint of being bothered, annoyed or condescending.

Parent Ponder-Points:

- Completing household chores in a timely, peaceful manner is a way of serving the family. Engage your child in identifying specific ways of showing love within the family that go beyond assigned chores. For example: pairing socks from the laundry basket, reading to or playing with a younger sibling, turning down the bed covers, offering the favorite chair, controlling volume of voice and electronics, etc.
- As a family, practice the Corporal Works of Mercy with focus on giving; not receiving. “To feed the hungry. To give drink to the thirsty. To clothe the naked. To visit the imprisoned. To shelter the homeless. To visit the sick. To bury the dead.”
- From life observation, TV, movies or books point out to your child how the Spiritual Works of Mercy are ways of practicing Christian Service. “To admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to forgive all injuries. To bear wrongs patiently. To pray for the living and the dead.”
- Teach your family the St. Francis Prayer for Peace. Regularly pray it together.

Reflection Questions:

1. When do you find it easy to serve others, and when is it most difficult?
2. Generally, is your heart more oriented to giving or to receiving?
3. Have you ever received the service of another person and thought, “If that’s your attitude, don’t bother! I’d rather do without.” What about that person’s attitude was a turn-off to you?
4. Read *The Joy of Love*, #93-94. With what thought do you most resonate?

