

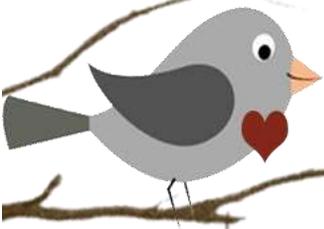
Apostolic Briefings & Communications



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

IT IS CHRISTMAS
IN THE HEART. 
THAT PUTS
CHRISTMAS IN THE AIR. 

-W.T. Ellis





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Winter 2015

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IHM Best Practices

Classroom Prayers Promote Relationships and Set Children for Life



Prayer forms the basis of who we are as Catholic Schools and therefore it is essential that each teacher prays with her class four times a day – in the morning, before lunch, after lunch, and at the end of the day. Learning traditional Catholic prayers will form lifelong habits that will assist students throughout life. Children learn prayers by saying them daily and there should be no need to test children on their prayers other than then hearing the act of contrition from the children receiving first reconciliation. Traditional prayers at all ages are known for the following:

- Allows you to pray when you do not have the words to pray.
- Allows you to pray when you feel unable to pray.
- Provides comfort in stressful situations.
- Gives children and adults the sense that they have prayed.
- Unites us as a universal church.

Special Math Class Prayer
 Dear God,
 May we, through your blessings,
add purity to the world,
subtract evil from our lives,
multiply Your good news,
 and **divide** Your gifts and share
 them with others. Amen.



Here are practical suggestions for your classrooms. Each week, assign a prayer leader and have set prayers for each time of the day. For example in a fourth grade classroom, in the morning, the prayer leader would say: Please stand for prayers. When all the students are ready, the child makes the sign of the cross and says, The Morning Offering, followed by the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be. Now let us give our intercessions to God. Individual students announce their petitions followed by a *let us pray* to which the class responds, *Lord, hear our prayer*. When everyone is done, the prayer leader says for all our spoken and unspoken petitions, we pray to the Lord for which the children respond *Lord, hear our prayer*. Conclude the prayer with aspirations, the first being to the patron/ness of your school, such as: St. Mary, pray for us. Good Shepherd, pray for us. The leader concludes the prayers with the sign of the cross. At lunch time, the prayer leader asks the children to please stand for prayers and when all are ready makes the sign of the cross. The Angelus and Grace Before Meals are

prayed. After lunch, prayers should consist of Grace After Meals and one Act of Faith, Hope, or Love. At the end of the day, students should pray the Act of Contrition and Angel of God. It is helpful to have a printed card for the prayer leader so they are confident in what they are doing.

Through spontaneous prayer, students are encouraged to pray for individual needs. Teachers and students grow in relationship with one another when they are aware of each other's concerns. Teachers should join in offering their own spontaneous prayers. Below is a list of the prayers that each grade should recite. If for some reason a teacher is running late, anyone should be able to step into the room, ask the prayer leader to start prayers, and the day begins in a routine in which the children are well versed. Many schools choose to pray over the PA or as part of morning assemblies. If your school has such a practice, enhance the Morning Prayer in your own room with your own prayer practice and be sure to include the prayers for your grade.

Grade 1: Short Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God.

Grade 2: Short Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God, One of the Acts of Faith, Hope, or Love and a short Act of Contrition.

Grade 3: Long Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed or Confiteor, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God, Long Act of Contrition.

Grade 4: Long Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed, Angelus/Regina Coeli, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God, Long Act of Contrition, Long Acts of Faith, Hope and Love

Grades 5, 6, 7, 8: Long Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed, Angelus/Regina Coeli, Grace Before and After Meals, Memorare, Hail Holy Queen, Angel of God, Long Act of Contrition, Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love.



Time Management during the Busy Season

November, December, and January challenge educators to teach their lessons amidst the flurry of activities that Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Catholic Schools Week offer. Valuable teaching time is lost to practice for Christmas Pageants, Santa Secret Shops, Christmas Concerts, and Christmas Parties just to name a few of the December Activities. The following suggestions may help.



- Make a master calendar of the three months with the special activities and times highlighted. Plan your new concept teaching for the days with the least disruptions. Plan review activities for the days with the most activities.
- Challenge yourself to start your classes as soon as possible. Allow only five minutes for children to put their coats and items away and collect things for the office. Set a timer and when it rings, it is time for prayers. After prayers, direct instruction begins immediately.
- Assign a writing assignment or have students journal about each activity that takes place.
- Ask if activities could be scheduled in the afternoon to leave the best learning time of the morning intact for your students.



The Power of Kahoot

Kahoot is an online game that provides practice in many skill areas that promotes learning. Teachers may choose from over 4,000,000 pre-made quizzes on all topics or they may create their own. Once they build and launch their Kahoot, they give the game pin to their students who go to <https://kahoot.it> where they enter the game pin and a nickname. Watch the fun begin as the quiz starts and students answer the questions receiving immediate feedback. The faster the students answer correctly, the more points they will receive. At the end, someone will win the game.



This works particularly well in group settings with a small group working together on an iPad to answer the questions. As you are preparing for Catholic Schools Week, Religion Bees, Math Bees, Spelling Bees, Science Bees, or Social Studies Bees, Kahoot will provide worthwhile activities. Kahoot works well on smartphones as well. This could even be used in your homes for trivia parties with adults.

Promise yourself you will take some time to learn Kahoot and you will not be disappointed. It all starts at: <https://getkahoot.com/how-it-works> and sign up.

For additional information regarding the IHM Best Practices contact Sister Margaret Rose Adams, IHM at smgtadams@gmail.com.
11-15

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



As promised in the last issue, here are more activities to differentiate your instruction through some *chew* strategies. We broke the process of DI into three buzz words: *chunk*, *chew* and *check*. *Chunk* is the input stage (whether from your instruction or student research, reading etc.) *Chew* indicates how the students can digest the learning and begin to demonstrate whether or not they understand. *Check* is the final stage wherein you make sure - *to your satisfaction* - that the students have absorbed the learning and can communicate it. This is also a type of formative assessment. If you've already surveyed their learning styles (as recommended in the previous issue), you can assign varied ways by which the students can demonstrate their understanding of the material according to those styles or multiple intelligences.

Most of the following *chew* activities include movement. We must build movement into our lessons. Students, no matter what age, cannot remain still for an entire period. So they begin to move in spite of us and get jittery. Then it becomes a behavior issue. So if you have a *growth mindset* rather than a *fixed*

mindset (also in previous issue), you'll be comfortable with the task oriented, productive movement in these ideas:



Stand and Share: The teacher poses a question and the entire class stands. Beginning with volunteers, the teacher takes answers to the question. After



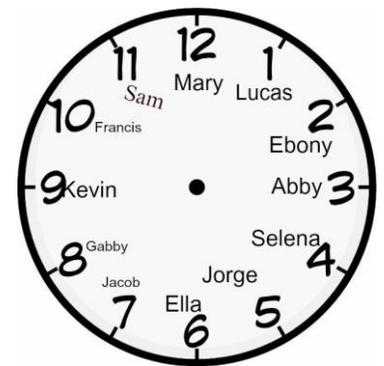
they answer, students may be seated. After a few answers have been given, it's wise to call on the shy or struggling learners. They've heard some ideas already and might be able to build on them or rephrase them. The better and/or more outspoken students will always have varied ideas to share. Many times-but not always-they can be saved until the end.



Vote With Your Feet: This time the question asked has only three answer choices: for instance, yes/no/not sure *or* A/B/not sure *or*

agree/disagree/not sure. Students go to designated sections in the room depending on their choice of response. Once there, they discuss the rationale of their answer and justify it as the teacher comes to their section. (Teachers may find that after the "not sure" group has deliberated, a student or two may have moved to one of the other groups.)

Clock Partners: Students receive an outline of an analog clock with blank lines drawn to specific hours (e.g. 2, 4, 8, 10). They have no more than two minutes to walk around the room and get classmates to be their partners for the various times. When all lines have been filled in (one name to a clock hour), the teacher continues *chunking* the lesson. At the end of the first chunk, the students must find their two o'clock partner and discuss what they've learned thus far. After the next chunk they find their eight o'clock partner, etc. Note that clock partners can extend for a week, a chapter or any other plan the teacher thinks is practical. Students do not have to meet every clock partner on the same day.



Reflect/Pair/Share: Most teachers have used think/pair/share, but this technique “kicks it up a notch”. The students are given a prompt on a higher level of Bloom’s taxonomy. The prompt can also require metacognition (thinking about their thought processes). For example: 1) *Reflect* on how you can apply your knowledge of _____ to our new topic of _____. 2) *If you got stuck on the last problem, how did you succeed in solving it?* 3) *Evaluate your last writing piece using our rubric. Then reflect on the improvements you want to make this time.* After one minute of reflection, they can voice their thoughts to a partner (*pair*). Then the teacher calls on students randomly to verbalize some of their thoughts (*share*). Repeated answers or “I don’t know” should be discouraged. They’ve had plenty of time, they’ve discussed with a partner, so they should be able to say something pertinent to the lesson.



Draw It: Some students who are not artistic might not gravitate to this one, so assure them that you are not looking for anything more than stick figures or rough sketches. Remind them that you are looking for major concepts and important details only. Since you are teaching to their styles of learning, there will be some who will do a wonderful job and enjoy this technique. Therefore, with regard to those students, it might be best to put a time limit on the response, so that it doesn't take too long or become an art project! This could also take the form of comic strips. Advantage: comic strips are short so students must confine themselves to main ideas and details only. (This is also a good method for teaching students how to summarize.)

TV Guide Summaries: This is another instance of confined space. Students only have enough writing space for the main idea and one or two supporting details. It forces them to synthesize (a critical thinking skill). You could use a similar technique and refer to it as putting the ideas “in a nutshell”.

Charades: As in the popular game, students act out the concept. If you're tired of the worn out synonym/antonym exercises in vocabulary books, this may wake the class up. Ask them to act out the shades of meaning in the synonyms for a worn out word like *walk*. See if they can enact *stride*, *lope*, *amble* etc. The vocabulary section of standardized tests may improve as a result.



PRIME TIMES



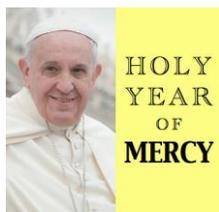
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Immaculata, Pennsylvania 19345

November, 2015

Preparing for the Year of Mercy

<http://looktohimandberadiant.blogspot.com/2015/08/year-of-mercy-resources-all-ideas.html>

The above site has a variety of free crafts, resources, printables, coloring pages, and activities that can be



other used

to prepare for and celebrate the Year of Mercy which begins on December 8, 2015.

Five Little Pilgrims

Five little Pilgrims on Thanksgiving Day
The first one said, "I'll have cake if I may."
The second one said, "I'll have turkey roasted."
The third one said, "I'll have chestnuts toasted."
The fourth one said, "I'll have pumpkin pie."
The fifth one said "Oh, cranberries I spy."
But before the Pilgrims ate their turkey dressing,
They bowed their heads and said a
Thanksgiving blessing.



A song for the Seasons

Tune: This Old Man

Winter, Spring,
Summer, Fall
These are seasons
Four in all
Look outside and
You will see
It is _____, yes-siree



Challenge students to a Jeopardy Math Problem

The answer is: **27 ice cream cones.**
The question could have been?

Create a question and answer board.
Post the answer to a problem on the board and have students write a word problem on an index card that matches the answer. Students can do any operation. Have students check each other's questions.
You may want to save the index cards in a file box and at a later time choose one to read to the class and have students decide whether the answer matches the question.

An Advent Prayer

O Jesus, come!
We wait for You.
And everything we say and do
Prepares the way
Until You come on Christmas Day!



Advent Waiting Song

Tune: Frere Jacques

Come, Lord Jesus. Come, Lord Jesus.
Come to us. Come to us.
We wait for Your coming.
We wait for Your coming.
Christmas Day. Christmas Day.

Writing Prompts for December

Santa is looking for one more reindeer to pull his sleigh. Why should he choose you?

What would you do if Santa got stuck in your chimney or on the roof?

If I were Santa Claus.....

Camels and Wise Men

by: Jackie Owen



Sung to: Frere Jacques

We are camels, we are camels,
Gold and brown, gold and brown,
Following the leader,
Going to see Jesus.
Come along, come along.

We are Wise Men, we are Wise Men,
From afar, from afar,
Following the bright star,
Bearing gifts for Jesus.

A Winter Song

Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Snowflakes, snowflakes falling down
Falling, falling to the ground.
Can you catch them on your nose?
Will they fall and touch your toes?
Snowflakes, snowflakes, falling down
Falling, falling to the ground.

New Year 2016 Writing Activity



To help the children begin the new year with some goals, prepare a large 2 and 0 and 1 and 6 for each child.

Each child will write the following:
on the 2 – two goals that they have for the year

on the 0 – write about something they would like to stop doing

on the 1 – one new book they would like to read

on the 6 – six things they want to learn

The children can color and decorate the letters, cut them out, paste to a piece of construction paper and then use to display. This activity can be adjusted to your needs and ideas.

Stretch a Sentence



Sentence Writing – expanding, adding

who, what, when, where, and why

Start with the beginning of a sentence.

Who?

My little brother...

Is doing what?

My little brother is building a snowman.

When?

Right now, my little brother is building a snowman...

Where?

Right now, my little brother is building a snowman in the front yard.

Why?

Right now, my little brother is building a snowman in the front yard to surprise our dad.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Song to Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King

Tune: Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Peace, peace, peace and love
Sweet equality.
These were Martin Luther King's dreams for
you and me.

A Song to Help Teach Money

Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Penny, penny
Easily spent
Copper, brown
Worth one cent.

Nickel, nickel
Thick and flat
You're worth five
I know that.

Dime, Dime
Little and thin
I remember
You're worth ten.



Language Lineup

As each child lines up, have him/her say a word relating to a particular category, holiday, or phonemic element. This method encourages students to lineup quietly so they can hear their classmates' words.

Build Student Confidence

One way to help students become more confident in themselves is to create a bulletin board or decorate a wall that displays positive ways to: **“Change your words – Change your mind-set”**



Instead of: I don't understand.
Say: What am I missing?

Instead of: I give up.
Say: I will use some of the strategies I have learned.

Instead of: I made a mistake.
Say: Mistakes help me improve.

Instead of: I'll never be as smart as ____.
Say: I'm going to figure out what ____ does and try it.

Instead of: I'm not good at this.
Say: I am on the right track.

Instead of: This is too hard!
Say: This may take some time and effort.

Instead of: This is good enough.
Say: Is this really my best?

Binding Class Books

by: Suzanne Gerczynski

Bind class books in a jiffy with the help of plastic cable ties. Simply hole-punch the project and then thread a cable tie through each opening and lock it - leaving plenty of room for the pages of the book to be turned. Snip off any excess plastic at the end of each tie and the class book is ready to read!



Punctuation Marks

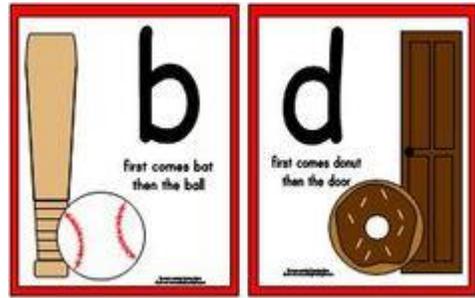
The period is a busy man.
A small round traffic cop.
He blocks the helter-skelter words
And brings them to a stop.

The question mark is a tiny girl,
She's small but very wise;
She asks too many questions
For a person of her size.

Of all the punctuation folk,
I like the comma best.
For when I'm getting out of breath
He lets me take a rest.

Quotation marks are curious.
When friendly talk begins
You'll always find these little marks
Are busy listening in.

The exclamation mark is an elf,
Who is easily excited.
When children laugh or cry or shout
It's then he's most delighted.



A song to help remember how to print b and d

Tune: Farmer in the Dell

A bat and a ball
A bat and a ball
That's how to make a **b**
A bat and a ball.

A doorknob and a door
A doorknob and a door
That's how to make a **d**
A doorknob and a door.



Another idea to help with **b** is:
Lower case **b**, as you can see, fits so nicely
in upper case **B**



Exploring Computer Lab



Scholastic's "Computer Lab Favorites Student Spinner" offers quick, compelling one-session activities that incorporate interactive learning and technology into your curriculum. Each activity requires no prep and can be completed in 15-30 minutes.



Online games for kids in K-5 sorted by grade level. Games incorporate areas such as math and language arts while introducing basic computer skills.



Primary Games has free arcade and learning games for kids and teens featuring the best action, adventure, sports, and racing games!



Play educational kids games, computer games, printable worksheets and learning games online at turtlediary.com



Education sites for K-8 teachers and kids. Find online educational games for kids of all ages, including math, grammar, science, spelling, and history.



BrainPOP engages students through animated movies, learning games, interactive quizzes, primary source

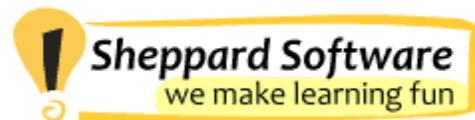
activities, concept mapping, and more.

BrainPop Jr. Provides educational movies for K-3 students. Homework Help, leveled quizzes, games and activities for kids.



Knowledge Adventure

Knowledge Adventure's games for kids are the perfect combination of fun and learning!



Educational shareware, choose from prediction, subject learning, or math software.



All of the best K-5 online, interactive, educational games and simulations in one place!

These activities work great with your SMARTboard for whole group or small group instruction or use in the computer lab or at home for individual learning.



Free site to teach the basics of reading. Features interactive books and phonics games.

IHM Good Writers Club



Grades 3 & 4

JANUARY

Snow on my nose
Tiny cold kisses of white
Winter now blows,
The season of frozen delight.

FEBRUARY

I can say "I love you."
On Valentine's Day.
Just put me in an envelope
And give me away!

Grade 5 & 6

JANUARY

If you are busy being kind,
Before you know it, you will find
You soon forget to think, it's true,
That someone was unkind to you.

FEBRUARY

The hunger for love
Is much more difficult to remove
Than the hunger for bread.

Grades 7 & 8

JANUARY

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen like the snow.

FEBRUARY

Let me learn that I must love,
for if I have all knowledge,
yet without love all knowledge
profits me nothing.

MARCH



Grades 3 & 4

Letter shapes are important.
Make them round and neat.
So everyone will see
Your writing can be neat!

Grades 5 & 6

Beautiful faces are they that wear.
The light of a pleasant spirit there;
Beautiful hands are they that do
Deeds that are noble, good and true.

Grades 7 & 8

Right is right, even if everyone is against it.
Wrong is wrong, even if everyone is for it.

William Penn

Winter, 2016

IHM Good Writers Club



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Winter, 2016

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This certifies that

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and thereby is entitled to this

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION...Cover Sheet
I.H.M. ABC NOTES -- Winter, 2015

Approaching THE YEAR OF MERCY

USCCB CATECHETICAL THEME, 2015 – 2016
“SAFEGUARDING THE DIGNITY
OF EVERY HUMAN PERSON”

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

“Let us thank all those teaching in Catholic Schools. Educating is an Act of Love.”
Pope Francis

Catholic Schools Week 2016 during the Jubilee Year of Mercy
Prayer of Appreciation for our Phenomenal Teachers

Call to Prayer: One of the essential reasons for celebrating Catholic Schools Week is to take the time to say Thank You to the many dedicated people who make a Catholic Education possible. Teachers are not only the backbone of our Catholic Schools and the heart of its mission, but God’s Mercy made visible and tangible.
During this special week and this Jubilee Year of Mercy, we offer this grateful prayer to all of our loving teachers. By instructing, advising, comforting, forgiving, feeding our minds, and quenching our thirst for God, you make the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy come alive each day in our school. “We thank God whenever we think of You” and your Merciful Love for us.

Gathering Hymn: Loving and Forgiving Scott Soper

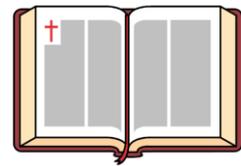
Antiphon: “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s Mercy.” Pope Francis

Please pray in Unison “Christ Has No Body” Saint Theresa of Avila

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion on this world.
Christ had no body now on earth but yours.



Reading: Glory be to the Father. . .

“Jesus” as taken from DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE. . . (Inspiration from
Pope Francis) by Brother Michael O’Neill McGrath

“Jesus”

It’s all about Jesus: everything through him, with him, for him, and in him. He’s your doctor when you’re sick, your counselor when you’re confused. He’s your mother and father when you’re afraid, your brother and sister when you’re lonely, your best friend when you need an ear. He is you whenever you are patient, gentle, and kind. ***You are the face of Jesus to***

me. As St. Teresa of Ávila used to say, “God has no hands on earth but yours to do the work of Christ.” So, lend a hand, then give yourself a hand!

Intercessions

Introduction

Pope Francis opened the Holy Door at Saint Peter’s during Advent to officially announce the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The Holy Door is a sacred symbol that reminds us that anyone who enters will experience the love of God. You, dear teachers, are “Holy Doors” for us, connecting us to God everyday.

Our Response is: WE THANK GOD FOR YOU.

For welcoming us every morning even when we are tired or sad or anxious, we pray. . .

For feeding our minds with wisdom and truth, we pray. . .

For watering our thirsty souls with the knowledge of God’s endless love for us, we pray. . .

For comforting us when we are grieving the death of someone we love, we pray. . .

For showing compassion to us when we are sick, we pray. . .

For teaching us how to pray and for forgiving us when we make mistakes, we pray. . .

Our Father

Closing Prayer:

Lord, our God, Pope Francis tells us that “Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel.” Like the heart of the Good Samaritan, each day our teachers offer kindness, model compassion, heal our wounds of body and spirit, and help us on our journey to the Kingdom. Let them know deeply of Your love and also our love and gratitude today and always. We ask this in Jesus’ Name.

Amen.

Blessing Hymn:

May God Bless You George Van Grieken FSC





Advent Staff Prayer Service

Come, Lord Jesus!

Opening Hymn: Come, Lord Jesus (vs. 1, 2)

This holy season of Advent reminds us that “for us life is Christ.” Advent helps us to recognize anew that the deepest longing of our souls is for our loving God – the One who has come, the One who will come again, the One who comes each day to those who seek Him.

Our longing for God pales in comparison to God’s infinite and unending longing for us. That longing has existed from all eternity and reached new heights in the person of Jesus Christ. We need to get in touch with the Advent longing inside of our hearts and allow God to do His work within us, so that He may continue to reach young hearts through us. As we wait for His coming, let us remember that He has been quietly waiting for us all along.

Psalm 63 Antiphon: Come, Lord Jesus, for You are our life.

Right Side: O God, You are my God, for You I long;
for You my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for You
like a dry, weary land without water.
So I gaze on You in the sanctuary
to see Your strength and Your glory.

Both Sides: For Your love is better than life,
my lips will speak Your praise.
So I will bless You all my life,
in Your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise You with joy.

Left Side: On my bed I remember You.
On You I muse through the night.
For You have been my help;
In the shadow of Your wings I rejoice.
My soul clings to You;
Your right hand holds me fast.

Both Sides: Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be forever. Amen.

(over)

Reading: Is.26: 7-9

The way of the smooth is just; the path of the just You make level.
 Yes, for Your way and Your judgments, O Lord, we look to You;
 Your name and Your title are the desire of our souls.
 My soul yearns for You in the night; yes, my spirit within me keeps vigil for You.
 When Your judgment dawns upon the earth, the world's inhabitants learn justice.

Word of the Lord...

Silent Reflection...**Sung Response: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."**

God our Father, strengthen us as we strive to sow and nurture the seeds of faith
 that you so graciously provide for us. (Response)

In our efforts, draw us closer to you,
 that we may continue to lead others closer to you. (Response)

Strengthen us so that we may give faithful witness to you always. (Response)

Enkindle in us the fire of your love,
 so that we may share your light and warmth with those we teach. (Response)

May we live lives of Christian witness, being for others beacons in the darkness,
 shining as mirrors who reflect your light and love to all we meet. (Response)

Let us more perfectly reflect in all that we say and do that "for us, life is Christ!" (Response)
(Spontaneous Intercessions)

Our Father...**Closing Prayer:**

Lord, we give You thanks for this holy and beautiful season of Advent.
 As we go about preparing in these days before Christmas,
 help us to keep in mind this longing for You in our hearts.
 As we busy ourselves in making our homes ready,
 help us to make our hearts a worthy home for You.
 How wonderful to know that You long for us, Lord!
 Come, Lord Jesus, for you are our life! Amen.

**Closing Hymn: Come, Lord Jesus (vs. 3, 4)**

Veterans Day Prayer

November 11, 2015

For the Catholic School or Religious Education Program Faith Community

(This Prayer could be adapted, according to the local situation.)

Call to Prayer: Student

Today is Veterans Day. Every year on November 11th we remember and honor our military veterans -- those men and women who served our country in the various military branches of the U.S Armed Forces: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. In a very special way, we welcome our veterans who have joined us today. Here in this church, we gather together to thank them, as well as all other men and women who have served our country, and we ask God to bless them for their courage, valor, and service.

Entrance Procession

Processional Hymn: America the Beautiful (*verses 1, 2*)

Cross Bearer

Two candle bearers

American Flag Bearer

Readers

Priest



Pledge of Allegiance: Led by a student

The Star Spangled Banner

Opening Prayer: Priest

Heavenly Father, we gather together today to pay tribute to our Military Veterans, those men and women who have selflessly served our country to protect and preserve our freedom. Bless them for their sacrifices, fill them with your love, and let them know our deep gratitude for the sacrifices they made to preserve peace. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(over)

Reading: Colossians 3:12-15 Student (2)

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 122 Student

Response: Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you. *(recited or sung)*

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: John 20: 19-21 Priest

Homily – Reflection Priest

Intercessions:

Priest: Heavenly Father, as we pray together, we ask you to hear our petitions.

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

For Pope Francis, who inspires people to work for peace, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all world leaders who strive to promote peace, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For all military veterans who served our country, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

For military men and women serving our country now, we pray to the Lord...**R/**

Priest: Father, we ask that you hear our prayers through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Tribute to our Veterans

Members of the Past/Present Duty Military Personnel are invited to stand in their pews in turn, as each branch of the Military is called: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy.

After they have been acknowledged... (prayer, poem, token of appreciation, etc.)...

Hymn: God Bless America



Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, you are the source of all life, love, and peace. We ask that you shower your life, love, and peace upon these veterans, blessing them with the assurance that their efforts were not in vain. May we faithfully hold them in our prayers, as we continually express gratitude for the freedom which is ours because of their sacrifices. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Recessional Hymn: America the Beautiful *(verses 3, 4)*

December - Virtue of JOY

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, "Joy is caused by love" Thus our joy lays in acknowledging God's loving omnipresence. Joy is the expression of inner happiness and contentment. Joyous people look for the good in every situation. Choose to be positive and content and you will be a source of joy to others.

Primary

JOY to the World!

Jesus first



Others second

Yourself last



Begin the year of mercy by focusing on the positive virtue of JOY. To help the students understand what Joy is, read the story *Mr Happy* by Roger Hargreaves. Discuss with them how they might make others happy and show mercy this Advent through participation in the Missionary Childhood Association's Holy Buckets program. Tell them that when they put Jesus first, Others second and themselves last, they can spread true Joy. Use the acronym JOY on the bulletin board. Additional resources can be found at

<http://phillymissions.org/our-work/youth->

Upper

Advent can be a great time to reflect upon first part of the message of Pope Francis' exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*. In it the Pope acknowledges that joy is not always easy, but it is the source of our healing and life. Encourage the students to "catch" people spreading joy by taking photos showing others showing joy to add to the bulletin board. Try to have all spaces filled by the end of Advent. The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Many excerpts from the introduction to the *Joy of the Gospel* can be used as reflections during Advent as they encourage outreach in our path to imitating Jesus. Some good resources for Advent can be found at: <http://www.thereligionteacher.com/advent-activities/>

HOW CAN YOU SPREAD



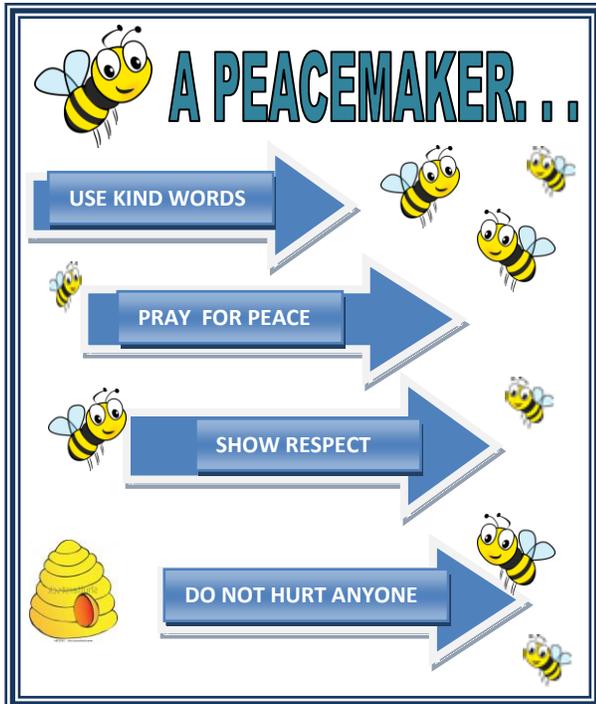
The Joy of the Gospel?

January—Virtue of Peace

Peacefulness is being calm inside. You are practicing peacefulness when you ...

- ***Create inner peace with daily reflection or prayer,***
- ***Use peaceful language even when you are angry,***
- ***Speak gently and respectfully,***
- ***Avoid harming anyone,***
- ***Appreciate differences,***
- ***Find peaceful solutions to every problem..***

Primary



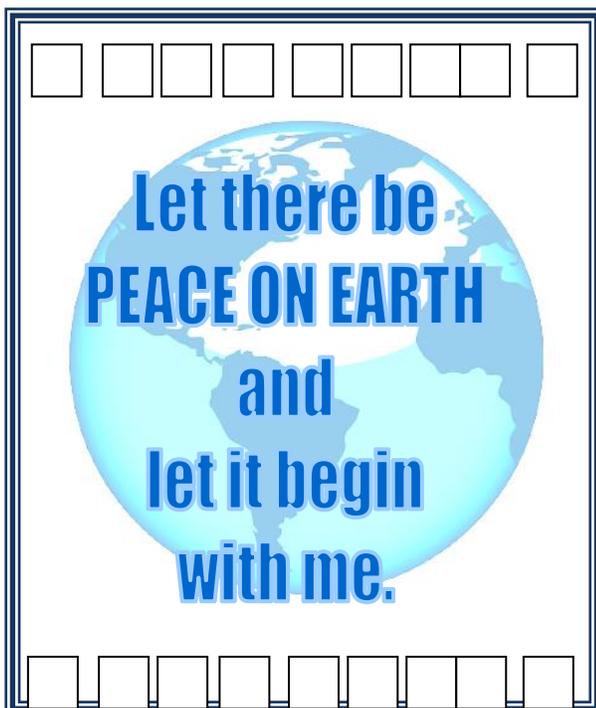
Explain to the students what it means to be a peacemaker. Discuss each of the qualities on the arrows which are pointing them in the right direction. Use the analogy of how hard bees have to work to accomplish their goal of building a beehive:

- Every bee needs to work at it.. They don't leave it up to just a few bees.
- They need to work at it all of the time.
- All of the bees are included.

Add a "bee" to the bulletin board each time you see the students working together to be peacemakers.



Upper



One hundred years ago, in 1916, Pope Benedict XV extended the Church Unity Octave observance which is celebrated during January, to the universal church. This provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the need to restore peace among all believers. For 1,000 years after the ascension of Christ there was one Lord, one faith and one baptism, because there was one Church, the Church founded by Jesus Christ for all mankind, the Catholic Church. The doctrinal chaos of denominational religion didn't begin until a few hundred years ago, when proud men rejected Christ's Church. Today, the differences among all faiths has led to conflicts throughout the world. Use this bulletin board as a springboard for discussing tolerance for all believers and to emphasize the need to pray for peace among the members of all religions. Use Ephesians 4: 5-6 as a scriptural reference. Use student pictures as border

February – Virtue of Kindness

Kindness is a fruit that you can build on, and it is a fruit that takes a lot of work. It is easy to be kind to those you like and those who like you. Yet are you willing to put your own contempt aside to help someone that has not been kind in return? Jesus tells us that we are to show mercy to all...not just the people we like.

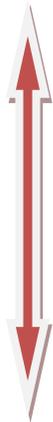
Primary

Kindness makes a difference

Jesus showed
kindness. . .



I can show
kindness by. . .



Random Acts of Kindness Week is February 14 – 20. Activities and resources to teach about kindness can be found at <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

Start a “Kindness Makes a Difference Bulletin Board On one side show ways Jesus showed kindness to others. On the other side show the students doing kind acts.



Upper

Random Acts of Kindness Week is February 14 – 20. Activities and resources to teach about kindness can be found at <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

Have the students research people whose kindness made a difference at the time in which they lived. Add research findings to the bulletin board.

Remind students that during this Year of mercy, they can practice being merciful by doing random acts of kindness for all especially those who have not always been kind to them

St. Katherine Drexel

St. Josephine Bakhita

A parent/benefactor

St. Francis of Assisi

Pope Francis

Sister Mary Scullion

*Go,
make a difference
in the world.*

John and Josephine Connelly

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

WALL PROJECT ON THE VIRTUE OF THE MONTH

*Based on The Virtues Bulletin Boards
Found in the Religious Education Section
of the Fall 2015 IHM ABC Notes*

ABC Notes Come Alive!

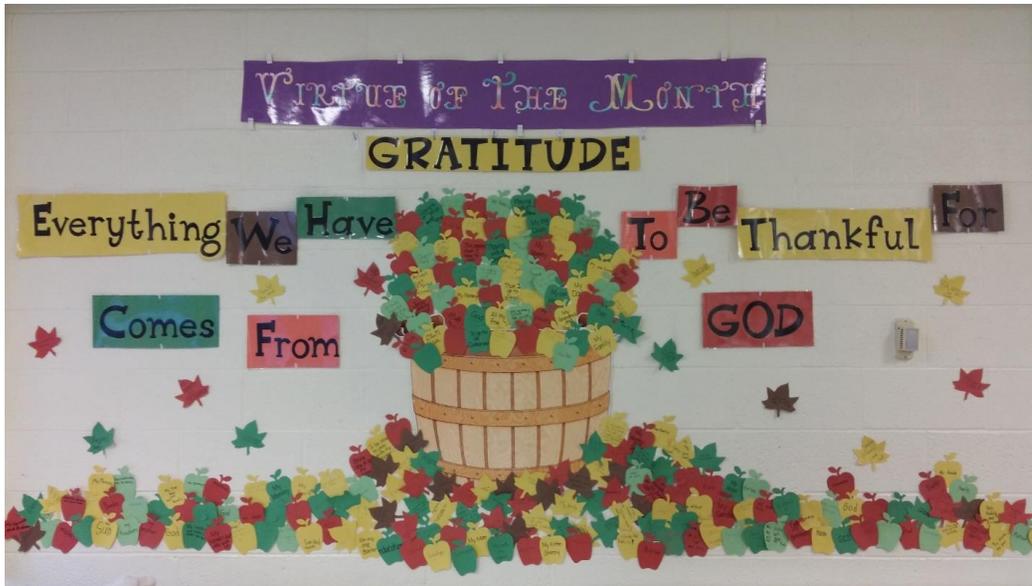
Our school chose to work on the monthly virtues, as suggested in the Religion Bulletin Boards of the Fall 2015 IHM ABC Notes. Our “Committee for the Virtue of the Month” shared with the faculty: the virtue of the month, a quote of the month, a song for the month, and the suggested practices. Then we decided on a visual presentation.

For **September** the virtue was **Hospitality**. The committee created and displayed a large lock, showing struggles like hunger, thirst, and homelessness. Then the students in every grade worked to put pictures and Scripture quotes on a large KEY, in order to show how they would strive to unlock the doors of such struggles by practicing hospitality.

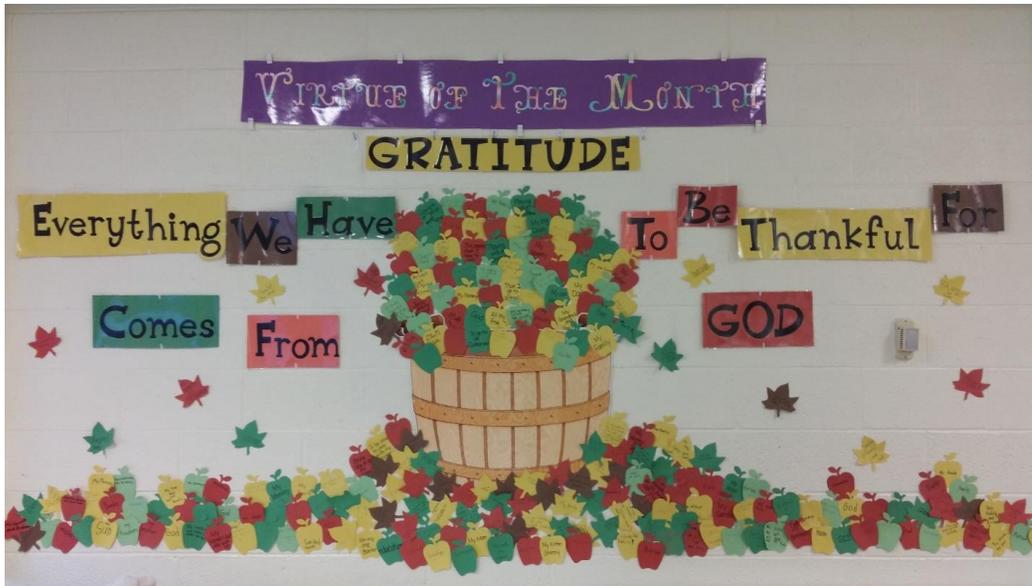
In **October** the committee chose the virtue of **Gratitude**. The students wrote one person or thing for which they were grateful. (Electronic items were not allowed.) Each student wrote their person or thing on an apple or a leaf displayed with a large basket.

Please enjoy our attached photos, showing the fruits of our efforts for these two months!

Develop a Prominent Display for the Virtue of the Month



Develop a Prominent Display for the Virtue of the Month



CATHOLIC TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Motivational Videos - Simple Truths

<http://www.simpletruths.com/movies.html>

The *Simple Truths* website contains motivational and inspirational videos that can be used with a variety of audiences. While the videos are not specifically religious, they do provide material for reflection that can be incorporated into lessons about virtues or used as meditations during prayer services.

The Mary Page

<http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/aboutmary2.html>

The *Mary Page* is a resource provided by the University of Dayton, containing extensive resources about the Blessed Virgin Mary and devotion to her throughout the world. This site provides useful information about the Blessed Mother that can serve as background knowledge for teachers. Older students will also enjoy navigating the site for research projects and for expanding their knowledge about the Mother of God.

Catholic App-titude

<http://catholicapptitude.org>

The *Catholic Aptitude* website contains reviews of apps and websites that might be of interest to Catholics. Catholic educators and catechists are able to use a simple search engine within the site, in order to search for apps that complement their lessons. The Catholic App-titude site is also a marvelous resource for parents who wish to extend their children's knowledge.

Apps for Ipad, Iphone, Ipod XT3

The *XT3* app is a marvelous companion for the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent. This free app provides the user with a calendar to keep track of one's progress during these holy seasons. The app also offers a reflection for each day to assist the faithful in maintaining a more prayerful attitude during these holy seasons.



Catholic Social Teaching

The *Catholic Social Teaching* app is a wonderful resource for all Catholics, who desire to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic understanding of service to others. Teachers of young people preparing for Confirmation or students fulfilling service learning requirements will find this app very helpful, since it contains Church documents and articles about this topic.



Relevant Radio

The *Relevant Radio* app is a great source for current news and commentary. This app offers much more than a radio. It contains articles about current and seasonal events, as well as links to Catholic prayers, daily Mass readings and podcasts. The content is refreshed and updated constantly, so as to provide users with timely seasonal articles and commentary.



Shared Wisdom

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

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TREASURES

Thinking about past IHM ABC issues dealing with the many treasures of our Religious Education, I found myself re-thinking what I do now and where that came from.

As a young child in Incarnation School, Philadelphia, Sister Ruth Dolores, my First Grade teacher, taught us about many of the “Little Things” I found myself passing on when I taught, as well as doing now with our PREP and Little Church Programs.

The use of **Holy Water** was one of those teachings that stayed with me. Here in our Parish of St. Rose of Lima, we give out a small Holy Water font to each of our families when the children begin in Religious Education. We encourage them to use Holy Water and to place the font somewhere, perhaps near a door, and as we do in Church, to bless themselves as they enter and leave their home. We also have a font in each classroom and encourage the children to use it on entering and leaving the room.

I have fond memories of my Mom making sure we used the font in our home. It is a joy seeing the students come back for more when the Holy water bottle is empty.



Blessing One Another is another way to help the children bring home what they are learning. Many of us can remember our parents saying “Goodnight” and always adding “God bless you” to it. As our children leave PREP every week, I stand at the door and as they leave, say to them placing a cross on their forehead, “God bless you, be safe” or “God bless you, have a great week, see you in church.” I can’t tell you how many respond, put a cross on my forehead and say, “God bless you too.”

At our meetings, I encourage the parents to do the same for one another as well as for their children. Many parents have shared with me how between husband and wife, it diffuses situations and helps them focus on what is truly important. The children can’t wait to tell me and their teachers that they do it at home now.

Saints Today... We all struggle with not enough time to focus on what the students really need to give them that foundation of faith for when they leave us. I have found Church Envelopes, “**Patron Saints Series**”, a way of helping our older students learn about and please God, as well as imitate the saints. Each week, there is a picture of a saint and a couple of lines telling them about that Saint. Many of our children preparing for Confirmation have picked their Confirmation Name because of what they learned about a particular Saint, and maybe even more important, how they can relate to that saint as a young adult in today’s world. There is also a line where they can write what they felt, reading about that particular Saint. The younger children use “**Smiley Face**” envelopes and they are asked each week to put down something they did that made someone smile. Each week when we gather for PREP, I share with the children what some have written on their envelopes. A week or so ago, I shared what one wrote. She had just begun as an altar server and wrote; “I couldn’t wait to help Father at the altar. I was standing right

there, so close. Then when he held up Jesus, I prayed for my family and my friend who was sad. It was cool.”

I ask the child to make sure their name is on the envelope and I record their attendance. Nothing is said to the child, but if two weeks go by and I don't see the child, I stop or call the family and just ask, “I missed you at Mass; is everything alright?” It's amazing what you find out in that call or visit, which helps me help not just the child but the family too. God is good.

(For your information, if interested, the envelopes come from OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, www.OSVPARISH.com)

Prayer Box: Again as a youngster in Incarnation School, I remember in most of my classrooms, seeing a box sitting on the table with pieces of paper beside it. If we had a prayer request, someone sick in our family, or any problem, Sister told us we could write it down and place it in the box. When we prayed as a class, those intentions would be included in the prayers. When I started teaching I began to do that, and found it a way for children to share concerns, needs, etc. We still do it in our PREP Program. No one looks at or knows what is written, unless the child chooses to say it out loud at prayer time. This helps them to feel comfortable with what they write, especially for our older children who can't always express what they are feeling or going through. **Prayer works! We all know that!**

At the end of each year, I gather all the requests and take them to our convent, placing them in Chapel for their needs to continue to be brought to God in prayer all summer.

Another ‘Treasure’ from the past...do you remember when we had **Bible History** in our schools? We are blessed in our PREP Program to give every child a Bible from Kindergarten all the way up the grades. To go into the Kindergarten room, really any of the classrooms, and have the children tell me about a story they learned and what that story means to them, is a great joy. Granted, the children in Kindergarten use a Bible which is mostly pictures, but even at that age, they look at the picture and tell us what it says to them.

If you wish more information, please contact Sister Catherine J. McErlean, I.H.M. at scjmcerlean@yahoo.com.

In closing, you know as I do, that it's truly those ‘little things’ that made such an impact on us. In sharing those ‘little things’ in whatever opportunity we have with our children, they too will truly treasure the Gift of their Faith. Thank you, God!



Living Social Justice.....*Laudato Si*

Autumn Focus: *Bringing a Theological Lens to Environmental Issues*

"*Laudato Si*" brings a theological perspective to environmental issues. Dialogue on these issues has been framed mainly with political, scientific and economic language. With this encyclical the language of faith enters the discussion in a clear, decisive and systematic manner. It invites all to listen to a religious point of view, particularly its understanding of creation as a holy and precious gift from God to be revered by all men and women. Pope Francis at the beginning of "*Laudato Si*" provides an overview of the current environmental crisis and then combines Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching with the findings of experts in a variety of fields to reflect on modern day problems. He points especially to St. Francis of Assisi who shows how "inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace". (10)

Ponder:

- Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself. (66)
- The responsibility for God's earth means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world. (68)
- When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. The vision of "might is right" has engendered immense inequalities, injustices and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful. Completely at odds with this model is the ideal of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus. (82)

- Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. (92)

Pray:

The Canticle of the Sun written by St. Francis of Assisi to deepen your spirit of relationship with and reverence for all of Creation. (Christian Prayer, pp. 2057-58)

Take a walk or gaze out your window to notice the special beauty of the autumn season and offer a spontaneous prayer of praise and gratitude throughout your experience.

Pay special attention to Psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours that Praise God the Creator. (Psalms 8, 65, 104, 148, and others).

Practice:

Be attentive to recycling as much as possible. Don't let convenience dominate your choices.

Notice the plant life in your home, appreciate it, increase it, and care for it.

Evaluate your daily practices and eliminate habits of wastefulness.



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

A Guide to Catholic Parenting: CATHOLIC PARENTS CREATE A CULTURE OF MERCY

One day Jesus said that if a brother sins against you seven times a day, and each time says, 'I am sorry,' you are to forgive him (Lk. 17:3-4). Jesus was speaking to adults but the advice applies equally well to children. It is an ideal that Christian parents try to instill in their families.

Hurts come from varied sources. Easily children (and adults) feel left out, betrayed, cheated, overlooked, wrongly accused, discounted, violated regarding space or possessions, ignored, put-down, embarrassed, ridiculed, disrespected, used, or bullied. Because egos are fragile these slights fuel anger, defensiveness, standoffs, shutdowns, shutouts, and, perhaps, retaliation. These cause-effect dynamics occur at a single offense so what about multiple offenses? Forgiveness is more likely when the culprit expresses sorrow. But what about when the offender does not own up to responsibility? What about hurts that are never followed by the words, "I am sorry" or hurts that are repeated over and over again?

Surely we have all heard the expression "forgive and forget" and the expression "I can forgive but I will never forget!" The first remark requires thoughtful interpretation, otherwise we mistakenly conclude that brainwashing is a component of forgiveness. The second remark fails to recognize that releasing the hurt from memories is the essence of forgiveness and necessary for personal peace.

Forgiveness is first, a gift that you give to yourself. Secondly it is a gift that you offer to the offender who may or may not accept it. If the offender does accept your gift of forgiveness he can be converted and possibly even be restored to your friendship. If the offender does not accept responsibility, he chooses to remain outside your circle of friendship but you release yourself from the paralyzing effects of un-forgiveness.

What are the paralyzing effects of un-forgiveness?

When we hold onto a hurt, we let that event or person continue to hurt us over and over again. Un-forgiveness makes your own heart hard. Un-forgiveness spreads into general distrust of others. When you hold onto anger or hurt, you stop smiling and laughing. You cease to see the world around you with optimism. You isolate yourself. You go into a pity world of one. You cannot recognize and accept blessings that are right under your nose because you exist within an inner world of "I'll show you" or "I'll get even with you" or "I'll punish you; I'll make you pay!" or "You'll be sorry!" By these kinds of thoughts and reactions, you actually continue to hurt your own self. Your soul shrivels up. You become bitter and life stops for you. Meanwhile, the offending person may be totally unaware of hurting you or worse, he or she may be totally unconcerned for causing hurt. That person continues to be just fine while you are destroying yourself – emotionally, psychologically, and even physically. Anger affects health.

What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a proactive choice. It is a freedom that you give to yourself to “let go” of the paralyzing effect of the offense. As a result you continue to grow happy, healthy, and more whole. You admit that someone has offended you. You name it for what it is. You do not condone the wrong. Rather than keeping the hurt alive by ruminating over it, you make a decision to grow beyond the offense and to release the negative emotions associated with the person or event.

Cultivate an Environment of Love

Anger and hurting behaviors poison family life. Love is like preventive medicine! Pope John Paul II suggested that practicing a “[Spirituality of Communion](#)” would create a culture of love. Catholic families observe these proactive practices thereby preventing or, at least, minimizing fractures to relationships.

- Find Christ in one another. If it is difficult to find Jesus, bring Jesus!
- Think of others as extensions of myself.
- Do for others what I would want for myself.
- Honor the joys and sorrows of another.
- Be sensitive to the “core” needs of others.
- Relate in genuine friendship.
- See the positive in others. Welcome it and cherish it as a gift from God.
- Affirm the efforts and potential of others.
- View others as gifts.
- Make room for others; be inclusive and inviting.
- Practice tolerance and mutual respect.
- Resist the selfish temptations that provoke competition, distrust, and jealousy.

Sometimes, totally unbidden, feelings of anger towards a person attack us. We immediately slip into a negative space and old wounds reopen. Every time that this dynamic pops up, pray a *personalized version* of the OUR FATHER for that person. Little by little it will release the negative hold that the person has on you. With Jesus you will recognize that the person is wounded and in need of healing and you will cultivate the virtue of mercy. For example, suppose Pat has hurt you. Pray for her . . .

Pat’s Father who are in heaven, hallowed be your name in **Pat**. Your kingdom come in **Pat**. Your will be done in **Pat** on earth as it is in heaven. Give **Pat** this day her daily bread and forgive **Pat** her trespasses as **Pat** forgives those who trespass against her. Lead **Pat** not into temptation but deliver **Pat** from evil. Amen.

Dr. Patricia McCormack, IHM, a former Catholic schoolteacher and catechist, is a formation education consultant, an author of several books as well as the PARENT PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK feature of *Today’s Catholic Teacher*, and director of **IHM Formative Support for Parents and Teachers**, Arlington, VA. She speaks and writes frequently on topics of child formation. Reach her at DrPatMcCormack@aol.com. Find additional NEWSLETTERS at www.ParentTeacherSupport.org. This article originally appeared in the (April 2013) issue of *Today’s Catholic Teacher*, © Peter Li, Inc. Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved.