

CONTENTS

Introduction..... 5

Have a heart for other children 6

Create **birthday cards** for people
who are homebound 8

Use scenarios to talk about ways
to help other people10

Make **colorful Bible verse posters**
about loving others.....12

Reach out to children
living in shelters14

Help elderly people
in the community16

Pair older children
with younger children18

Brighten the day at a care center
by **making mosaic leaves** 20

Learn about **the example of
caring saints** on All Saints Day.... 22

Make a **weekly prayer
calendar** to pray for others 24

Design posters for
a food pantry drive..... 26

Get creative with
Thanksgiving placemats..... 28

Assemble **Christmas craft kits**
for sick children30

Give from the heart
with **Christmas gift cards** 32

Share the light of Christ
with a **star tree** 34

Make **quote cards** about serving
others in Jesus' name 36

Put together **breakfast bags**
for shut-ins..... 38

Provide decorations for
a soup kitchen..... 40

Make valentines for children
in the hospital 42

Create hearts for seniors at
a community center 44

Learn to **live the works of mercy**
in our lives 46

Help families with sick children .. 48

Draw rice **bowl posters**
for your parish..... 50

Pray for other people
with a **Lent prayer chain** 52

Give up something so others
may have more..... 54

Participate in a project
for seriously ill children 56

Create **butterfly door decorations**
for special-needs children 58

Put together an **Easter care basket**
for residents in a nursing home ... 60

Make bookmarks for your
parish library 62

Share the hope of Easter
with Seniors 64

Role-play ways to care
about others 66

Brighten the day for children
in the hospital 68

Provide a helping hand
to others..... 70

MAKE COLORFUL BIBLE VERSE POSTERS ABOUT LOVING OTHERS

Objective

Invite children to follow Jesus through exploring the words of Bible verses about caring for others

Background

Scripture shows how Jesus served others, and then how the early church carried on his message. Today the word of God in the Bible still speaks to our lives. We are to see Christ in others. This is to be a way of life for us as children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ. Bible posters help children learn verses that describe Jesus' call to serve others.

Materials

- COPIES OF BIBLE VERSES HANDOUT
- SHEETS OF WHITE CARD STOCK
- MARKERS OR CRAYONS
- OTHER DECORATIVE MATERIAL, SUCH AS STICKERS OR GLITTER PENS

Lesson starter

Ask: What are some of the stories in the Bible? Are we called to follow Jesus in our lives? Does the Bible help us do that?

Explain that, through the gospels, Jesus taught us by his words and actions to share God's love with others. He calls us to be caring and compassionate people.

Invite the children to read and talk about the Bible verses one at a time. After each verse is read, talk about ways to serve others as Jesus did.

Activity

Ask each child to choose one of the verses from the handout and to make a poster. Provide help as needed to write the words on a sheet of card stock using markers or crayons. Then invite the children to decorate the words with illustrations, symbols, or a fancy border. Display the posters in the parish or school, or send them home with the children to share with their families. Close by offering the following prayer.

Pray together

*Faithful God,
we thank you for your word in Scripture
and for making it available to all generations.
May we live your words as Jesus showed us
by his words and his actions.
Guide us to live always in your love
that we may witness to your love for all people
in what we do and say each day.
Amen.*

Option

Have older children look up the Bible verses as a way to strengthen their knowledge of, and skill in, using the Bible.

Bible verses about helping others



Talk about these Bible verses.
Then choose one to write on a poster.

**In everything do to others
as you would have them do to you.**

Matthew 7:12

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Mark 12:31

It is more blessed to give than receive.

Acts 20:35

**Just as I have loved you, you also
should love one another.**

John 13:34

**Serve one another with whatever gift
each of you has received.**

1 Peter 4:10

Live in love, as Christ loved us.

Ephesians 5:2

REACH OUT TO CHILDREN LIVING IN SHELTERS

Objective

Help children living in a local family shelter by donating craft supplies

Background

We are called to follow the example of Jesus in serving others. The U.S. bishops wrote, "Being a believer means that one lives a certain way—walking with the Lord, doing justice, loving kindness, living peaceably among all people. Christian discipleship means practicing what Jesus preached" (*Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice*).

In the United States, more than a million children spend time in shelters each year. Children are the fastest-growing group in shelters. Many family shelters like to get donations of new art and craft supplies. Making crafts gives the children and families a chance to do something fun together.

NOTE ► Prior to the event, gather donations of craft items to fill the box. These might include child-proof scissors, boxes of markers or crayons, stickers, construction paper, yarn, scrapbooking materials, and other supplies.

Materials

- COPIES OF HANDOUT
- CRAFT BOX FOR DONATIONS
- DONATED CRAFT BOX ITEMS
- MARKERS OR CRAYONS
- OTHER DECORATIVE MATERIALS

Lesson starter

Ask: What are some things you would miss if you were homeless? For example, would you be able to be on a soccer team if you lived in a shelter? Would you miss having a backyard or other outdoor place to play?

Point out that there are many people without homes in our country. Many of these people are children. We can reach out to families who are living in shelters in our community.

Show the box and the donated craft supplies. Explain how the box and supplies are going to be given to a local shelter as a way for families to do something fun together. Invite the children to think of ways to decorate the craft box. Distribute the markers and other decorative items. When the box is decorated, invite the children to arrange the supplies inside of it. Set the box on or near the prayer table. Offer the concluding prayer together.

Pray together

*God of compassion,
we know that you call us to love others
as Jesus showed us by his words and actions.
We pray for the children and families
who live in shelters in our community.
May they know your love and care
in their lives today and always.
Guide us to be people of compassion
who reach out a helping hand to others.
Amen.*

Option

Use the handout to discuss other ways to help people in homeless shelters. Encourage the children to share the handout with their families and to watch for parish outreach programs in which they can participate that provide food, clothing, and other resources to those in need.

10 WAYS

for families to reach out
to people who are homeless

1 Give new craft supplies to children at a local shelter

2 Volunteer to plant flowers at a family shelter to brighten the area

3 Participate in a local hunger walk to raise funds and awareness

4 Contribute leftover home improvement items to Habitat for Humanity

5 Ask for toys for kids at a shelter instead of birthday gifts for yourself

6 Supply personal care items such as bars of soap to a men's shelter

7 Donate outgrown clothing to a thrift shop that supports a shelter

8 Make a meal at home and deliver it to a local family shelter

9 Provide household goods for local refugee families

10 Support a worldwide organization such as Catholic Relief Services

HELP ELDERLY PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

Objective

Challenge children to look for ways to help elderly people

Background

The elderly population is growing, along with their needs for assistance. Many elderly people need a helping hand in their everyday lives, particularly those who live in assisted living or extended care facilities.

By expressing their ideas through art, the children personalize the idea of helping the elderly. They learn by doing.

Materials

- COPIES OF THE HANDOUT
- MARKERS OR CRAYONS

Lesson starter

Ask: What might be difficult about getting old? Why do elderly people sometimes need our help?

Remind the children that Jesus calls us to love and care for others. He said, "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). Many older people have health problems and live on limited incomes. Some struggle to stay in their homes and others must live in care centers.

Invite the children to think of ways to help some of the elderly in our parish and community. Use the following list to describe some ways to help elderly people. Write the ideas on chart paper or a white board. Encourage the children to add their ideas. For example:

- hold the door open for an elderly person coming to Mass
- say "have a nice day" to someone after Mass
- be patient when you are behind someone who walks slowly
- let an elderly person go ahead of you at a store
- make a birthday card for an elderly neighbor

- rake leaves with your family to help your neighbor
- visit an elderly relative in a nursing home

Activity

Distribute the handouts and markers or crayons. Ask the children to write or draw a picture of a way to help someone who is elderly. When they are finished, invite them to share their ideas with the group. Gather in a circle and place the children's pictures on the floor in front of them. Join together in offering the following prayer.

Pray together

*Spirit of love,
we ask you to fill our hearts with compassion
that we may see you in other people.
We pray today for people who are elderly
especially those who live in our neighborhoods.
Help us to reach out to the elderly
and brighten their day because we care.
May they see your love for them
through our words and our actions.
Amen.*

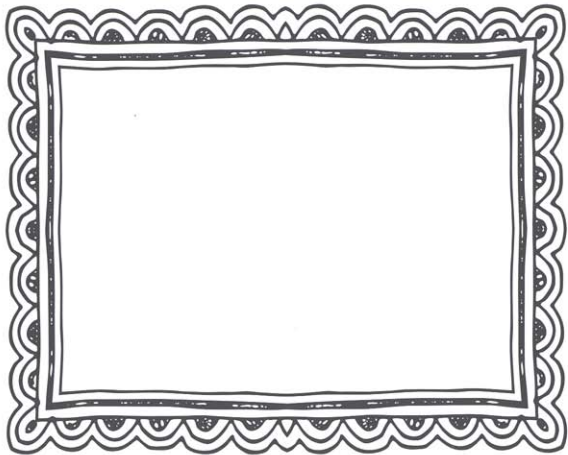
Option

If families want to do more for elderly people in extended care facilities, collect prizes that can be used for games such as Bingo. These could include colorful notepads, wallets, body lotion, lip balm, small trinket chests, journals, sugar-free candy, and small picture frames.

Jesus calls us to love others.

In everything do to others
as you would have them do to you.

MATTHEW 7:12



Draw a picture of how you
will help an elderly person

PAIR OLDER CHILDREN WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN

Objective

Offer an opportunity for older children to assist younger children with a project as a way to care about others

Background

When children have a chance to help other children, they begin to see the possibilities for reaching out to other people. There are many things older and younger children can do together, such as a craft project, church-year activity, prayer service, learning a song, or acting out a Bible story.

Make arrangements with another catechist or teacher for your group to help younger children. This works best when the little ones have a planned activity to do.

Materials

- NAME TAGS AND MARKERS

Lesson starter

Ask: Did someone ever help you when you were younger? What did they do? Did you appreciate the help?

Explain that they are going to have the opportunity to help a group of younger children today. Point out that younger children look up to older children and enjoy learning from them. Talk about the project and how they will be providing assistance.

Activity

① Remind the older children to help the younger children, but not do the project for them. Invite each child to make a nametag so that the other catechist will know their names. Before proceeding to the children's area, answer any questions the children have about the project and what they will be expected to do.

② After they have returned to their own classroom, invite the children to talk about their experience. What did they enjoy about the process? Did they feel awkward or unsure of themselves? What do they appreciate about the roles of a teacher/catechist of young children?

③ Make a circle and offer the following prayer together.

Pray together

*Jesus,
you were a compassionate person
who reached out to people in need.
Open our hearts and our lives
to the needs of other people.
Show us opportunities that we may
reach out a helping hand to others.
Give us willing hearts so that
we can help where we are needed.
In this way, we follow in your footsteps
and live as caring people.
Amen.*

Option

Use the handout to teach the action prayer. Have them practice a few times so that they can share the action prayer with younger children as part of this class project.

Action prayer



Say the words and do the actions line by line.
Children repeat the words and actions.

Lord Jesus Christ,*(point to palms)*

help us to walk in your way*(walk in place)*

May we listen to your voice*(hands behind ears)*

speaking in our hearts.....*(hands on heart)*

Help us to see the needs of others*(point to eyes)*

and reach out to help them.*(hands palms up)*

In this way we give glory*(arms over head)*

to your holy Name.*(hands over heart)*

Amen*(bow head)*