

Thanksgiving Intergenerational Learning Program

Focus: Thankfulness, Generosity, and Service

Introduction to Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational learning programs are designed in a 2½-3 hour timeframe with time for a meal included. The design format for an intergenerational learning model includes six parts.

Registration and Hospitality

Welcome people and ask them to sign-in for the program; and make or receive name tags. Distribute Home Kits including the handouts for the session. Invite people to share a meal. (Depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal.)

Part 1. Gathering

Provide an overview of the program and theme. Conduct a community building activity and a forming groups activity (if necessary). Lead the group in prayer and song on the theme of the program.

Part 2. All-Ages Opening Experience

Intergenerational religious education begins with a multigenerational experience of the theme that all the generations share together. In-common-experiences of generations are usually less verbal and more observatory than in the other three elements. In-common-experiences equalize the ages, so that listening to music or singing, making an art project, watching a video, hearing a story, participating in a ritual, praying together, and so on, are things that different-aged people do at the same time and place in a similar manner. Learning is at a level where all may do it together.

Part 3. In-depth Learning Experience

Through structured learning activities and discussion all generations explore the meaning of the event and develop the ability to participate meaningfully in the event. In-depth learning experiences can be designed in one of three formats:

- The **Learning Activity Center Format** provides structured learning activities at a variety of stations or centers in a common area. Learning activity centers are usually facilitated by a leader with background reading, instructions for the activity, and materials for engaging in the activity. Tables and chairs (or floor space) are essential so that individuals and families can learn, create, and discuss.
- The **Parallel Learning Format** provides age-appropriate learning for groups at the same time. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic – utilizing specific learning activities that are designed for their life cycle stage, e.g., families with children, adolescents, young adult, adults, et al. Parallel learning sessions can be designed in a variety of ways, e.g., learning activity centers for the families with children group, integrated lesson plan for adolescents, faith sharing groups or guest speaker for adults.
- The **Learning Group Format** provides a series of facilitated learning activities for the entire group using intergenerational groupings or family and age groups. The entire group is guided through an integrated learning program.

Part 4. Whole Group Sharing Experience

All participants re-gather and each group briefly shares what they have learned and/or created in their in-depth experience. Whole group sharing provides an opportunity for each generation to teach the others. Groups can share the project or activity they created, offering a verbal summary or symbol of their learning, a dramatic presentation, etc. Whole group sharing can also be conducted in small groups – intergenerational or family and age groups – rather than using presentations to the entire group.

Part 5. Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

To conclude the program participants have the opportunity to reflect on what they learned and to prepare for applying their learning to their daily lives. The Home Kit provides individuals and families with a variety of practical tools for bringing the event home. After an explanation of how to use the Home Kit, individuals and families have time to create an at-home action plan for using the Home Kit. Participants can be organized into family groupings, intergenerational groupings, and/or kindred groups of age groups for reflection and application.

Part 6. Closing Prayer Service

Thanksgiving Intergenerational Program Design

Theme: Thankfulness, Generosity, and Service
Time: 2½-3 hours

Registration and Hospitality

- Sign-in for the program; make/receive name tags.
- Distribute Home Kits including the handouts for the session.
- Invite people to share a meal. (Depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal.)

Part 1. Gathering

- Welcome the participants and provide an overview of the program and schedule.
- Conduct a community building activity and a forming groups activity (if necessary).
- Lead the participants in an opening prayer service on the theme of thankfulness, generosity, and service.
 - Scripture: Story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
 - Resource: Liturgy of Thanksgiving (Sacramentary)
 - Check the following sources for songs:
 - *Singing Our Faith – A Hymnal for Young Catholics* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2001) [Hymnal, Leader's/Catechist's Manual, 11 CD set]
 - *Walking by Faith – Music and Ritual Prayer for Children*. David Haas and Robert W. Piercy. (Chicago, GIA Publications, 1997.) [CD]
 - *Spirit and Song – A Seeker's Guide for Liturgy and Prayer*. (Portland: OCP Publications, 1999.) [Hymnal and 10 CD set]
 - *Gather – Comprehensive*. (Chicago: GIA, 1994)

Additional Prayer Resources

Berger, Alison J. 30 Rituals and Prayer Services for Catechist and Teacher Meetings. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2003.

Cronin, Gaynell Bordes, and Jack Rathschmidt, O.F.M. Cap. *The Blessing Candles – 58 Simple Mealtime Prayer-Celebrations*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000.

Haas, David. *Increase Our Faith – Prayers Services and Faith Sharing for Whole Community Catechesis*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004. (Cycle A)

- McCann, Deborah. *Let Us Gather – Prayer Services for Catholic Schools and Assemblies*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002.
- Piercy, Robert W., and Vivian E. Williams. *When Children Gather – 20 Prayer Services for the Liturgical Year*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1998.
- Rupp, Joyce. *Inviting God In – Scriptural Reflections through the Year*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2001.
- Rupp, Joyce. *Out of the Ordinary – Prayers, Poems, and Reflections for Every Season*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2000.

Part 2. All Ages Opening Experience

- **Extended Prayer Service:** Consider preparing and conducting an extended prayer on thankfulness, generosity, and service. Include a dramatization of one or more key Scripture passages, e.g., Zacchaeus, Rich Man and Lazarus. Consult the following resources for dramas and role plays:
 - Glavich, Mary Kathleen. *Acting Out the Miracles and Parables*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988. (The Good Samaritan, Rich Man and Lazarus)
 - Glavich, Mary Kathleen. *Acting Out the Gospels – 40 Five-Minute Plays for Education and Worship*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1999. (Rich Young Man, Zacchaeus)
 - Marmouget, Rosemary. *Scripture Alive – Role-Plays for Youth*. Winona, MN: St. Mary’s Press, 1997. (Good Samaritan, Rich Man and Lazarus, Rich Young Man)
 - Schneider, M. Valerie. *Gospel Scenes for Teens – 23 Guided Prayer Meditations*. Mystic, CT: Twenty Third Publications, 2000. (Rich Man and Lazarus)
 - Zyromski, Page McKean. *Echo Stories for Children*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998. (“Thanksgiving is knowing who to thank”)

Part 3. In-Depth Learning: Parallel Learning

1. Families with Children: Learning Activity Centers

Each center will be facilitated by a leader, with background reading (e.g. Saints Profiles), instructions for the activity, and materials for engaging in the activity. Three activity centers will be organized around the church building with tables and chairs (or floor space) for individuals and families to learn, work, discuss.

- Activity Center #1: Talents Poster**
- Activity Center #2: Meals in a Bag**
- Activity Center #3: Generous with our Time, Talents, and Treasure**
- Activity Center #4: Thankful Placemats**

Option: The four activities for families with children can also be organized in a *Learning Group Format* by conducting the activities sequentially in table groups of families.

2. **Adolescent Session: “Thanksgiving: A Jubilee Experience”**
3. **Option 1: Young Adult and Adult Session: “Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice”**

Option 2: Young Adult and Adult Session: Guest Speaker or Panel of Leaders involved in service to those in need

Part 4. Whole Group Sharing Experience

- Determine what each group will bring back to the large group to share as a result of their learning.
- Determine how each group will share their reports or projects so that they “teach” the other groups about the event and theme.

Part 5. Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

- Guide individuals and families in sharing their learning in family clusters, individual family units, and/or kindred groups (young adults, adults, older adults)
- Review the Home Kit for the event containing prayers, rituals, service projects, family enrichment, and learning activities.
- Review the reflection activities or strategies to use in conjunction with the event.
- Guide individuals and families in developing an individual or family action plan for celebrating/living the event at home using the Home Kit, and planning for participation in Thanksgiving and service projects.

Part 6. Closing Prayer Service

- Prepare a Closing Prayer Service that includes a litany of thanksgiving and invited people to share what they are thankful for and what service project they are committing to.

The Story of Zacchaeus

“Generosity Received and Given”

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus was going through Jericho, where a man named Zacchaeus lived. He was in charge of collecting taxes and was very rich. Jesus was heading his way, and Zacchaeus wanted to see what he was like. But Zacchaeus was a short man and could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree.

When Jesus got there, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry down! I want to stay with you today.” Zacchaeus hurried down and gladly welcomed Jesus.

Everyone who saw this started grumbling, “This man Zacchaeus is a sinner! And Jesus is going home to eat with him.”

Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the LORD, “I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated.”

Jesus said to Zacchaeus, “Today you and your family have been saved, because you are a true son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost.”

In the story of Zacchaeus Jesus shows generosity through his compassion, love, and acceptance for a wealthy tax collector who has probably cheated his own people. In response to Jesus' generosity Zacchaeus makes a very generous offering – to give half of his possessions to the poor *and* if he has cheated someone, he will repay what he had inadvertently cheated four-fold (400%). Jesus' generosity toward Zacchaeus, moved him to show generosity to the poor and to those whom he had cheated.

Give! Give the love we have all received to those around you. Give until it hurts, because real love hurts. That is why you must love until it hurts. You must love with your time, your hands and your heart. You need to share all that you have.

Mother Teresa

Activity #1: Families with Children Talents Poster

God has generously blessed each of us with wonderful talents and abilities. God asks each of us to be generous in sharing share our talents with others. This activity will help you find ways to share your talents with others.

Step 1. Draw the outline of each child's body on a poster.

- Distribute poster paper and ask the parents to draw the outline of their son/ daughter on large sheets of paper.

Step 2. Ask the participants to think about the talents and abilities God has given them using the different parts of your body: head, heart, hands, feet, eyes, nose, ears, mouth, etc. (God's generosity to us!)

- Give the participants examples of talents and abilities related to their body parts. Examples: feet for running fast, hands for playing musical instrument, voice for singing, hands for building things, etc.
- Ask the parents to help their children identify talents and abilities.

Step 3. Write each talent or ability next to the correct part of your body.

Step 4. Next to each talent or ability write one way that you can share your talent or ability with others – family, friends, parish, and people who need your help. (Our generosity to others!)

- Give the participants examples: hands for doing chores at home, ears for listening to others, voice for singing in the choir, eyes for reading stories to younger brothers and sisters, etc.
- Ask the parents to help their children identify ways they can use their talents and abilities to benefit others.
- If time allows invite children from one family to share their talents posters with children from other families. Organize family groups.

Activity #2: Families with Children Meals in a Bag: Thanksgiving Food Baskets

Preparation

To prepare for this activity identify the types of food needed for Thanksgiving food baskets. Prepare the lists of foods needed and then glue the list onto grocery bags. Make sure there are enough bags for each family. Distribute one bag to each family.

Step 1. Ask the families to identify their favorite foods for: breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert, and snacks.

- Organize the participants in groups of families. Ask everyone parents and children to share their responses to each of the five categories.

Step 2. Explain to the group: *Did you know that people in our country and around the world don't have enough food to eat? Sometimes people don't have enough money to buy food. Sometimes people live in areas where they can't grow enough food to feed everyone. Imagine if our world only had 100 people...20 people would go hungry every day. Most of these people struggle to survive on the equivalent of a dollar or less per day.*

- Share the information on hunger with the group. For your background there is a brief overview of the "Facts of Hunger" on a handout.

Step 3. Explain to the group: *Jesus has given all of us the job of helping people who are hungry. Jesus said that when we feed someone who's hungry, it's just like feeding him.*

- Introduce the reading from Matthew 25:31-40 and then either read it aloud or invite the families to read it.

Step 3. Explain: *Together we are going to help by providing food for families who are hungry in our own area. Review the list of food items. Plan a time to go shopping as a family.*

- Ask families review the list of food items they will need to purchase for families who are hungry. Give the families time to decide when they will shop.

Step 4. Ask the children (with parental assistance) to decorate their bag with artwork.

- Give the children time to decorate their bags with artwork: pictures, words, Thanksgiving images, etc. You may want to give them several ideas.

Step 5. Remind the families to bring their "meal in a bag" to Mass on a designated Sunday, e.g., on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Facts About Hunger

Hunger happens when people do not have access to the food needed to live healthy and active lives. When people regularly have too little to eat, or when what they eat does not provide the needed balance of nutrients, like vitamin A, iodine and iron, they become *malnourished*. *Malnutrition* affects people's physical and mental health, and can be particularly harmful for the very young and old. *Famine* is a time of severe and widespread food shortage. It can result from drought and disease, or violence or warfare that make it impossible to plant or harvest crops.

The Global Reality

- Today, one in every five people in the world, almost 900 million people, will go *hungry*. Most of these people live in absolute poverty, struggling to survive on the equivalent of a dollar or less per day.
- Over the next twelve months, *famine* will kill 150,000 to 200,000 people.
- One-quarter of the world's children suffer from malnutrition. Every year, *malnutrition* and preventable diseases account for 70% of deaths during infancy, childhood and early adolescence. Each and every day, 35,000 children under the age of five die of *hunger* and lack of access to basic medical services and supplies.

The National Reality

- Hunger in the United States is increasing instead of decreasing in severity. In 1985, 20 million people went hungry. Ten years later, the figure was closer to 30 million.
- Poverty and hunger go hand in hand. When people are poor, they have fewer resources to spend on nutritious food. More than 20% of U.S. children are living in poverty – a rate that is double that of any comparable, industrialized country.

Exposing Myths About Hunger

- It's a myth that people are hungry because the world just does not produce enough food. The reality is that the world produces enough wheat, rice and other grains to provide everyone on earth with enough calories to make us all fat! The problem lies with how these food resources are distributed. Redistributing just a small percentage of what is produced would wipe out hunger throughout the world.
- It's a myth that nature is to blame for hunger and famine. Famine is more likely to result from war and violence than drought or disease. And a little sharing from beyond its borders would go a long way in helping any country survive its present need.
- It's a myth that hunger is caused by overpopulation. People in developing countries often have large families to guarantee that some, at least, will survive. As the risk of hunger decreases, and people's economic situation gets better, population rates start to fall.

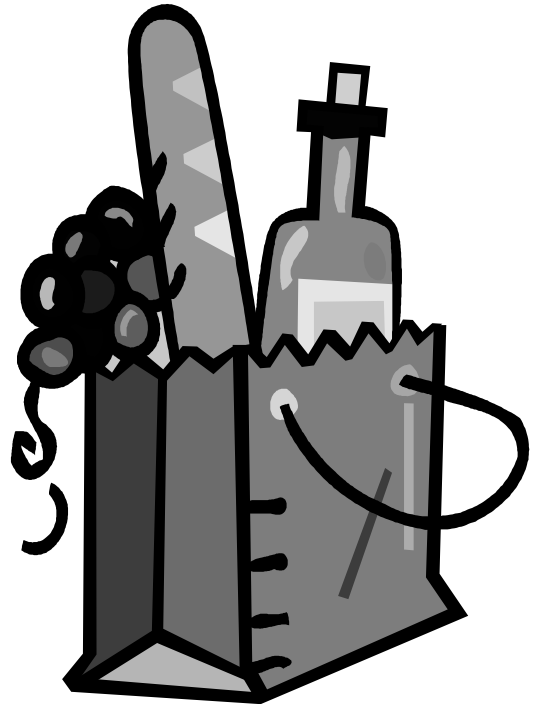
- It's a myth that the environmental damage being done to the world is caused by people's efforts to end hunger. While it is true that the world's rain forests are being destroyed, and harmful chemicals and pesticides are polluting the world's waters, it is false that these activities benefit the hungry. Profits from the logging of old-growth forests usually stay in the hands of wealthy owners and business people. And, the farming that is done on the cleared land is used to produce crops for export to richer countries. The hungry remain hungry and suffer from this unnecessary damage to the world's environment.
- It's a myth that the hunger problem is too big to solve, or that it would involve major sacrifices on the part of people living in countries like the U.S. Simple steps taken by ordinary people can help put an end to hunger, both locally and around the world.

Meals in a Bag

1. What are your favorite foods?
 - for breakfast
 - for lunch
 - for dinner
 - for dessert
 - for snacks
2. Did you know that people in our country and around the world don't have enough food to eat? Sometimes people don't have enough money to buy food. Sometimes people live in areas where they can't grow enough food to feed everyone.
3. Imagine if our world only had **100** people...**20** people would go hungry every day.
4. Most of these people struggle to survive on the equivalent of a dollar or less per day.
5. Jesus has given all of us the job of helping people who are hungry. Jesus said that when we feed someone who's hungry, it's just like feeding him. Reflect on our Scripture passage from the Gospel of Matthew 25:31-40.
6. Together we are going to help by providing food for families who are hungry in our own area. Review the list of food items. Select the items you want to include in your meal.
7. Plan a time to go shopping as a family.
8. Decorate your bag with artwork.
9. Bring your gift bag to church on _____.

Read more about the Bible's teachings on hunger and justice:

- Psalm 146:4-9.
- Isaiah 58:6-12
- John 6:1-14 or Mark 8:1-19
- Luke 16:19-31



Activity #2: Families with Children Generous with Our Time, Talent, and Treasure

Preparation

Research local, national, and international service projects. Develop a handout with service projects (See the sample handout, "Generosity through Service."). Try to collect information materials and develop a display of potential service projects the family can adopt.

Part One

*"Your heart will always be where your treasure is." (Luke 12:34)
We use our time for what is really important in life.*

1. Introduce the activity with the above Scripture quote and emphasize that we use our time for what is really important in life. This activity will analyze the family's use of time and how they can be generous with their time, talent, and treasure in service to those in need. Part Two focuses on service.
2. Introduce the activity by saying: *Think about how your family currently spends time on a typical day. Identify the number of hours your family spends on typical daily activities. Use your **Family Time Chart** to draw a picture of how your family uses time.*

Guide the families through this activity using the "Sample Daily Family Time Chart." You may want to consider using a typical day in your family as an example.

3. When the families have finished the activity, introduce the three discussion questions. Suggest that to be more generous with the family's time, talents, and treasure in service to others, the family may need to make changes in their use of time.

Ask the families to talk about their **Family Time Chart**:

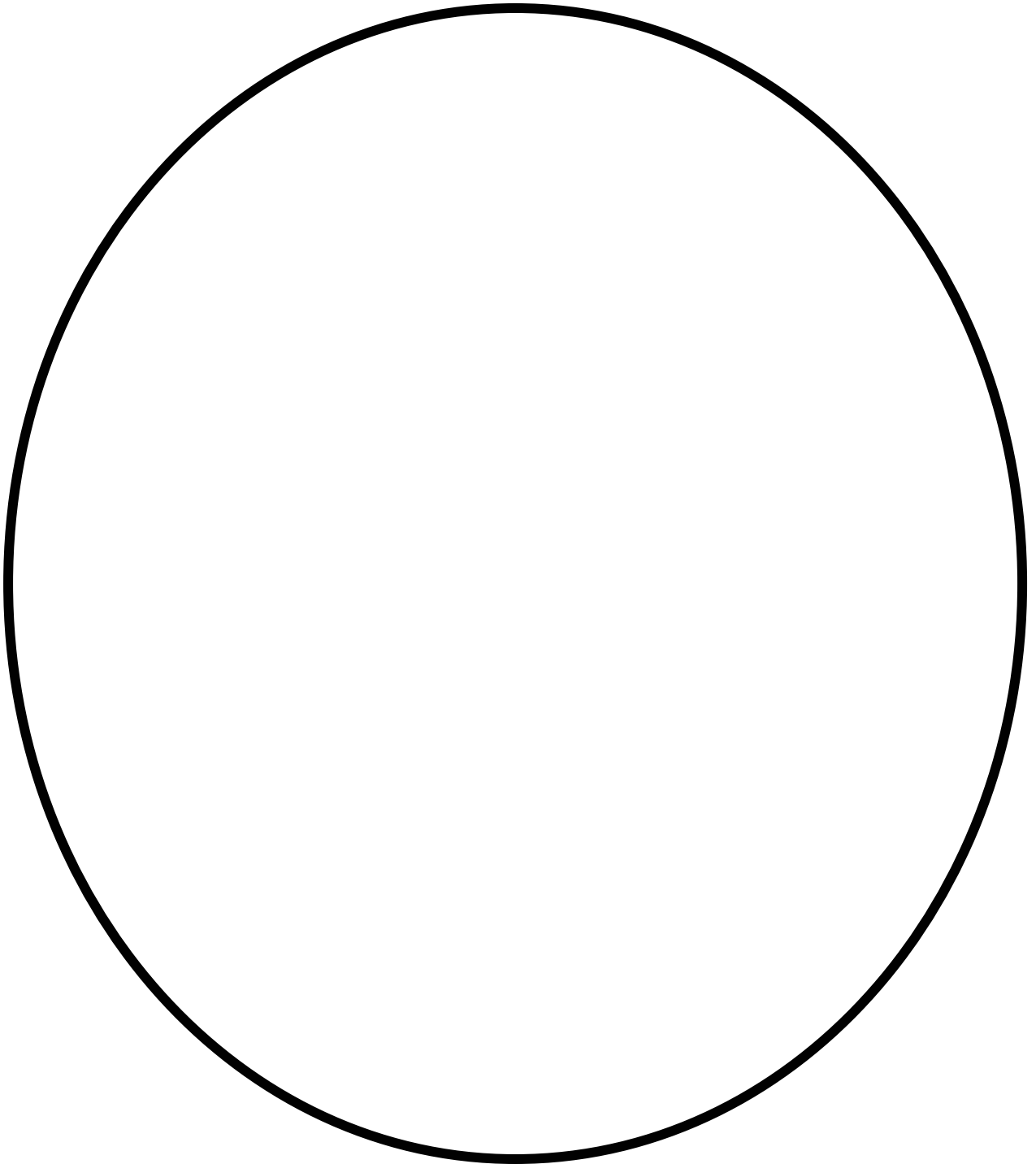
- Are there important activities we must make more time for? How can we make more time for these important activities?
- How can we become more generous with our time, talents, and treasure to serve people in need – locally and around the world?
- What changes will you make in your CHART?

Part Two

You will be blessed in every way, and you will be able to keep on being generous. Then many people will thank God when we deliver your gift. (2 Corinthians 9:11)

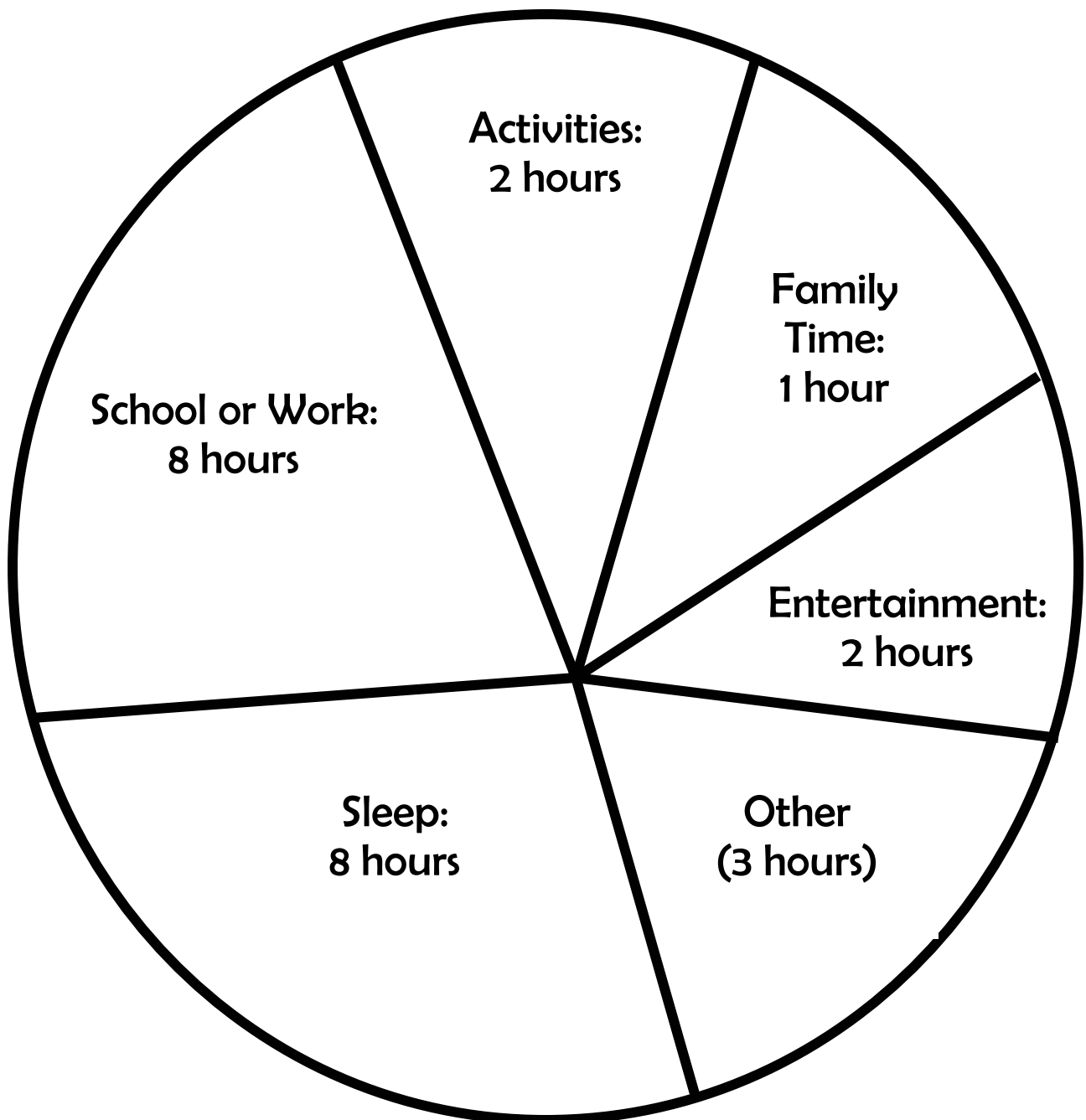
1. Read Matthew 25:31-40 aloud to the group.
2. Review the service projects on display and on the handout, and the contribution they are making to serving people in need – locally and globally. Discuss the projects and how they practice Jesus' command to serve those in need.
3. Guide the families in making a commitment to being generous through service. Ask them to find projects that match with their family's time, talents, and treasure. Select one or more projects for November and December.
 - Families spend time discussing the projects and then selecting one or more projects.
4. Ask the families to complete two copies of the commitment card – one for them and for the parish.
 - Guide the families in completing a commitment card. Be sure they leave behind one copy for the parish.

Family Time Chart

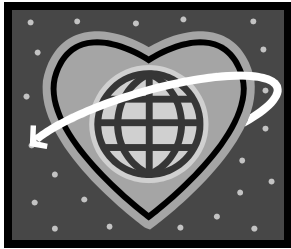


Sample Daily Family Time Chart

- ✓ school or work
- ✓ activities/sports/leisure
- ✓ family meals/activities
- ✓ sleep
- ✓ entertainment/TV
- ✓ other



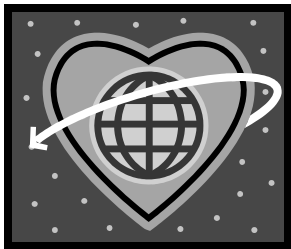
Living Generosity through Service



*When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat...
When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink...
When I was a stranger, you welcomed me...
When I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear...
When I was sick, you took care of me...
When I was in jail, you visited me...*

Our Family will use our time, talents, and treasure by...

Living Generosity through Service



*When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat...
When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink...
When I was a stranger, you welcomed me...
When I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear...
When I was sick, you took care of me...
When I was in jail, you visited me...*

Our Family will use our time, talents, and treasure by...

Sample Ideas

Generosity through Service

Thanksgiving Food Baskets

Collection: _____

Donate an entire basket of groceries for a Thanksgiving meal for a family in need or a gift certificate to local grocery stores. This year's collection will be on Saturday-Sunday, _____. Your generosity will provide Thanksgiving dinner for a family in need.

Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas Collection

Collection: _____

St. Vincent de Paul is seeking the support of our community for new clothing items to provide as gifts for guests who come to the shelter at Christmas time.

Christmas Gifts

Collection: _____

The women and men living with HIV/AIDS at (facility) will make out Christmas wish lists in hopes that the parish will grant their wishes. They ask for simple articles of warm apparel or grooming items. At the beginning of December, select a paper angel with name of a resident and his or her wish and then provide the selected gift.

Catholic Worker House Christmas Wish List

Collection: _____

The Catholic Worker House is looking for new toys and clothing for boys and girls ages 3-14 years old. Consider donating an item for their Christmas Party.

A Blessing Basket

Prepare a *Blessing Basket* for the Thanksgiving table. At the conclusion of your Thanksgiving dinner, set this basket in the middle of the table. From then until Christmas, each day add to the basket supplies needed at the local community service agency. Perhaps it is warm socks for children, bars of soap for the homeless shelters. Call the agencies in your community to plan how to fill your family's Blessing Basket.

Build a Home for a Family

Habitat for Humanity is a Christian housing ministry that has built or renovated over 60,000 low-cost houses since 1976 for families in need. This holiday season help a family celebrate the holidays by moving into a new Habitat home. A gift of \$20 purchases a 50-pound box of nails, \$35 helps to purchase a living room window, \$50 helps to pay for an interior door. Habitat provides a special holiday Housewarming Card for a new Habitat family, signed by your family. Call 912-924-6935 for information or write 121 Habitat St., Americus, GA 31709-3498.

Give the Gift of Life

Through Heifer Project International you can provide a hungry family with an animal that will enable them to become self-reliant by producing food, caring for the earth, and sharing with others. Select the animal you want to donate, or the share you want to give toward purchasing the animal, for example \$500 for a cow, \$120 for a goat or pig or sheep, \$20 for a flock of chicks. Join with other families to make a contribution. Call 800-422-0755 for the Heifer Project catalog (P.O. Box 808, Little Rock, AR 72203).

Activity #4: Families with Children Thankful Placemats

“Tell the Lord how thankful you are...”

Introduce the placemat activity and review the instructions. Use the sample placemat as guide for the children.

Step 1. Explain to the families that they are going to make a Thanksgiving Placemat to tell others what they are thankful for this year, such as the important people in your life – family and friends, the kind or helpful things people have done for you, the things you have done well this year – school, sports, activities, etc.

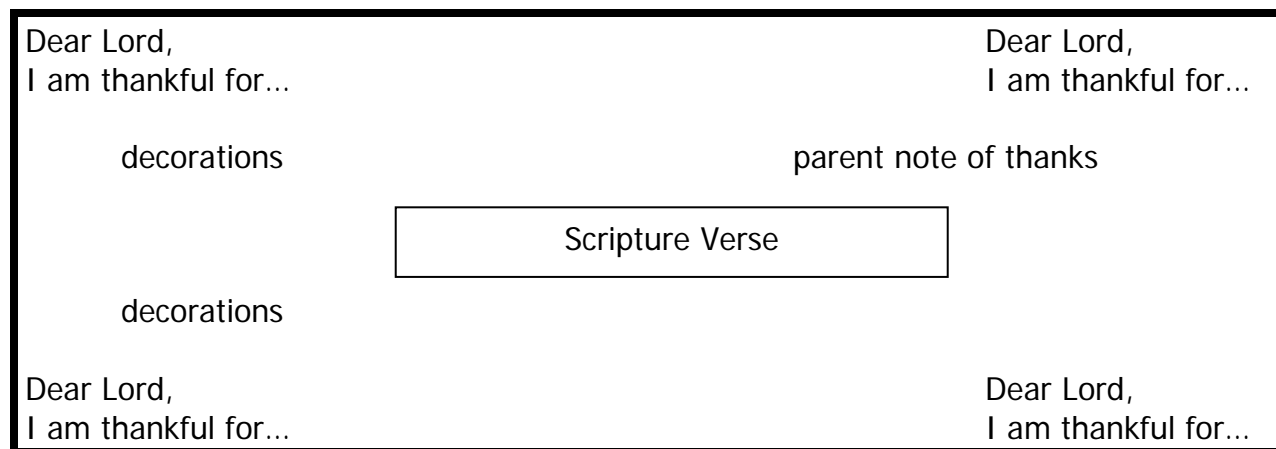
Step 2. Each family member should complete a place. Explain that in each corner of the placemat people are to draw or write a response to the prayer: *Dear Lord, I am thankful for...*

Step 3. Ask them to select one Scripture verse of thanks (or a phrase from the verse) and write it in the center of your Placemat.

Step 4. Then they should decorate their placemats.

Step 5. Family members can add a note on the placemat to express how they are thankful for this family member.

Example



Scripture Verses of Thanks

- ✦ I am God Most High! The only sacrifice I want is for you to be thankful and to keep your word. (Psalm 50:14)
- ✦ The sacrifice that honors me is a thankful heart. Obey me, and I, your God, will show my power to save. (Psalm 50:23)
- ✦ Tell the Lord how thankful you are, because he is kind and always merciful. (Psalm 118:2)
- ✦ Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him. (**Colossians 3:17**)
- ✦ You should praise the Lord for his love and for the wonderful things he does for all of us. (Psalm 107:15)
- ✦ Lord, we are thankful, and we worship only you. We will tell the nations how glorious you are and what you have done. Because of your wonderful deeds we will sing your praises everywhere on earth. (Isaiah 12:4-5)
- ✦ Then we, your people, will always thank you. We are like sheep with you as our shepherd, and all generations will hear us praise you. (**Psalm 79:13**)
- ✦ And give thanks to your Creator, who lets you enjoy all the good things he made. (**Sirach 32:13**)
- ✦ Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever. (Psalm 100:4-5)
- ✦ Our God, we thank you for being so near to us! Everyone celebrates your wonderful deeds. (Psalm 75:1)
- ✦ I will praise the Lord God with a song and a thankful heart. (Psalm 69:30)
- ✦ I will always thank God for what he has done; I will praise his good name when his people meet. (**Psalm 52:9**)
- ✦ I thank you from my heart, and I will never stop singing your praises, my Lord and my God. (**Psalm 30:12**)
- ✦ Shout praises to the Lord! With all my heart I will thank the Lord when his people meet. Tell the Lord how thankful you are, because he is kind and always merciful. (**Psalm 111:2**)

Adolescent Activity Plan

Thanksgiving: A Jubilee Experience

Objectives

By participating in this program adolescents will

- recognize that not all people are treated fairly or have equal access to the things needed for a full life
- explore the concept of Jubilee as an expression of God's concern for the dignity and rights of all people
- direct a parish-wide, food collection program to help local agencies respond to people in need

Session Overview

- 1. Introduction** (15-20 minutes)
 - Introductory Activity: *Bursting Another's Balloon*
- 2. Involvement** (20-25 minutes)
 - Group Brainstorm and Discussion: What is fair and unfair?
 - Compare and Contrast: Films, Fables, and Real Life
- 3. Exploration** (20-25 minutes)
 - Painting the Big Picture – Fair & Unfair/Right & Wrong in Our City, State, Nation and World
 - Team Worksheet and Sharing
- 4. Reflection** (15-20 minutes)
 - The Biblical Experience of Jubilee
 - Reading, Presentation and Dialogue
- 5. Action** (20-30 minutes)
 - Preparing and Planning for Service

Materials Needed

- Participant Handout: *Painting the Big Picture: Fair & Unfair/Right & Wrong*
- Leader Resource: *Reflections on the Biblical Experience of Jubilee*
- Program Supplies & Equipment
 - Learning Session: Yarn, scissors, balloons; Newsprint, markers, tape; pens/pencils, crayons; Bible for each participant
 - Service Activity: Paper shopping bags, *Needs Lists* and *Agency Tags*, tape glue, ribbon or twine, hole punch, stapler and copies of the Jubilee Prayer

Advance Preparation

Advance

- Read through the **Session Plan** and **Leader Resource Sheet: Reflecting on the Biblical Experience of Jubilee**
- Contact service agencies; organize *Needs Lists* and *Agency Tags*
- Work out service schedule and details with the parish team and/or appropriate parish committees
- Determine roles and needs
- Organize sign up sheets for youth involvement in the service project

Immediate

- Gather the materials needed for the learning and service sessions; duplicate *Painting the Big Picture* for team use.

Service Options and Extenders

This **Thanksgiving Jubilee Project** offers a wide range of possible involvements by young people. Consider the options below, selecting any that fit your situation and program schedule.

■ Project Planning

As a planning (or extender) activity, involve youth in researching and visiting local groups and organizations that bring the jubilee message to life today through their work. Involve youth in selecting the groups that will benefit from their project, in putting together the *Needs Lists* and writing up the *Agency Tags*.

■ Project Leadership

Involve youth in sorting and delivering food items to the local service agencies. Have them write a paragraph or two on the agency's response to the project and how the food will be distributed before and after Thanksgiving; include their reports in the parish bulletin or in a special mailing to parishioners.

■ Project Extenders

There are lots of ways of "extending" the reach and impact of this service program. Consider the following.

- Involve young people in a special way in weekend liturgies on the weekend the Jubilee sacks are returned.
- Couple the "Thanksgiving Jubilee Project" with a "Spring Jubilee Event," which could take the same shape as the fall food collection or another direction entirely.
- Use the agencies served through the project as a site for direct service involvement through the year.
- Link this indirect service project with the development work being done by Campaign for Human Development (CHD) and CHD's November collection.

Session Plan

1. Fair and Unfair, Right and Wrong in Movies and Books (10-15 minutes)

Large Group Discussion

Tell the group that you would now like to involve them in a discussion of what they see as fair and unfair, right and wrong in the world around them.

On newsprint or chalkboard, create two columns. Label one "Movies, Videos and Television Programs" and the other "Books & Stories." Ask participants to think back on the movies they've seen and the books they've read, and identify stories where the story line involves looking at what's right and wrong, fair and unfair in life.

Once the sharing starts, list all of their suggestions under the appropriate column.

When the flow of suggestions starts to slow down, move to a different task. Ask participants,

- If things were "fair" or "right" for everyone, what would life look like?
- What would *every* person have?
- What would be true about how *everyone* is treated?

2. Right and Wrong, Fair and Unfair in Everyday Life (10-15 minutes)

Small Group Dialogue

Ask participants to think about their personal experience of right and wrong, fair and unfair. Does everyone in their family, neighborhood, or school experience get treated justly? Is everyone treated the same way, or at least "fairly?" Can they think of a time when things didn't end as they should have? When people were misjudged or treated badly, when everyone didn't get what they needed or deserved?

Invite sharing of stories about when something like this happened to them or someone they know locally.

Ask participants what they think it feels like to be on the losing end, what being treated unfairly can do to people if it happens consistently.

Note that people may respond differently to this situation, but that being consistently on the losing end saps people's energy and enthusiasm, and can leave them feeling sad, angry or depressed. Some people act out in their anger, blaming everyone else for their problem. Others just blame themselves, accepting their poor treatment as what they "deserve."

3. Exploration (20-25 minutes)

Small Group Activity

Invite the group to move the discussion beyond themselves and the nearby community to their city and state, country and world. As they look at the world that exists beyond their neighborhood and home, can they identify any situations where others aren't treated fairly, where people can't get ahead or win out, regardless of what they do?

To keep this discussion manageable, and give participants another way of sharing, divide your group into teams of four to six. Give a copy of the worksheet, **Handout: *Painting the Big Picture: Fair & Unfair/Right & Wrong*** to each team. Ask teams to discuss how they see fairness and unfairness, right and wrong being played out in the wider world. Instruct them to come up with at least a couple of examples for each section of the worksheet. Tell them to be as specific as possible, referencing specific stories and events. If it is needed or helpful, provide an example or two for each section of the worksheet. For example:

- **City/Town** – Child or spouse abuse, families without a home or apartment of their own
- **State** – Lack of jobs, plant shutdowns, local hunger
- **Nation** – Lack of health care, continuing prejudice and racism
- **World** – Children who have no opportunity for education, refugees, kids caught in warfare in Bosnia, Palestine or other sections of the world

When team members have agreed on examples for each section, they should jot a few words describing the situation in the appropriate sections of the worksheet, or use pen/pencil/crayon to illustrate the problem creatively. Remind them that their group responses will be shared with the large group.

Note: If time allows, teams could create a collage, cutting pictures and phrases from magazines or newspapers and pasting or taping them onto poster board.

Team Reports

Invite team reports and/or whole group sharing. This discussion will serve as a good indicator of how "in touch" young people are with what's happening in the world around them. It can also help young people see that bad things happening "out there," can create problems for the people who live "around here."

To close off this section of the program, ask participants to recall the introductory activity that opened the session and what it felt like not to have an equal chance of winning. Ask participants what it would be like if they felt they didn't have an equal chance of winning – not just in a five-minute game, but in their decades-long experience of life?

4. Reflection (15-20 minutes)

Presentation and Discussion

Note: This presentation and discussion can be done as a large group activity or facilitated by **Learning Guides** as a small group activity.

Suggest that God, like us, is concerned about people who do not have a fair chance of getting ahead, or sometimes even surviving, in life. In addition to instructing people to share what they can with those in need, the Bible, God's holy Word, offers a radical approach to making things equal for all people.

Ask participants to pick up their Bibles and turn to the 25th chapter of the book of Leviticus. Encourage them to read along as volunteers from the group read verses 1-28 out loud. When the reading is finished, provide participants with a bit of background on the reading. Be sure to include the following points in your sharing.

- In Biblical times, things happened that made it hard for people to hold their own in life. Sometimes it was their own fault. Frequently, it was through no fault of their own – but the consequences were the same. When people ran out of savings, they had no option but to sell their land or work as slaves for others.
- The sabbatical (every seven years) and jubilee (every 50 years) celebrations didn't make everyone equal, but did guarantee that everyone was given a chance to start over, with all the basics needed to survive and grow: personal freedom, a piece of land, and a few necessary possessions.
- The concept of the Jubilee Year was based on the belief that everything, in the long run, belongs to God. God generously shares things with people. People, in turn, are expected to share generously with each other, so that no one is forced to live without freedom or without the basics needed for survival.
- The Jubilee year was a time set aside to make things right again – to level the playing field so that everyone had an equal chance to survive and thrive in life.
- In some ways, things haven't changed greatly in the centuries since the concept of jubilee was first set forth. People are born in the wrong place or make serious mistakes, disaster strikes or illness overwhelms a family's resources, and people fall into poverty or despair.
- The Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, reminds us that all people are God's children, and that we need to take other's needs seriously.

Large Group Dialogue

Following the presentation, ask participants to comment on what the world would look like if we declared this year *A Year of Jubilee and Celebration* – and everyone in the world had what they needed for a new start on life. Ask these questions.

- How would things change in our neighborhoods, nation and world?
- What seems right about the idea? What seems wrong?
- What problems would it answer? What problems could it create?

Note that the concept of a Jubilee Year was radical even in Old Testament times, and that there's no historical proof that it ever happened exactly as written. But the concept behind the Jubilee Year remains important because it tells us a lot about God's ongoing concern and compassion for the poor and forgotten.

- God created people with dignity, and wants that dignity respected at all times.
- God's attention and concern are focused in a special way on those who are poor and in need, who aren't treated equally and don't have a chance of getting ahead.
- God holds us responsible for one another's life, and expects that we will work together to see that every person's basic needs are met.

5. Action (20-30 minutes)

Presenting Thanksgiving Service Project

Suggest that Thanksgiving is a time in our community and church life when we can take simple "Jubilee steps" as a people. During Thanksgiving we set time aside to remind ourselves that everything we have is a gift from God. For Christians, the recognition of our giftedness goes hand in hand with the responsibility to share what we have received with others.

Thanksgiving offers us a chance to take the concept of Jubilee seriously, to share some of what we have with others, to make it easier for people in need to get through the day, and maybe even get ahead in life.

Note that Christian sharing can take many forms.

- Sharing our resources (money and possessions) with others – **indirect service**
- Sharing our time and talents with those in need – **direct service**
- Voicing our concern for others – **advocacy**
- Working together to change the unjust situations that people find themselves in – **social change**

Describe the **Thanksgiving Service Project** as an opportunity for adolescents and the entire community to take a "Jubilee step" through indirect service.

Special Note: The service project work may be done as part of this session and/or scheduled for a separate time.

Explain the project in detail, responding to any questions the group may have.

Discuss and finalize roles, responsibilities, and timelines for carrying out the collection and distribution phases of the service activity. This could include deciding who will

- see that announcements get into the parish bulletin for the necessary weekends

- explain the project to parishioners and ask for their support at the weekend Masses when the *Jubilee Sacks* are distributed
- attach *Needs Lists* and *Agency Tags* to the *Jubilee Sacks*
- distribute the bags to willing parishioners in the back of the church, outside the building, or in a nearby room or hall
- be available to sort out the food items donated by parishioners
- help deliver the food to the agencies being supported by the food drive
- write up a brief report on the project for later sharing with parishioners and the other young people involved

A Jubilee Prayer

Loving God, we are the work of your hands.
Life and all the good things in our world
are gifts from you.

We thank you for the many ways you have blessed us
and our land.

Help us to remember your goodness and
to accept the challenge of sharing who we are and
what we have with others.

Help us to freely share our time and talent with others.

Give us the confidence we need
to speak out for those whose needs remain unmet.

Touch our hearts with compassion and concern.

Help us to be as generous in sharing our possessions and resources with others
as you have been in sharing your gifts of life and
love with us.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our teacher and our friend,
Now and forever. Amen.

Service Involvement: Project & Process

▶ **An experience of indirect service**

The Thanksgiving Jubilee project offers participants an experience of indirect service, collecting food items to provide immediate assistance to those in need. It can be done in learning groups or teams, as families, or as a whole group.

▶ **Advance preparation**

Advance work needs to be done by the project planners/coordinators, e.g. identifying and contacting service agencies, typing up Needs Lists and Agency Tags, and organizing the project for youth involvement.

▶ **Identifying agencies and their food needs**

Working with two or three local service organizations (food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, city/town welfare offices, Catholic Charities, etc.) the project coordinators put together detailed lists of the food items needed to help people make it through Thanksgiving and the following weeks.

▶ **Organizing the food collection process**

Once the Needs Lists have been typed and duplicated, they are ready to be pasted onto large paper bags. Most large grocery stores will be happy to provide bags free of charge for this project. Adding a Needs List converts supermarket bags into special Jubilee Sacks. This can be done in advance, or with the assistance of youth at the end of the learning session. Note on each bag whether it's a \$5, \$10 or \$20 bag. Check off the items you would like the individual or family who takes the bag to purchase. This will take a bit of advance planning, but will help people know exactly what's needed and how much they're expected to spend. (See sample below.)

Agency Tags can also be attached to the Jubilee Sacks with tape, or hole-punched and attached with ribbon or twine. The Tags provide basic background on the service agency, the population it serves, and its ongoing needs during the year. The Agency Tags can be removed and kept by parishioners, serving as an incentive for ongoing involvement with the agency during the year. (See sample below.)

Attach a copy of the Jubilee Prayer to each sack. Provide families with a copy of the Jubilee Prayer for use as table prayer at home.

▶ **Spreading the word, informing the parish community**

Have young people make a special announcement about their Thanksgiving Jubilee Project during Mass on the weekend the Jubilee Sacks are distributed. Include special notes on the Project in the parish bulletin on the distribution and collection weekends.

▶ **Distributing the Jubilee Sacks**

The Jubilee Sacks can be distributed at church doors as people leave weekend liturgies or in the parish hall during a coffee and donuts/soda and cookies gathering. Young people could also distribute the Jubilee Sacks to family relatives, friends and neighbors.

Samples and Suggestions

Following are samples of *Needs Lists* and *Agency Tags*. Create your own tags based on the actual agencies and needs in your area.

A Sample Needs List

The Caring Community Center, Your Town, U.S.A.

The Caring Community responds to the food needs of local residents who are unemployed or living on limited income. Through your generosity, people will receive what they need for a full and balanced meal.

A Jubilee Sack worth \$5 \$10 \$20

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peanut Butter | <input type="checkbox"/> Soup | <input type="checkbox"/> Flour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jelly | <input type="checkbox"/> Stew | <input type="checkbox"/> Bisquick |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crackers | <input type="checkbox"/> Boxed Meals | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee/Tea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desserts | | <input type="checkbox"/> Canned Milk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Canned
Meat/Tuna | <input type="checkbox"/> Instant Milk |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Canned
Vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cereal | | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby Food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canned Fruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Instant | <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable
Diapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Juice | <input type="checkbox"/> Rice and Rice
Mixes | <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry
Products |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Powdered
Juice/Drinks | <input type="checkbox"/> Instant | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom
Items |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta | <input type="checkbox"/> Potatoes or
Potato Buds | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Goods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spaghetti
Sauce | <input type="checkbox"/> Stuffing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canned
Tomatoes | | |

A Suggestion

Agencies have both regular, ongoing needs and occasional or seasonal needs. It is best to check with the agency about its specific wants and needs before typing up a generic *Needs List*. Apart from foods, agencies have other regular needs. Homeless shelters, for example, are frequently in need of towels and bedding, pajamas and nightgowns, socks and underwear. Depending on the season, agencies may have other pressing needs. Consider adding a simple clothing item or two to your *Needs List*.

Agency Tags

Following are sample *Agency Tags*. Create your own tags based on the actual agencies and needs in your area.

St. Vincent de Paul Shelter, Your Town, U.S.A.

St. Vincent de Paul is the largest shelter in the city and the only one in the city that accepts single men. The Shelter houses 60-80 guests nightly – two-thirds men and the remainder women and children. Guests are provided with a shower, pajamas, a warm bed, supper, and a light breakfast. Guests range from newborns to senior citizens. The Shelter is financed primarily through private donations and relies on the generosity of local individuals and businesses to keep its food pantry full. If you would like to contribute food or clothing to the Shelter or learn about its volunteer needs, call the Shelter Director.

A Suggestion

Many agencies have information sheets available upon request that outline their services and needs. If not, ask for copies of recent newspaper articles, newsletters or fundraising brochures. Or talk to one of the agency staff or regular volunteers and put together a description sheet of your own. Many folks hesitate to give because they don't know what agencies do, or how well they use their money. Something as simple as an *Agency Tag* can serve as invitation to regular giving and/or volunteer involvement.

Bulletin Notices and Announcements

Sample Bulletin Notice Join Our Parish Youth in Helping Feed the Hungry

As part of their learning about the Christian call to service, young adolescents in grades (*fill in with grade levels involved*) of our parish have adopted a special *Thanksgiving Jubilee Project*. The Project will provide local agencies with the food supplies they need to help families celebrate Thanksgiving and make it through the coming winter months. *Jubilee Sacks* will be distributed following next weekend's masses by the young people. The *Sacks* indicate the specific food items needed and offer a description of the agencies we will be assisting. God has been so good to us. Consider sharing his goodness with others by taking part in this worthwhile project.

Announcements

With several slight changes, the above notice can easily become a parish announcement. Invite the young people involved in planning and leading the service to make the announcement at the close of each weekend Mass. The announcement can also be expanded to include a brief description of the learning session and related ministry activities.

Painting the Big Picture Fair & Unfair, Right & Wrong

City/Town	State
Nation	World

Reflections on the Biblical Experience of Jubilee

From John Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *As the Third Millennium Draws Near*

Note: In preparation for the year 2000, a year of celebration and jubilee, the pope calls Christians to a period of personal and social renewal. His letter draws heavily on the Scriptural tradition of jubilee. Excerpts from *The Third Millennium* follow:

Jesus of Nazareth, going back one day to the synagogue of his hometown, stood up to read (cf. Lk. 4: 16-30). Taking the book of the prophet Isaiah, he read this passage: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (11)

"Today," Jesus added, "this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21), thus indicating that he himself was the Messiah foretold by the prophet and that the long-expected "time" was beginning in him. It is he who proclaims the good news to the poor. It is he who brings liberty to those deprived of it, who frees the oppressed and gives back sight to the blind (cf. Mt. 11:4-5; Lk. 7:22). In this way he ushers in "a year of the Lord's favor," which he proclaims not only with his words but above all by his actions. The jubilee, "a year of the Lord's favor," characterizes all the activity of Jesus. (11)

The words and deeds of Jesus thus represent the fulfillment of the whole tradition of jubilees in the Old Testament. We know that the jubilee was a time dedicated in a special way to God. It fell every seventh year, according to the law of Moses. This was the "sabbatical year," during which the earth was left fallow and slaves were set free. What was true for the sabbatical year was also true for the jubilee year which fell every 50 years. In the jubilee year, however, the customs of the sabbatical year were broadened and celebrated with even greater solemnity. (12)

The jubilee year was meant to restore equality among all the children of Israel, offering new possibilities to families which had lost their property and even their personal freedom. On the other hand, the jubilee year was a reminder to the rich that the time would come when their Israelite slaves would once again become their equals and would be able to reclaim their rights. (13)

The foundations of this tradition were strictly theological, linked first of all with the theology of creation and with that of divine providence. It was a common conviction, in fact, that to God alone, as Creator, belonged lordship over all creation and over the earth in particular. If in his providence God has given the earth to humanity, that meant that he had given it to everyone.

Therefore the riches of creation were to be considered as a common good of the whole of humanity. Those who possessed these goods as personal property were really only stewards, ministers charged with working in the name of God, who remains the sole owners in the full sense, since it is God's will that created goods should serve everyone in a just way. The jubilee year was meant to restore this social justice. (13)

From this point of view, if we recall that Jesus came to "preach the good news to the poor" (Mt. 11:4; Lk. 7:22), how can we fail to lay greater emphasis on the church's preferential option for the poor and the outcast? Indeed, it has to be said that a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities, is a necessary condition for the preparation and celebration of jubilee. (51)

From Jim Wallis' *The Call to Conversion*

(Harper & Row, 1981, pp. 58-59)

The subject of money, possessions, and the poor is hardly a casual concern or passing interest to the biblical writers. The Bible is literally filled with it. Not only is the Bible strong in its emphasis; the Scriptures are stunning in their clarity on this issue. Wealth is seen, at best, as a great spiritual danger and, most often, as an absolute hindrance to trust in God. The rich are continually held responsible for the sufferings of the poor, while God is portrayed as the deliverer of the oppressed. The God of the Bible has taken sides on this matter and has emphatically chosen the side of the poor. Sharing with the poor is not regarded as an option but as the normal consequence of faith in God.

Yahweh demanded justice and righteousness and declared that nations would be judged by how they treated the poor. The early Hebrew codes built in provisions for periodic redistribution to counter the concentration of wealth and to ensure equity and justice. Right relationships to the Lord required the setting straight of all economic and social relationships.

Jesus is God made poor. His coming was prophesied to bring social revolution, and his kingdom would turn things upside down: The mighty would be brought low, the rich sent away empty, the poor exalted, the hungry satisfied. Jesus identified himself with the weak, the outcast, the downtrodden. His kingdom undermines all economic systems that reward the rich and punish the poor.

From Ronald Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*

(Intervarsity Press, 1977, pp. 90-92)

Leviticus 25 is one of the most radical texts in all of Scripture. Every fifty years, God said, all land was to return to the original owners — without compensation! Physical handicaps, death of a breadwinner or lack of natural ability may lead some people to become poorer than others. But God does not want such disadvantages to lead to greater and greater divergence of wealth and poverty. God therefore gave his people a law which would equalize land ownership every fifty years (Lev 25:10-24).

That this passage prescribes justice rather than haphazard handouts by wealthy philanthropists is extremely significant. The year of Jubilee envisages an institutionalized structure that affects everyone automatically. It is to be the poor person's right to receive back his inheritance at the time of Jubilee. Returning the land is not a charitable courtesy that the wealthy may extend if they please.

The Jubilee Principle also provides for self-help and self-development. With his land returned, the poor person could again earn his own living. The biblical concept of Jubilee underlines the importance of institutionalized mechanisms and structures that promote justice.

One final aspect of Leviticus 25 is striking. It is surely more than coincidental that the trumpet blast announcing the Jubilee sounded fourth on the day of atonement (Lev 25:9)! Reconciliation with God is the precondition for reconciliation with brothers and sisters. Conversely, genuine reconciliation with God leads inevitably to a transformation of all other relationships.

Jesus knew and Deuteronomy implies that sinful persons and societies will always produce poor people. Rather than justifying negligence, however, God intends this insight to lead to renewed concern for the needy and to the creation of structural mechanisms for promoting justice... Institutionalized structures to reduce poverty and great economic inequality are God's will for his people.

Young Adult and Adult Activity

Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice

This session is designed in a small group format, but can easily be adapted to a large group setting with presentation and group activities.

Focusing Scripture

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

“He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read, and was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.’

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant, and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently on him. He said to them, ‘Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.’” (Luke 4:16-21)

“...the call to live our faith in everyday choices and actions remains at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

“Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them. ...Social justice and the common good are built up or torn down day by day in the countless decisions and choices we make. This vocation to pursue justice is not simply an individual task—it is a call to work with others to humanize and shape the institutions that touch so many people. The lay vocation for justice cannot be carried forward alone, but only as members of a community called to be the “leaven” of the Gospel.” (Catholic Bishops of the United States, *Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice*, 1998)

Gathering

Begin this session by reading the Focusing quotes. Then complete the following reflection activity.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States state "...the call to live our faith in everyday choices and actions remains at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus." Take a few moments to think about how you live your faith in daily life – through your daily choices and decisions, through your relationships with others, through the use of your talents, through your values, etc. Try to identify specific actions you take to live your faith in each of the following arenas of your life.

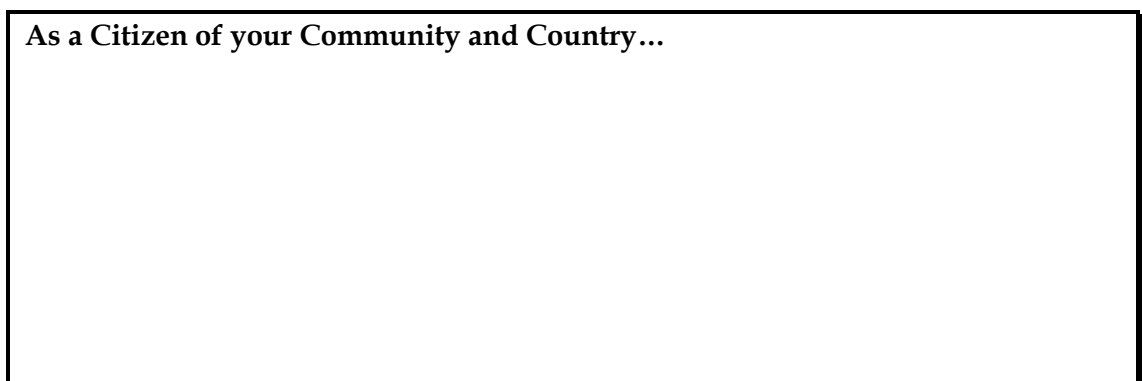
At Home...



At Work or School...



As a Citizen of your Community and Country...



Reflecting

Take time now to share your reflections with the group. Make sure that each person has shared his or her responses to the first question, before discussing the second and third questions.

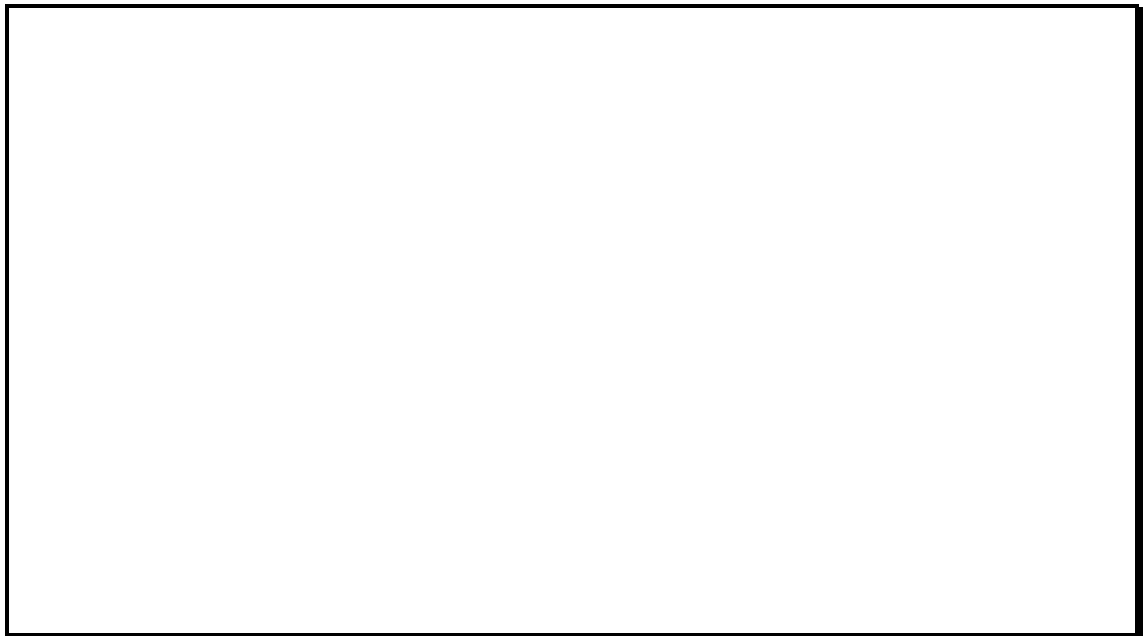
- Share with your group several ways you try to live your Catholic faith in your daily life – at home, at work or school, and as a citizen.
- What is difficult about living the Catholic faith in your daily life at home, at work or school, and as a citizen?
- What are the benefits of linking your Catholic faith to daily life – for you, for others, for the community and the country?
- Where do you find support for living your Catholic faith in your daily life?

Discovering

This section explores the responsibilities of the Catholic in everyday life utilizing *Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice* by the Catholic Bishops of the United States. Each part of the Discovering section weaves together personal reading from *Everyday Christianity* and reflection.

Part One: “Introduction” and “The Catholic Layperson: Discipleship and the Pursuit of Justice”

- Read the first two sections of *Everyday Christianity*.
- “Being a believer means that one lives a certain way...” What does this mean to you in your daily life?



Part Two: “Called to Justice in Everyday Life”

- Read the third section of *Everyday Christianity: “Called to Justice in Everyday Life”*
- “Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them...” What does this mean to you as a family member, as a worker or as an owner/manager/investor, as a consumer, as a good steward, as a citizen?

- ▶ as a family member

- ▶ as a worker or owner/manager/investor

- ▶ as a consumer

- ▶ as a good steward

- ▶ as a citizen

Sharing

Begin by sharing your reflections on *Everyday Christianity* using the two questions from the *Discovering* section. After each person has shared his or her responses to these two questions, take several minutes to discuss your responses as a group. Then, discuss as a group, your responses to the third question.

- “Being a believer means that one lives a certain way...” What does this mean to you in your daily life?

- “Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them...” What does this mean to you as a family member, as a worker or as an owner/manager/investor, as a consumer, as a good steward, as a citizen?
- Imagine what your daily life would be like if you lived the message of Micah in all the arenas of your life: home, work or school, community, country.
 - He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
 - and what does the Lord require of you
 - but to do justice, and to love kindness,
 - and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8, NRSV)

Living

The focus of the Living section is to develop specific strategies for living the Catholic faith daily. Take time to work through these ideas together as a group.

Developing an Action Plan

- As a group, brainstorm specific strategies for living the Catholic faith daily: at home, at work or school, and as a citizen.
- Using your own ideas and those developed by the group, create a personal action plan. Try finding one action from each of the three categories.

Actions List several actions that you can begin living right now.	Potential Roadblocks List potential roadblocks to implementing your actions.	First Steps Name the first steps you need to take to accomplish the action.
1.		
2.		
3.		

Make a Pledge for Charity, Justice and Peace

- Review the ideas below and as a group, brainstorm ideas for living each statement of the pledge.
 - Pray regularly for greater justice and peace.
 - Learn more about Catholic social teaching and its call to protect human life, stand with the poor, and care for creation.
 - Reach across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and disabling conditions.
 - Live justly in family life, school, work, the marketplace, and the political arena.
 - Serve those who are poor and vulnerable, sharing more time and talent.
 - Give more generously to those in need at home and abroad.
 - Advocate for public policies that protect human life, promote human dignity, preserve God's creation, and build peace.
 - Encourage others to work for greater charity, justice, and peace.
- Using the Jubilee Pledge worksheet (separate page), add specific commitments you will make to live each statement of the pledge.
- Share several specific commitments with your group.

Using Your Gifts

Take time over the next several weeks to think about how you can become a better steward of your gifts in the work of justice.

It has been said that no one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Each of us has unique abilities, a certain amount of time at our discretion, particular financial resources, obligations and responsibilities. And each of us will someday give an account of our stewardship to God. Are there changes that you should make in allocating your talent, time, and treasure so that you live "everyday Christianity" – locally, nationally, globally?

Praying

Living "everyday Christianity" means that we are called to be salt of the earth and light of the world. Conclude by praying together Matthew 5:13-16.

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Jubilee Pledge for Charity, Justice, and Peace

A Catholic Commitment for the New Millennium

*The jubilee of our Lord's birth calls us "to bring glad tidings to the poor. . . .
to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free." (Luke 4:18)*

As disciples of Jesus, I pledge to:

▶ **Pray regularly for greater justice and peace.**

To live this I will...

▶ **Learn more about Catholic social teaching and its call to protect human life, stand with the poor, and care for creation.**

To live this I will...

▶ **Reach across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and disabling conditions.**

To live this I will...

▶ **Live justly in family life, school, work, the marketplace, and the political arena.**

To live this I will...

- ▶ **Serve those who are poor and vulnerable, sharing more time and talent.**
To live this I will...

- ▶ **Give more generously to those in need at home and abroad.**
To live this I will...

- ▶ **Advocate for public policies that protect human life, promote human dignity, preserve God's creation, and build peace.**
To live this I will...

- ▶ **Encourage others to work for greater charity, justice, and peace.**
To live this I will...

Signature

Love for others, and in the first place love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice.
(Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, 1991)

Thanksgiving @Home Activity

Learn More About Generosity

n. 1. the quality of being generous; liberality or willingness in giving; unselfishness; 2. nobility of thought or behavior; magnanimity; 3. a generous act. "She is always willing to lend a helping hand. He thinks the best of everyone."

There are many examples of generosity in home life. Everyday we show generosity when we give a little extra of ourselves to get the chores done, when we share things that are special to us, when we watch for ways to help others. To be generous we first need to be aware of people around us who need our help.

Talk about generosity in your household.

- ▶ How does generosity begin? What do we first need to be aware of in order to be generous?
- ▶ Once we recognize that someone needs or deserves our help, what ways are generous in our home?
- ▶ What do each of us have to share that is meaningful? Think about sharing time, knowledge, things or money.

Create a list of ways your home wants to practice generosity, such as...

- ▶ Help each other with our schoolwork.
- ▶ Pitch-in to get the chores done.
- ▶ Share our things, particularly new gifts.
- ▶ Find ways to be generous with our time.
- ▶ Help those who are hungry.

Use the list of ways your household wants to practice generosity, to create goals for your household, such as...

- ▶ We will help each other with our homework by arranging a quiet space in our home where we can work together.
- ▶ We will pitch in to get the chores done by creating a list of chores for the week with responsibilities and assignments.
- ▶ We will share our new computer games with each other.
- ▶ We will give a "free night of babysitting" coupon to our neighbors.
- ▶ We will help those who are hungry by making a sack lunch for the homeless who stand at the nearby intersection.

Talk about Jesus' generosity.

- ▶ How was he a model of generosity?
- ▶ To whom was he generous?

Read about Jesus' generosity in Scripture.

- ▶ Jesus was thoughtful about the needs of others. Read Matthew 14:13-21.
- ▶ Jesus notices when someone needs help. Read about the Wedding Feast of Cana in John 2:1-11.
- ▶ Jesus gives freely without hope of reward and gives freely without holding back. He is willing to sacrifice fully. Read Matthew 27:45-49.

PRAYER FOR GENEROSITY

Generous Lord, help us to be givers, not takers. Help us to experience the joy of giving. May we look for every opportunity to give of our time, our talents, our money, our possessions, our thanks, compliments, healing words, hugs, smiles, a helping hand, or a listening ear. Help us to give out of full hearts, and even nearly empty hearts if the need be. Bless us, that we may be wise stewards of your many gifts. We pray this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Thanksgiving @Home—Prayer

Thanksgiving Day Prayer

Lord of all blessings, from You has come a full harvest of gifts to us.
With our uplifted hearts, we come today around this table to give thanks to You.

We are grateful not only for the gifts of our very lives
but for all the gifts of friendship, love, devotion and forgiveness that we have shared.

On this Thanksgiving and this day of giving thanks, we thank You for showing us how to return thanks by lives of service, by actions of hospitality, by kindnesses to others and by concern for each other.

We are most grateful, today, for the way You, our unseen God,
have become visible to us in one another, both in our families and our friends, in countless daily gifts
and in the marvels of creation itself.

Come, Lord of Gifts.
Bless our table and
all the food of this feast.
Let us thank the Lord
today and all days.
Amen.

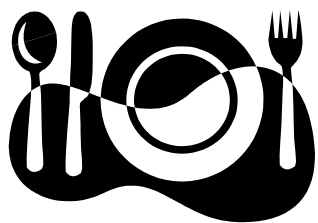
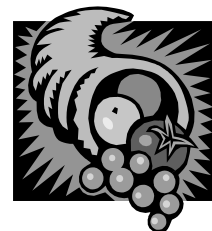


Table Prayer for November

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Holy and awesome God, you bless us continuously with your goodness—and we are thankful.

In a few moments of silence, let us each be mindful of all we have for which to give thanks: friends, food, hopes, health and happy memories.

(a moment of silence) (Each person around the table shares one thing he or she is thankful for.)

Thus in giving thanks, our home is blessed. Amen.

Thanksgiving Activities

A Thanksgiving Litany

Prepare a Thanksgiving litany to use for your table grace today. List the letters of the alphabet on a sheet of paper. Write down blessings such as foods from your feast, family members, or friends whose name starts with each letter. Right before your meal, read them in groups of three or four, and invite everyone to respond “Thank you, God!”

A Thanksgiving Wall

We give thanks on Thanksgiving for the many gifts we have received. Share with each other one thing that you are thankful for this Thanksgiving. Use poster or butcher paper to create a *Thanksgiving Wall* in your home. On Thanksgiving Day supply markers for the wall and allow the family and guests to fill the wall with pictures and words reflecting “We are thankful for...” At the end of the day gather with family and friends in front of the wall for a Thanksgiving picture

