

Service Ideas for the Season

Sharing in a Material World

Material World: A Global Family Portrait was published in 1994. The author, Peter Menzel visited thirty countries around the world, taking pictures of "statistically average" families. The family in each photo stands outside their homes, with all of their possessions laid out on the ground. The book shows in a graphic way how unevenly the world's resources are shared.

If you can, pick up a copy of *Material World* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books). Then, consider assisting a family in need in the developing world by contributing to Catholic Relief Service's global development efforts. To learn more about CRS and its work, write: CRS, 209 West Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

Grateful and Generous Education and Recreation

For many people in our country and world, education is a luxury. And the work of guaranteeing even subsistence living leaves little time for play. Say a prayer of thanks for your ability to read and write, and understand the world around you.

Consider giving a child or youth the gift of education through sponsorship with a group like Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. Sponsorships run just \$15-20 per month and can make a world of difference in a child's life. Contact CFCA, One Elmwood Ave., Kansas City, KS 66103. Phone (800) 875-6564.

Grateful and Generous Food and Drink

"Real happiness and satisfaction come from who we are and how we care for one another rather than from what we have." Commit to eating simply today and every Friday of Lent. Set your meal savings aside. Throughout Lent, be attentive to the requests for assistance that you receive in the mail, see on TV or read about in the paper. Then, during Holy Week, share your savings with a charity of your choice.

Grateful and Generous Clothing and Shelter

Tens of millions of people in our world don't have a place to call home, and live on the street or out in the open. This reality shouldn't leave us feeling guilty, but rather move us to greater generosity in sharing what we have with those in need. You could, for example make a gift of new or good, used clothing to a local abuse center or family shelter.

Grateful and Generous Work and Security

Work is seen, in biblical terms, not as drudgery but as a way of sharing in God's creative power. Work gives people the opportunity to join God in making the world a better place for all. Lent is a time to thank God for our talents and gifts, for our paid and volunteer work. It is also a time to reflect on how generously we share our skills and abilities with others, and especially with those in need.

Works of Mercy

This Lent as a family, take on one of the works of mercy you read about yesterday in scripture. First, talk about the different needs that you see in your community. Then choose a work of mercy addressing one of these needs. Brainstorm a list of ideas on how you can participate in that work of mercy. Decide on one or more and begin planning. To start, contact social service organizations such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the local hospitals and care facilities or migrant and refugee centers.

Give Away Something You Cherish

Do you own your things or do they own you?

One way to cultivate liberty of soul is to give things away now and then, something you cherish. Perhaps you have a book that means a great deal to you. You've read it many times. Perhaps it's time to give it to someone who will cherish it in turn.

Think of anything you own that gives you much pleasure and satisfaction—a particular recording of music, or a painting or framed photograph. Give it to someone who will cherish it as much as you do.

In Solidarity with Those Who Have Less

Fasting or sacrifice is a traditional Lenten activity. What can your family do during Lent? Consider these possibilities:

- ▶ have a simple soup and bread dinner each week
- ▶ set aside a percentage of family money normally spent on entertainment to be donated to a local charity

And remember, "When you go without eating don't try to look gloomy as those showoffs do..." (Matthew 6:16)