

# Mercy

## Definition

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

## Scripture

*Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

Matthew 5:7

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Superintendent's Message:**

It's a familiar scene in classic melodramas. The villain corners the hero and, in a final act of triumph, insists his nemesis beg for mercy. The audience is tempted to think for a moment evil defeats good as the hero is brought to his knees. It makes for interesting theater, but poor theology.

Mercy stands so strong in the hierarchy of virtues Saint Thomas Aquinas deemed it the greatest of them all. "...All the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies." The virtues which spring from mercy are plentiful – forgiveness, compassion, kindness, understanding, respect, and - most of all - love. The Beatitude states simply those who extend mercy will receive it back from a God whose love would never drive us to our knees out of malice. Instead, we bow down in grateful recognition of the psalmist's words: "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in mercy." (Psalm 145:8)

**Food for thought:**

*"Justice without mercy is unloving; mercy without justice is degrading."* - Friedrich Von Bodelschwingh

The account of the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11) is a touching example of the interplay between justice and mercy. Jesus responds to the crowd's frenzied demand for justice by calling upon them to account for their own sins. He then extends mercy to the woman by forgiving her and challenging her to reform her life. Use the passage to reflect on ways you might balance concerns for justice with merciful love.

**Faith in Action:**

Jesus describes mercy as the touchstone of all of our actions. *"Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful."* (Luke 6:36) The Works of Mercy are acts of love by which we care for the bodily and spiritual needs of others. Encourage principals and teachers to expand opportunities for students to exercise the Corporal and Spiritual Acts of Mercy in age-appropriate ways.

**Prayer:**

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Diocesan Director's Message:**

It's a familiar scene in classic melodramas. The villain corners the hero and, in a final act of triumph, insists his nemesis beg for mercy. The audience is tempted to think for a moment evil defeats good as the hero is brought to his knees. It makes for interesting theater, but poor theology.

Mercy stands so strong in the hierarchy of virtues Saint Thomas Aquinas deemed it the greatest of them all. "...All the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies." The virtues spring from mercy are plentiful – forgiveness, compassion, kindness, understanding, respect, and - most of all - love. The Beatitude states simply those who extend mercy will receive it back from a God whose love would never drive us to our knees out of malice. Instead, we bow down in grateful recognition of the psalmist's words: "*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.*" (Psalm 145:8)

**Food for thought:**

*"Justice without mercy is unloving; mercy without justice is degrading."* - Friedrich Von Bodelschwingh

The account of the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11) is a touching example of the interplay between justice and mercy. Jesus responds to the crowd's frenzied demand for justice by calling upon them to account for their own sins. He then extends mercy to the woman by forgiving her and challenging her to reform her life. Use the passage to reflect on ways you might balance concerns for justice with merciful love.

**Faith in Action:**

Jesus describes mercy as the touchstone of all of our actions. "*Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful.*" (Luke 6:36) The Works of Mercy are acts of love by which we care for the bodily and spiritual needs of others. Encourage catechetical leaders to expand opportunities for children and youth to exercise the Corporal and Spiritual Acts of Mercy in age-appropriate ways in their parishes.

**Prayer:**

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Pastor's Message:**

Mercy stands so strong in the hierarchy of virtues Saint Thomas Aquinas deemed it the greatest of them all. "...All the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies." The virtues which spring from mercy are plentiful – forgiveness, compassion, kindness, understanding, respect, and - most of all - love. The Beatitude states simply those who extend mercy will also receive it. As the psalmist writes, "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in mercy." (Psalm 145:8)

Children are greatly motivated by a brand of justice that demands fairness. In their minds, this often means getting what they deserve – nothing more and nothing less. When speaking to them about mercy, emphasize the unlimited nature of God's love. Assure them, even when they do things, which may be wrong, God is always willing to give them a second chance. God's love truly abounds in mercy.

**Building Mercy in the Parish Community:**

As the parish reflects on the virtue of mercy, highlight specific ways various ministries and programs carry out the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Tell about these efforts in the bulletin or on the parish web site. Affirm the work of committees and volunteers who serve the needy, and who provide comfort and care to those who are homebound, sick, or have special needs. Use this opportunity to involve more parishioners in parish works of mercy as well as to encourage them to put mercy into practice at home and in the workplace.

**Prayer:**

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Day 1

Good morning. We are focusing this week on the virtue of **mercy**. Mercy is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love. Jesus taught us in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy." (Matthew 5:7). Saint Thomas Aquinas called mercy the greatest of all the virtues because so many other virtues spring from it. When we are kind, forgiving, caring, or loving, we are showing mercy. I am looking forward to seeing how mercy will grow among us this week. May God's merciful love be with you today.

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Day 2

Good morning. We have so many wonderful examples of **mercy** in the stories of the saints. Today you will hear about Saint Peter Claver. He gave his life to caring for people who were captured in Africa and sent to South America as slaves. Although this was a long time ago, the care he gave to those men, women, and children is a powerful example of mercy. I hope each of you will try to follow the example of the saints. One of the most important ways you can do this is by showing mercy to one another and by praying for those who are poor and in need. God bless you.

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Day 3

Good morning. Have you ever done something you were ashamed of? We all have. It makes us feel sad, guilty, and even afraid. We may think our parents, teachers, or friends won't forgive us. The good news is we never have to worry about God's love. He is always ready to forgive us and to give us a second chance. Listen to these beautiful words from the Bible: "*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in **mercy***" (Psalm 145:8). God's mercy never ends. When we trust in mercy, we know there is nothing we can do to make God stop loving us. Keep that thought close to your heart today.



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Day 4

Good morning. We all know Jesus wants us to love one another. This means he also wants us to show **mercy**. Listen to the words he spoke to his disciples: "Be merciful, just as... your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). To be merciful like God the Father means we forgive each other. We care about each other. We offer to help one another. And, most of all, we love one another. When we show mercy to each other, it naturally spills outward. Our Catholic faith teaches us to practice the Works of Mercy. These are acts of love by which we care for the needs of others, especially those who are poor, sick, lonely, or sad. Let's all put mercy to work in our lives today. God bless you.



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Day 5

Good morning. By now, you know many ways to show **mercy** to one another here at school. Will you take what you learned home to your family? Tell them the story of Saint Peter Claver and what you learned about the Works of Mercy. Most of all, show your mercy by being loving, kind, and forgiving. Watch for ways your parents, your brothers or sisters, your grandparents, and other people in your family show mercy to you and to one another. When we encourage each other, mercy grows. With mercy, our world a much more loving place. May God's peace be with you.

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Faith in Action:**

**Explain** mercy is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love. **Talk** to the children about how Jesus wants us to show mercy to others. We show mercy by sharing God's love and forgiveness. God sent Jesus to show us this love and how to share this love with others. **Remind** the group we can follow Jesus by helping the poor, caring for the sick, giving food to the hungry, and comforting the sad and lonely. **Explain** when we care for the needs of others, we are showing mercy. **Invite** the children to share ways they can show mercy to others. **Read** the anchor Scripture: "*Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*" (Matthew 5:7) **Explain** when we show mercy to others, God will show mercy to us.

**Fostering Mercy (Option 1):**

**Ask** the children to share ways they can show mercy to others at school. **Invite** them to create a group story illustrating mercy being shown at school. **Begin** by saying: *Some students were playing on the playground.* Then go around the room, having each child add a sentence to the story. **Remind** them the story must be one that gives examples of mercy.

Suggestions for other story starters include:

- *When it was time for lunch, the class went into the cafeteria.*
- *When the bell rang, students rushed into the classroom.*
- *On the way to the library, everyone heard a loud noise.*
- *When the teacher looked up, she was surprised by what she saw.*

**Encourage** the children to show mercy to everyone at school. **Send** a note to parents in a letter or email about the story starter. **Encourage** them to try a story starter about ways to show mercy at home with their child.

**Fostering Mercy (Option 2):**

**Share** the story of Saint Peter Claver in these or your own words:

*Many years ago, Peter Claver grew up on a farm in Spain. Because he loved God very much he wanted to give his life to God by becoming a priest. Peter Claver wanted to share God's love by helping and caring for others in the same way Jesus did. After he became a priest, he believed God wanted him to become a missionary and teach about God to others who lived far away. He was sent to South America, to the place where many people were brought on ships from Africa to be sold as slaves. These people were treated very badly and were scared, hungry, thirsty, and sick. Everyday, Peter Claver would bring these people water, food, medicine, and clothing.*

*(continued on next page)*

## Mercy (continued)

*Then he would share with them stories about God, his son Jesus, and their love for them. He administered the sacraments to these people, baptizing thousands. Peter Claver showed mercy to these people.*

**Ask** the children if they have ever been very thirsty after playing outside on a warm day. **Invite** them to share how good it was when someone gave them a drink of cold water. **Recall** how Saint Peter Claver helped the people on the ships who were hungry and thirsty. **Say:** *Imagine how wonderful it felt to have someone bring them food and water.* **Point out** Saint Peter Claver brought kind words and actions along with the food and water. **Ask** the group to consider something they could bring to others today that would help them feel better. **Write** the following words on the board: help, respect, kindness, love, healing. **Point out** these words describe merciful words or actions we could offer to someone else. As an additional activity, **instruct** the children to use one of these words in a story describing how they could show mercy to someone. As an extended home activity, **suggest** to parents they help their child write words such as *help, respect, kindness, love, healing*, etc. on note cards. **Tell** them to use the cards as reminders to perform merciful actions as a family.

### Prayer for Mercy:

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 1

**Explain** mercy is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love. **Talk** to the children about how Jesus wants us to show mercy to others. We show mercy by sharing God's love and forgiveness. God sent Jesus to show us this love and how to share this love with others. **Remind** the students we can follow Jesus by helping the poor, caring for the sick, giving food to the hungry, and comforting the sad and lonely. **Explain** when we care for the needs of others, we are showing mercy. **Invite** the children to share ways they can show mercy to others. **Read** the anchor Scripture: "*Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*" (Matthew 5:7) **Explain** when we show mercy to others, God will show mercy to us. **Invite** the children to bow their heads as you offer the following prayer:

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 2

**Review** the meaning of **mercy** by reminding the students Jesus showed God's love and forgiveness to others. **Remind** them Jesus fed the hungry, helped the poor and the sick, and made those who were sad or lonely feel better. Jesus showed us how to love and care for everyone. **Share** the story of Saint Peter Claver in these or your own words:

*Many years ago, Peter Claver grew up on a farm in Spain. Because he loved God very much he wanted to give his life to God by becoming a priest. Peter Claver wanted to share God's love by helping and caring for others in the same way Jesus did. After he became a priest, he believed God wanted him to become a missionary and teach about God to others who lived far away. He was sent to South America, to the place where many people were brought on ships from Africa to be sold as slaves. These people were treated very badly and were scared, hungry, thirsty, and sick. Everyday Peter Claver would bring these people water, food, medicine, and clothing. Then he would share with them stories about God, his son Jesus, and their love for them. He administered the sacraments to these people, baptizing thousands. Peter Claver showed mercy to these people.*

*(continued on next page)*

## Mercy (continued)

### Lesson 2

**Ask** the children if they have ever been very thirsty after playing outside on a warm day. **Invite** them to share how good it was when someone gave them a drink of cold water. **Recall** how Saint Peter Claver helped the people on the ships who were hungry and thirsty. **Say:** *Imagine how wonderful it felt to have someone bring them food and water.* **Point out** Saint Peter Claver brought kind words and actions along with the food and water. **Ask** students to consider something they could bring to others today to help them feel better. **Write** the following words on the board: help, respect, kindness, love, healing. **Point out** how these words describe merciful words or actions which we could offer to someone else. As an extended activity, **instruct** the students to use one of these words in a paragraph describing how they could show mercy to someone. As time allows, **instruct** the children to use one of these words in a story describing how they could show mercy to someone. As an extended home activity, **suggest** to parents they help their child write words such as “help,” “respect,” “kindness,” “love,” “healing,” etc. on note cards. **Tell** them to use the cards as reminders to perform merciful actions as a family.



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 3

**Review** the meaning of **mercy** with the students. **Read** the anchor Scripture. **Talk** to the children about the word, “mercy.” **Ask** if they know other words, which mean the same as “mercy.” **Explain** these are synonyms for “mercy.” **Offer** examples such as “compassion,” “kindness,” and “support.” **Ask** if they know any words, which mean the opposite of “mercy.” **Explain** these are antonyms for “mercy.” **Offer** examples such as “selfishness,” “hard-heartedness,” and “meanness.” **Give** each student a sheet of paper. **Have** them fold it in half lengthwise. **Instruct** students to label the top of the first column with the word, “synonym,” and the top of the second column with the word, “antonym.” **Have** each student write five synonyms for “mercy” in the first column and five antonyms for “mercy” in the second column. **Ask** the students to share their answers. As an extended activity, **tell** students to write compound sentences using the words they identified. **Remind** them to use correct punctuation and capitalization. **Encourage** students to challenge a family member to write a compound sentence including a synonym and an antonym for “mercy.”





**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 4

**Review** the meaning of **mercy** with the students. **Read** the anchor Scripture.

**Remind** them we can show mercy to others at school. **Invite** the students to create a group story, which illustrates mercy being shown at school. **Begin** by saying: Some students were playing on the playground. Then go around the room, having each student add a sentence to the story. **Remind** them the story must demonstrate mercy. Suggestions for other story starters include:

- *When it was time for lunch, the class went into the cafeteria.*
- *When the bell rang, students rushed into the classroom.*
- *On the way to the library, everyone heard a loud noise.*
- *When the teacher looked up, she was surprised by what she saw.*

**Encourage** the students to show mercy to everyone at school. As an extended home activity, **send** a note to parents in a letter or email about the story starter. **Encourage** them to try a story starter about ways to show mercy at home with their child.

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 5

**Review** the meaning of **mercy** with the students. **Read** the anchor Scripture.

**Emphasize:** *We will be shown mercy when we show mercy to others.* **Lead** a discussion regarding what it means to the students. **Write** the following words on the board: for, mercy, blessed, merciful, will, are, they, be, shown, the. **Explain** to the students these words are to be used as their word bank. **Encourage** the students to arrange these words on a sheet of paper to form the anchor Scripture. When everyone is finished, **invite** the students to read it together. **Encourage** the students to bring the Scripture home and share it with their families. As an extended family activity, **suggest** to parents they locate the Scripture in their Bibles and read all the Beatitudes together as a family.



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Faith in Action:

**Explain** mercy is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love. **Read** the anchor Scripture: "*Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*" (Matthew 5:7) **Read** the following quote: "*The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.*" (Evangelii Gaudium, 114) **Explain:** It was written by Pope Francis as part of his encyclical Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel). **Ask** the group to think about what Pope Francis is inviting us, as members of the Catholic Church, to do. **Read** the quote again. **Write** the following words on the board: "place of mercy", "welcome", "love", "forgive", "encourage." **Underline** the first words and stress how Pope Francis is inviting us, as a Church, to be merciful. **Say:** *Four ways to do this are by welcoming, loving, forgiving, and encouraging others to live the gospel.* **Divide** the class into four small groups. Assign each group one of the four verbs. **Invite** them to come up with one or two concrete ways to carry out the pope's words at home, in the school, or with friends, teammates, or neighbors. **Draw** the large group together and **share** responses. If time allows, **decide** on one or two responses to implement together as a class. **Encourage** the children to live their Catholic faith by being merciful.

## Fostering Mercy (Option 1):

**Ask:** *How can you perform the acts of mercy with your family? How can you perform the works of mercy for your family?* **Ask** the students what they know about the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. **List** the Works of Mercy on the board:

*Corporal Works of Mercy* - Feed the hungry. Give drink to the thirsty. Clothe the naked. Visit the imprisoned. Shelter the homeless. Visit the sick. Bury the dead.

*Spiritual Works of Mercy* - Admonish the sinner. Instruct the ignorant. Counsel the doubtful. Comfort the sorrowful. Forgive all injuries. Pray for the living and the dead.

**Brainstorm** ways to apply them in a family. **Offer** examples such as:

- *Give drink to the thirsty – taking a drink out to someone doing yard work*
- *Visit the imprisoned – staying home to spend time with a grounded sibling instead of going out with your friends*
- *Clothe the naked – sort through clothes to donate to a parish clothing drive*
- *Instruct the ignorant – help a younger sibling with their homework*

*(continued on next page)*

## Mercy (continued)

**Ask** the children to pick one of these examples to take home with them. **Encourage** them to put the Work of Mercy into practice in the home. **Send** a note to parents about this discussion and **ask** them to watch for ways their child is showing mercy to others.

### Fostering Mercy (Option 2):

**Tell** the story of Saint Peter Claver in these or your own words.

*Peter Claver was born in Spain in 1580. His parents were poor farmers. Even so, Peter was able to go to a Catholic college in the capital city of Barcelona. When he was twenty years old, he began his studies to become a Jesuit priest. During the course of his studies, he met another Jesuit, Alphonsus Rodriguez, who had been a missionary in South America for forty years. Alphonsus encouraged Peter to go to the Americas and minister to the people there. Peter went to Cartagena, which is now the country of Columbia. This is the port where thousands of people who were brought from West Africa were sold as slaves. Even though the pope at the time condemned slavery as evil, the practice was flourishing in the Americas. The slaves were subjected to terrible treatment on the ships. They were crowded together and given little to eat or drink. Many were sick and over one-third of them died before the ships reached land. Peter wanted to do something to ease their suffering. As soon as the ships pulled into the harbor, he went on board, bringing food and water. He dressed their wounds and shared the Gospel with them. He assured them of their worth and dignity in the eyes of God. Thousands of them entered the Church through Baptism. Peter also traveled to the plantations where he encouraged the slaves to live as Christians, and urged the owners to treat the slaves humanely. He refused to stay in the plantation houses, but chose instead to lodge in the slave quarters. The slaves knew he was a true friend.*

**Remind** the group of the quote by Pope Francis from the earlier lesson. **Ask:** *How did Saint Peter Claver make the Church a “place of mercy”?* **Point out** how he cared for not only the physical needs of the slaves, which were great, but also for their spiritual ones. **Emphasize** the way he welcomed the slaves as fellow humans, who are worthy of dignity and respect. **Explain** by being merciful, we are touched by the suffering of others; and we do what we can to offer comfort, assurance, and love. **Read** the anchor Scripture again. **Remind** the children the Beatitudes describe the way Jesus asked us to live as disciples. As an extended activity, **distribute** paper and **invite** the children to write about a group of people in today’s world whose suffering touches their hearts. **Invite** volunteers to read their responses. **Include** these people in class prayers for the remainder of the week.

### Prayer for Mercy:

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 1

**Explain** mercy is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love. **Read** the anchor Scripture: "*Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*" (Matthew 5:7) **Read** the following quote: "*The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.*" (Evangelii Gaudium, 114) **Explain:** *It was written by Pope Francis as part of his encyclical Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel).* **Ask** students to think about what Pope Francis is inviting us, as members of the Catholic Church, to do. **Read** the quote again. **Write** the following words on the board: "place of mercy;" "welcome," "love," "forgive," "encourage." **Underline** the first words and stress how Pope Francis is inviting us, as a Church, to be merciful. **Say:** *Four ways to do this are by welcoming, loving, forgiving, and encouraging others to live the gospel.* **Divide** the class into four small groups. **Assign** each group one of the four verbs. **Invite** them to come up with two or three concrete ways to carry out the pope's words at home, in the school, or with friends, teammates, or neighbors. **Draw** the large group together and **share** responses. If time allows, **decide** on one or two responses to implement together as a class.

*(continued on next page)*

## Mercy (continued)

### Lesson 1

**Encourage** students to live their Catholic faith by being merciful. **Gather** students in a circle to offer the following prayer:

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 2

**Review** the meaning of **mercy**. **Read** the anchor Scripture. **Tell** the story of Saint Peter Claver in these or your own words.

*Peter Claver was born in Spain in 1580. His parents were poor farmers. Even so, Peter was able to go to a Catholic college in the capital city of Barcelona. When he was twenty years old, he began his studies to become a Jesuit priest. During the course of his studies, he met another Jesuit, Alphonsus Rodriguez, who had been a missionary in South America for forty years. Alphonsus encouraged Peter to go to the Americas and minister to the people there. Peter went to Cartagena, which is now a city in Columbia, South America. This is the port where thousands of people who were brought from West Africa were sold as slaves. Although both Pope Paul III and Pope Pius IX condemned the slave trade, the practice flourished and grew in the Americas. The slaves were subjected to terrible treatment on the ships. They were crowded together given little to eat or drink. Many were sick and over one-third of them died before the ships reached land. Peter wanted to do something to ease their suffering. As soon as the ships pulled into the harbor, he went on board, bringing food and water. He dressed*

*(continued on next page)*



## Mercy (continued)

### Lesson 2

*their wounds and shared the Gospel with them. He assured them of their worth and dignity in the eyes of God. Thousands of them entered the Church through Baptism. Peter also traveled to the plantations where he encouraged the slaves to live as Christians, and urged the owners to treat the slaves humanely. He refused to stay in the plantation houses, but chose instead to lodge in the slave quarters. The slaves knew he was a true friend.*

**Remind** students of the quote by Pope Francis from the previous lesson. **Ask:** *How did Saint Peter Claver make the Church a “place of mercy”?* **Point out** how he cared for not only the physical needs of the slaves, which were great, but also for their spiritual ones. **Emphasize** the way he welcomed the slaves as fellow humans who are worthy of dignity and respect. **Explain** by being merciful, we are touched by the suffering of others, and we do what we can to offer comfort, assurance, and love. **Read** the anchor Scripture once again. **Remind** students the Beatitudes describe the way Jesus asked us to live as disciples. As an extended activity, **distribute** paper and **invite** students to write about a group of people in today’s world whose suffering touches their hearts. **Invite** volunteers to read their responses. Include these people in class prayers for the remainder of the week.

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 3

**Review** the meaning of **mercy** and the anchor Scripture with students. **Remind** students of the Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy. **Ask** volunteers to define each of those two terms. **Expand** upon their explanation as needed by noting the Corporal Works of Mercy are acts of love, which care for the bodily (corporal) needs of other, and Spiritual Works of Mercy care for their spiritual needs. **Ask** students to name the Works of Mercy. **List** them on the board as students correctly name them. **Provide** missing elements if necessary:

*Corporal Works of Mercy* - Feed the hungry. Give drink to the thirsty. Clothe the naked. Visit the imprisoned. Shelter the homeless. Visit the sick. Bury the dead.

*Spiritual Works of Mercy* – Admonish the sinner. Instruct the ignorant. Counsel the doubtful. Comfort the sorrowful. Forgive all injuries. Pray for the living and the dead.

*(continued on next page)*

## Mercy (continued)

### Lesson 3

As an extended activity, **write** each of the Works of Mercy on a strip of paper and place them in a container. **Call on** students to draw one slip from the container and answer the following: *Is it a Corporal Work of Mercy or a Spiritual Work of Mercy? What is an example of a Work of Mercy a sixth grader could do?* (Note: Since children may not be able to do some of the works, such as visiting the imprisoned, suggest writing letters to deployed soldiers or visiting the home-bound/nursing home as an age-appropriate alternative.)

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 4

**Review** the meaning of **mercy** and the anchor Scripture with students. **Facilitate** a short discussion on what it means to be merciful at school. **Ask:** *What are some opportunities to be merciful at school?* **Offer** examples such as: a new student is alone, a classmate forgot his lunch, etc. **Ask:** *How do you show mercy to those around you at school?* **Offer** examples such as: apologizing when you hurt someone's feelings, being considerate to your teacher, etc. As an extended activity, **divide** students into groups. **Tell** them to collaborate to make fliers or posters encouraging students to demonstrate mercy at school.

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Mathew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Lesson 5

**Review** the meaning of **mercy** and the anchor Scripture with students. **Review** the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy with students. **Ask:** *How can you perform the Acts of Mercy with your family? How can you perform the Works of Mercy for your family?* **List** the Works of Mercy on the board. **Brainstorm** ways to apply them in a family. **Offer** examples such as:

- *Give drink to the thirsty – taking a drink out to someone doing yard work*
- *Visit the imprisoned – staying home to spend time with a grounded sibling instead of going out with your friends*
- *Clothe the naked – sort through clothes to donate to a parish clothing drive*
- *Instruct the ignorant – help a younger sibling with their homework*

**Ask** the children to pick one of these examples to take home with them.

**Encourage** them to put the selected Work of Mercy into practice in the home.

**Send** a note to parents about this discussion and **ask** them to watch for ways their child is showing mercy to others.

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Reflection:**

It's a familiar scene in classic melodramas. The villain corners the hero and, in a final act of triumph, insists his nemesis beg for mercy. The audience is tempted to think for a moment evil defeats good as the hero is brought to his knees. It makes for interesting theater, but poor theology. Mercy stands so strong in the hierarchy of virtues Saint Thomas Aquinas deemed it the greatest of them all. "...All the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies." The virtues that spring from mercy are plentiful – forgiveness, compassion, kindness, understanding, respect, and - most of all - love. The Beatitude states simply those who extend mercy will receive it back from a God whose love would never drive us to our knees out of malice. Instead, we bow down in grateful recognition of the psalmist's words: "*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.*" (Psalm 145:8)

**Family Activity:**

Jesus described mercy as the touchstone of all of our actions. "*Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful.*" (Luke 6:36) The Corporal Works of Mercy are acts of love by which we care for the physical needs of others. Expand your family's extension of mercy by doing something together to serve the poor, the sick, or the elderly. Shop for food to donate to a parish pantry or local food bank. Volunteer to visit residents in an extended care facility. Collect toys and books to bring to a children's hospital or homeless shelter. Include those in need of food, housing, and care in your mealtime prayers. Let mercy grow in your hearts as you reflect upon the blessings in your own lives, and the ways you can share with others. Learn more about the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy from the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops as [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

**Prayer:**

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*



**Definición**

**MISERICORDIA** es la preocupación por las necesidades de las mentes, los corazones, y las vidas de la gente. Significa compartir el perdón y el amor de Dios.

**Pasaje de la Biblia de referencia**

Mateo 5:7 - Bienaventurados los misericordiosos, pues ellos recibirán misericordia.

# Misericordia

**Reflexión:**

Es una escena conocida de los melodramas clásicos. El villano acorrala al héroe y en un gesto final de triunfo, insiste en que su enemigo pida misericordia. Por unos instantes, el público se inclina a pensar que el mal ha derrotado al bien, al ver al héroe humillado. Como teatro, es interesante, pero no es buena teología.

La Misericordia ocupa un lugar tan alto en la jerarquía de las virtudes, que Santo Tomás de Aquino la consideraba la mayor entre ellas. “...*Todas las otras giran alrededor de ella, y aún más, las compensa en sus deficiencias.*” Las virtudes que se derivan de la misericordia son muchas – el perdón, la compasión, la bondad, la comprensión, el respeto, y más que nada, el amor. La Beatitud dice simplemente que aquellos que otorgan misericordia la recibirán también, de parte de un Dios que jamás nos haría humillarnos maliciosamente. Por el contrario, inclinamos la cabeza agradecidos al escuchar las palabras del cantor de los salmos: “*Clemente y misericordioso es Jehová, lento para la ira, y grande en misericordia.*” (Salmo 145:8)

**Actividad para realizar en familia:**

Jesús describió la misericordia como la medida principal de todos nuestros actos. “Sed pues misericordiosos, como también vuestro Padre es misericordioso” (Lucas 6:36). Los Actos de Misericordia Corporales son actos de amor con los que nos ocupamos de las necesidades físicas del prójimo. Expandan las acciones misericordiosas de su familia, haciendo juntos algo para servir a los pobres, los enfermos, los ancianos. Compren alimentos para donar a la despensa de una parroquia o a un banco de alimentos local. Ofrézcanse a visitar residencias de ancianos. Junten juguetes y libros para llevar a un hospital de niños o un albergue de personas sin hogar. Incluyan en su rezo antes de las comidas a aquellos que necesitan alimentos, vivienda, o atención médica. Dejen que crezca la misericordia en sus corazones mientras reflexionan sobre las bendiciones que han recibido en sus vidas, y cómo compartirlas con los demás.

Encuentre más información sobre las Obras de Misericordia espirituales y corporales de la Conferencia Católica de Obispos de los Estados Unidos en [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

**Oración:**

*Dios de bondad, ayúdanos a mostrar misericordia amándonos, cuidándonos, y perdonándonos los unos a los otros. Gracias por el amor y la misericordia que nos das cada día. Amén.*



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

## Faith in Action:

**Explain** mercy is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love. **Read** the anchor Scripture: "*Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*" (Matthew 5:7) **Read** the following quote: "*The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.*" (Evangelii Gaudium, 114) **Explain:** It was written by Pope Francis as part of his encyclical Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel). **Ask** the group to think about what Pope Francis is inviting us, as members of the Catholic Church, to do. **Read** the quote again. **Write** the following words on the board: "place of mercy", "welcome", "love", "forgive", "encourage." **Underline** the first words and stress how Pope Francis is inviting us, as a Church, to be merciful. **Say:** *Four ways to do this are by welcoming, loving, forgiving, and encouraging others to live the gospel.* **Divide** the class into four small groups. Assign each group one of the four verbs. **Invite** them to come up with one or two concrete ways to carry out the pope's words at home, in the school, or with friends, teammates, or neighbors. **Draw** the large group together and **share** responses. If time allows, **decide** on one or two responses to implement together as a class. **Encourage** the children to live their Catholic faith by being merciful.

## Fostering Mercy (Option 1):

**Ask:** *How can you perform the acts of mercy with your family? How can you perform the works of mercy for your family?* **Ask** the students what they know about the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. **List** the Works of Mercy on the board:

*Corporal Works of Mercy* - Feed the hungry. Give drink to the thirsty. Clothe the naked. Visit the imprisoned. Shelter the homeless. Visit the sick. Bury the dead.

*Spiritual Works of Mercy* - Admonish the sinner. Instruct the ignorant. Counsel the doubtful. Comfort the sorrowful. Forgive all injuries. Pray for the living and the dead.

**Brainstorm** ways to apply them in a family. **Offer** examples such as:

- *Give drink to the thirsty – taking a drink out to someone doing yard work*
- *Visit the imprisoned – staying home to spend time with a grounded sibling instead of going out with your friends*
- *Clothe the naked – sort through clothes to donate to a parish clothing drive*
- *Instruct the ignorant – help a younger sibling with their homework*

*(continued on next page)*

## Mercy (continued)

**Ask** the children to pick one of these examples to take home with them. **Encourage** them to put the Work of Mercy into practice in the home. **Send** a note to parents about this discussion and **ask** them to watch for ways their child is showing mercy to others.

### Fostering Mercy (Option 2):

**Tell** the story of Saint Peter Claver in these or your own words.

*Peter Claver was born in Spain in 1580. His parents were poor farmers. Even so, Peter was able to go to a Catholic college in the capital city of Barcelona. When he was twenty years old, he began his studies to become a Jesuit priest. During the course of his studies, he met another Jesuit, Alphonsus Rodriguez, who had been a missionary in South America for forty years. Alphonsus encouraged Peter to go to the Americas and minister to the people there. Peter went to Cartagena, which is now the country of Columbia. This is the port where thousands of people who were brought from West Africa were sold as slaves. Even though the pope at the time condemned slavery as evil, the practice was flourishing in the Americas. The slaves were subjected to terrible treatment on the ships. They were crowded together and given little to eat or drink. Many were sick and over one-third of them died before the ships reached land. Peter wanted to do something to ease their suffering. As soon as the ships pulled into the harbor, he went on board, bringing food and water. He dressed their wounds and shared the Gospel with them. He assured them of their worth and dignity in the eyes of God. Thousands of them entered the Church through Baptism. Peter also traveled to the plantations where he encouraged the slaves to live as Christians, and urged the owners to treat the slaves humanely. He refused to stay in the plantation houses, but chose instead to lodge in the slave quarters. The slaves knew he was a true friend.*

**Remind** the group of the quote by Pope Francis from the earlier lesson. **Ask:** *How did Saint Peter Claver make the Church a “place of mercy”?* **Point out** how he cared for not only the physical needs of the slaves, which were great, but also for their spiritual ones. **Emphasize** the way he welcomed the slaves as fellow humans, who are worthy of dignity and respect. **Explain** by being merciful, we are touched by the suffering of others; and we do what we can to offer comfort, assurance, and love. **Read** the anchor Scripture again. **Remind** the children the Beatitudes describe the way Jesus asked us to live as disciples. As an extended activity, **distribute** paper and **invite** the children to write about a group of people in today’s world whose suffering touches their hearts. **Invite** volunteers to read their responses. **Include** these people in class prayers for the remainder of the week.

### Prayer for Mercy:

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Faith in Action:**

**Explain** mercy is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love. **Talk** to the children about how Jesus wants us to show mercy to others. We show mercy by sharing God's love and forgiveness. God sent Jesus to show us this love and how to share this love with others. **Remind** the group we can follow Jesus by helping the poor, caring for the sick, giving food to the hungry, and comforting the sad and lonely. **Explain** when we care for the needs of others, we are showing mercy. **Invite** the children to share ways they can show mercy to others. **Read** the anchor Scripture: "*Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*" (Matthew 5:7) **Explain** when we show mercy to others, God will show mercy to us.

**Fostering Mercy (Option 1):**

**Ask** the children to share ways they can show mercy to others at school. **Invite** them to create a group story illustrating mercy being shown at school. **Begin** by saying: *Some students were playing on the playground.* Then go around the room, having each child add a sentence to the story. **Remind** them the story must be one that gives examples of mercy.

Suggestions for other story starters include:

- *When it was time for lunch, the class went into the cafeteria.*
- *When the bell rang, students rushed into the classroom.*
- *On the way to the library, everyone heard a loud noise.*
- *When the teacher looked up, she was surprised by what she saw.*

**Encourage** the children to show mercy to everyone at school. **Send** a note to parents in a letter or email about the story starter. **Encourage** them to try a story starter about ways to show mercy at home with their child.

**Fostering Mercy (Option 2):**

**Share** the story of Saint Peter Claver in these or your own words:

*Many years ago, Peter Claver grew up on a farm in Spain. Because he loved God very much he wanted to give his life to God by becoming a priest. Peter Claver wanted to share God's love by helping and caring for others in the same way Jesus did. After he became a priest, he believed God wanted him to become a missionary and teach about God to others who lived far away. He was sent to South America, to the place where many people were brought on ships from Africa to be sold as slaves. These people were treated very badly and were scared, hungry, thirsty, and sick. Everyday, Peter Claver would bring these people water, food, medicine, and clothing.*

*(continued on next page)*

## Mercy (continued)

*Then he would share with them stories about God, his son Jesus, and their love for them. He administered the sacraments to these people, baptizing thousands. Peter Claver showed mercy to these people.*

**Ask** the children if they have ever been very thirsty after playing outside on a warm day. **Invite** them to share how good it was when someone gave them a drink of cold water. **Recall** how Saint Peter Claver helped the people on the ships who were hungry and thirsty. **Say:** *Imagine how wonderful it felt to have someone bring them food and water.* **Point out** Saint Peter Claver brought kind words and actions along with the food and water. **Ask** the group to consider something they could bring to others today that would help them feel better. **Write** the following words on the board: help, respect, kindness, love, healing. **Point out** these words describe merciful words or actions we could offer to someone else. As an additional activity, **instruct** the children to use one of these words in a story describing how they could show mercy to someone. As an extended home activity, **suggest** to parents they help their child write words such as *help, respect, kindness, love, healing*, etc. on note cards. **Tell** them to use the cards as reminders to perform merciful actions as a family.

### Prayer for Mercy:

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*



**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Catechetical Leader's Message:**

It's a familiar scene in classic melodramas. The villain corners the hero and, in a final act of triumph, insists his nemesis beg for mercy. The audience is tempted to think for a moment evil defeats good as the hero is brought to his knees. It makes for interesting theater, but poor theology.

Mercy stands so strong in the hierarchy of virtues Saint Thomas Aquinas deemed it the greatest of them all. "...All the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies." The virtues spring from mercy are plentiful – forgiveness, compassion, kindness, understanding, respect, and - most of all - love. The Beatitude states simply those who extend mercy will receive it back from a God whose love would never drive us to our knees out of malice. Instead, we bow down in grateful recognition of the psalmist's words: "*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.*" (Psalm 145:8)

**Faith in Action:**

*"Justice without mercy is unloving; mercy without justice is degrading."* - Friedrich Von Bodelschwingh

The account of the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11) is a touching example of the interplay between justice and mercy. Jesus responds to the crowd's frenzied demand for justice by calling upon them to account for their own sins. He then extends mercy to the woman by forgiving her and challenging her to reform her life. Use the passage to reflect on ways you might balance concerns for justice with merciful love.

**Building Mercy in the Catechetical Program:**

Saint Peter Claver was a model of mercy. His ministry to slaves not only brought relief from their physical suffering but also affirmed their human dignity and assured them of God's merciful love. As catechists share his story, encourage them to stress the importance of treating others with tenderness and compassion. Let mercy become the hallmark of your parish catechetical program.

**Prayer:**

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*

**Definition**

**MERCY** is caring for the needs of people's minds, hearts, and lives. It means to share in God's forgiveness and love.

**Scripture Reference**

Matthew 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.*

# Mercy

**Additional Scripture:**

Luke 6:36 – “Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful.”

Matthew 9:13 – “Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”

Psalm 100:5 – “Good indeed is the Lord, his mercy endures forever, his faithfulness lasts through every generation.”

**Saints and Holy People:**

“In itself mercy is the greatest of the virtues, since all the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies.” – Saint Thomas Aquinas

“Extend your mercy towards others, so that there can be no one in need whom you meet without helping. For what hope is there for us if God should withdraw His Mercy from us?” - Saint Vincent de Paul

**The Church Speaks:**

“Merciful forgiveness – the mercy that we show to others and the mercy that we ourselves seek – is indivisible. If we ourselves are not merciful and do not forgive one another, God's mercy will not reach our hearts.” - YouCat, 524

“The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.” - Evangelii Gaudium, 114

**On the Web:**

To find out more about the life of Saint Peter Claver visit [www.sadlierreligion.com](http://www.sadlierreligion.com).

**Prayer:**

*Gracious God, help us to show mercy through loving, caring for, and forgiving one another. Thank you for the love and mercy you show to us each day. Amen.*