

Service Ideas Related to the Works of Mercy

Corporal Works:

Care for the Sick

- Send a card to an elderly friend who may feel forgotten.
- Prepare and deliver a meal for a family with a family member hospitalized.
- Schedule a visit to a nursing home. (Many have an activities director who will help you plan something that will engage the residents.)
- Adopt a parish shut-in and send a monthly card or remembrance to him or her. This could include a poinsettia at Christmas, a fruit basket at Thanksgiving, a lily for Easter, or a decorated box of tissues for Valentine's Day.

Feed the Hungry

- Contact a local food pantry or soup kitchen and ask about opportunities for service.
- Participate in One Can Help here at SVdP monthly.
- Thanksgiving/Christmas Meals.
- Participate in Operation Rice Bowl.
- Pray the following prayer at meals that your youth group or religious education class shares: "Lord, we thank you for food and remember the hungry. We thank you for friends and remember the lonely. We ask that you bless this food so that it might give us strength to do your will."

Giving Drink to the Thirsty

- Volunteer to clean at a local animal shelter.
- Raise funds for Catholic Relief Services by participating in Operation Rice Bowl.

Clothe the Naked

- Participate in Parish clothing drives like:
 - October Hat and Mitten Drive
 - SVdP Society clothing drives
- Volunteer at a thrift shop. Help sort and tag donated clothing.

Welcome the Stranger

- Participate in the Parish Christmas Gift Drive.
- Make Welcome Kits for homeless centers (contact them for what they need).

- Participate in the Parish Spring and Summer donation drives for Habitat for Humanity.
- Be ministers of hospitality at weekend Masses.

Help Those Imprisoned

- Contact area detention centers, jails, and prisons and ask for the prison chaplain. Ask if you can serve them in any way. Examples include preparing care kits at the holidays (toothpaste, soap, and deodorant are not provided by prisons), organizing a book drive, preparing rosaries or prayer cards, and donating hymnals for prison liturgies.

Bury the Dead

- Assist at All Souls' Day celebrations in your Church by helping with invitations, setup, candle lighting, music, or flowers, or as greeters or readers.
- Volunteer at a local cemetery. Some cemeteries request help from youth on Memorial Day, to be present to greet people as they come in to visit the graves of their loved ones. Others may ask for volunteers to help in general cleanup, leaf raking, etc.
- Praying for the soul of the deceased can be an act of mercy.
- Before Memorial Day, contact your local Veterans Administration and volunteer to help place flags or flowers on the graves of those who have served our country in the military.

Spiritual Works:

Give Correction to Those Who Need It

- Look for stories in current news in which someone has refused to participate in the sins of others.
- Purchase a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or a Concordance or Bible Commentary and learn how to use it.
- Practice inviting others to holiness. Pray as a family, use language that builds up, listen, speak the truth, refuse to participate in the sins of others, and forgive.
- Participate in the annual Walk for Life held each January in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Share Your Knowledge with Others

- Serve as religious education aides and catechists for parish catechetical programs.
- Volunteer for a week-long vacation Bible school.

Give Advice to Those Who Need It

- Schedule a visit to a local retired religious community. Have time set aside during the visit to interview the retired religious about how they made it through times of doubt.

Comfort Those Who Suffer

- Send Sympathy Cards to those your family knows who have lost someone close to them.
- Send a prayer card to parishioners who have lost someone they loved in the last month, and say that you are praying for them.

Be Patient With People

- Schedule a family movie night that includes a film about Dorothy Day or Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Your local bookstore or an Internet search can provide a list of titles available.
- Create a "patience journal," in which you keep track of incidents that try your patience and the blessings that help you through.

Forgive Those Who Hurt You

- Schedule a movie night to include a film about forgiveness, racism, or healing after war conflicts.

Pray for the Living and the Dead

- Help with a special liturgical celebration, for example, a feast day that is meaningful to the community, such as All Souls' Day, All Saints' Day, or Memorial Day. Participate in liturgy planning as readers, greeters, program designers, or in music ministry.
- Participate in a parish novena, Eucharistic Adoration, an ecumenical community prayer experience, or spend time before the Eucharist in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.



What is My Mission in This Life?

Confirmation is about mission. It's the sacrament that anoints us to take up Jesus' mission of compassion and reconciliation for the world. The social justice teaching of the Catholic Church gives us principles and tools to understand human rights and responsibilities and evaluate how social structures affect the well-being of all. Here are seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching that guide us in our response to the needs of others.

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** All human life has dignity and is sacred. We are in relationship with others. We live in community. We are one body; when one suffers, we all suffer.
- **Rights and Responsibilities:** People have rights and responsibilities. We have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education and employment. We have the responsibility to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good.
 - **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** We must care for those who are poor and vulnerable. To evaluate the morality of a society, look at how the most vulnerable members are treated.
 - **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** People have a right to decent work and fair wages.
 - **Solidarity:** We are one human family, so our concern is for all races and all nations. We care about justice globally.
 - **Care for God's Creation:** We are called to care for the earth, not just be consumers of the earth's resources.
 - **Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** Families need to be supported so that all people can be active participants in society.

Living out these principles is essential to our baptismal identity as Christians.