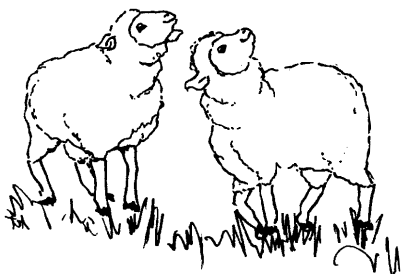


Divine Mercy Sunday



2nd Sunday of Easter

Week of March 30, 2008



On April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II announced the canonization of Sister Maria Faustina Kowalska and, soon after, decreed that, *"throughout the world the Second Sunday of Easter will receive the name Divine Mercy Sunday."* The primary celebration on this day is, as always, the Second Sunday of Easter, but within that, today's reading from the book of John tells us of the institution of the sacrament of Reconciliation. How appropriate it is that we should celebrate God's abundant mercy on this day!

In an address from the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Poland on June 7, 1997, Pope John Paul II gave the following reflections on this devotion to Divine Mercy: *"There is nothing that man needs more than Divine Mercy—that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above His weakness to the infinite heights of the holiness of God."*

"In this place we become particularly aware of this. From here, in fact, went out the Message of Divine Mercy that Christ Himself chose to pass on to our generation through Faustina. And it is a message that is clear and understandable for everyone. Anyone can come here, look at this image of the merciful Jesus, His Heart radiating grace, and hear in the depths of his own soul what Faustina heard: 'Fear nothing. I am with you always.' (from her diary, 586)

"The Church re-reads the message of mercy in order to bring with greater effectiveness to this generation at the end of the millenium, and to future generations, the light of hope."

"At no time and in no historical period—especially at a moment as critical as our own—can the Church forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon humanity and threaten it. 'The more the human conscience succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word "mercy," moves away from God, and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the Church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy with loud cries.'

I pray unceasingly that God will have mercy on us and the whole world."

MEMORIZE:

*"For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world."
Prayer from the Chaplet of Divine Mercy*

MONTH OUTLINE:

- Lesson 1: Reconciliation
- Lesson 2: Triduum and Easter
- Lesson 3: Divine Mercy Sunday**

FOCUS:

- To realize the depths of God's mercy for all of us. The mercy of God is a divine gift.
- To introduce the Corporal Works of Mercy.

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Saint Patrick
March 17

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray, "Dear Jesus, we love You and thank You for all the blessings You have given to our family. We are glad that we are part of Your family, and we want to get to know You better. Send Your holy angels to be at our side to light and guard us, to rule and guide us. Help us to grow to be a happy, healthy, holy family. Help us to know, love, and serve You better. Help us to be honest and friendly and helpful to our family and our neighbors. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Catholic Church of Saint Paul

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MISSION

Little Lambs has the same mission as *Family Formation* and is designed to help parents respond to the Church's call to be "*the first and foremost educators of their children.*"* It is our purpose to aid families as they grow in their love and knowledge of the Catholic faith.

All material has been subjected to lay theological review.

DIRECTOR

Jessica Balzarini

AUTHOR OF THIS LESSON

Mary Donahue, Nichole Chang

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Christina Barthold, Emilie Kenney, Ann Tristani, Mary Dietz,

TO SUBSCRIBE OR CONTACT US

Church of Saint Paul
1740 Bunker Lake Blvd. N.E.
Ham Lake, Minnesota 55304
(763) 757-1148
www.familyformation.net

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Scripture quotations are from the Saint Joseph Edition of the New American Bible unless otherwise noted.

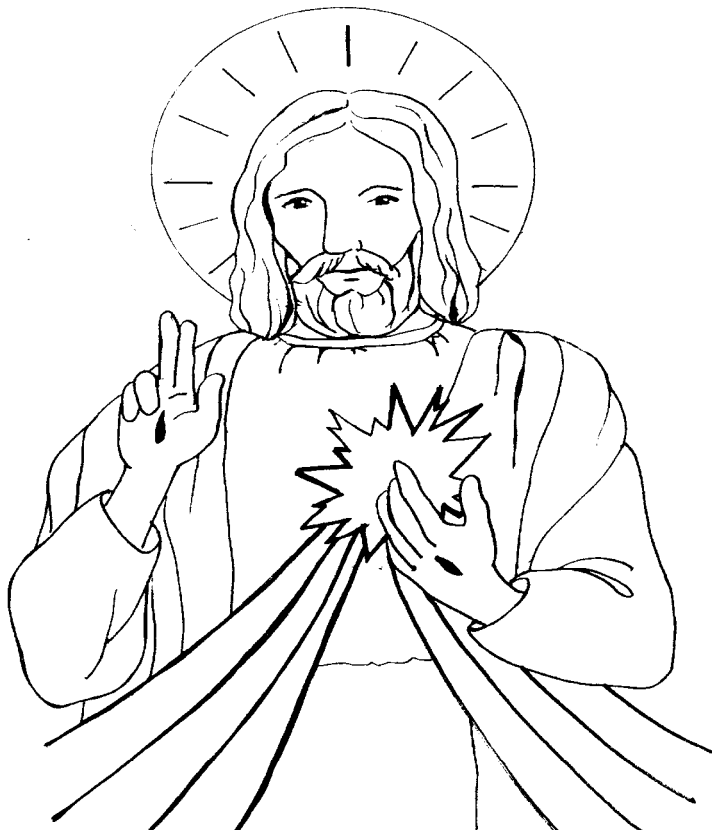
**Gravissimum Educationis*, 3

FAMILY LESSON

In 1931, a young Polish nun named Sister Faustina Kowalaska saw a vision of Jesus. Jesus stood before her with white rays streaming from His heart. He told Sister Faustina to have an artist paint a picture of Him just as she saw Him. Underneath the picture, He instructed her to have the artist write, "Jesus, I Trust in You!"



Sister Faustina was then told to write down everything Jesus would tell her of His mercy. She was to keep a diary so others would come to know and trust in Him. Jesus said that His mercy was available to even the greatest of sinners.



Jesus I Trust in You!

Two of the key points of Divine Mercy are *trust* and *mercy*.
We are asked by the Lord to *trust* Him in all things,
and if we approach Him with a sincere heart,
He will pour out His unlimited *mercy* on us.

TRUST: Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

MERCY: The loving kindness, compassion, or forbearance shown to one who offends.

Glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

God expects us to let His mercy flow through us to others. Jesus told Sister Faustina:

*"I demand from you deeds of mercy,
which are to arise out of love for Me.
You are to show mercy to your neighbors
always and everywhere."*

Diary, 742

We can show mercy to others by praying for them. Sister Faustina was given this prayer:

"Eternal Father,
I offer You the Body and Blood,
Soul and Divinity
of Your dearly beloved Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ,
in atonement for our sins
and those of the whole world."

Diary, 476

✂ The Hour of Great Mercy

Purpose:

This activity will draw attention to the hour of the day that recalls the Lord's death and will remind us to honor His request through Blessed Faustina to implore His mercy and to pray for sinners.

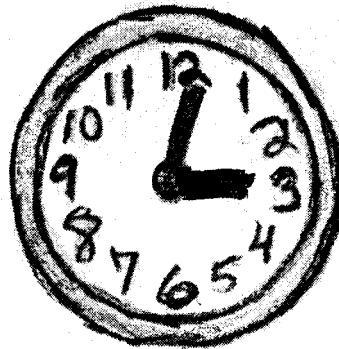
Materials Needed:

Divine Mercy Holy Card (included with packet)
alarm clock/wrist watch with alarm
crucifix (optional)

Directions

Everyone in the family can participate in this activity, no matter where they happen to be. Set the alarm on your watch/clock to 3:00 p.m. When it rings, take out the Divine Mercy picture and think about Jesus. Reflect especially upon His Passion. Preschoolers can be given a crucifix to hold and told to think about Jesus and how He died for us on the cross. Everyone can say, "Jesus I trust in you." Pray especially for sinners: "Lord, have mercy upon all sinners." Or recite the memory verse, "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world." (Instructions for the entire Chaplet of Divine Mercy is on the back of the holy card included.)

If this "family prayer time" occurred when family members were apart from each other, ask each other later, "Where were you at 3:00 p.m. today?" It might make for an interesting discussion!



We can show mercy to others by taking care of their needs. The Church guides us and gives us the teaching of the Corporal Works of Mercy.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

Feed the hungry.

Give drink to the thirsty.

Clothe the naked.

Shelter the homeless.

Comfort the imprisoned.

Visit the sick.

Bury the dead.



Stairway to Jesus

Purpose:

This activity will help introduce the Corporal Works of Mercy to your child.

Materials Needed:

stairway/hallway

smiling picture of Jesus (optional)

list of Corporal Works of Mercy

Directions:

1. Start at the bottom of the stairs or at the end of a hallway, and announce that you are going to play a game. Ask your child to sit on the bottom step. Have him or her pretend that Jesus is at the top of the stairs (or place a picture of Jesus at the top of the stairs).
2. Ask your child the following questions regarding the Corporal Works of Mercy. As your child answers the question correctly, have him or her move up a step or take a step closer to the picture of Jesus. Also, with each question, identify which Corporal Work of Mercy is being addressed.
 - How can you show you like someone who doesn't have enough food? (offer food)
 - What should you do if a friend tells you he or she is thirsty? (offer a drink)
 - What do you do if it is cold out and someone is without a hat and mittens? (offer a hat and mittens)
 - A neighbor's house just burned down; how can you help? (offer a place to stay)
 - How can you help an elderly lady who lives next door who is home bound? (offer to help, ask if she needs anything, color her a picture, or visit)
 - Continue to ask more questions that lead to examples of the Corporal Works of Mercy until your child has reached Jesus at the top of the stairway or end of the hall.

Congratulate your child for moving closer to Jesus by showing others love and mercy.

✂ Feed the Hungry

Purpose:

This activity focuses on the Corporal Work of Mercy "feed the hungry." It introduces your child to the concept of a food shelf.

Materials Needed:

grocery bags

non-perishable food items (items you plan to donate)

Directions:

1. Start by playing grocery store. Use various non-perishable food items, including boxes of food, or canned goods you plan to donate to a food shelf.
2. Suggest that you are the volunteer at the local food shelf. Say, "We really need canned goods." (Your child can retrieve these items from the grocery bag and give them to you.)
3. As soon as you have collected everything, switch roles.
4. When your child's bag is full, tell him or her you need to bring some items to the local food shelf, and you would like his or her help.
5. Provide your child with his or her own bag, and have him or her choose the items to donate.
6. Go to the food shelf, and donate the food. Praise your child for helping.

A family can experience hard times unexpectedly and might need the help of a food shelf to get them through. With this in mind, children can learn from you as a parent that it is OK to be needy. We all are needy, in one form or another; it's just that some needs are more visible than others. If you have ever experienced hard times in this way, share this with your child, and share with them your feelings. It will help them to appreciate what others go through and will teach them the true meaning of God's great mercy.