

Monday: I am the face of God's mercy when I am kind and compassionate

Consider

Talk to the children about the theme of Catholic Schools Week this year, which is **Catholic Schools: Challenged to Proclaim God's Mercy**. Are there any words in the theme that we are not sure that we understand fully? Explore the children's understanding of the word 'challenge'. Why is it a challenge to proclaim God's mercy?

What does the word 'proclaim' mean to us? It's a strong word that means to say with conviction, to demonstrate publicly, to really mean not just what you say but what you do as well. Jesus told his apostles to 'go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation' (Mk 16:15).

What about the word 'mercy' – what does that mean to us? What does God's mercy mean? When we talk about God's mercy we are talking about being forgiven even when we don't deserve it. Pope Francis says that when we look beyond what is on the outside and see into the heart, we are showing mercy. We learn about God's mercy when we see how Jesus treated people. We see God's mercy in the face of Jesus.

Every day this week we will be challenged to show God's mercy, to be the face of God's mercy in different ways. On the first day of Catholic Schools Week we focus on how we can show God's mercy when we are kind and compassionate.



Discuss

Write the word 'mercy' on the white board and ask the children to say what the word means to them. Record their answers.

- When do they use the word 'mercy'?
- Have they ever shown mercy to someone?
- Have they ever been show mercy by someone?
- How did that feel?

What about God's mercy? Where do we hear about the mercy of God? The word mercy is found three hundred and forty-one times in the Bible. Sometimes the following words are used to mean 'mercy' in the Bible:

Kindness

Loving Kindness

Goodness

Compassion

Did any of those words appear on your original class list?

Did You Know?

The word mercy is so important that in all the sixty-three books of the Bible, only sixteen do not use one of these words for mercy.

Remember, Pope Francis said that when we look beyond what is on the outside and see into the heart we are showing mercy; we are being kind and compassionate.



Do

Divide the children into groups and give them the following task using the worksheets on the following pages. Ask them to appoint a reporter who will share the group's ideas with the rest of the class. Put the completed worksheets on the CSW 2016 noticeboard in your classroom.

Worksheet

Our challenge is to think of ways in which we can be kind and compassionate today. Let's think of three things that we could do in each of these places:

1. In the classroom
2. In the yard
3. At home



In the Classroom

1.

2.

3.

In the Yard

1.

2.

3.



At Home

1.

2.

3.

Tuesday: I am the face of God's mercy when I forgive and reconcile

Recap

Yesterday we talked about the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2016, which is **Catholic School: Challenged to Proclaim God's Mercy**. We talked about God's mercy and we were challenged to show God's mercy to others by being kind and compassionate. We thought of ways in which we could show kindness and compassion in the classroom, in the yard and at home.

Invite the children to recall some of the ideas that they had. Then invite them to sit quietly for a moment and to think about how they did in this challenge. Remind them that this was not just a one-off challenge, but that we are asked to try and do this all the time because we are followers and friends of Jesus. Pray the Our Father together as we begin to explore our challenge today.

Consider

Today we are asked to think about how we show God's mercy when we forgive and reconcile. Is this a difficult challenge? How does God want us to treat those who hurt us? Is it easy to forgive someone who has hurt you or done something wrong? Is it hard to be reconciled with someone when you have done something that you know is wrong?

There are many stories in the Bible that show us how God wants us to forgive and be reconciled. Let's listen to one of them in the Gospel of Luke (15:11-32). Alternatively you can show the children this video at www.safeshare.tv/v/ss564b205e10085.

The Parable of the Lost Son

Jesus continued: 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the estate." So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

'When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." So he got up and went to his father.

'But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

'The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

'But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." So they began to celebrate.

'Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. "Your brother has come," he replied, "and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound."

'The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!"

"My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."





Discuss

Take a few minutes to talk about the story to ensure that the children have an understanding of what they have heard or seen.

Use the following chart to review some of the key learnings of the story with the children. Tell them that they should stand up if the statement is true and remain sitting if the statement is false

	True	False
The man in the story had two daughters.		✓
The man in the story was very rich.		
The older son wanted to take his share of the property so that he could leave.		
The father in the story is like God because he forgave his younger son.		
The father in the story didn't love his older son because he acted badly when his brother came home.		
God always loves us even when we are not as good as we can be.		
This story helps us to learn about God's love for us.		
This story shows us how God wants us to love each other.		



Do

- What words do you think best describe the father in this story?
- In groups of four, can you make a list of at least ten words that describe the kind of parent this father was?
- Appoint a recorder and a reporter in each group.
- Choose two people to write all the words that are called out by the reporters from each group on the white board.
- See how many times the same words are used.

Who else do these words describe?

Choose one of these words that you would most like to be used to describe how you are with the people around you.

The worksheet on the following page can be used as a template for the children to write their chosen words. The boxes can then be cut out and placed on or around the CSW 2016 noticeboard.



God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

God the Father helps me to be ...

Thursday: I am the face of God's mercy when I am fair and just

Recap

Ask the children about the words that we have used this week to show how we can be the face of God's mercy. Use the noticeboard to help revise the words.

Consider

Today we are going to explore how we are the face of God's mercy when we are fair and just. What do these words mean to us? Talk about times when we need to be fair and just. Let's learn about how we can help people who work very hard but who are not treated fairly or justly. We are going to do this by playing a game and then discussing what we have learned from it.

Discuss

Play the 'Banana Split' game, adapted from Cafod.org.

How to Play the Game

Tell the children that you are about to play a game that traces the path of the banana as it is exported from its plantation in Central America (or the Caribbean Islands) to your fruit bowl.

Divide the class into five groups to represent each of the different jobs in the banana chain.

First Round

1. Allocate the roles:
 - a) Banana worker/producer
 - b) Plantation owner
 - c) Shipper
 - d) Importer and ripener
 - e) Shop or supermarket

(Make sure everyone has a role to play)
2. Space out the groups. Give them their role cards and ask them to read their role information. Give them a few moments to work out what their roles might involve.
3. Tell them that each banana costs 30c.
4. Ask them to decide how much of the 30c they should get for the jobs/work they do in the banana chain.
5. Ask them to spend a couple of minutes discussing this and preparing arguments why they deserve the amount they have chosen for themselves.
6. Get each group to share the amounts and present their reasons.

Second Round

Inevitably, the total from all the groups will be more than 30c. The groups will need to renegotiate.

1. Choose a spokesperson from each group to negotiate a price until the amount comes to 30c.
2. When they have agreed amounts, reveal the true breakdown of who gets what from the final price of a Latin American banana (see answers at the bottom of the page).

For more impact, give the group representing the supermarket 30c. They keep their share and then pass the rest to the ripener's group, who keep their share and pass the rest on to the importers, who keep their share and pass the rest to the shippers, then the owners, and finally the workers.

Suggestions for Discussion

- Do you think this is a fair situation?
- Why is the 30c shared out as it is?
- Who has power and why?
- What could be done to improve the situation?
- What role can we play as the people who buy the bananas?
- Would you be prepared to pay more for your bananas if you knew workers and farmers got a price that would enable them to meet their basic needs?
- Have you ever heard of Fairtrade or seen the emblem below on food items in your house?



Do

Find out which shops in your town/area sell Fairtrade bananas or other Fairtrade items. Talk to your parents about the kind of bananas they buy, and encourage them to look for Fairtrade bananas the next time they go shopping.

Go to: www.cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-schools/Fair-trade for more resources.

ANSWERS

Banana worker 1c Plantation owner 5c Shipper 4c

Shop or supermarket 13c Importer and ripener 7c

TOTAL 30c



Friday: I am the face of God's mercy when I live like Jesus

Consider

What have we learned this week about the different ways that we can be the face of God's mercy?

Discuss

Imagine what a different place our world would be if we all tried to be the face of God's mercy every day. This is what Jesus wants us to do. He showed us the way to do this every day that he was on earth. We know this because we can read about all the things he did in the Bible. Now that Jesus is not on earth anymore we have to be like him, and to live like him.

A long time ago a saint called Teresa of Ávila wrote these words:

Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.
Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

She used these words to encourage us to be the face of God's mercy to our world. These words help us to understand that we have a mission as followers of Jesus, and a challenge to be his body on the earth.

Are we up to the challenge?





Do

Finish the sentence below.

I accept the challenge to be the face of
God's mercy by ...

