

AGENTS OF MERCY LESSON: CARING FOR THOSE IN NEED

PK-KINDERGARTEN

Goal:

Students will be encouraged to explore the meaning of poverty here in the United States as well as around the world. What does poverty look like? Why is help for the poor central to Jesus' message?

Lesson:

Students will explore what is meant by poverty. They will look at both extreme poverty, such as exists in certain developing parts of the world and practical poverty, such as we have in the US in which even working families struggle to make ends meet and fall further and further behind. Pope Francis has called us to go out with the joy of the Gospel, to encounter people where they are at. Like Mother Teresa, we are called to serve the poor by looking people in the eye, respecting their dignity, and engaging in works of mercy.

Sing and Dance:

Encourage students to join in the dancing and singing to [Every Move I Make](#).

Bible Story:

Watch [the story](#) of the Little Boy who shares his lunch with Jesus.

Discussion:

Throughout the Bible, we hear Jesus talk about his great love for the poor. He means not only people who don't have anything to eat, but also people who are lonely (poor in spirit). Why does he spend so much time talking about these people? It is because people who are poor ask us for something: they ask us to be generous and kind and share what we have. Jesus wants to help each of us and He wants us to help each other too.

The story of Jesus feeding the 5000 people by sharing the little boy's lunch allows us to see that caring for the poor changes us for the better as much as it helps those in need.

- What happens in the story?
- Why are all of the people hungry?
- How does Jesus solve the problem?
- How do you think the people felt after Jesus gave them food to eat?
- Can you think of a time when you are generous with someone who did not have something that you had? Did you share with them?

Activity:

- Materials needed: small bowls for each student; a bag of M&Ms
- Give each child a bowl, then pass out M&Ms to each—filling most moderately while filling a few with handfuls and a few with just two each. Ask the children not to eat their candy yet.
- Lead a discussion with the children about how they feel about the candy in their bowls. Why do some have less and some have more?

This is an illustration of the disparity in the world. In each school and in each classroom, there is a great disparity of resources. Some have more than others.

- Following the example from the Scripture reading, what can each child do to help other children enjoy their treat? Does it matter what was “yours”? Should everyone have the same? Or is sharing more important?

In the bible story, Jesus took the small donation of the young boy and multiplied it. He can do the same with our own small gestures of kindness and mercy.

- Help the children understand that sharing candy with a friend not only shares the candy itself but also shares kindness and friendship, and that these qualities last long after the candy has been enjoyed.

Library Time:

- If time allows, read [Last Stop on Market Street](#) (can purchase on Amazon or get from the library).

Discussion:

- Have students discuss what they learn about the bus ride and the different people who are on the bus.
- Do they seem happy? Why or why not?
- How does the love of family bring different joy than what comes from having things?

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
You have given us so many good things.
You have given us our family, our friends, our home, our school, good food, and nice clothes.
We pray for our brothers and sisters who do not have these things.
Help us to love them and to find ways to help and serve them.
Amen

Lesson adapted from the plans on the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Life, Justice and Peace website

