



'Light for the Path' a Resource for Families in the Year of Mercy

Session Six for Children: People asked Jesus, 'When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' (Mt 25:37) - the Kingdom of Mercy.

We look

What do we notice about the people around us – people close to us in our families? Our friends? What about looking out at people we don't know? **How can we tell if they are happy, or sad, or hurting in some way?**

We listen

Gospel of Mathew 25:34-46 *Jesus is teaching about his kingdom. At the end of time, Jesus, the King, will sit on his great throne and all the people of the world will be gathered before him. He will separate them into two groups - good people will stand on his right, and bad people on his left.*

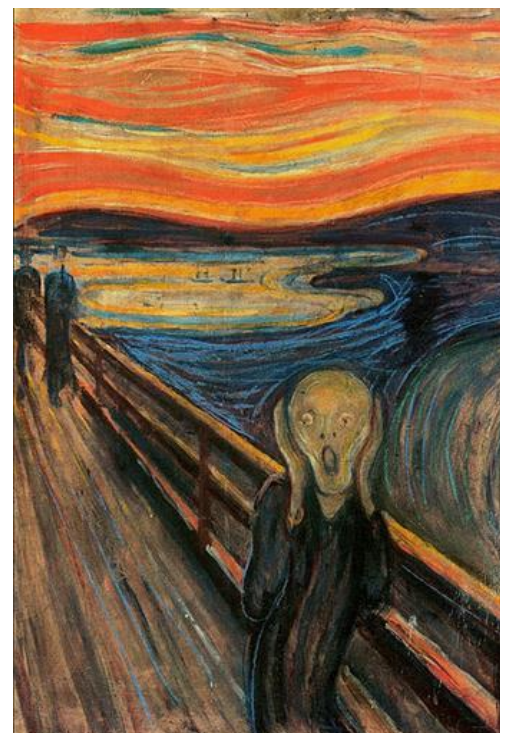
Then the King will say to the good people on his right, 'Come. My Father has given you his blessing. Come and receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes and you gave me something to wear. I was sick and you cared for me. I was in prison and you visited me. Then the good people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you? Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me.' Then the King will say to those on his left, 'Go away from me. God has said that you will be punished... I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was alone and away from home and you did not invite me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison and you did not care for me.' Then those people will answer ... 'Lord when did we see these things and not help you?' Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you refused to do for any of my people here, you refused to do for me'. 'These people will go off to be punished forever. But the good people will go to live for ever.' *Scripture quoted from International Children's Bible, New Century Version (Anglicised Edition) copyright 1991 by Authentic Media. Used by permission. (This version was translated solely for children from the original Hebrew and Greek texts)*

We wonder

What might it be like to be in this picture? Where would you be? Imagine yourself in the story. What about the other people – can you see them? What are they doing?

I wonder, when have you or someone close to you been sad or lonely or hurting? What's it like when you are hurting? How do you know when people are hurting?

I wonder - where is Jesus?



<https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=wikicommons+art&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=667>

Edvard Munch, 'The Scream'.

At Home

Jesus says when we help anyone we are helping Him! When we love and show mercy - a smile, a kind word, a helping hand - we are building the world into the kingdom of heaven. You might like to talk together about how we can all hurt and feel sad in different ways. How can we notice and help people who are hurting?

- In our own families? In other families, or people we don't know?
- Find out what the parish is doing – and join in!



Pope Francis asks us

to reach out to people who are living in sad, lonely and painful situations. Sometimes we can't hear their crying because we have not cared! **'May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of us being there with them, and our friendship, like brothers and sisters.'** (Adapted from MV 15)



You may like to draw your favourite part of the story, 'When did we see you?'

Tips for using this 'Year of Mercy' resource with the family at home

1. **We gather:** Decide on the best time – before or after school, evening or weekend – for a quiet 10-30 minutes together.
2. **Background:** You will find some notes below.
3. **We look at our experience and our Catholic Tradition:** What does it mean for us to notice and reach out to people who are suffering or hurting in any way? Who are they? Following Jesus Christ means that like Him we have to be aware of all those in need and do something about it. We are to treat them as if they were Jesus Christ himself – he is with them! (The Gospel, and Catholic Social Teaching)
4. **We listen to God's Word.** Read the story. For the very young, the picture might help to talk about the story and where we find ourselves in it.
5. **We wonder:** Ask the 'wondering' questions. Have a conversation about these.
6. **Pope Francis says:** Look at the 'Pope Francis' box, and his teaching about caring for others – everyone is our brother or sister. What catches your attention?
7. **We respond:** Look at the 'At Home' box – and talk about this.
8. **What difference does this make?** Finally, draw the part of the story you like best, to remind you of the importance of being there for other people, whatever their needs are.
9. **We pray:** Finish with a simple prayer (see an example below)

Prayer moment

Let's sit quietly for a moment, and remembering the story Jesus told about the end of the world and our lives on earth. We ask 'When did we see you Lord?' and listen to His reply. Can we recognise Jesus present in everyone we meet, and know that whatever we do to love and care for others, we do for Him? Jesus is with us always as he promised, and He gives us the strength and power we need to be compassionate and merciful, in our families, amongst friends and strangers, pouring out the never-ending love and mercy of our Heavenly Father. (*Pause for thinking back*). As we think about these things, we pray:

You are with us as we gather here in your name Lord Jesus. Through our time together, you have carefully shown us how to be loving and kind like you and our Heavenly Father, who is loving and merciful to everyone. Surprise us Lord, as we open our hearts to the love and mercy you share with us. May it be like a spring of water bubbling up in us – a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people drink from it.

May we never grow tired of being loving and kind. May we be patient in showing how much we care, saying words and doing kind things that comfort other people in need. We make this prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(Adapted from MV25)

You may like to conclude the session with the Blessing in God of Surprises, below

May the Lord bless us and keep us. All: Amen

*May he let his face shine upon us and show us his **mercy**. All: Amen*

May he turn his face towards us and give us his peace. All: Amen

Background: The Gospel of St. Matthew is the gospel of the 'Kingdom of God' – through Jesus, God is present, from the beginning as 'Emmanuel' meaning 'God-with-us', to the end, the Risen Jesus, promising to be with us always. This promise of Christ present with us continues to be made real in families and communities down the ages to our own days, guiding our lives, accompanying us in joys and sorrows, gracing us with the ability to love and reconcile, and to make decisions. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus is already seen as 'kingly', and his 'kingdom' of love and mercy, justice and peace, is already growing, teaching and encouraging us to live a life turned out towards others, with the common good at heart. This is the way we bring the kingdom 'on earth as it is in heaven' as we pray in the Our Father. 'Good works' are beautiful, like 'wedding garments' (Mt 22:11) and powerful or energising like the 'oil' in an old-fashioned lamp - the fuel that keeps it shining out, giving light. At the end of our earthly lives, we will hear from Jesus that when we did any good work for another person, we did it for Jesus himself. (Mt 25.45)

Pope Francis asks us to open our hearts to those living on the edges in uncertain and painful situations, those without a voice because their cries are drowned out by indifference – we don't notice, or if we do, we don't know how to respond. 'May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own'... (MV 15)

*'The Jubilee year will close with the liturgical Solemnity of Christ the King on 20th November 2016. On that day... we shall be filled, above all, with a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity for having granted us an extraordinary time of grace. We will entrust the life of the Church, all humanity, and the entire cosmos to the Lordship of Christ, asking him to pour out his mercy upon us like the morning dew, so that everyone may work together to build a brighter future ... steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as **a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst!**'*
(From the Pope's document on the Year of Mercy, MV 5)