

Name _____

A Year of Discipleship:

Living Mercy as a Disciple of Jesus

Due week of 10/19/26
Before Confirmation Interview

Discipleship is a way of life, not an occasional service project.

Discipleship is about WHO WE ARE, not what we do. When we choose to live as a disciple, we cease to be a volunteer. The difference between being a disciple and a volunteer is the same as the difference between being a mother/father and serving as a babysitter.

The relationship is essential and defining. Discipleship puts Jesus at the center of our decisions and actions and demands something more than just putting in time or checking off boxes. If God isn't in the picture, it's just another activity.

To help you think about all of your decisions and actions, all day every day, in terms of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, your parish is giving you:

- a Bible, because Scripture tells your story of salvation so that you know both **who you are** and **whose you are**
- this Discipleship booklet to help you reflect on actions that you do deliberately to live as a disciple of Jesus

Use these sheets throughout the Confirmation formation process to reflect on the service projects, acts of mercy and deeds of discipleship done intentionally during this year of formation. This is not homework; instead, **think of it as another way of encountering Jesus and praying.**

These notes are to be turned in before the Confirmation Conversation interviews so interviewers have a fuller picture of the Candidate's intentional discipleship. They will be returned after Confirmation. Descriptions of the works of mercy here and suggestions are adapted from Joe Paprocki's *The Catechist's Journey* on Loyola Press. Find more resources online at: <https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/>

"Stay where you are. Find your own Calcutta. Find the sick, the suffering, the lonely, right there where you are – in your own homes and in your own families, in your workplaces and schools."

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Living Mercy as a Disciple

1. bury the dead (Jan)

Read the Book of Tobit in your new Bible. (It's only about 10 pages.) Throughout the year, make a special effort to be present to those who have had to bury a loved one. Even if you cannot attend any of the services, "show up for them" and offer comfort. Do something like:

- Making and sending a card
- Making and taking some food over to the family's home
- Sending a card or email on the first holidays (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, etc.) that the family will observe without their loved one.

Descriptions of how I lived mercy:

Reflection on how living mercy in that way helped me to recognize my neighbor and respond as Jesus would:

Dates of deliberate discipleship _____ Candidate signature _____

Parent/family reflections (optional) _____

2. instruct the ignorant (Feb)

This Lent, be open to learning more about your faith and talking with others about it. Do something like:

- Be prepared to explain the ashes on your forehead and what the Cross means to you.
- Invite someone to go to Mass with you.
- Talk with someone about the Catholic practice of fasting during Lent and how it is a spiritual and a physical discipline.

Descriptions of how I lived mercy:

Reflection: How did living mercy in that way help me to recognize my neighbor and respond as Jesus would?

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3. bear wrongs patiently (Mar)

Do not be bitter or hold a grudge about wrongs done against you. Ask God to help you endure the troubles of this world with a spirit of compassion. Do something like:

- Frustrated with someone? Step away from the situation, take a deep breath and pray the Our Father, asking God for patience. Every time you pray the Our Father, you remind yourself of common kinship; you are a child of our Heavenly Father just as those who drive you nuts are also God's children!
- Place your troubles at the foot of the cross along with those of your brothers and sisters who are living through severe trials.

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4. comfort the sorrowful (Apr)

Be open to listening and comforting those who are dealing with grief. Even if we aren't sure of the right words to say, our presence can make a big difference. Do something like:

- Lend a listening ear to those going through a tough time.
- Invite a friend who is facing a difficult time to spend time at your house or join your family for dinner.
- Write a letter or send a card to someone who is suffering.

A few moments of your day may make a lifetime of difference to someone who is going through a difficult time.

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5. forgive offenses willingly (May)

Forgiving others is difficult at times because we do not have God's limitless mercy and compassion. But Jesus teaches us that we should forgive as God forgives, relying on him to help us show others the mercy of God. Do something like:

- Let go of grudges. (Write them down and run the paper through the paper shredder!)
- Really **mean it** when you say you're sorry. Forgiveness transforms hearts and lives.
- Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet or a decade of the Rosary for the person who has offended you.

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6. feed the hungry (June)

Many people in this world go without food or are uncertain about their next meal. When so much of our food goes to waste, consider how good stewardship practices of your own food habits can benefit others who do not have those same resources. Do something like:

- Try not to take more food than you are able to eat so you don't waste food.
- Organize or participate in a food drive to help the parish pantry or the Food Bank.
- Watch the documentary, *A Place at the Table*, (1.5 hours) about hunger in America. (It is free on YouTube)

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7. clothe the naked (Jul)

Many of today's street fashion trends disguise the real need for clothing. Wearing pajamas and slippers in public or pants and tops with holes hide the fact that some people don't have adequate clothing. Do something like:

- Go through your clothes closet and closets in your home where you keep seasonal clothing and donate clothing that you have outgrown or will not wear again.
- Just as you avoid wasting food or water, avoid buying "fast fashion", clothing that is cheap, trendy and disposable.
- Read about the impact that "fast fashion" has on our environment.
- Take care of the clothes and shoes that you have so they last until you outgrow them.
- Help sort clothes at the parish clothing sale

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8. give drink to the thirsty (Aug)

Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ do not have access to clean water and suffer from the lack of this basic necessity. We should support the efforts of those working towards greater accessibility of this essential resource. We take it for granted that we have access to clean water. To increase your awareness of the gift of water, do something like:

- Read the memoir or watch (on Netflix) the movie of a 13 year-old genius in Malawi who tries to save his family from drought and famine by building a windmill: *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.
- Read the novel *A Long Walk to Water* (in the SPSL library)
- Make an effort not to waste water. Turn off the water faucet when you are brushing your teeth or washing dishes. Take shorter showers.
- Offer cold bottled water to those who work in the heat.

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9. shelter the homeless (Sept)

In Nebraska, 2,462 people are homeless on a given night; 407 of them are under age 18 (HUD 2023 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs report). Count it as a blessing that you have a good roof over your head. Take good care of your home. Look for ways that you can support people who work with the homeless. Do something like:

- Collect soap, shampoo and other personal items to give to local homeless shelters.
- Help your parents or a neighbor with some home maintenance to keep the home nice and secure.
- Show kindness and respect to persons who look a bit disheveled; they may be living in their car or “couch surfing” because of homelessness or an unstable home life.

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10. visit the sick and imprisoned (Oct)

Those who are sick or imprisoned are often forgotten or avoided. In spite of their illness or their guilt, these individuals are God’s children, our brothers and sisters, deserving our encouragement and words of hope. Do something like:

- Take time on a Saturday to stop and visit with an elderly neighbor who is homebound.
- Offer to assist caregivers of chronically sick family members so they can rest, run errands, or enjoy a break.
- Help make a meal for a family in your parish or neighborhood who has a sick loved one.
- Write letters to a prisoner through an organized prison ministry program or Amnesty International.
- Volunteer to help out or donate to charities that give Christmas presents to children whose parents are in jail.

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11. pray for the living and the dead (Nov)

You started this year of mercy by observing the corporal work of burying the dead. Now you can come full circle and practice a spiritual work of mercy. Joining together in prayer for the living and the dead entrusts us all into God's care. Do something like:

- Attend the Mass on All Souls Day (Monday, Nov. 2) to pray for those who have died.
- Attend the prayer service in honor of parishioners who have died in this past year.
- Send a card to someone who lost a family member this year to let them know that you are remembering them and their loved one in prayer on All Souls Day.

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12. give alms to the poor (Dec)

Donate money to organizations that have the ability to provide support and services for those in need. Do research and find organizations that put people in need first, rather than profit. Do something like:

- Ring bells with your family for the Salvation Army Red Kettle drive outside your local grocery store. The whole family can do this and you can make it a tradition! (register your family/group online)
- Think of a way for your family to do something **together** to serve the poor. Be creative! Make it something really fun that you'll enjoy doing together for years!

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Living Mercy in the Community

Discipleship Group Service Projects

1. Service Project Title & Date _____

What need did you address? (Describe the situation) _____

How did you respond as a disciple of Jesus? _____

How did that make you feel? _____

What did you learn? _____

2. Service Project Title & Date _____

What need did you address? (Describe the situation) _____

How did you respond as a disciple of Jesus? _____

How did that make you feel? _____

What did you learn? _____

Living Mercy in the Community

Discipleship Group Service Projects

3. Service Project Title & Date _____

What need did you address? (Describe the situation) _____

How did you respond as a disciple of Jesus? _____

How did that make you feel? _____

What did you learn? _____

4. Service Project Title & Date _____

What need did you address? (Describe the situation) _____

How did you respond as a disciple of Jesus? _____

How did that make you feel? _____

What did you learn? _____
