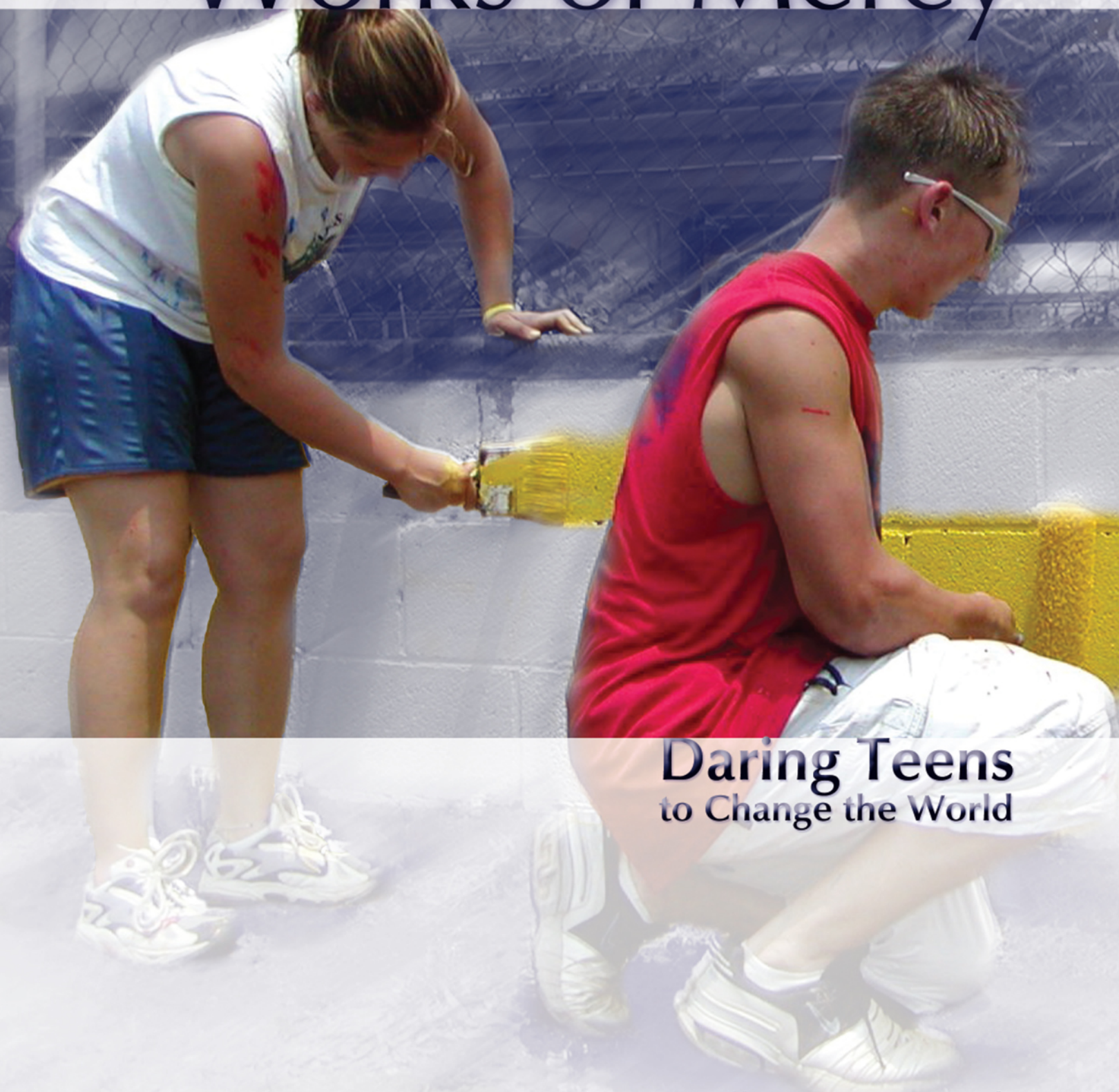


saint mary's press

Living^{the} Works of Mercy



Daring Teens
to Change the World

Ellen P. Cavanaugh

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*Blessed Mary Angela,
servant of the needy,
dedicated advocate for the poor,
and woman of mercy.*

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Introduction

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, states three goals for ministry with adolescents. *Living the Works of Mercy* is written to provide practical lessons to implement these goals.

Goal 1. To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. *Living the Works of Mercy* addresses specific skills and strategies to empower young disciples.

Goal 2. To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. *Living the Works of Mercy* provides resources to connect lesson material with local, diocesan, and universal Church ministries.

Goal 3. To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. *Living the Works of Mercy* encourages youth to develop an intimacy with God through prayer, knowledge of the Scriptures, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Reconciliation.

The *General Directory for Catechesis* speaks to the need to address the correlation and interaction of profound human experiences and the revealed word of God (no. 153). *Living the Works of Mercy* facilitates the dialogue between human experiences of suffering, isolation, doubt, and sin, and the truth of Christ.

The Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* describes the law of God inscribed in our conscience and how this law is made known through the love of God and of one's neighbor, through works of mercy (no. 16). *Living the Works of Mercy* invites and challenges young people to actively build a civilization of love. Through their response to this invitation and challenge, may they come to see the face of God in the lives of the poor and the depths of their heart.

Overview of *Living the Works of Mercy*

Intended Audience

Living the Works of Mercy is intended for teens in junior and senior high school. It may be used by religion teachers in Catholic schools, campus ministers, coordinators of youth ministry, directors of religious education, catechists, youth ministry teams, or teen mentors. Ownership of this book includes permission to duplicate any part of it for use with program participants.

This book contains strategies to help youth live the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Each chapter includes prayer experiences, Scripture-based presentations, practical handouts, Internet resource listings, and outreach activity suggestions.

Format of the Chapters

Each chapter begins with a statement of lesson objectives. The next element is the suggested time for the lesson. The suggested time does not include time for an outreach activity, which is strongly recommended if and when time allows. Use the suggested time as a starting point, and modify it according to your circumstances.

Session steps, an outline of how the material is designed to be presented, follow. A complete checklist of materials needed is included next in each chapter. Some of the materials are not readily available, such as magician's flash paper, in the chapter titled "Forgive Injuries." It is a good idea to look over this list in advance.

The lessons emphasize calling forth and empowering the leadership of young people. Materials are flexible, and can be used by a team of older teen mentors or by the participants themselves. It is best to invite them to set aside 20 or 30 minutes before the session to rehearse and prepare their part of the lesson.

Music selections are listed for each chapter. The selections are drawn from the following five sources:

- WOW 2002 is the 2002 collection of the thirty most popular Christian rock hits. These CDs and cassettes are available in most bookstores, through Internet booksellers, or through their Web site at www.wow2002.com.
- *Spirit & Song* is a youth hymnal published by Oregon Catholic Press. You can order CDs of the music through their Web site at www.ocp.org/catalog/hymnal/spirit-song.html.
- Jesse Manibusan is a Catholic music artist popular at youth rallies and conferences. His mix of rock and roll, reggae, and rap makes each of his CDs a treasure that can be used in a variety of formats. His music can be purchased through www.ocp.org/composers/manibusan.html.

- Jamie Dillon also is a Catholic music artist. She blends story and song for inspirational meditation that works its way into the heart of the listener. Her CDs can be purchased through www.cdfront.com/artisthomepages/jamiedillon.
- I mention one song by Greg Magirescu, titled “Streets of Calcutta,” in the chapter “Bear Wrongs Patiently.” Greg is a sought-after songwriter in the Christian music industry. His CD *Food for the Journey* can be found at www.gregmagirescu.com.

Searching the Web provides some suggestions to acquire additional resource material, read source material, and get up-to-date research and statistics.

A detailed description of the session is then provided, and possible outreach activities are listed at the end of the procedure. The handouts and resources for each session end the chapter.

Finally, each section concludes with a retreat format. “Jesus in Disguise” is an overnight retreat focusing on the corporal works of mercy. “Christ Looks on Us with Love” is a weekend retreat focusing on the spiritual works of mercy. These retreats serve as an overview of the works of mercy. They can be used as an introduction to a series of sessions from the text, as a conclusion, or as a stand-alone experience for an individual group. The retreats draw on some of the prayers and activities of the sessions and include new material that it is not possible to use in the time frame of the sessions.

Programming Ideas

The chapters in this book can be used in a variety of ways. Consider the following suggestions:

- as a regular supplement to a religious education curriculum in a parish or school setting
- as a response to an immediate need: a member of the group being diagnosed with a prolonged illness (Visit the Sick), an environmental crisis (Give Drink to the Thirsty), a leader’s public confession of sin (Convert the Sinner), the death of a community member (Comfort Those Who Mourn), or an incident of violence (Forgive Injuries)
- as a guide for a monthly service group
- as creative prayer and catechesis to accompany volunteer projects at food banks, nursing homes, and homeless shelters
- as feast day and holiday planning for any of the following:
 - Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Bear Wrongs Patiently, Counsel Those Who Doubt)
 - April 7, Saint John Baptist de la Salle (Instruct the Ignorant)
 - May 15, Saint Isidore (Give Drink to the Thirsty)

- last Monday in May, Memorial Day (Bury the Dead)
- July 11, Saint Benedict (Welcome the Stranger)
- October 1, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (Bear Wrongs Patiently, Counsel Those Who Doubt)
- October 4, Saint Francis of Assisi (Give Drink to the Thirsty)
- October 31, Halloween (Feed the Hungry)
- November 1, All Saints' Day (Pray for the Living and the Dead)
- November 2, All Souls' Day (Bury the Dead, Pray for the Living and the Dead)
- The chapters in this book can also be used as reflections on the sacraments:
 - Baptism (Give Drink to the Thirsty)
 - the Eucharist (Feed the Hungry, Convert the Sinner, Pray for the Living and the Dead)
 - Confirmation (Clothe the Naked, Christ Looks on Us with Love)
 - Anointing of the Sick (Visit the Sick)
 - Reconciliation (Visit the Imprisoned, Forgive Injuries)
 - Holy Orders (Christ Looks on Us with Love)
 - Marriage (Christ Looks on Us with Love)

Your Comments or Suggestions

Saint Mary's Press wants to know your reactions to the material in *Living the Works of Mercy*. If you have a comment or suggestion, please write to us at 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1318; call us at our toll-free number, 800-533-8095; or e-mail us at smpress@smp.org.

Thanks

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I am especially grateful to the youth, families, and communities, too numerous to mention, that live the works of mercy. You have enabled me to find Jesus disguised in poor people, and invited me to conversion, communion, and solidarity. Thank you.

* * *

The goal of our life is Christ who awaits us. He will lead us across the boundaries of time to the eternal embrace of the God who loves us. Eternity is our horizon as people starving for truth and thirsting for happiness. The Father puts in our hands the task of beginning to build here on earth the kingdom of heaven. Our daily commitment is to live side by side with our peers, sharing their worries and hopes. . . . We cannot ignore the tragedies of our era. We cannot close our eyes and heart to the anguish that pervades life. We are immersed in this world every day. We stand ready to rush to wherever there is a brother or sister in need of help, a tear to be dried, a request for help to be answered. On this will we be judged! (Message of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, for World Youth Day XI, November 26, 1995, as adapted in The Call to a Deeper Faith)

PART 1

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

Visit the Sick

Feed the Hungry

Give Drink to the Thirsty

Clothe the Naked

Welcome the Stranger

Visit the Imprisoned

Bury the Dead

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Changing the World Through Prayerful Action

The corporal works of mercy find their origin in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah tells of God's call to "share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin" (Isa. 58:7).

The Word became flesh and human dignity was raised to immeasurable heights. Jesus Christ—only Son of God, the second person of the Trinity—experienced sickness, hunger, thirst, nakedness, estrangement, imprisonment, and burial. Jesus tells us that when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, take care of the sick, and visit the imprisoned, we care for Christ himself (see Matt. 25:32–46).

As early as the third century, the additional deed burying the dead was added to the corporal works of mercy, to bring the number to seven. Seven is a significant number in religious tradition. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, making it holy. The number seven is often interpreted as completeness or perfection. Burying the dead is stressed in the Old Testament Book of Tobit as an act of mercy (see Tob. 1:16–18).

In the corporal works of mercy, we recognize the sacredness of human life, the unity of the body and soul, and each individual's relationship with the Creator. In living out this covenantal relationship, we discover that we are our "brother's keeper" (Gen. 4:9). We discover that good sentiment alone is not enough; our feelings of charity must be accompanied by acts of charity, physically building a civilization of love one life at a time.

CORPORAL WORK OF MERCY

Visit the Sick

Session Overview

Objectives

- to foster in youth a growing awareness of the Catholic Christian ministry to those who are sick
- to have the participants reflect on the scriptural and traditional understanding of our call to visit the sick
- to inform participants of opportunities to visit the sick as an act of discipleship and to develop practical skills for the ministry
- to make young disciples who recognize Christ in the sick and call on Christ to magnify their efforts to be present to those who are sick

Suggested Time

Allow 40 minutes for this session, plus time to do an outreach activity if you choose.

Materials and Preparation

- ☐ Recruit six volunteers for the anointing skit.
- ☐ Create the scene of a patient's space in a hospital emergency room. You may want to use the following items:
 - ☐ a bed sheet or another large piece of cloth to use as a curtain
 - ☐ a sign that says "Emergency Room"
 - ☐ a table or a bed stand
 - ☐ a lab coat, or a mock lab coat made by cutting out neck and arm holes from a pillowcase, cutting a straight line from the center of the neck to the bottom, and using a pin to hold it closed

- ☐ a pyx
- ☐ a Bible
- ☐ a small container or an empty vile from a sick call set
- ☐ a recording of one of the following songs or one on similar themes:
 - ☐ “Breathe on Me,” by Jennifer Knapp, *WOW* 2002
 - ☐ “Who’s Giving Their Heart?” by Jesse Manibusan, *In the Heart*
 - ☐ “There Is a Longing,” by Anne Quigley, *Spirit & Song*
- ☐ copies of resource 1, “Anointing Skit”
- ☐ copies of handout 1, “A Disciple’s Guide to Visiting the Sick”
- ☐ copies of resource 2, “Visit the Sick: Petitions,” cut apart as scored

Searching the Web

- The Vatican Web site www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/sick/index.htm includes the pope’s message for the most recent World Day of the Sick.
- Catholic Relief Services (www.catholicrelief.org/what_we_do_overseas/index.cfm) is involved in global health-care issues.
- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org/subject.htm) issued a statement on health-care ethics.
- The Catholic Medical Mission Board (www.cmmb.org) provides health care to the world’s needy people through provisions of medical shipments, community health-care training, programs for disease control and eradication, medical volunteer placement, and emergency assistance.

Procedure

Anointing Skit (10 minutes)

This entire session is based on resource 1, “Anointing Skit.” To have the skit done well and with some seriousness, you may want to give the young people a chance to rehearse before the session.

1. Ask the students to call to mind any times when they have been sick or injured. Ask them also to think about times when they have visited someone who was sick. Summarize the lesson objectives, and ask them to keep in mind the fear and anxiety of someone who is in need of help, as they listen attentively to the skit.
2. Gather the group around the emergency room scene that you set up before the session. Ask the volunteers to act out the skit. You may take this opportunity to show the items that might be found in a priest’s anointing kit. You may also use this time to explain what a pyx is and how it is used.

Presentation: The Disciple's Call to Visit the Sick (10 minutes)

Briefly present the following information:

- To visit the sick is listed within Church Tradition as a corporal work of mercy. These works focus on responding compassionately to the human condition. They lead us to make ourselves a neighbor to those in need.
- Every human must confront powerlessness, limitations, suffering, and death. Being sick can be a time to question God, and a time to grow to a deeper faith.
- Jesus' compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them when he says, "I was sick and you took care of me" (Matt. 25:36).

Divide the students into four groups. Have each group look in one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) and list two times when Jesus heals the sick. Ask each group to report their findings.

- Jesus' healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death. On the cross Christ takes away the sin of the world, of which illness is only a consequence.
- In imitation of Jesus, the Church, throughout history, has served the sick, the suffering, and the dying. Saints, both recognized and forgotten, have cared for the infirm and sponsored hospitals, care homes, and health-care services. Catholics continue to actively participate in the health-care ministry.
- The teaching office of the Church and Catholic theologians continue to speak up for the sacredness of life and to guide the ethical decisions now being faced in medicine. Many Catholic medical professionals volunteer their time with poor people, in our country and in developing nations. Ask the students if they have parents or relatives in the medical profession, and if they have heard stories of them volunteering with homeless people or in a developing country.
- As disciples of Christ, we are called to visit the sick, to see Jesus in them, to be present to them. Suffering is a mystery. When we suffer we are chosen to be united to Christ's suffering, and to be a part of the redemption of the world.

Taking Action: Visiting the Sick

At this time or in the near future, engage the young people in an activity that puts this work of mercy into practice. Several ideas are listed below.

Handout Review (10 minutes)

Distribute copies of handout 1, "A Disciple's Guide to Visiting the Sick." Divide the students into small groups. Instruct them to read through the handout, and then discuss their own experiences of visiting the sick. They should report back to the group with a story of visiting the sick.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

1. Gather the students for the prayer. If possible move to a prayerful space away from where the lesson was presented. Distribute the petitions you cut from resource 2, “Visit the Sick: Petitions,” to five volunteers. Introduce the prayer by telling the teens that the response will be, “Lord, hear us.” Begin with a sign of the cross. Then invite each person in turn to offer his or her petition. Lead the group in responding after each prayer.

2. Make the following comments and explain the ritual to the group:

- The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is reserved for those afflicted with a serious illness or those preparing for a serious operation. Nonetheless, we are called to pray for one another, that we may be healed of all the minor ailments that keep us from being healthy. Among the symbolic actions in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick are the placement of the priest’s hands on the head of the person and the making of the sign of the cross on the person’s hands. These actions represent the healing touch of Jesus Christ. Today we will pray for one another. We will use these actions as we ask for Christ’s healing touch in prayer.
- At the appropriate time, you will place your hands on the head of the person next to you and pray, “God of life, heal us and make us whole.” After saying this prayer, please trace the sign of the cross on the back of that person’s hands.

While the young people are praying for one another, play the song that you chose before the session.

3. Close with the following prayer or spontaneously create one on a similar theme:

Lord Jesus, you instituted the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. You ask us to imitate you by visiting and praying for the sick. May we recognize you in all who need to be healed. May we be your ambassadors to all who need to be strengthened by your love. May we build a culture in which life is affirmed and secured. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Project Ideas: Visit the Sick

- Schedule a visit to a nursing home, a home for people who are mentally or physically disabled, or a hospital. Many of these places have an activities director who will help your group plan something that will engage the residents. Possibilities include Christmas caroling, a polka party, a game of bingo or poker, a music recital, or a “senior prom,” that is, a dance for senior citizens.

- Arrange for a group of young people to adopt a parish shut-in and send a monthly card or remembrance to him or her. This could include a poinsettia at Christmas, a fruit basket at Thanksgiving, a lily for Easter, or a decorated box of tissues for Valentine's Day.
- Arrange to join with the infirm sisters, brothers, or priests of a local convent or monastery to pray the stations of the cross, to celebrate a seder meal, or for a favorite saint's feast day.
- Recruit Eucharistic ministers who make Communion calls to sick people to allow one or two teenagers to accompany them. It should be the same teens each time so that a mentor relationship can develop between the adult and the teens. Recruit teens who have expressed an interest in health-care professions.
- Organize family catechesis for a celebration of the World Day of the Sick (February 11 each year, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes). Distribute copies of Pope John Paul II's annual letter, which can be found at www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/sick/index.htm.
- Ask a parishioner who has made a pilgrimage to Lourdes to give a witness talk.
- If your parish has a parish nurse program, speak to the coordinator about the possibility of getting the youth involved, such as serving refreshments at blood drives and blood pressure screenings.
- Working with the coordinator of adult education, invite high school juniors and seniors, college students, and adults interested in health care to hear a speaker on the latest topics in medical ethics.
- Offer a resource list of Web sites that students can turn to when researching school papers, for the Catholic perspective on medical ethics. They are allowed to cite these resources in public school work.
- Plan a dramatization of the Book of Job for a family catechesis event.
- Offer a religious movie night for parents and teens that includes films like *Damien*, *the Leper Priest* or *The Song of Bernadette*.

Anointing Skit

Characters: Narrator, Mom, Dad, Father Sam, the doctor, Annie

Scene: Hospital emergency room. Mom and Dad, holding hands, are standing outside the curtain of their daughter's hospital bed.

Narrator: While riding in a car on their way to a movie theater, Annie, Sharon, two other friends, and Sharon's mom were injured in a violent accident. Annie was pinned inside the car, requiring a dramatic rescue. Annie's parents, who recently arrived at the hospital, are joined by their pastor.

Father Sam arrives. Mom stares at the curtain with desperation, but does not let go of Dad's hand.

Dad: (frantically) Father Sam, you got here so quickly, thank you. We're still waiting to hear. The chaplain told us she called you. We were both home when the hospital called. We still don't know how bad she is. They won't tell us anything. Annie was with her friends. They were going to the movie. I think it was Sharon's mom driving the van. The others were taken to the county hospital. They had to life-flight Annie here. Oh God, she's only fifteen. They told us we just had to wait. We haven't even seen her yet . . .

Father Sam waits with Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill until the doctor emerges from behind the curtain.

Doctor: Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill? (looks toward the priest) May we talk?

Dad: (motions to Father Sam and nods to the doctor) Our priest.

Doctor: Annie is a very lucky young girl. She was pinned by the car that hit the car she was in. They had to cut the door away. She's badly broken several ribs and will need surgery. The X rays show she is in no immediate danger, but the surgical team is getting ready. You can visit with her. I'll need to explain the surgery. When you give your consent, we'll move her upstairs to begin.

The priest and the parents get up and draw the curtain to reveal Annie lying on a table.

Mom: (runs to embrace her) Oh, Annie, there are so many tubes. Are you in pain?

Annie: They gave me some painkillers. Right now I'm just really scared. I'm so glad you're here.

Mom: The doctor says that you need surgery. Your ribs are broken.

Annie: I know. They explained it to me. (looks to the priest) Father Sam, you were telling us the other day about how you were at the hospital anointing patients. I never thought I'd be one of them.

Father Sam: If you want to receive the sacrament of Anointing before you go up to surgery, I can administer it. You can also receive Reconciliation and Communion.

Annie: Mom, is it okay?

Mom: You don't have to ask me. (looks to Father) Can we stay?

Father Sam: The anointing is a community celebration. I want you to stay. (turns to Annie) Annie, do you want me to hear your confession? We can do that at a whisper.

Annie: (looking embarrassed) Father Sam, I just went to confession a couple weeks ago. I'd rather not right now. Is that okay?

Father Sam: That's fine, Annie. Let's begin.

Narrator: Father Sam now begins the Rite of the Anointing of the Sick. He begins this liturgy as the Church begins all liturgies, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He offers the familiar greeting, "The Peace of Lord be with you, my brothers and sisters." Finding comfort in these familiar words, Annie's parents respond, "And also with you." Father Sam then draws the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament from his anointing kit and places it on the table for a moment of quiet adoration.

Father Sam: The risen Lord Jesus is indeed here. He is here with his mercy and healing. In his letter, James directed that the sick be brought to the priests for anointing and prayer. Through these acts of faith, the sick will be saved, and their sins will be forgiven.

Let us now lift up our injured sister, Annie, in prayer and ask that the power and grace of Christ will raise her up.

Narrator: Just as in the liturgy of the Eucharist, a time to reflect on our sinfulness and seek forgiveness follows the greeting by the priest. Father Sam invites Annie, her parents, and the others at Annie's side to prepare themselves for this sacrament.

Father Sam: My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this holy anointing, let us call to mind our sins.

Narrator: For those of us gathered here, let us also take a moment to call to mind our own sins. (Pause for a moment of quiet.) Let us now express the regret we feel because of our sins.

All: I confess to almighty God, . . .

Narrator: After the penitential rite, Father Sam asks Annie's father to read Matthew 11:25–30. Let us also stand and be attentive to God's voice in the words of the Gospel.

Dad: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

At that time Jesus said in reply, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants. . . . Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:25–30)

Narrator: After the Gospel has been proclaimed, Father Sam will lay his hands upon Annie's head.

Father Sam: Annie, I am going to lay my hands on you and pray for you in silence.

Narrator: After a moment of silent prayer for Annie, Father Sam offers this prayer of blessing over the oil: "God of all consolation, you chose and sent your Son to heal the world. Graciously listen to our prayer of faith: send the power of your Holy Spirit, the Consoler, into this precious oil, this soothing ointment, this rich gift, this fruit of the earth. Bless this oil and sanctify it for our use. Make this oil a remedy for all who are anointed with it; heal them in body, in soul, and in spirit, and deliver them from every affliction. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Father Sam: Annie, I'm now going to anoint your forehead.

Narrator: As Annie closes her eyes and lifts her head, Father Sam dabs his thumb with the blessed oil and prays, "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit."

Annie: Thank you, Father.

Father Sam: Please extend your hands toward me.

Narrator: Father Sam continues the liturgy of Anointing as he anoints Annie's hands, "May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."

Father Sam: Annie, I would anoint your injuries, but I'll bet you're too sore.

Annie: Father, I've never felt anything this bad.

Father Sam: Can all of us hold hands? After I pray, I ask that we join together in praying the Our Father.

Narrator: Finding strength in God's love and in the support of her family, Annie grips the hands extended to her, in spite of the pain. Father Sam prays, "God of compassion, our human weakness lays claim to your strength. We pray that through the skills of surgeons and nurses your healing gifts may be granted to Annie. May your servant respond to your healing will and be reunited with us at your altar of praise. Grant this through Christ our Lord."

We believe that in God's kingdom, there will be no more suffering, pain, or death. As those gathered around Annie will pray the Our Father, let us also pray for God's kingdom of healing to come.

All: Our Father . . .

Narrator: Father Sam takes the pyx and removes a host. He raises the host and says, "This is the bread of life. Taste, and see that the Lord is good."

First, he consumes Holy Communion and then offers Holy Communion to Annie and her family.

After a brief moment of quiet, Father Sam prays, "All-powerful and ever-living God, may the body and blood of Christ your Son be for our sister Annie a lasting remedy for body and soul. We ask this through Christ our Lord."

Just as Father Sam concludes his prayer, the doctor returns to take Annie into surgery.

Father Sam: Doctor, would you feel comfortable joining us for the final blessing?

Doctor: Father, I need the blessing as much as Annie does.

Narrator: Father Sam then blesses the doctor, Annie, and her family to conclude the liturgy, "May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Doctor: Annie, are you ready for surgery?

Annie: I am now.

THE GOAL OF OUR LIFE is Christ who awaits us. He will lead us across the boundaries of time to the eternal embrace of the God who loves us. . . . We cannot ignore the tragedies of our era. We cannot close our eyes and heart to the anguish that pervades life. We are immersed in this world every day. We stand ready to rush to wherever there is a brother or sister in need of help, a tear to be dried, a request for help to be answered. On this will we be judged!

—Message of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II for World Youth Day XI,
November 26, 1995, as adapted in *The Call to a Deeper Faith*

THE WORKS OF MERCY are actions for justice and peace in today's world that have timeless roots in the Scriptures and in the Tradition of the Church. The fourteen works address the deepest needs of human beings of all ages past and to come. Among these are care, compassion, freedom, acceptance, and understanding.

THE SEVEN CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY focus on personal needs:

- Visit the Sick
- Feed the Hungry
- Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Clothe the Naked
- Welcome the Stranger
- Visit the Imprisoned
- Bury the Dead

THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY are aimed at helping people grow in holiness:

- Convert the Sinner
- Instruct the Ignorant
- Counsel Those Who Doubt
- Comfort Those Who Mourn
- Bear Wrongs Patiently
- Forgive Injuries
- Pray for the Living and the Dead

About This Book

LIVING THE WORKS OF MERCY: DARING TEENS TO CHANGE THE WORLD can be used by teachers, coordinators of youth ministry, directors of religious education, catechists, teen mentors—anyone who works with young people in junior and senior high school. It contains fourteen sessions, each of which engages teens thoughtfully, actively, and prayerfully in one of the works of mercy, in a variety of ways:

- explorations of the scriptural basis for the works of mercy
- suggestions for group projects
- links to related Internet resources
- guides for discussion
- reproducible handouts listing individual actions for living each work of mercy, Scripture passages and citations, and prayers
- connections to Catholic history and Tradition
- dynamic prayer experiences

The book also contains two retreats. “Jesus in Disguise” is an overnight retreat on the corporal works of mercy, and is designed for younger teens. “Christ Looks on Us with Love” is a weekend retreat on the spiritual works of mercy, especially created for older teens.

Living the Works of Mercy: Daring Teens to Change the World is a resource that helps adults facilitate for teens the dialogue between profound human experiences and the revealed word of God. It is a resource that enables teens to understand the relevance of God's word in their life, and ultimately dares them to translate this sacred dialogue into action that will change the world.

About the Author

ELLEN P. CAVANAUGH has served fifteen years in a variety of youth ministry settings. She is pursuing a PhD in theology at Duquesne University, and is a master catechist for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. She has also published a Lenten prayer booklet for teens based on Pope John Paul II's letter to youth, titled *The Call to a Deeper Faith*.