



ARCHBISHOP'S PENTECOST LETTER TO YOUTH 2016
Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Be
merciful, as
your heavenly
Father is
merciful

Resource
for Schools

Every year, Archbishop Denis Hart writes a letter to young people, which is released for Pentecost Sunday. The Pentecost letter is inspired by the Archbishop's annual conversation with student leaders and reflects on the hopes, concerns and questions expressed by young people at this gathering.

This year's Pentecost Letter is an invitation for young people to learn more about 'mercy' and to discover ways in which we can be merciful. It is called 'Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36) and is based on the theme for the Extraordinary Year of Mercy that Pope Francis has declared for the whole Church from 8 December 2016- 20 November 2016.

Schools are invited to share this year's letter with their students. Copies of the letter are being distributed to all Catholic secondary schools and additional copies can be downloaded from the Archdiocesan website www.cam.org.au/youthletter. The letter is accompanied by four short video reflections which have been developed to further unpack the letter. These can be viewed and downloaded from the above address.

The following document is a resource which includes suggestions for using the letter as part of the classroom curriculum or school faith program. A reflection guide for youth groups is also available online which you may consider adapting for classroom use. We would appreciate any feedback you have about the resource to improve it in the future.

Reflect

The following table provides some suggestions for reflecting on the Archbishop's Pentecost letter in the context of the Coming to Know, Worship and Love Curriculum Framework.

Year 7

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 7: Unit 3a God and People in creation	Central to the Christian tradition is the dignity of the human person. This dignity of the human person is founded on being created in the image and likeness of God, and on an appropriate way of responsible living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme for this year's letter is 'Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful'. As Christians we not only believe that we were made in God's image and likeness but that we are to continue to imitate God and grow more like Him. In the letter Archbishop Hart speaks of ways we can be like the Father. Ask the students to put together a list of characteristics of God that we are called to imitate. Archbishop Hart also speaks of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. In sharing our created world, we as Christians are commanded to make sure all humans are looked after. Invite the students to read the letter and then look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to put together a list of actions they can do to carry out these works. For ideas see the "Other helpful resources" section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas.
Year 7 Unit 4b The Liturgical Year	The fifty days from Easter to Pentecost, the Easter season, are one great feast of joy. The Ascension is celebrated on the seventh Sunday. The season culminates in Pentecost, the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What liturgical seasons do we most associate with mercy and why? Why would Archbishop Hart choose to write a letter to young people on Pentecost? At Pentecost we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. Why did God choose to send us His Holy Spirit? Read Archbishop Hart's letter and watch the video 'Jeff's mercy story'. The Holy Spirit is vital in our faith life. What are the ways in which Archbishop Hart and Jeff suggest we can connect to God through the Holy Spirit?
Year 7 Unit 4a Ways people pray	Prayer is an integral part of Christian living. Jesus stood before his disciples as a man of prayer. He constantly turned to his Father for help, strength and encouragement throughout his life. He used prayer as a source of strength and spiritual renewal. Christians should look upon Jesus as a role model to help them improve the quality of their prayer life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the letter and watch the video 'Jeff's mercy story' Archbishop Hart tells us that the way to be merciful is to be connected to God directly through the Holy Spirit. What are the ways that he suggests we can be connected through the Holy Spirit? The letter suggests that by spending time with God we can connect with Him. What other ways can you think of to spend time with God? One of Archbishop Hart's suggestions on how to connect to God is through reading the Scriptures. Invite the class to take out their bibles and direct them to one of the parables of mercy (see below for ideas). Have a short time of silence and invite the students to contemplate what God is trying to teach them through this parable. Watch the mercy reflection video 'Be merciful as your heavenly father is merciful.' In the year of Mercy Pope Francis has called us particularly to pray the Divine Mercy prayers. Introduce this to the students and pray the chaplet together.

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 7 Unit 5a Christian Ideals – Moral Decisions	The key principles which characterise the life of Jesus and underpin his actions and attitudes in the Gospel include love, compassion, forgiveness, the dignity of each individual, justice, truth and honesty, service to others, loyalty, sensitivity towards others, faith and hope. The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes offer guidelines for Christian living and direction to individuals who are faced with making moral decisions. In recognising these guidelines Christians can come to express them in a positive way in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Archbishop Hart’s 2016 Pentecost letter. Archbishop Hart refers to the story of a dinner party in Luke 7:36-50. Read the whole story and discuss how Jesus treated the woman who washed his feet. What does this tell us about him? • Jesus taught us through the parables such as the one mentioned in the letter. Invite the students to look at some of the other parables of mercy (see below for ideas) and discuss Jesus’ message. • In this Extraordinary Jubilee year of mercy, Pope Francis has particularly called us to focus on mercy. Jesus claims in the Beatitudes that those who are merciful will have mercy shown to them. What does it mean to be merciful? How do mercy and justice relate to each other? • Watch the video <u>‘What is Mercy?’</u> • Archbishop Hart has highlighted Pope Francis’ call for the Church to pay particular attention to the ‘works of mercy’. In living a moral life, it is our responsibility as Christians to make sure all humans are looked after. Invite the students to look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to put together a list of actions they can do to carry out these works. For ideas see the “Other helpful resources” section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas.

Year 8

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 8 Unit 2a Participating in the Life of the Church	The Church’s mission is one of evangelisation, following Jesus’ command to the apostles (Mt 28:19). Members of the Church are called not just to profess and communicate their faith, but to put it into practice. The mission of the Church is the mission of each individual and each community. Members of the Church live out their mission in the witnessing to the values presented by Jesus in the Gospel; by sharing their talents in the service of others as well as sharing in the life of worship in the local parish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One characteristic of Jesus that stood out to those he met was his Mercy. As Christians, we too are called to show mercy. Jesus commands us to “Be Merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful”. What does it mean to be merciful? • Watch the video <u>‘What is Mercy?’</u> • Archbishop Hart has highlighted Pope Francis’ call for the Church to pay particular attention to the works of mercy. Invite the students to look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to put together a list of actions they can do to carry out these works. For ideas see the “Other helpful resources” section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas. • Every person has a specific calling within the Church. Watch the video <u>‘Jeff’s mercy story’</u> where he speaks about God’s mission for him. What might God be calling you to do as part of living the mission of the Church?

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 8 Unit 2b Beliefs of Early Christian Communities	<p>The Church, whose foundations had been laid by Christ, came alive on Pentecost. The Acts of the Apostles traces the spiritual birth of the Christian communities to a religious event shared by the assembled disciples and Mary. This common experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit ensured that the first followers of Christ would become confident witnesses of the Resurrection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Archbishop Hart's 2016 Pentecost letter. What is Archbishop Hart encouraging us to do this Pentecost? • At Pentecost we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. Why did God choose to send us His Holy Spirit? • Read Archbishop Hart's letter and watch the video: 'Jeff's mercy story'. The Holy Spirit is vital in our faith life. What are the ways in which Archbishop Hart and Jeff suggest we can connect to God through the Holy Spirit? • Watch the video 'Claire's mercy story'. Claire share's about her conversion to the faith and through it, witnesses to the work of God in her life. As Christians we are all called to witness to the resurrection and the work of God in our life. Spend time thinking about how God is working in your life. Do you ever give Him credit? Think about writing a short testimony to share with others.
Year 8 Unit 5a Jesus, a model for living	<p>By reading and reflecting on the Gospels it is possible to outline certain exemplary qualities which characterised Jesus' lifestyle. Jesus' love for others was not selective and excluded no one, even those ostracised from society. He showed compassion for sinners, as well as an infinite capacity for mercy and forgiveness (Lk 7:36–50; Jn 8:1–11 Lk 23:32–34). Throughout his ministry, Jesus was surrounded by multitudes but never forgot the individual. He identified with the suffering of others and freed many people from their infirmities. Not only did Jesus respond sensitively to others, but he was also keenly aware of their spoken and unspoken needs. Inspired by their faith in Jesus, many realised their need for forgiveness and healing, whether physical or moral. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7) is a collection of many of Jesus' key teachings on Christian living. This discourse is an invitation to a new and different kind of living which challenges the priorities of people and demands a change of heart from those who accept the Christian way. The Sermon offers an insight into the high standards Jesus set for his followers. He challenges his audience towards inner conversion resulting in changed behaviour. Incorporating the everyday experiences of his audience was characteristic of Jesus' teaching style. By employing the literary form of a parable, Jesus ensured that most of his audience both grasped and reflected on the meaning of his teaching. Parables helped to challenge stereotypes and customary attitudes and behaviour, and to encourage a practical response from his listeners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Archbishop Hart's 2016 Pentecost letter. Archbishop Hart refers to the story of a dinner party in Luke 7:36-50. Read the whole story and discuss how Jesus treated the woman who washed his feet. What does this tell us about him? • In the Gospels many people who encountered Jesus came away transformed. Jesus also told parables to demonstrate God's mercy. Invite the class to take out their bibles and direct them to one of the parables of mercy (see below for ideas). Have a short time of silence and invite the students to contemplate what God is trying to teach them through this parable. Alternately, in groups ask the students to read different parables of mercy and discuss how mercy is portrayed. • Ask the students to brainstorm what they think 'mercy' means. • Watch the video 'What is mercy?' What does mercy look like in real life? Invite the students to think of who are people that they associate with showing mercy? What are the key characteristics of these people that demonstrate mercy? • Archbishop Hart speaks of the importance of receiving mercy in order to give mercy. Invite the students to reflect on a time when they have experienced mercy from someone else and share it with the person next to them. • Pope Francis described himself first and foremost as "a sinner". Archbishop Hart also refers to his need for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Watch the video 'Claire's mercy story'. Claire shares about her experience of receiving God's mercy through the sacrament of Reconciliation. What is the relationship between humility and mercy? • Archbishop Hart has highlighted Pope Francis' call for the Church to pay particular attention to the 'works of mercy'. Invite the students to look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to brainstorm ways they can show mercy to those around them. For ideas see the "Other helpful resources" section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas.

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 8: Unit 5b Living the Christian Life	<p>Christian living is the demonstration of solidarity with and action for those who suffer. In the same way Jesus transformed the lives of many, through his compassionate presence. Christians are called to help alleviate the suffering of others. Tradition has listed a number of ways of acting with mercy and compassion. They are known as the Corporal Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick; and burying the dead. Burying the dead relates to Tobit 1:16–20; 12:12 and was added out of respect for the sanctity of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). The list is relevant to this study because it demonstrates what followers of Jesus have always done in his name. Parish and local Church life today in all Christian denominations continues to be geared to doing these works of mercy. There are many opportunities available in the everyday life of students to imitate the example of Jesus and show compassion in their attitudes and actions, e.g. among friends and family at school and at work. Practical Christian living does not exist in isolation: it is fortified by prayer and regular celebration of the sacraments, most especially weekly participation in the Eucharist. Hence the Church has certain precepts for Christian living, nourished by liturgical life. The necessity of translating faith into action is central to Christian living. Faith without good works is dead (James 2:14-26). Many individuals and groups choose to put the teachings of Jesus to work in their own lives, by carrying out a wide range of ministries. Through their actions they give witness to the Christian faith expressed in love of neighbour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Archbishop Hart’s 2016 Pentecost letter. Archbishop Hart refers to the story of a dinner party in Luke 7:36-50. Read the whole story and discuss how Jesus treated the woman who washed his feet. What does this tell us about him? • In the Gospels many people who encountered Jesus came away transformed. Jesus also told parables to demonstrate God’s mercy. Invite the class to take out their bibles and direct them to one of the parables of mercy (see below for ideas). Have a short time of silence and invite the students to contemplate what God is trying to teach them through this parable. Alternately, in groups ask the students to read different parables of mercy and discuss how mercy is portrayed. • Ask the students to brainstorm what they think ‘mercy’ means. • Watch the video ‘What is mercy?’ What does mercy look like in real life? Invite the students to think of who are people that they associate with showing mercy? What are the key characteristics of these people that demonstrate mercy? • Every person has a specific calling within the Church. Watch the video ‘Jeff’s mercy story’ where he speaks about God’s mission for him. What might God be calling you to do as part of living the mission of the Church? • Both in Archbishop Hart’s letter and the video ‘Jeff’s mercy story’ we hear that that the way to be merciful is to be connected to God directly through the Holy Spirit. What are the ways that were suggested to help us be connected through the Holy Spirit? The letter suggests that by spending time with God we can connect with Him. What other ways can you think of to spend time with God? • In the letter, Archbishop Hart has highlighted Pope Francis’ call for the Church to pay particular attention to the ‘works of mercy’. Invite the students to look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to brainstorm ways they can show mercy to those around them. For ideas see the “Other helpful resources” section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas.

Year 9

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
<p>Year 9 Unit 2a Key Church Teachings</p>	<p>The Creed makes statements of belief about: God the Father and Creator, who is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present (within all things which exist in the universe) sustaining them and • transcendent (existing and beyond and outside of all things in the universe), and • has created people in the image of the creative God; this could tap into exploration of images of God. <p>Jesus – his full humanity and divinity: Central beliefs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salvation and the kingdom of God: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jesus, in what he taught and did, shows a model of life which, if put into practice, would allow us to achieve an ideal world. - the kingdom of God. What is an ideal world? How do we achieve it? It is God’s plan for the fulfilment of the world. • Jesus was born to a human woman in an unprecedented way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (see also Year 9, Unit 4b, on Mary). <p>The Holy Spirit: Central beliefs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Holy Spirit acts as a guide, as we make decisions and choices. • the Holy Spirit is the living memory of the mighty deeds of Jesus <p>The idea of the Trinity: the three Persons, the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are necessary to a full image of who God is; while each of them is distinct, together they form the full image of the one God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archbishop Hart’s letter is called “Be Merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful”. Is our heavenly Father merciful? Where do we find evidence in the Scriptures of this mercy? Consider some of the parables of mercy that Jesus told (see below for ideas). What do these teach us about God the Father? • Brainstorm as a class what it means to be merciful? Watch the video ‘What is mercy?’ • Jesus was a great model of mercy in the Gospels. What are some examples of Jesus showing mercy? • Archbishop Hart refers in his letter to the story of a dinner party in Luke 7:36-50. Read the whole story and discuss how Jesus treated the woman who washed his feet. What does this tell us about him? • Jesus taught us through the parables such as the one mentioned in the letter. Invite the students to look at some of the other parables of mercy (see below for ideas) and discuss Jesus’ message. • Jesus had a real mother – Mary. What does Archbishop Hart tell us about Mary’s role in our world? • Watch the video ‘Jeff’s mercy story’. Archbishop Hart in his letter and Jeff in the video tell us that the way to be merciful, to be like our Heavenly Father, is to be connected to God directly through the Holy Spirit. What are the ways that they suggest we can be connected through the Holy Spirit? The letter suggests that by spending time with God we can connect with Him. What ways can you think of to spend time with God? • The theme for this year’s Pentecost letter is ‘Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful’. As Christians we not only believe that we were made in God’s image and likeness but that we are to continue to imitate God and grow more like Him to bring about His Kingdom on Earth. In the letter Archbishop Hart speaks of ways we can be like the Father. Ask the students to put together a list of characteristics of God that we are called to imitate. • Archbishop Hart has also highlighted Pope Francis’ call for the Church to pay particular attention to the ‘works of mercy’. Invite the students to look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to brainstorm ways they can show mercy to those around them. For ideas see the “Other helpful resources” section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas.

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 9: Unit 3a Redemption and Hope	<p>Nowadays, we not only experience good and evil on a personal/local level but can immediately witness a variety of images throughout the world. This heightened sense of immediacy can be advantageous when people are prompted to act in response to the images to which they have been exposed. Consider what action is taken when people witness famine and hunger in the Third World; suffering and death caused by war; the destructiveness of an earthquake, cyclone and so on. Consider the treatment of refugees and disadvantaged in Australia. Consider the daily choices we make with those marginalised in our society and particularly students in our own classroom. As students search for a set of values as a guide to living, they are presented with contrasting images promoted by society and the Gospel. Society's images contribute, in part, to a rather selfish individualism and materialistic attitude to life which can be compared to the selfless and compassionate attitude of Jesus in the Gospel. The attainment of happiness as outlined by Jesus in the Beatitudes can be compared with society's reassurance that happiness is acquired through the pursuit of materialism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Archbishop Hart's letter called "Be Merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful". Archbishop Hart speaks of the importance of receiving mercy in order to give mercy. Invite the students to reflect on a time when they have experienced mercy from someone else and share it with the person next to them. • Invite the students to think of who are people that they associate with Mercy? What are the key characteristics of these people that demonstrate mercy? • Watch the video 'What is mercy?' Ask the students who they think is in need of mercy. • How does our society view mercy? Think about those who have committed serious crimes and whether our society can show forgiveness. • One of Jesus' claims in the Beatitudes is that those who are merciful will have mercy shown to them. What does it mean to be merciful? • Archbishop Hart has also highlighted Pope Francis' call for the Church to pay particular attention to the 'works of mercy'. Invite the students to look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to brainstorm ways they can show mercy to those around them. For ideas see the "Other helpful resources" section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas.
Year 9: Unit 4a Sacraments of Healing and Hope	<p>Jesus Christ is physician both to our souls and to our bodies, and the Church continues this model of service (Mark 6:12-13), through the Holy Spirit, in the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. Having received new life in Christ through the sacraments of initiation, Catholics care for its wellbeing through the sacraments of healing. Penance and Reconciliation</p> <p>The sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation encompasses the concepts of conversion, sin, Church, sacrament and mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Archbishop Hart's letter called "Be Merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful". In the letter, Pope Francis described himself first and foremost as "a sinner". Archbishop Hart also refers to his need for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. What reasons does Archbishop Hart give for regularly receiving Sacrament of Reconciliation? • Archbishop Hart speaks of the importance of receiving mercy in order to give mercy. Invite the students to reflect on a time when they have experienced mercy from someone else and share it with the person next to them.

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 9: Unit 5a The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes	<p>Christian morality is given its fullest expression in the Beatitudes. They go beyond a set of guidelines and positively advocate attitudes and actions which are to be embraced. They offer inspiration and encouragement to those who follow the example of Jesus' lifestyle. The Beatitudes are addressed to those who realize their dependence on God; those who are gentle, compassionate and hunger and thirst for justice; those who are merciful, honest and humble; those who are peacemakers and suffer persecution for others. Jesus reassured his followers that in living out the underlying principles of the Beatitudes, they would experience the joy and happiness that comes from an attitude of trust in God, and from acting on that trust. However, the challenge for society today is that many of the values in contemporary culture do not reflect the spirit of the Beatitudes. On the contrary, true happiness and joy will be the reward of those who endure experiences of sorrow, injustice and persecution on God's behalf, and who exemplify the qualities of gentleness, compassion, mercy, honesty and peace in their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After watching the video '<u>What is mercy?</u>' read Archbishop Hart's 2016 Pentecost letter • Jesus claims in the Beatitudes that those who are merciful will have mercy shown to them. What does it mean to be merciful? • Archbishop Hart reflects that Pope Francis is a man of great mercy because "he himself has come to Jesus as a sinner, and Jesus has looked upon him with mercy". Archbishop Hart also speaks of the importance of receiving mercy in order to give mercy. Invite the students to reflect on a time when they have experienced mercy from someone else and share it with the person next to them. • Watch the video '<u>Claire's mercy story</u>'. What was Claire's experience of the mercy of God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation? • Invite the students to think of who are people that they associate with Mercy? What are the key characteristics of these people that demonstrate mercy?

Year 10

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
Year 10: Unit 5b Working for Justice in Australia	<p>Justice is the key principle of social relationships which provides the conditions whereby each person or group of persons obtains what is their due. According to the Catechism, social justice is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect for the human person • equal dignity and rights, with recognition of differences in needs among persons • human solidarity. <p>A situation is just if it respects the dignity and rights of all persons involved in it. It is unjust if the dignity and rights of any person are compromised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Archbishop Hart's 2016 Pentecost letter ask the students to brainstorm what they think 'mercy' means. • Watch the video clip 'What is mercy?' • Archbishop Hart has highlighted Pope Francis' call for the Church to pay particular attention to the 'works of mercy'. In living a moral life, it is our responsibility as Christians to make sure all humans are looked after. Invite the students to look at the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in more detail. Ask the students to put together a list of actions they can do to carry out these works. For ideas see the "Other helpful resources" section below for some websites which list 50+ ideas.

VCE

Unit	Context from the curriculum documentation	Suggestions for reflection
VCE Religion and society	<p>The beliefs, values and ideas of religious traditions can play an important part in shaping and maintaining culture. Religious beliefs about the nature of existence and the purpose of human life provide a frame of reference for understanding the world and for guiding daily personal and communal action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From reading Archbishop Hart's letter, what do you think are some of the characteristics of his system of belief? • Watch the video 'Claire's mercy story'. How has her system of belief changed over her lifetime? • Do you think "mercy" can be considered a key characteristic of someone's spirituality? Why? • Watch the video 'Jeff's mercy story'. In what ways has being Catholic assisted Jeff to develop his personal meaning or identity? • How do you see other communities expressing mercy? Are there any similarities? • How have Jeff and Claire's religious beliefs impacted their interpretation of significant life experiences? • In his letter, Archbishop Hart points out that Jesus calls us to 'Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful'. How does our society view mercy? • What types of actions does Pope Francis call us to in this letter?
VCE Texts and Traditions	<p>This study equips student to come to a deeper understanding of the relationship between religious traditions and the written texts which grow and shape the traditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Archbishop Hart's 2016 Pentecost letter • Archbishop Hart draws on several different quotes from scripture to discuss mercy; what other examples from scripture do you think also discuss this theme? • The letter points out that Jesus often used stories and parables to help his audience understand his teachings. Find parables that give an account of God's mercy and discuss the ways in which they offer deeper meaning to the concept.

Liturgy for use in classroom or assembly

Reader: Pope Francis has called for an extraordinary year of mercy for the whole Church. We begin our gathering today with a short reflection on Mercy:

Watch the video 'What is Mercy?'

Reader: Jesus is our model in faith. Through his words and example we learn how we can grow in mercy for others. We listen now to a reading from the Gospel of Luke and we will then spend some time in silence reflecting on this passage.

Read Gospel from Luke 6:32-36 (followed by a time of silence to reflect on the scripture)

Reader: The call to 'be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful' is a challenge that is difficult to live out. We know we need to rely on God to help us grow in mercy and compassion for those around us. Let us pray together:

All: Lord, help us to be more merciful. Together with the whole Church we are called to be witnesses to the world in bringing God's mercy to all, through our work, leisure and service.

It can be difficult for us to love those who do not love us back, to do good to those who do not treat us well and to forgive those who hurt us.

Send your Holy Spirit to inspire us so we can look with eyes of mercy, listen with ears of mercy, speak with words of mercy and perform with actions of mercy to all those around us.

We pray that through humility and perseverance, we may allow the mercy of God to fill our hearts and the hearts of our school community.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Watch the 'Mercy Reflection video'

Explore

A few ideas to further explore the themes of the Archbishop's 2016 Pentecost letter include:

- There are hundreds of Saints who were great models to us of the Mercy of God. Encourage the young people to think of a Saint they know of who shows mercy and why. Alternately you can pick some Saints who are great models of mercy to teach the students about.
- Have students find examples in the news where our society has shown/ not shown mercy
- Ask the students to create a video reflection to encourage our society to have greater mercy

Other helpful resources

- Exploring Mercy: Ideas for how youth groups can unpack the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Can be downloaded from www.cam.org.au/youth/Resources/Online-Resources
- Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy), The Papal Bull announcing the extraordinary jubilee year of mercy which explains the reasons for this jubilee, and its theme: "Be merciful, just as your father is merciful." www.im.va/content/gdm/
- The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy Resource Booklet: Developed by the Melbourne Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation (AOFE), this document contains suggested resources that have been selected to initiate, inspire and support a response from parish communities and beyond for the Year of Mercy. www.cam.org.au/Portals/52/Year%20of%20Mercy/Year%20of%20Mercy%20resource%20booklet%20-%20WEB.pdf
- The Name of God is Mercy: a book in which Pope Francis reveals his vision of God's mercy in a series of interviews with a Vatican reporter.
- Pope Francis' letter to youth for the 2016 World Youth Day on the theme "Blessed are the Merciful for they shall receive Mercy" www.wyd.org.au/project/pdf/Pope_Francis_WYD_Message_2016.pdf
- A spirit of mercy: reflections on the works of mercy: Prepared by the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, this booklet contains a series of reflections on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, with reflection questions for use by individuals or groups. www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/Resources/Year-of-Mercy
- Ideas on ways to show mercy: There are several lists of ideas on how to live mercy. See the following: <http://lifeteen.com/blog/51-creative-ways-to-show-mercy-this-year/> or <http://aleteia.org/2016/12/07/54-ways-to-be-merciful-during-the-jubilee-year-of-mercy/> or <http://www.focus.org/blog/posts/50-corporal-works-of-mercy.html>. Other ideas include: visit a nursing home in your local area, fundraise for a local charity, collect food, clothes or other goods and donate them to Vinnies, write letters to asylum seekers in detention centres, investigate whether you can participate in prison ministry visitations, sign up to assist with a soup van or soup kitchen in your local area, assist with a local tutoring program.

Prayer

- The Official Year of Mercy Prayer: This was released by Pope Francis as the official prayer: www.jubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/gdm/en/giubileo/preghiera.html
- Prayer of Saint Faustina: This is a short prayer asking God to help us be more merciful. <http://stpatcatholicchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Prayer-of-St-Faustina.pdf>
- Australian WYD2016 prayer: www.wyd.org.au/resources/pastoral/australian-wyd-prayer
- Divine Mercy Chaplet: Jesus appeared to St Faustina with a special message of God's mercy for all and asked that people pray the Divine Mercy chaplet for the whole world. www.sjnirvine.org/files/the_chaplet_of_divine_mercy_with_picture_june_2011.pdf. A sung version has also been recorded and can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZT0MNmFkgG4
- Parables of Mercy: Jesus told many parables about Mercy – here are some you make like to meditate on or include in prayer:
 - Luke 7:36-47 – the two debtors
 - Luke 18:9-14 – the Pharisee and tax collector
 - Luke 12:13-21 – the Rich Man and Lazarus
 - Luke 18:1-8 – the widow and the judge
 - Luke 10:25-37 – the good Samaritan
 - Luke 15:4-7 – the lost sheep
 - Luke 15: 8-10 – the lost coin
 - Luke 15:11-32 – the forgiving father/ the prodigal son
 - Matthew 20:1-16 – the workers in the vineyard
 - Matthew 22:1-14 – the marriage of the king's son
 - Matthew 18:21-35 – the unforgiving slave
- Psalms There are many psalms that speak of the Mercy of God. Here are a few examples that you may like to meditate on or pray with during prayer: 23, 32, 51, 57, 103, 111, 112, 123, 130, 136, 145, 146 and 147.