



How do you define mercy? Be on the lookout for opportunities to impart and receive mercy this week, using these reflections and calls to response with family and friends as a guide.

Adult to Small Child

Read: **Luke 4:18.**

Reflect: Jesus began his ministry by declaring his mission to bring good news to the poor. Let us follow his example by anchoring our Lenten practice in service and giving. This type of focus is a great habit to get into, no matter what age your children are. Even the littlest among us can understand the concept of sharing and giving to others.

Respond: Start a “giving box” in your home. Add something to it each day or week during Lent. We’ll revisit the idea during the second week of Easter. If you have a very young toddler or baby, consider collecting items you already have around the house such as baby food and diapers to donate to a local diaper bank or shelter. For children who are old enough to participate, consider collecting food or toys as they are tangible representations of everyday needs for very young children.

Adult to Elementary Child

Read: **Luke 5:1-11.**

Reflect: Jesus doesn’t do God’s work alone. He chooses people to help him, ordinary people; in fact not very popular people: fishermen and a tax collector. Sure, fishing is a fun pastime on a warm summer’s day, but it’s hard and stinky work, and these fishermen Jesus approaches had been fishing all night without catching a thing. They’re cleaning their nets when Jesus tells them to try again; it’s not hard to imagine they might have been seriously annoyed by that suggestion.

They humor Jesus and go out again, this time catching so many fish that the nets are full to breaking, and their boats are now so heavy they are now danger of sinking. Simon Peter is both amazed and embarrassed. He tells Jesus not to bother; he’s a screw-up, a sinner. Jesus doesn’t have time for that nonsense: “Don’t be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people.’ As soon as they brought the boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.” Jesus does not say, “Stop being a screw-up and follow me.” He doesn’t even say, “Finish up with all these fish, your nets and the boats, and follow me.” Jesus doesn’t want us to wait, to grow up first or get everything right before we drop everything and follow him.

Respond: What is one thing we can drop, and what is one thing we can pick up or take on right now as followers of Jesus?

Adult to Youth or Young Adult

Read: [Luke 5](#).

Reflect: In Luke 5, a group of fishermen get a rude awakening: not only does Jesus have some killer fishing tips, but he also has a new vocation for their lives. It's easy to become over-confident when you've put a lot of time into something. These fishermen knew what they were doing. Chances are, their parents had fished, and their parents as well. The things they knew about fishing came from a lifetime of experience, as well as the wisdom of generations before them. And then, Jesus came along and turned all of that around. He wasn't a fisherman, and he didn't have the deep knowledge they did about the work of fishing. Instead, he offered them a new perspective, and that made all the difference for that day and for all their days to come.

Respond: Share a time you thought you knew it all and, after initially rejecting the help of an elder or friend, discovered they actually gave you insight from a new perspective. How did you respond at first? What gave you the humility to go back and accept their help or idea? What was the outcome? Write a prayer that invites God to open your heart to new perspectives and ideas, even in areas you believe you are an expert. Let Lent be a time you humble yourself and allow others to speak into your life and experiences.

Adult to Adult

Read: [Luke 7:36-50](#).

Reflect: Do you believe your sins are too great to be forgiven? From accounts of his healing leprosy, addressing the poor, healing a paralyzed man, and forgiving the sins of a woman who carried an alabaster jar of perfume, the Gospel of Luke teaches us of the mercy of Jesus Christ. In Luke 7:36-49, Jesus taught a Pharisee named Simon that a person who holds the most sin is the most grateful when forgiven. The woman with the alabaster jar wiped the feet of Jesus with her tears and perfume, but the Pharisee had not even offered a glass of water or oil for the head of Jesus. The woman, whose sins were many, was forgiven because of the great love she showed for Christ. In context, the alabaster jar of perfume was incredibly expensive, even by modern standards. The woman could not look Jesus in the eyes but she could wash his feet, a sign of utmost respect. Where the Pharisee pointed out the sin, Christ pointed out the gratitude. Too often we find we are brazen with sin but God still pours out grace. God notices when we offer all we have with a humble heart.

Respond: This week, identify a friend or family member who you find it difficult to forgive. If you are unable to approach them in love and kindness, write a letter to them extending forgiveness. How can you exemplify the love of Jesus in your actions as you move forward?