



## Family Prayer Activity for Syrian Refugee Children

### Praying the Parables of Jesus

#### Raising Awareness Through Family Prayer

One of the most powerful and simple ways that your family can demonstrate solidarity with the millions of Syrian refugees is through prayer. This family prayer activity reflects on the Good Samaritan parable as an example for achieving Jesus' mission of mercy by transforming the world, one person at a time.

Through parables, or stories, Jesus builds bridges of understanding with his followers. Likewise, we will reflect upon our stories of faith as we seek to "go deeper" in our commitment to Jesus' teaching and his mission of caring for the most vulnerable people in our community and world.

This prayer activity uses the prayer style of "lectio divina," or "divine reading."

#### How do we pray the parables of Jesus through "lectio divina"?

1. Select a time when most of the family is available to pray together.
2. Light a candle and place a Bible in the center of the table.
3. Invite family members to close their eyes, take a deep breath, exhale and prepare to listen closely to the parable.
4. Choose a family member to read the Scripture passage below. *The Word should be proclaimed slowly and deliberately. Do not rush through it.*
5. Ask your family to listen to the story as if Jesus is speaking directly to them.
6. Follow the reading with a moment of silence.
7. Ask each family member to share the message they heard as Jesus spoke to their hearts.
8. Make a "Family Pledge of Solidary" (see below).



### **The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)**

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?”

He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.”

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise, a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’

Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?”

He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.”

Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

[Follow with a few minutes of silence.]



### Family Pledge of Solidary

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus reminds his followers that we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. Solidarity with, and mercy for, the Syrian refugees starts with each member of our families. Together, list five ways that your family can commit to living in solidarity with Syrian refugees.

*Examples: Our family will always offer hospitality to people in need. Our family will pray every night for all refugees. Our family will speak up for the families that have fled Syria.*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



### Family Prayer of Solidarity and Mercy

Choose a family member to read the following prayer and offer the prayer petitions below, or have each person around the table take turns in offering one or more of the petitions.

**Leader:** We do not always love as we should. We ask for your mercy to help us to love better. Our sisters and brothers who are refugees need us. For the times we let fear and prejudice prevent us from offering hospitality to those in our world who suffer injustice, oppression and poverty, we pray ...

**Response:** Have mercy on us, the Syrian refugees and the whole world.

**Leader:** For the times we lack courage to speak out to address the causes of injustice, oppression and poverty ...

**Response:** Have mercy on us, the Syrian refugees and the whole world.

**Leader:** For the times we give in to despair and resignation when confronted with the injustice of our world ...

**Response:** Have mercy on us, the Syrian refugees and the whole world.

**Leader:** For the times we allow our fears to triumph over the call to solidarity ...

**Response:** Have mercy on us, the Syrian refugees and the whole world.

**Leader:** Merciful God, heal the brokenness in our hearts and in our world caused by injustice, indifference, selfishness and fear. Support us as we seek to respond in solidarity and with compassion. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

Adapted from a prayer by Helene Paharik, Archdiocese of Pittsburgh, inspired by the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.