

Pflaum VISIONS

May 10, 2020
5th Sunday of Easter

What Is the Work That Christians Do?

We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We cannot do everything. There is a sense of liberation in knowing that.

This allows us to do something and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

—This prayer was first presented by Cardinal Dearden in 1979 and quoted by Pope Francis in 2015.



What work do you do that is like the work of Jesus?

**What Christlike work have you seen someone in your class do?
We cannot do everything. What is one thing you can do?**



CAMP SUZANNE

Going to visit someone in prison can be scary, even if that inmate is your mom. Camp Suzanne gives kids time with their moms in prison—five hours a day for five days. Four of the girls visiting this week are between eleven and fourteen years old; one is only ten. The three boys are nine, ten, and twelve.

Fences with curls of barbed wire on top surround the federal prison in Dublin, California. The bus drives the children into a parking area near the entry.

The prison checks all visitors when they arrive. Every person signs in and goes through an x-ray screening at the door. Adults leave their driver's licenses. No cell phones are allowed inside. No gifts. Officers carrying lots of keys around their waists lead the children to the visitor center.

Visiting people in prison is one of the Corporal Acts of Mercy that Jesus teaches in Matthew's Gospel: "I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25:36).

Each day begins and ends with child and parent time together.

When Camp Suzanne leaders arrive with the campers at the visitor center, moms grab blankets and lead the children outside to sit and snuggle against a wall or swing together while it's cool.



The visitor center has an outside area with picnic tables on one side and a sandlot with swings and a slide on the other.

Jade and her mom sit side by side at a table. Her mom has an arm around her. "I forgot how much I missed my mom," Jade later tells an officer at the prison, which invites programs like Camp Suzanne to connect with inmates. "Thank you for helping me come."

In between saying hello and saying goodbye, the moms and their kids do activities. "We bond together," Adrianna says.

The moms and kids create a keepsake book. They make four pages during the week, each with a different theme or "recipe." Page one is a recipe for celebration. Page two is a recipe for a perfect day. Page three is a recipe for what to do when you miss someone. Page four is a photo of the children with their moms and a letter. The kids will take their books home.

The moms and kids participate in a family challenge activity each afternoon. Everyone has to work together. On the third day, the challenge is to

build the highest tower with a cup on top to hold little candies. The families get four straws, a small paper cup, tape, clay, and a yard of string.



Day three brings mixed feelings. The kids enjoy a great day with their moms but realize they have only two more days together. In the evenings back at their rooms, they play elbow tag, make tie-dye shirts to wear on day five, and play basketball on a hot court.

Leaders plan special activities for day four.

"What do you do when you miss someone?" Jessica, one of the leaders, asks. Everyone feels sad again. "Being apart doesn't mean you can't feel connected," she explains. To stay connected, the families make snuggly blankets, worry dolls, and long-distance hugs.

Kids and moms choose fleece squares and tie the cut edges together to make blankets. Two boys wear the blankets on their shoulders like capes as soon as theirs are finished.

To make a long-distance hug, children outline their mom's hands, cut a piece of string the distance between their mom's hands outstretched, and then



Adrianna's mom sits in the swing and holds her on her lap. Her brother Carlos pushes them a little. Then their mom gives Carlos a turn on her lap.

tape the string to the two hands. Children and moms write words on the hands to describe how the hugs feel—close, cozy, safe, *amor*, *proteccion*, *cuidado*, *soqueredad*, *apapachachos*.

Everyone likes the worry doll tables, making little creatures out of pipe cleaners, buttons, and colored thread and showing them to each other. The children can tell the dolls their worries and then put the dolls under their pillows at night.

The fourth day ends with a scavenger hunt to find the family challenge boxes in the visitor room. Inside are straws and directions to create a place that is home. Tony and his mom make a waterfall and pour water through it. “The waterfall keeps running as long as we keep learning,” explains his mom.

Three sisters work together. They blow up a plastic glove. The fingers symbolize five, the number of people in their family. Tony and his mom make a tent with the whole family inside it.

On the last night of the week, the camp leaders, kids, and the counselors sit in a circle. The leaders ask, “What was the best thing about the week?”

“Seeing my mom,” all of the kids agree.

What was the hardest thing about the week? “Saying good-bye to my mom.”

“I know how my mom is and where she is now,” says Jade in the circle. “I didn’t remember hiding behind the vacuum cleaner when I was four. My mom told me she had to call 911 because she couldn’t find me.”

“I haven’t been with my mom since I was five years old,” Johnny says. “She smiles easy.”

“Camp Suzanne tells us pretty things about our moms,” Genessy says.

The biggest surprise for Louis is a sad one. “I found out my mom and dad aren’t getting together again,” he says.



On Friday, the last day of the visit, the children give their moms photos of themselves with their moms. They write messages on the back, such as, “When you feel sad or miss me, just read this.”

“We were happy to see you,” the three sisters write. “We hope to see you again soon.”

The moms have a surprise for their children. They give them a copy of the same photo with loving thoughts written on the back.

“TALK”

- 1** What is best for the children taking part in Camp Suzanne? What is hardest?
- 2** How are the activities like those you do in your family?
- 3** How does visiting people in prison help them? How does visiting their mothers in prison help the Camp Suzanne children?
- 4** What is valuable about the memory book, the photos, and the messages?

Camp Suzanne grew out of the Get on the Bus program, which takes children to see their moms and dads in prison on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Sister Suzanne

Jabro worked with women in California prisons. On one visit, her group asked the women what they needed most. “We want to see our children,” the mothers said.

The first year, Get on the Bus took one busload of children to visit their mothers on Mother’s Day. Today, 1,500



children see their parents on Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, and other spring weekends. They may live seven to nine hours away from the prison by car or bus. Many live with

grandparents or other family members who don’t have cars or money to make the trip.

People in schools and parishes along the way support Get on the Bus. (For more information about Get on the Bus or to support their ministry, visit crjw.us/programs/camp-suzanne).



SUNDAY GOSPEL

5th Sunday of Easter

John 14:1-12

Jesus Prepares a Place for Us

Jesus 1: Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me. In my Father's house, there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, how could I have told you that I was going to prepare a place for you? I am indeed preparing a place for you and then I shall come back to take you with me, that where I am, you also may be. You know the way that leads where I go.

Thomas: Jesus, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?

Jesus 2: I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father also. From this

point on, you know and have seen my Father.

Philip: Show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.

Jesus 3: Philip, after I have been with you all this time, do you still not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

Jesus 4: The words I speak I do not speak on my own. The Father lives and works in me. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works I do. I solemnly assure you, the person who has faith in me will do the works I do and even greater ones than these because I am going to the Father.



TALK

- 1 What troubles Jesus' friends?
- 2 Where is Jesus going? How can his followers get there?
- 3 According to Jesus, how do we know God?



and DOCTRINE

Connecting GOSPEL

Peter Teaches Us Who Christians Are

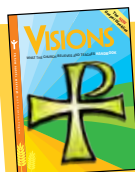
Sunday's Second Reading comes from a letter from Saint Peter. The letter tells Christians that each of them is a living stone in a new temple built of people rather than stones (1 Peter 2:4-9).

In A.D. 70, the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. Peter sees Jesus as the living stone on which Christians build their lives without the Temple. Jesus is the cornerstone of a new community of people.

In this new living temple, our spiritual gifts

take the place of the sacrifices that priests used to offer God in the Temple. All year, you have been learning that we are called to follow Jesus as our model in everything that we do. Using our gifts to serve the Church will always point us in the direction of "Jesus Christ himself, who is 'the way, and the truth, and the life'" (CCC, 1698).

- 1 Build a temple made of metaphors with your classmates. For example, how are you a door for others? A window? The ceiling?
- 2 In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus describes his Father's house as having room for everyone. Imagine that you have been asked to design and construct a house for the Church. What would you include in your plans?



In order to grow and thrive, the Church needs the gifts of all of its members. The Holy Spirit gives us special gifts. Turn to pages 49-50 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* to explore the gifts of the Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit. This is your last *Visions* lesson of the year. Think about how you can put your gifts to work this summer.

Christians Serve the Growing Community

Saint Luke tends to paint a very idealistic picture of the first Christian community in Jerusalem. He writes, “The community of believers was of one heart and mind” (Acts of the Apostles 4:32).

However, in this Sunday’s First Reading, the Christian community is experiencing conflict. The widows of Greek-speaking Christians aren’t receiving as much food as Hebrew-speaking widows. Widows tended to be poor because they had no means of livelihood after their husbands died.

Read Acts 6:1–7, Sunday’s First Reading. How does the community solve its problem?

The early Christian communities gather to break bread as Jesus taught. They can’t accept Jesus’ love for them without providing for one another.

As the Christian community grows, it develops ministries or roles of service. The Greek word *diakonos*, which is used to describe the “seven reputable men” in the reading means “one who serves.” We get the English word *deacon* from this word. The word *minister* is the same in English and Latin and has the same meaning.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders establishes three ministries in the Church—deacon, priest, and bishop. Deacons serve through preaching the Gospel, baptizing and marrying people, teaching, working with the poor, and many

other kinds of **ministry** in the community. Priests preach and teach the Word of God and celebrate the sacraments for the community. Bishops do all these works of service. They take the place of the Apostles as leaders and teachers in the community. They are the ones who ordain deacons, priests, and other bishops.

There are also many ways for laypeople to serve in the Christian community: teachers, musicians, eucharistic ministers, lectors, ushers, altar servers, catechists, and people who work with the poor. Perhaps there are people in your parish who need a kind of service your class can give.

**Catholic
FAITH WORD** 

MINISTRY A way we can serve others in the Church and the world.



Gabi, Erin, Jennie, and Alex arrive early at the Dorothy Day Center to set up the silverware for breakfast.

Brainstorm responses to the questions. Consider what the needs of your parish community ask of you.

What is something ideal or special about your parish or school community?

What is something that could be better in your parish or school community, especially for kids?

How can your class be of service in your parish or school community?





Easter Season Crossword

DOWN

- 1 Wrote both a Gospel and one other New Testament book
- 2 The week that we celebrate Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection (two words)
- 3 Short title for New Testament book that tells about the early Church
- 4 Important event for some eighth graders
- 5 One of the words Jesus used to describe himself to Thomas
- 6 Event that often takes place during the Easter Vigil
- 7 Town outside Jerusalem
- 8 Another word Jesus used to describe himself to Thomas

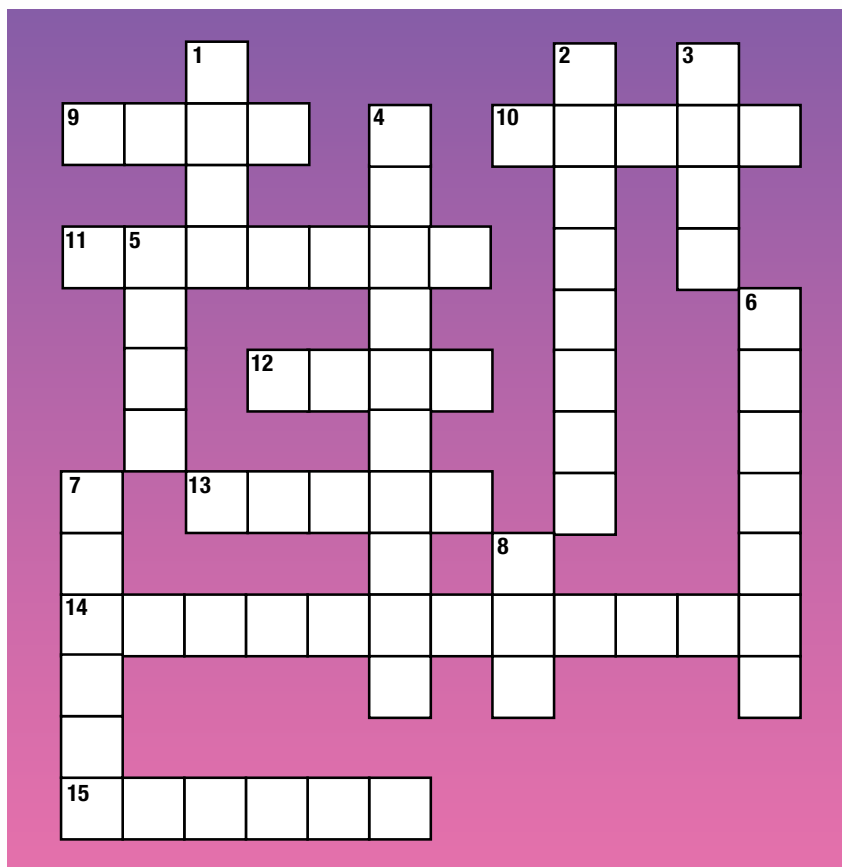
ACROSS

- 9 A man called the Apostle to the Gentiles
- 10 What sheep recognize about their shepherd
- 11 Disciple who met the Risen Jesus on the road
- 12 Number 9's other name
- 13 Another word Jesus used to describe himself to Thomas
- 14 Persons who spread the Good News about Jesus
- 15 The Divine Person sent on Pentecost

Answers are in the Teaching Guide.



➔ For **free** at-home activities, visit [@gospelweeklies.com/seasonal](https://gospelweeklies.com/seasonal)



With My Family and Friends

Scan here for parent resources.



Pray

Jesus, I want to trust you in all things. Give me the courage to ask you for what I need. Amen.



Think

When is it difficult for me to trust Jesus?



Act

With your family, talk about times you were worried about something (a test, illness, job, etc.). Share how those things worked out and make note of how many times God has brought you safely through what you were worried about.

We Build the Church with Living Stones

The Church is made up of people, just as a building is made of bricks and stones or a body of limbs and organs. The Body of Christ and the Temple of God are images that we use to describe the Church as a community of people.

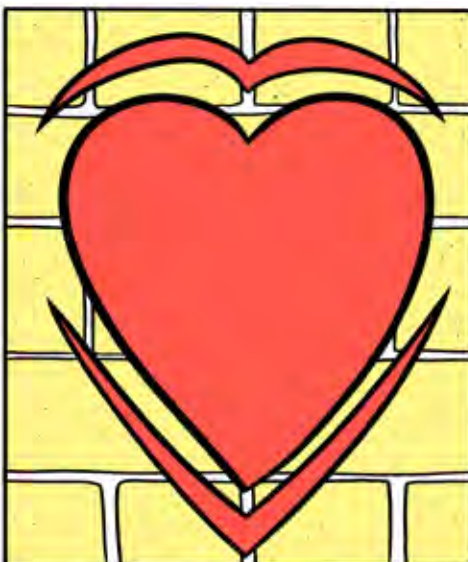
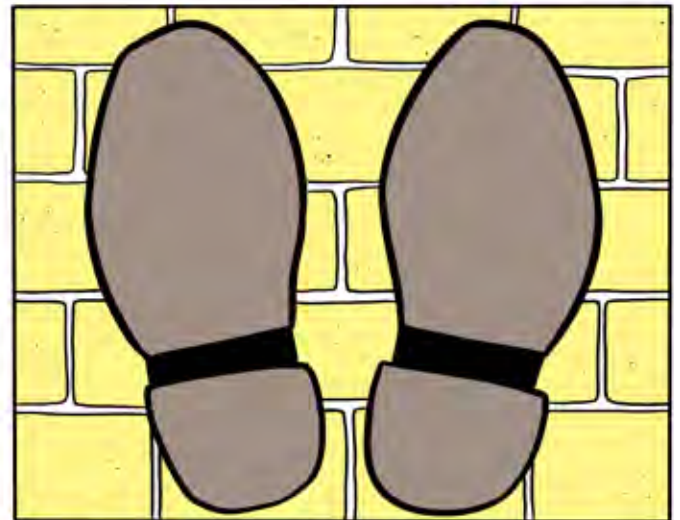
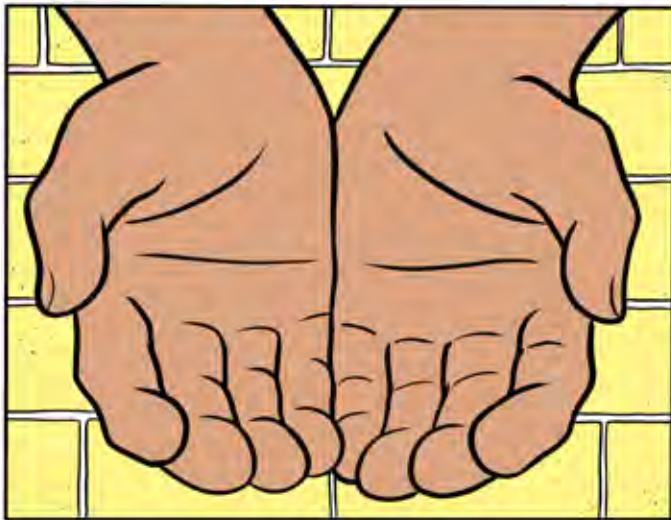
1 Cut out the hands, feet, heart, head, and voice (guitar) blocks on this page. Note that these blocks are made in the shape of stones cut for building. Read the descriptions on the back of each of the stone shapes. Brainstorm with a partner the names of people you know who reach out in service and care to one another—people who are the hands, feet, heart, head, or voices of your

local church community. Add these names to the lists on page 8.

2 Go to the library or search online for biographies of saints or other historical people.

3 Arrange your living stones on a bulletin board or sheet of poster paper in the form of a building that represents the Temple of God, the Church.

4 Your teacher will choose a volunteer to lead the prayer service. Everyone else should choose a group to participate in the prayer service—the feet, hands, heart, head, or voice—from page 8.





Living Stones Prayer Service

LEADER: God, you sent Jesus to bring together a people who could know, love, and praise you. Together we form a living Temple, a house where we honor your name. Thank you for giving us companions in living our lives and praising you.

Each group—feet, hands, heart, head, voice—takes a turn reading the appropriate prayer together. Students take turns reading the names they have written on their living stones, telling briefly about these persons, and pointing out the living stone in the church building the class has created.

FEET: We are thankful for all the people who are the feet of the Body of Christ, the foundation of the Church. *Group presents.*

HANDS: We are thankful for the hands of the Church, the people who give with generosity as Jesus did. *Group presents.*


HEART: We are thankful for those in the Church who live and die with courage. By their lives and deaths, these people show us what Christians most treasure. *Group presents.*

HEAD: The head stands for thought, leadership, imagination.

We are thankful for those who call us forward in the Church. *Group presents.*

VOICE: We need to experience the Good News in prose, poetry, music, dance, and song. Thank you, God, for those who are the voice of the Church. *Group presents.*

LEADER: We are glad to be living stones in the building of God's kingdom on earth. Let us sing together to express our unity.

 Play and sing "Send Down the Fire" (*Venture/Visions Music CD, CD-2, #6*).

Feet

Missionaries, teachers, all those who spread the Good News of the Gospel, those who provide a foundation for the building up of the Church

- Saint Francis of Assisi
- Patrick Carter and pilgrims in Maine

- _____
- _____
- _____

Hands

Caregivers, healers, those who reach out to suffering people or animals, people who notice when others need help, those who give quietly and without counting the cost

- Saint Teresa of Kolkata
- Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow
- Dorothy Day

- _____
- _____

Voice

Musicians, artists, writers, storytellers, those who tell the Good News of Jesus in ways our senses can appreciate

- Chloe Becker, artist
- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- Saint John Henry Newman

- _____
- _____

Head

Leaders, those who speak out, those who think and write about things the rest of us haven't come to yet.

- Saint Teresa of Avila
- Farmington High School Robotics Team
- Haben Girma

- _____
- _____

Heart

Those with courage, those who give their lives for the Gospel, those who pray for us and enliven us with their love of God.

- Saint Oscar Romero
- Sister Dorothy Kazel
- Blessed Stan Rother

- _____
- _____