



Sharing is Caring: Living Our Faith Through Helping Others

“Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me...”

— Matthew 25:40

“Do not withhold kindness from those who need it, when it is in your power to help them.”

— Proverbs 3:27

“Give something, however small, to the one in need... Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.”

— Saint Gregory the Theologian

★ INTRODUCTION

Today’s lesson is about philanthropy: a big word that means showing love to others through our actions. We will learn how helping people in need is not just a good thing; it is something Jesus Christ asks us to do.

When we share what we have and care for others, we are walking the path of love. As part of today’s lesson, each of you will get a copy of the Orthodox *Prayer Journal* from International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). This is a magazine made just for kids and teens like you, with stories and photos about faith, prayer, and helping others. When we help others, we are showing the world what it means to follow Christ.

This Christmas season, our Church-school is working with IOCC to help other children and families. Each of you will get a special Prayer Journal, and you may bring a small gift of love if you want to help.

💡 WHAT IS PHILANTHROPY?

Philanthropy comes from Greek words that mean “love of people.”

In the Church, it means giving, helping, sharing, and showing kindness—especially to those who are poor, sick, lonely, or hurting. It does not always mean giving money. It can be as simple as:

- Sharing your snack with someone who forgot theirs
- Listening to a friend who is sad
- Making a card for someone in the hospital
- Donating to a cause
- Volunteering your time
- Praying for people in need

Philanthropy is love in action. It is doing what Christ would do.

You do not need to be rich or grown up to be generous. Even a smile, a kind word, or a simple prayer can bring light to someone’s day. When we help others, we are not just being nice—we are showing that God’s love is alive in us. This is how we become the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

Now think: Has someone ever helped you when you needed it? How did that make you feel?

Sometimes we help people close to us, like family and friends. Sometimes we can help people far away too. IOCC is a group that helps people around the world when they are hurt, sad, or need food or a home.

That is what real love in action can do.



👉 ACTIVITY 1: CHARITY IN ACTION

Instructions:	<p>On a piece of paper, draw a big heart in the middle. In that heart, write the word LOVE.</p> <p>Around it, draw little bubbles or branches that say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love is... sharing• Love is... listening• Love is... helping• Love is... serving• Love is... giving• Love is... praying <p>Now, think of a time you showed love to someone. Add a drawing or a sentence to your map.</p>
Optional variation for ages 8–10:	<p>If time allows, offer a few sentence starters to help younger students brainstorm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I helped my mom when...”• “One time I shared...”
For older students (ages 12–14):	<p>You may also answer in writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “What is a time you helped someone and it changed you?”• “How do you feel when someone shows love to you?”

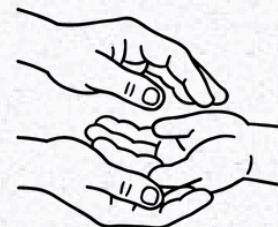


† ACTIVITY 2 – CHRIST CARES FOR OTHERS

Scenario:	<p>Let us look at how Jesus Christ cared for people in the Bible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He healed the sick• He fed the hungry• He forgave sinners• He welcomed strangers• He wept with the grieving• He gave His life for us
Task:	<p>Now think:</p> <p>💬 What is one small way you can be like Christ today?</p> <p>Each student can share an idea out loud or write it down privately.</p>
Optional for older students:	<p>What does it mean to follow Christ's example in today's world?</p>
Our Nativity Giving Box	<p>During the Christmas season, our class will have a <i>Nativity Giving Box</i>. If you want, you may bring one small gift for someone in need. It could be a coin, a dollar, a drawing, or a prayer. Every small gift shows love.</p>


👉 ACTIVITY 3 – GIVING HAND POSTER

Instructions:	<p>Trace your hand on a piece of paper.</p> <p>Inside the hand, write or draw something kind you can give this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A smile• A compliment• Help with chores• A prayer for someone <p>Add color and decorate it!</p>
Visual enhancement idea:	<p>Gather all hand posters and create a <i>Tree of Giving</i>, a mural made from everyone's hands to display in the church hall or another visible place. We will put our hands and gifts together to help IOCC share love with others.</p>



ACTIVITY 4 – IOCC SPOTLIGHT MOMENT

Today, we are part of something big!

 The International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) helps people in need around the world—after earthquakes, during war, in refugee camps, and even in our own cities.


IOCC created the Orthodox Prayer Journal to inspire kids like you to pray, reflect, and show love through your actions. You will receive a copy today, and we will use it to learn how we can help people in need.

If your family would like to join in, you may bring a small offering for the *Nativity Giving Box*. We will send our class gifts to IOCC at the end of January.

ACTIVITY 5 – NOTE TO MYSELF: BE THE LIGHT

Instructions:

Write a note that begins:

 “This week, I will show love by...”

Take it home and place it in your prayer corner, fridge, or journal. Let it remind you to be kind, generous, and full of love wherever you go.

GROUP REFLECTION – WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Instructions:

In a circle, each student can complete this sentence:

 “I can help others by...”

Let us listen to one another and celebrate how each of us can shine God’s light in our own way.

✦ CLOSING THOUGHT

When we help others, we help Christ. When we love with our hearts, hands, and voices, we become part of God's healing in the world.

Remember:

- ✦ Your kindness matters.
- ✦ Your generosity is holy.
- ✦ Your love is powerful.

🏠 TAKE-HOME CHALLENGE: PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION

Before we close, here is one last challenge: Put your love into action this week.

Choose one act of kindness to do for someone—at home, at church, or in your neighborhood. It can be big or small. What matters is that it comes from the heart.

Here are some ideas:

- Help your parents or grandparents without being asked
 - Invite someone to join you at lunch or sit with someone new at church
 - Write a kind note or draw a picture for someone who needs cheering up
 - Donate something to someone who has less
 - Say a prayer for someone who is sick or lonely
- ✍ After you do it, write it down:
- What did you do? How did it make you feel?

You can bring your note to your group leader so we can celebrate all the ways our Church-school family is sharing God's love.

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” — Matthew 5:16

Srdjan Maksimovic
coordinator

Published with the Blessings of
+ IRINEJ
Bishop of Washington-New York and Eastern America SOC
Winter 2025



**DIOCESAN
EDUCATION
COMMISSION**