We recognize our youngest parishioners are the future of our Church and we must foster their natural curiosity, open hearts and faithful spirits! Parish Social Ministry is happy to be a resource to your parish in creatively engaging children and families in learning what Catholicism teaches on serving our most vulnerable populations.

Outlined below is an overview of some of the more popular children’s offerings. The programs come from a variety of different sources, are customizable and can be implemented with the help of PSM staff. We welcome you to contact us for more information about helping the children in your parish or school grow in their social justice spirit, psm@ccmaine.org or by calling 781-8550.

**Mustard Seed Projects**

*Mustard Seed* is a program to engage and educate children in serving the most vulnerable populations of Maine. Parish Social Ministry staff come to the school or parish and educate the children on a specific Catholic Charities program and the children do an activity or a collection to connect them to the program. A few examples of collection items:

- Socks for people served by the PATH’s, a program in Lewiston that serves the homeless.
- Food our Food Bank or area food pantries.
- Items for new refugees in CC Refugee program: blankets, cleaning supplies, personal care items.
- Books for our Child Development Centers (appropriate for children ages six weeks to seven years).

**Care for Creation Art Project**

This art project is to encourage both creative and critical thinking on our shared responsibility to be good stewards of the environment. The activity consists of a video, a discussion, and creation of an art piece, with a timing connected to Earth Day.

**Superhero of Justice Activity**

This creative activity helps youth of elementary school age envision Catholic social teaching from the perspective of a superhero.

**Storybooks on Faith in Action**

Two storybooks that help children understand important lessons of how to work for justice and peace and to help those in need: *Green Street Park* and *Drop by Drop*. Both are available through Loyola Press.

**Hands of Mercy**

*Hands of Mercy* is an engaging way to teach about the acts of mercy! In a large group, children (and their parents) learn in a special way about the Corporal Acts of mercy. Four activity stations are set up where they become creatively involved in “Feeding the Hungry,” “Sheltering the Homeless,” “Clothing Those in Need,” and “Comforting the Afflicted.” *Hands of Mercy* is easy to prepare and do at your church.

**If I Were King or Queen for a Day**

*If I Were King or Queen for a Day* is an introduction to Catholic social teaching. The participants learn Catholic social teaching by acting like the ruler of the Kingdom and thinking about what they would do if they wanted the best for the people in their care. Children and parents can participate in the program – it would be great for a Family Faith Formation gathering.

**In Their Shoes**

An engaging, highly-interactive workshop designed to help participants understand the path of a refugee and invites them to walk a moment “in their shoes.” Participants learn how to be welcoming to refugees in our Maine communities.

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“Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”

— Matthew 19:14