

FAMILY IDEAS FOR OUTREACH AND CARING



Give up dessert at dinner tonight. Give the money saved to a group that feeds the hungry.	Visit a lonely person in your neighborhood.	Call Habitat for Humanity and ask if there is a new home where your family could plant flowers.
Grow a garden. Give some of your crops to a soup kitchen or food pantry.	Gather items for small gift bags for a homeless shelter: soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.	As a family, write a letter to the newspaper about something your community could do to help those in need.
Visit a shut-in.	As a family, write a letter to a politician about a life issue.	How might you secretly “give” to another family member today?
Offer to help someone in your neighborhood who is lonely or grieving.	Think of all the people who love you. give 10 cents for each person you can think of to your family piggy bank for the needy.	Invited someone who is grieving or unemployed to dinner.
Have soup and bread for dinner. Donate the money saved to a soup kitchen.	Do a chore that belongs to someone else – one that you know that person dislikes doing.	“The extra coat in your closet belongs to the poor.” Go through your closets and box up for the needy those things that you aren’t using.
Set an empty place at the table as a reminder of the hungry in the neighborhood and in the world.	Write a quick thank you note to the people who serve you every day – mail carrier, trash collectors, etc.	Collect change in a jar all year or all month. At the end of the month, give the jar anonymously to someone who could benefit from the money.
Compliment the first three people you talk to today.	Surprise a neighbor with freshly baked cookies or treats.	Find out who in your parish is sick and offer to visit them or bring them food.
Read about kindness stories. What could you do? http://www.kindspring.org/	While grocery shopping, purchase an additional day’s supply of food and drop it off at a local food pantry.	Learn as much about a particular social issue (immigration, human trafficking, racism, AIDS victims, child poverty) as possible. Give money to an organization, related to your chosen issue that supports the dignity of the human person.
Help an elderly or disabled person in your neighborhood with yard work or other difficult chores.	Buy something to give to a homeless person instead of money- a sandwich, some chocolate, a hat or scarf.	Become involved in “Because I said I would.” https://becauseisaidiwould.com/
Pick a news story about a world problem. As a family, write a letter to a politician or to the editor.	Volunteer as a family to become involved in one of your parish’s ministries.	Make a “thinking of you” card for someone who is lonely. Deliver it

Do you have a relative that needs help? Time? Company?	Go to a soup kitchen and help clean up – after you’ve visited with the people.	As a family, relieve a caregiver for a few hours and spend time and conversation with the person who needs care.
Make a list of those people who need a kind word – and then give it	Take a home-cooked meal (everyone can play a part in the preparation) to someone who is sick or lonely.	When you go shopping, buy doubles of everything. Give the second items to the St. Vincent DePaul Society.
Give up fancy beverages of carbonated drinks and donate the money saved to a parish or civic group that helps needy people pay water and/or electric bills.	Do something for someone who is having a rough time – but don’t let on who did it.	Make baskets full of crayons, puzzles, coloring books, etc. to give to children in the hospital.
Offer to do one of the “unwanted” or “undesirable” tasks at home, school, work.	Collect soda can tabs to donate to Ronald McDonald House for sick children and their families. The charity gets paid for these.	Send a crazy letter or postcard to make someone laugh. Send a letter just to “let you know how much I care about you.” Cut out an article and send it to someone. “I thought about you when I saw this…” or “this reminds me of…”
Try to find out about somebody your own age from a poorer country and imagine what it would be like to swap lives.	Leave something nice to eat on a neighbor’s doorstep, ring the bell and run.	Chat about issues that matter to you and research a new charity to support.
Send an anonymous gift to someone who might be lonely or sad.	Pick up litter or gather a litter picking team to clean up an area near where you live.	Write family members’ names on slips of paper. Draw names and keep the name you draw a secret. Without being asked – or bragging – do something kind for that person everyday for a week.
Think of ways your family can conserve paper: write on both sides; wrap presents in comic paper or reusable gift bags, etc.	Write a letter to the newspaper editor or some other media representative in praise of someone or some action.	Do an intentional act every day for 21 days -- with many kindred spirits. http://www.kindspring.org/challenge/
Talk together as a family about ways you can pay it forward. http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/	Take your extra blankets to the homeless shelter.	Set an alarm on your phone to go off at three different times during the day. In those moments, do something kind for someone else.

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