

67 Ways to Do the Works of Mercy with Your Kids (An author Q&A)

With very full lives, we can feel there's no way to fit anything else into the day. So, when I saw that Heidi Indahl had written *67 Ways to Do the Works of Mercy with Your Kids*, I was immediately intrigued.

Doing the works of mercy—which include feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, and more—seems a bit daunting when you're trying to raise a family. Many mornings it seems as if we can just barely find lunchboxes and shoes to get everyone off to school.

But I've been reading Heidi's writing long enough to know that she offers beautiful, simple approaches to daily challenges. This book absolutely achieves that, giving manageable, yet beautiful, ways to incorporate the works of mercy into your lives.

I reached out to Heidi, who lives with her husband and seven children in rural southeastern Minnesota, to ask her about her book, which you can find [here](#).



What inspired you to write this book?

This book was written on the back of a chance meeting that could have only been divinely inspired. I was speaking with the publisher, Jerry Windley-Daoust, at a conference and he shared that he would really like to have a series of books with practical ideas for core practices of family faith formation. He had already written *77 Ways to Pray with Your Kids* and was looking to find someone else to work on the Corporal Works of Mercy. One thing led to another, I volunteered, and several years

later here it is!

Was it difficult to think of the variety of activities and projects families could take on?

Before becoming a stay-at-home mom, I was an early childhood teacher and program director. Doing service projects with young children was something I valued as a teacher, and I drew heavily on my experiences there. The hardest piece was how to integrate older and younger children in the same family.

I love that you focused on the importance of preparation and reflection as well. Can you give an example of a time when preparation and reflection have helped make a work of mercy particularly meaningful for your family?

As a Lenten group service project several years ago, our homeschool co-op did a Spiritual Bouquet for priests. We spent several weeks praying for our priests, and then we met for a card-making session...

Each family was responsible for delivering a couple of the packages during Holy Week. Doing this during Holy Week allowed us to have some great conversations about the additional work that goes into such special seasons from the Church side. Since we did part of the activity as a family and part as a group, I think it provided a different perspective than we would have had doing it alone.

What would you recommend to parents who have trouble imagining how to fit works of mercy into their busy lives? I loved how you spoke about this in the book.

If someone is really struggling here, I recommend starting close to home. Look for projects that require little to no financial investment and can be done without leaving home. I dedicated an entire section to these sorts of projects. Several activities could even be spread out by a family to allow some flexibility with busy schedules.

What kind of reactions have you received from the book? What would be the most rewarding feedback to receive?

The response has been overwhelmingly positive! This is definitely an area where people would like to be doing more but aren't sure where to start. I'd absolutely love to start seeing some pictures and hearing stories about family experiences with the various activities in the book.

What do you hope readers will take away from the book?

That this really is doable! It doesn't have to be fancy and complicated. I truly believe every single family has a small way that they can provide practical, intentional service to others.