

# Mission Connections: Special Catechetical Leaders Edition

## Youth Connecting in Mission

Mission Office, Catholic Diocese of St. Cloud  
11—8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301 (320) 251-1100

February 2016  
<http://mission.stcdio.org>

February  
is Heart  
Month!

### Healthy Hearts

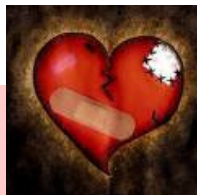
*Bringing back an old favorite: the following is a re-print of one of our most popular reflections from these monthly Mission Ed bulletins done over the past several years. Having just celebrated Valentine's Day, and shortly before that having entered into this holy season of Lent, I invite us all once again to take a look at our "heart health."*

February is American Heart Health Month. My local *Curves*® has signs and posters and facts from the American Heart Association all over the fitness center, sharing about heart disease, risk factors and ways to stay healthy, each one splashed with bright red hearts. It's like Valentine's Day come early! And while it's important to know the dangers and ways to keep our heart pumping healthily, what about keeping our heart healthy in other ways—pumping with compassion, with desire for GOD, with fulfillment, with love and joy and hope and community?



The Department of Health and Human Services secretary stated, "Heart disease takes the lives of far too many people in this country, depriving their families and communities of someone they love and care for." I believe there are other 'diseases' of the heart—loneliness, exclusion, lack-of-conscience, busyness, depression, anxiety, disconnect from GOD, broken relationships, and more. Each of these things does, in its own way, take away from who we are and who GOD calls us to be; and therefore they also deprive our families and communities of someone they love, someone who needs to be whole as they help to complete the Body of Christ.

Perhaps you know someone who has been lost to an unhealthy heart in this way; perhaps you yourself are afraid of slipping away from having a strong heart.



#### Words of Wisdom:

"A sad soul can kill you quicker than a germ."

~John Steinbeck~

#### Don't Forget:



**February:** Heart Health Month

**Feb. 15-March 1:** Diocesan Delegation to Homa Bay, Kenya—hold them in prayer!

**March 4:** World Day of Prayer, "Receive Children, Receive Me"

**March 6:** CRS Collection in parishes

**March 11:** "Ministry in an Increasingly Hispanic Church" lecture at St. John's SOT

**April 8:** Mission Rally at St. Louis Parish, Paynesville

So how can we help do away with the risk factors, and help keep our spiritual hearts healthy so our true-to-the-divine selves can keep living on? Here are just a few suggestions of good heart exercises from the ultimate health handbook:

- Forgive & ask forgiveness (Colossians 3:13)
- Pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Read the Scriptures (Proverbs 4:20-22)
- Love someone (John 13:34)
- Learn (Proverbs 4:13)
- Uphold justice (Micah 6:8)
- Practice gratitude (1 Timothy 4:4)
- Help Others (John 13:14-15)
- Be mindful of what we think about, take-in and do (Philippians 4:8)
- Laugh & maintain a positive attitude (Proverbs 17:22)



The Scriptures tell us of the importance of heart health: "Above all else guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life" (Proverbs 4:23). So certainly, let us celebrate Heart Health Month; but let us not only recognize ways in which we can care for ourselves physically, but also spiritually. Let us splash our homes and churches and schools and classrooms and sanctuaries with images and information about healthy hearts. Let's give the American Heart Association a run for their money this February, by splashing more than images of red hearts around our communities—lets splash our world with people whose hearts find healing in prayer and community, whose hearts are wholly healthy and ready to be the source of a life in God.



#### Give it a Try!

Try incorporating these resources, projects or activities into your ministry.



#### Mission Education Resource

As a young person growing up in the Catholic Church I remember well the Lenten tradition of praying the Stations of the Cross. But it wasn't until I was older that I came to understand this prayer as a way of connecting Jesus' journey to Calvary with the journey so many in our world continue to make—the journey from hatred, fear, oppression and pain to love, hope, righteousness and life. Help the communities you work with understand this more, by using one of the many Ways of the Cross focused on social justice issues, peace or mission. Contact the Mission Office for

examples, or check some out for yourself at the following site: <http://iglesiadescalza.blogspot.com/2011/02/via-crucis-some-social-action-stations.html>

#### Activity Ideas

Each year in March, Christian women gather in different parts of the world to pray for one another and the world, on World Day of Prayer. This year the ecumenical prayer day will take place on Friday, March 4th, focusing on the women and children of Cuba. Find resources to join in this World Day of Prayer, including a prayer service guide and Cuban recipes, at [www.wdp-usa.org](http://www.wdp-usa.org) and click on "2016 Cuba."