

Jesus, I Trust in You.

A Divine Mercy Prayer Activity for Children....

By Cathy Gilmore Inspired by the book, *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*, Liguori ©2014



Jesus wants all of us to experience God's loving Divine Mercy. Each of us needs to exercise humility and place our **trust** in Jesus. For young children, fear is often the barrier to their trust in God. This meditation offers children an opportunity to trust their fears to Jesus and cling to his love, and prepares them for the time when they can give their sins to Jesus and cling to His Mercy.

The story, *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*, is an excellent way for children to be introduced to Divine Mercy. The pretend bunny in the story who is so frightened, places his trust in Jesus. Easter is all about surprises. The surprise of the risen Lord. The love of the risen Jesus lifts all the fear from the little bunny's heart and fills him with JOY. The bunny's life then has a new purpose...surprising others with the sweet love of Jesus. The surprise hidden inside of trusting in the Divine Mercy of Jesus is that His love can renew each of our hearts; and fill each of us, even the youngest child, with JOY.

This activity is designed for children age 3-7 years old, but can be appreciated by all ages. It is perfect for the Saturday of Holy Week or sometime soon after Easter Sunday. Suitable for use with one family at home, in a classroom, or as a children's prayer activity during a Divine Mercy Parish Event.

"Jesus I Trust in You" Activity Step-By-Step:

- 1) READ aloud the picture book *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*
- 2) TALK with the children about the way *trust in Jesus trades fear for JOY!*
- 3) APOSTLES (older child or teen or adult volunteers) enter and tell children how Jesus took their fears away.
- 4) Children PREPARE to give their fears to Jesus (volunteers guiding).
- 5) PRAYER WALK to "Mercy Altar" to leave fears and pray a prayer of trust
- 6) SING "Jesus Takes My Fears Away"
- 7) Plus OPTIONAL coloring page and/or snack.

Supplies: Plastic Eggs, copies of "Jesus Notes", copies of "Prayer of Trust", Divine Mercy image, flowers, candle, empty basket, crayons/pencils, optional copies of coloring/song/Take Home pages and optional Easter or "bunny style" snacks.

1) Story Time:

Gather the children together and read aloud the picture book *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day* by Carol Benoist and Cathy Gilmore. This story reframes the children's understanding of the Easter Bunny. This bunny helps the children discover that trust in Jesus fills you with the best Easter surprise...the LOVE & JOY of Jesus!



2) Talk about Fear and Trust:

The Little Bunny in the story trusts in Jesus and trades his fear for JOY. We all are afraid of some things sometimes, right? We can trust in Jesus just like the bunny did. God said some important things in the Bible about being afraid... "Trust in the Lord with all your heart" (Proverbs 3:5) "Do not fear, for I am with you" (Genesis 26:24).

3) Friends of Jesus Tell How Jesus Took Their Fears Away

Middle school, teen, or adult volunteers dressed in simple costumes as disciples and Apostles come in and tell the children how Jesus surprised them after He rose from the dead and took their fears away. Along with other costumed volunteers who are part of the “crowd” who do not have a speaking role, together they will act as leaders for small groups of children as they go through the rest of the prayer and activities. (One volunteer can dress as Blessed Mother Mary and does not speak but is there to help.) The following are **mini-scripts** for each of the 5 main characters.

MARY MAGDALANE: “Hello, my name is Mary of Magdala. I loved Jesus so much. I was heartbroken to see Him die on the cross. I helped wrap His body and place it in the tomb. On Sunday morning before the sun came up, I went to anoint him with burial oils and spices but the tomb was open and empty when I got there! I thought that someone had stolen His Body! I was AFRAID of being all alone. Was He really gone? I sat by the tomb and cried and cried and cried. A man came up. I thought he was the gardener. I begged him to tell me where they put Jesus. Then HE said my name. I didn’t recognize Him at first, but Jesus **surprised** me! Jesus was alive and was with me! He had risen! I was so happy! Death could not separate me from Jesus! All my fear melted away!”

SALOME: “I’m Jesus’ friend, and when Jesus died, I thought the world was coming to an end. The afternoon became totally dark. Lightning and thunder crashed and an earthquake shook everywhere. I was terrified. On Sunday, the day you call Easter, when I saw the tomb open, glowing with light and a shining angel told us that Jesus was risen I started trembling again. But this time it was all JOY! Jesus was alive, He loved us and we would see Him again! Hurray!”

TWO DISCIPLES: (Disciple #1,) “Hey There! We are a couple of followers of Jesus too. People call us disciples. When Jesus was crucified, we felt so lost. When He died, we were so confused. Why? If he was the Messiah, how could this happen? If we stayed in Jerusalem would we get arrested and killed too? We were AFRAID. On that Sunday, some people were saying Jesus had risen from the dead, but no one had seen Him and we weren’t sure what to believe. To be safe, we were heading out of town toward Emmaus.”

(Disciple #2,) “Then this guy starts walking with us. He acted like he knew nothing about Jesus’ death so we told him the sad story. Then he started explaining lots of scripture stories to us. He was amazing! He told us it made sense that the Messiah would die because he would rise again. Later, when we invited him to have a meal with us He took bread, blessed it and broke it. In that moment, we recognized him! It was Jesus all along! What a surprise! All our worry, confusion and fear was gone. He was alive and we could **TRUST** Him with everything! We couldn’t contain our JOY! We were cheering and laughing running all the way back to town to tell everyone!”

APOSTLE PETER: “Hi! I’m Simon, but Jesus gave me a new name: Peter. I followed Jesus. I even walked on water with Jesus. He wanted me to be the leader of the Apostles but I really messed up. When He was arrested and killed, I was so AFRAID of being arrested and killed with Him that I ran away, hid and denied I even knew Him. I denied Him not just once, but three times. Afterwards, I was so ashamed. I was AFRAID I could never be forgiven.

I hid in the upper room with the other apostles for 3 days. Jesus had said He would rise again. On Sunday, Mary Magdalane came running to tell us the tomb was empty. When I saw it for myself, I knew it was true. He was risen, just as He said! Later on, He appeared to us and ate with us. Having Jesus, risen, with us, took all my fears away. He even forgave me and still trusted me to lead the others. With His MERCY and love, I’m not afraid of anything now, (Looking up) **Jesus, I TRUST in You!**”

4) Disciples and Apostles Help Children Give Fears to Jesus

Tell the children, "When Jesus died and rose again, the Apostles were afraid and Jesus took their fears away. When we remember that Jesus is always with us and how His love keeps us safe, then we know we can trust Him and give our fears to Him too. Let's give our fears to Jesus." Children are split into groups. Each child writes down or draws one of their own fears on a note to "give to Jesus." When finished, the child puts their Jesus note in a plastic egg. (Example notes below)



Jesus I give my fear to you.

Jesus I trust in you!

Name _____

Jesus I give my fear to you.

Jesus I trust in you!

Name _____

5) Prayer Walk to the "Divine Mercy Altar

Together with a Disciple or Apostle Leader, each child or small group of children take a walk to go to a prepared spot with a little "shrine" or altar set up. Include a framed Divine Mercy Image of Jesus, flowers, candle and empty basket. Gently children will place their egg in the basket and take a copy of the Prayer of Trust in exchange. Kneeling for a quiet moment, the group then together will pray the Prayer aloud (children repeating each line after a leader) before returning to the main room.

Prayer of Trust
By Cathy Gilmore

Please Jesus, give me a humble heart,
that I may trust you for everything.
I am small, but you are big enough to take care of me, always.
Fill my heart with your love and your JOY!
Help me to remember that you do big things with what appears to be small,
like bread, children, *bunnies* and ME!
Jesus I TRUST in YOU! Amen.

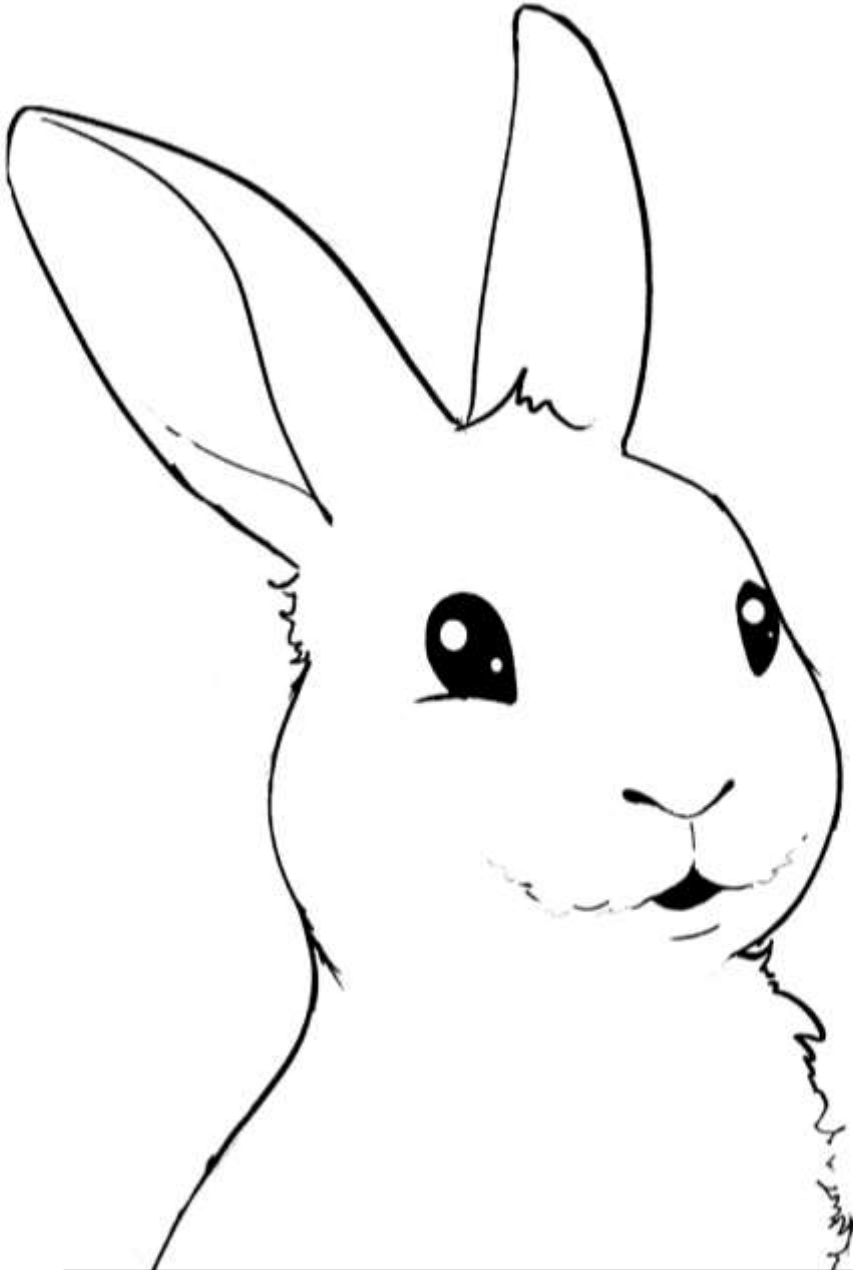
6) Songs, Coloring and Snack

Conclude your special time by singing the song, "Jesus Takes My Fear Away". Then allow younger children to color the bunny who trusts Jesus in his sunny garden and older children can color the two rays of Jesus Divine Mercy thinking about how Jesus' Mercy restores our union with Jesus when sin or fear pulls us away from Him. You can end with "bunny style snacks" like veggies and dip, chocolate eggs, gummy bunnies, etc. **to celebrate the JOY of Divine Mercy!**

Jesus I TRUST in YOU! You fill my heart with JOY!

Colored By: _____

Color your own sunny and beautiful garden background for your Easter Bunny.



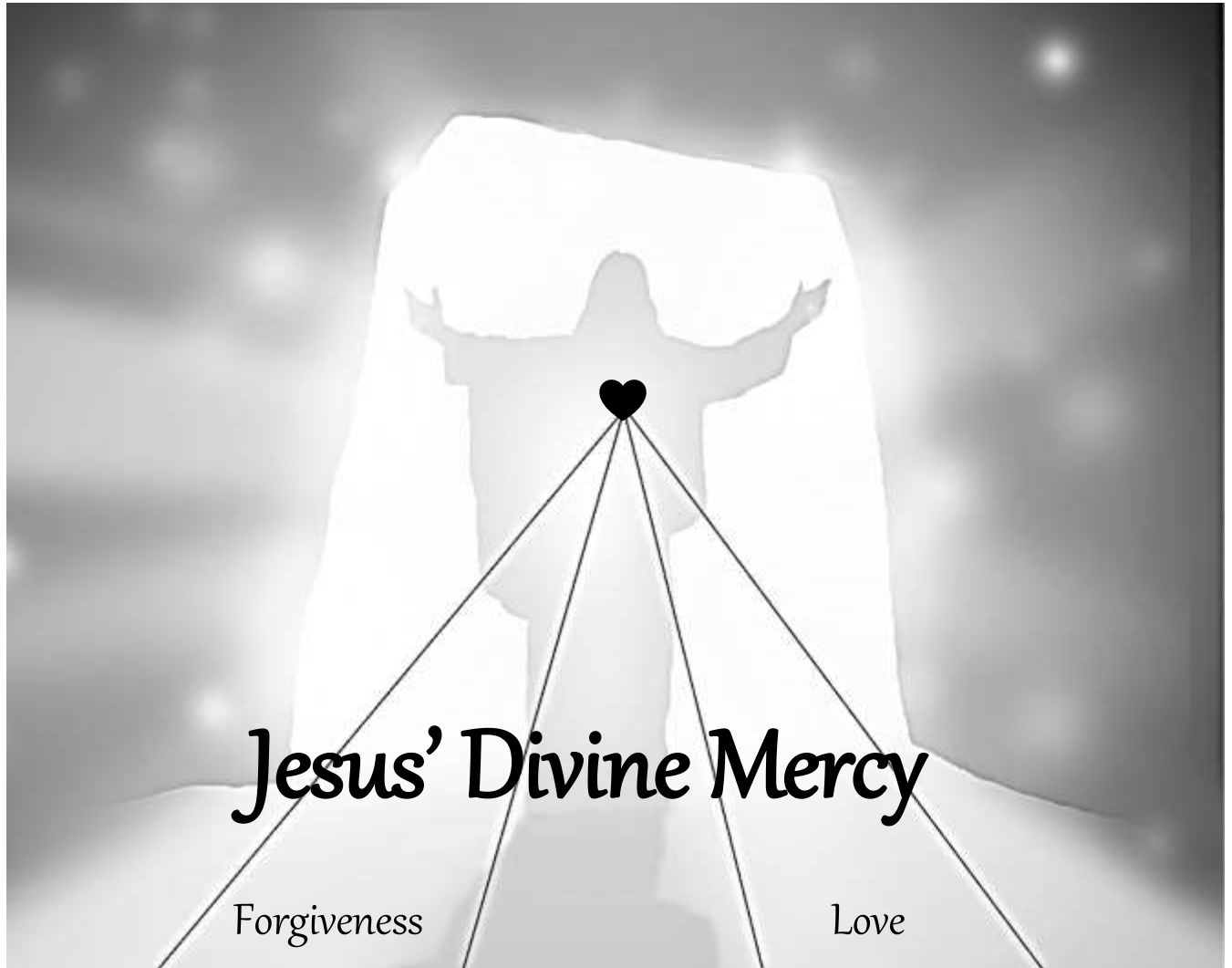
Easter Bunny's Amazing Day

Illustration from the book **Easter Bunny's Amazing Day**, by Carol Benoist and Cathy Gilmore Liguori Publications©2014
www.catherinec gilmore.com has more inspiring furry fun and you can follow Cathy @PowerOfParable on Twitter

Jesus, I Trust in YOU!

“Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have MERCY on us and on the whole world.”

From Saint Faustina’s Prayers of Divine Mercy



Color the “Forgiveness” ray from Jesus’ heart **red** for the sacrifice of His body and blood, offered to forgive and save me from my *sin*.

Color the “Love” ray from Jesus’ heart **white** for the new life He gives me in Baptism and tender care He gives me always as his beloved child. I *fear* nothing when I am close to Him.

I can ALWAYS trust in the Love and Forgiveness: the MERCY, of Jesus.

Illustration from the book **Easter Bunny’s Amazing Day**, by Carol Benoist and Cathy Gilmore Liguori Publications©2014
“Jesus I TRUST In You Activity” by Cathy Gilmore. Visit www.catherinecgilmore.com and @PowerOfParable on Twitter

“Jesus, I Trust in You.” Take home page

Dear Parents, Today your child/ren participated in something very special. It was a “Jesus, I Trust in You Prayer Activity”. Children were introduced to the idea of trusting in Jesus’ Divine Mercy first by hearing the story, Easter Bunny’s Amazing Day. Then some volunteers dressed as the Apostles who Jesus surprised on that first Easter described how they were afraid, and trust in Jesus traded their fear for JOY! Your child was invited to give his/her fear/s to Jesus. They put a word or picture of something they fear inside of a little egg and said, “Jesus I give my fear to you. Jesus I trust in you!” Continue to encourage your children to give their fears to Jesus and to trust in His love and Mercy always! Here is the song we sang and a prayer we prayed that you can enjoy at home.

Jesus Takes My Fears Away

By Cathy Gilmore
(To the tune of “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know”)

Jesus takes my fears away,
He protects me every day.
*When I’m scared**, I think of Him.
He’s with me and I can grin.....

(Refrain)

My Jesus **saves** me. (Hold arms up strong!)
My Jesus **holds** me. (Hug arms around self)
My Jesus **loves** me, (Make heart shape with 2 hands)
His own words tell me so. (Hold palms up like book)

Add more verses by substituting the following for the
“When I’m scared*” part of the 3rd line
“In the dark” or “In a storm” or “When I’m hurt” or
“When I’m sad” or “If I’m lost” or “If I’m alone”
And then repeat the refrain.

Final Verse: (Focusing on Divine Mercy)
Jesus takes my **sins** away,
Trusting His mercy gives me faith.
When I do wrong, I’ll go to Him.
He forgives me. I start again..... (refrain)

Inspired by the book, *Easter Bunny’s Amazing Day*, ©2014, Liguori Publications.
Lyrics by Cathy Gilmore; hymn by William B. Bradbury, 1862.

The “Jesus I Trust in You! Prayer Activity” was inspired by:
The story of the Easter Bunny who found JOY by TRUSTING Jesus:

Easter Bunny’s Amazing Day

By Carol Benoist and Cathy Gilmore, Liguori ©2014

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Fill my heart with your love
and your JOY!*

*Help me to remember
that you do big things
with what appears to be small,
like bread, children, bunnies and ME!*

Jesus I TRUST in YOU!

Amen.

