**Lesson on Pope Francis’ Five Finger Prayer**

People have prayed with their hands for a very long time. They have used their hands to hold and finger beads and this has happened in many faith traditions. They have raised their hands in praise of God and they have extended their hands in a gesture of thanksgiving. They have joined their hands and they have held their hands close to their heart. Catholics use their hands when they are making and praying the Sign of the Cross. They use their right hand to trace the shape of a cross by touching their forehead, their heart and each of their shoulders. They conclude this prayer with the powerful word AMEN and when they say Amen they let the palms of their hands meet.

The Five Finger Prayer is a simple prayer that Pope Francis uses and encourages people to pray.

Let us be still for a moment and take a deep breath.

Choose which hand you will use.

1. **Hold your thumb and think about the people who are closest to you.** ….. maybe your mom or your dad or members of your family ….. maybe your close friends or people in your class. Close your eyes and ask God to bless them. Choose one person that you will pray for today and ask God in your own words to help them let their light shine.

2. **Take your pointer finger**. This finger reminds us of people who have pointed or shown the way for us. They could be people who teach us, guide us or heal us. Think about teachers or school officers, coaches or Principals, music teachers or doctors who have helped you. Close your eyes and ask God to bless them and give them the courage and wisdom to be able to give others direction. Choose one person who has shown you the way, hold your pointer finger and hold that person gently in your heart.

3. **Now hold your tallest finger**. It reminds us to pray for leaders; leaders of our school, leaders of our country and Church leaders. Ask God to help them in their decision making.

4. **Your 4th finger has trouble standing tall by itself**. It is your weakest finger. Wrap your fingers around it. Pause …. Breathe …. Remember all those in our world who are missing the things they need e.g. the hungry, the lonely, the homeless, victims of war, terrorism or bullying. Pray for them. Ask God to help them.

5. **Your smallest finger is the last one to hold**. Take it and hold it. Stop … Breathe … when we hold this finger we pray for ourselves. What will you talk to God about? Maybe you have something to ask God for or maybe you can just listen to God with your heart.

Let us end our prayer by joining our hands with the palms touching and say together **AMEN**.

