



## Saint of the Month: Heaven's Heroes



### Saint Frances Xavier "Mother" Cabrini November 13

**Goal:** To provide a lesson for children about a saint or saints who exemplify a deep relationship with God and the ability to share it with others

**Materials Needed:** This lesson plan, accompanying story, and any necessary materials for follow-up activities

#### Objectives:

1. To assist children in developing the understanding that all of God's people are called to a life of holiness
2. To help children respond appropriately to the question: What is a saint?  
One who:
  - lives like Jesus
  - teaches others about Jesus by their example
  - is proclaimed by the Church, after their death, to have lived a life of holiness
3. To introduce one of our Church's saints, Saint Frances Xavier (Mother) Cabrini telling as much of the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level
4. To learn that Mother Cabrini is a saint because she lived in a way that respected the Gospel of Jesus
5. To learn that we are called by God to share the Gospel with our lives
6. To help the children develop listening skills

#### Procedure:

1. Prepare the children to listen to Mother Cabrini's story. (Have map posted or globe available)
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini. Elaborate or abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners.
3. Use the follow-up questions (below).
4. Present follow-up activity below (optional). Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini was born in Lombardi, Italy in 1850. She was the youngest of 13 children. Given the name Francesca at birth, she was especially tiny and was not expected to live when she was born. She defied the odds and lived to the age of 67, accomplishing some extraordinary things along the way.

When she was a young, her father would gather the children in their kitchen at their cherry farm and read missionary stories to them. Frances loved these chronicles. She also loved to visit her uncle, a priest, who lived by a canal. During those visits, she would make little boats out of paper, drop violets into them, call the flowers missionaries and "send them off" with her prayers to the countries in the missions she knew of from her father's stories.

At the age of eighteen, Francesca became a teacher and tried to enter several different religious communities, but they all refused to accept her because her health was poor. She began working with five other women at an orphanage in Italy; however, the local bishop soon closed the orphanage. While she was working there she began a religious community called the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. She added the name Xavier to her own to honor St. Francis Xavier, Patron Saint of the Missions.

Francesca and her Sisters continued to do whatever work was needed for the poor - caring for orphans, teaching, and doing household work. She became known as Mother Cabrini because she cared for people as a mother would. Mother Cabrini asked the Pope if she and her companions could go to China as missionaries. Instead, he decided to send her to the United States to help some of the immigrants who had come from Italy to New York and were

having a hard time. They were victims of prejudice. “Not to the East, but to the West”, was the Holy Father’s advice. Mother Cabrini was to become like a violet in her own childhood paper boats: she was to be a missionary to the United States.

In 1889, when she arrived in New York with seven other Sisters, there was no place for them to stay. The American bishop advised them to return to Italy. However, Mother Cabrini and the Sisters remained and gathered a houseful of orphaned children. They soon ran out of money to buy food for the children and began to go to homes and shops asking for anything that could be spared - food, clothing, or money.

Mother Cabrini and the Sisters established themselves in New York, opening other orphanages and schools and even starting a small hospital. Once things were running smoothly in the United States, Mother Cabrini left the other Sisters in charge and started missions in Nicaragua, Argentina, England, Spain, and Brazil.

In 1909, Mother Cabrini took the oath of allegiance to the United States and became a citizen of our country at the age of 59. She died in Chicago in 1917 at the age of 67 while preparing for a children's Christmas party in one of the hospitals she founded.

On July 7, 1946 she was canonized in Rome - the first naturalized American to become a saint. She is buried under the altar of the chapel of Mother Cabrini High School in New York City. In pictures, she is often shown against a background of New York harbor with the Statue of Liberty.

Her feast day is November 13.

***Pray: Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, you taught people to accept others who were different from themselves because all of us are children of God. Help us to respect and embrace each others differences as we follow you on the path to holiness. Amen.***

#### **Follow-up Questions:**

1. Mother Cabrini knew that God loves *all* people and made it her mission to help immigrants, who are often treated as if they are not as good as others. What does our Catholic faith tell us about how to treat others?
2. What are some situations in current events that remind you of Mother Cabrini's work?
3. Even when she had nowhere to live and no money, Mother Cabrini did not give up. She showed great perseverance. Do you think you could do the same? Why or why not?

#### **Follow-up Activities:**

##### ***Younger students:***

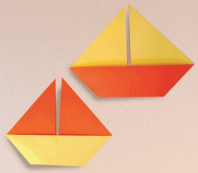
1. Write a card or letter to a priest, Sister, Brother or lay person who is a missionary. Thank her or him for what s/he is doing. Send your letters to the Missionary Childhood office and we will send them to the missions for you.
2. Create boats out of folded paper, a walnut shell, or scraps of wood—whatever is on hand. Draw flowers and write prayer intentions for the missions on them. Place them on your class altar with a globe, “sending them off” to the missions. You may also use the attached instructions for origami sailboats to make a bulletin board of mission prayers.

##### ***Older students:***

1. Trace Mother Cabrini's missionary travels on the map. Choose one of the countries and prepare a presentation for your class on the conditions in that country today for orphans. Collect your spare change for the month of November and donate it to MCA for orphans in the missions.
2. Interview a newly naturalized citizen. Ask them what it was like to come to a strange country; did they speak the language? Does he/she have family here? How did their immigration affect their life and family?

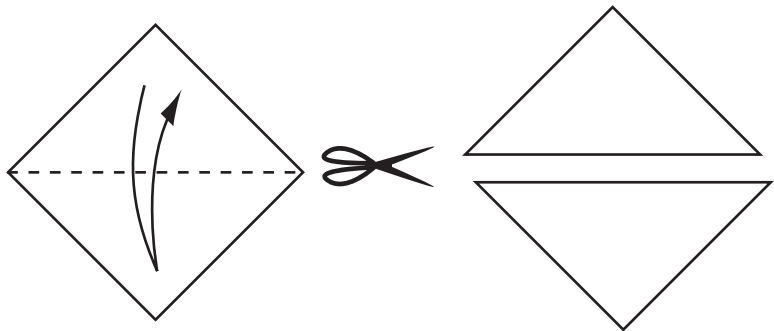
##### ***All students:***

At a time when transportation was difficult at best, Mother Cabrini travelled over 20,000 miles to establish orphanages in the missions. In your school or parish during the month of November, strive to collect a penny for each mile she travelled. That will equal \$200.00 - or about \$22.22 per grade, including Kindergarten—raised for Missionary Childhood to help orphans in the missions.

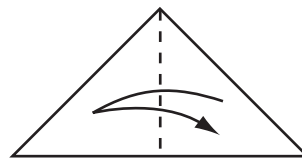


# Origami Sail Boats

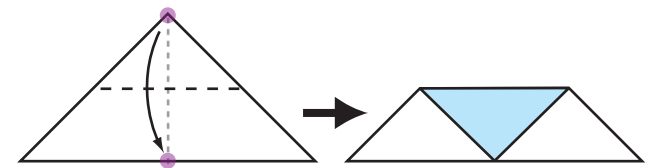
origami-fun  
www.origami-fun.com



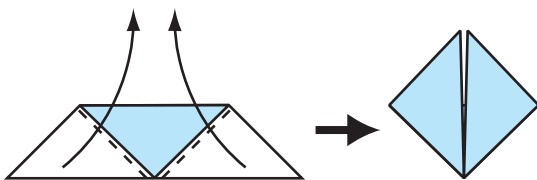
1. Start with a square piece of paper, white side up. Fold the paper in half, then open. Cut the paper in half along this crease.



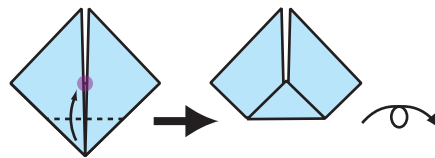
2. With one of the triangles, fold in half, and open.



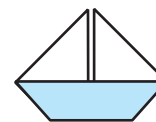
3. Fold the top corner downwards to meet the bottom edge of the triangle



4. Fold the two bottom corners upwards to meet together in the middle.



5. Fold the bottom corner up to the centre of the model. Then turn the model over.



Finished Sail boat.

Now you can make another one with the other triangle!

