



Saint of the Month: Heaven's Heroes



Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata September 5

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 Mother Teresa telling as much of the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level.
4. To learn that Mother Teresa was 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 Teresa's story. (Have map posted or globe available)
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saint Mother Teresa. 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 Mother Teresa

Mother Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu was born on August 26, 1910 in Albania. She was baptized the day after her birth and given the name Agnes. Throughout her life she considered the day of her baptism her true birthday. As a young girl, Agnes was drawn to the stories of missionaries; by the time she was twelve, she had made the decision to commit herself to religious life.

When she was eighteen years old, Agnes left home and traveled to Ireland to learn English and join the Sisters of Loreto. She was on her path to becoming a missionary!

Within a year, Agnes was sent to India and began her novitiate training in Darjeeling, which is in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. It was there that she learned the local language of Bengali (her third language of the five she would come to speak) and began to teach school.

Upon taking her first vows as a Sister, Agnes wanted to take the religious name of Theresa, after Saint Theresa of Lisieux, patroness of the missions. However, another Sister already had that name, so Agnes opted to use the Spanish version of the name, Teresa.

Teresa was then sent to teach in Kolkata (then called Calcutta) and in 1937 took her final religious vows. She remained there, teaching and then as headmistress for 20 years. Sister Teresa was very disturbed by the poverty that surrounded her and she experienced what she described as “a call within a call.” She described it this way, “I was to leave the convent and help the poor while living among them. It was an order. To fail would have been to break the faith.” Her biographer, Fr. Joseph Langford later wrote, “Though no one knew it at the time, Sister Teresa had just become *Mother Teresa*.”

In 1948, Mother Teresa put on the simple white sari (a traditional Indian outfit for women) with the blue border that she became well known for, and went into the slums of the city. With some medical training, she began to care for the local sick, poor, and hungry. Soon, she had attracted a group of women helpers, laying the foundation to what would become a new religious order, the Missionaries of Charity.

The first year was difficult—the women all begged for money to support their work among what Mother Teresa called “the poorest of the poor.” With approval from the Pope to officially begin her new order of Sisters, The Sisters began to care for, in Mother’s words, “the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone.” They opened hospices, where people who were sick and homeless could die with dignity, shelters and schools for homeless children, and a hospital for people with Hansen’s disease (leprosy).

Recruits and donations came as word spread of the work of the Missionaries of Charity and Mother Teresa became world renown for her work. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from the United States and the Nobel Peace Prize. She always used her fame to point back to the Gospel message of service to the poor.

Mother Teresa died on September 5, 1997 and was canonized in 2003. Over 5,100 Missionaries of Charity continue their founder’s work in over 100 countries.

Pray: Saint Mother Teresa, you remind us to see Jesus in each person we meet. Help us to always look for ways to serve those in most need whether it is near us or around the world. Amen.

Follow-up Questions: (add, omit, re-word as appropriate for your grade level)

1. Saint Mother Teresa was convinced at an early age that God wanted her to be a religious Sister. How do you think she knew this? How can you find out what God wants from you in life?
2. Why do you think it was important for Mother Teresa to wear an Indian sari when she decided to go into the streets of the slums to serve the poor?
3. What could you do in your everyday life to live more like Mother Teresa?

Follow-up Activities:

1. Mother Teresa considered the date of her baptism to be her “true birthday.” Find out the date of your own baptism. Make a classroom calendar with all your “new” birthdays on it and celebrate by praying a Hail Mary for each classmate on “their” day.
2. Mother Teresa and her early Sisters had to beg to support their early work. Missionary Childhood helps to make sure that missionaries don’t have to beg—they can rely on us! During the month of September, fill a jar, a shoebox, or a plastic container with spare change, “found” money, and funds you earn by sacrificing your time. Send it to Missionary Childhood so that we can help missionaries take care of children.
3. Mother Teresa once said, “We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.” Every day in September, in her honor, smile at every person you see. At the end of the month, write a short story, a song, or make a video about what your experiences were as you brought smiles into the lives of others. Share them with Missionary Childhood at the contact info below. We’ll feature you on social media!