

Saint Paul Miki and Companions
1562-1597



Goal: To provide a lesson for children about a saint who exemplifies 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:
 - loves and respects everyone in God's family
 - teaches others about Jesus
 - lives like Jesus
3. To introduce one of our Church's saints, Saint Paul Miki, telling as much of, or parts of, the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level.
4. To learn that Paul Miki was a saint because he lived and died in a way that respected the Gospel of Jesus
5. To learn that we are called by God to be witnesses to the truth
7. To help the children develop listening skills
8. To expand children's vocabulary, as appropriate: **martyr, Nagasaki, Jesuit,**

Procedure:

1. Prepare the children to listen to Paul Miki's story. (Have map posted or globe available)
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saint Paul Miki and his Companions. Elaborate/abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners.
3. **Pray: *Saint Paul Miki, You were well known in your time as a great preacher; your words brought many people to God. Help me every day, in my words and deeds to help others to know God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.***
4. Use the follow up questions (below)
5. Present follow-up activity below (optional). Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

Saint Paul Miki and Companions

Born into a wealthy Japanese family, Paul Miki was the son of a military man. He was educated by Jesuits and chose to join their order. He became well known as a preacher and was responsible for the conversion of many to the Catholic faith. This angered the local Daiymo (pronounced dah-ee-moh), who

was the local secular ruler who felt that those loyal to God would not follow his governmental decrees. He began to persecute Catholics and arrested Paul Miki and others. Among those arrested were priests, brothers and laymen who belonged to the Jesuit and Franciscan orders. “Ordinary” Catholics too – local people who were catechists, villagers, young and old – even some children were jailed and then forced to march 600 miles from Kyoto to Nagasaki, which would hundreds of years later become known as the place where the second atomic bomb in history was dropped during World War II killing over 37,000 people. As the prisoners marched, they sang the *Te Deum*, an ancient hymn of the Church which gives praise to God.

Paul Miki and his companions were crucified, as Jesus was, at a place called Holy Hill. From the cross, he gave his final sermon, saying, *“The sentence of judgment says these men came to Japan from the Philippines, but I did not come from any other country. I am a true Japanese. The only reason for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ. I certainly did teach the doctrine of Christ. I thank God it is for this reason I die. I believe that I am telling only the truth before I die. I know you believe me and I want to say to you all once again: Ask Christ to help you to become happy. I obey Christ. After Christ’s example I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain.”*

When missionaries returned to Japan over 260 years after the martyrdom of St. Paul Miki and his Companions, they found no obvious trace of Christianity. After establishing themselves, they found thousands of Christians living in and around Nagasaki, secretly practicing their faith.

The feast day of St. Paul Miki and his Companions is February 6.

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

1. Paul Miki was known as a great speaker. Imagine that you have to explain Jesus and the Catholic faith to someone who has never heard of Him. What would you say?
2. Think about what Paul Miki gave up for his faith. As we begin Lent, what are you willing to give up for Christ?
3. Religious freedom is a subject very much in the news these days. How do today’s current events compare/not compare to the persecutions of Paul Miki’s time?
4. Do you think it is difficult to publicly declare your faith? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities:

1. **Younger students:** Research in computer how Catholics in Japan celebrate Paul Miki’s Feast Day. Of what is he the Patron?
2. Create a classroom bulletin board for Lent. Using craft sticks (Popsicle sticks) have each student make a cross and write a prayer intention for the season on it. Hang the crosses on the board along with a portrait of St. Paul Miki; pray for his intercession every day.
1. **Older students:** There were 25 other Catholics martyred with St. Paul Miki. Find out who they were and tell their story in song/skit or essay.
2. Learn the *Te Deum*. Say or sing it as a Lenten prayer
1. **All students:** Use the Missionary Childhood Association Lenten Calendar, along with a Mite Box, as a way to focus the students on prayer and sacrifice during Lent. Use the story of St. Paul Miki and his Companions as a way to remind the children of what a real faith sacrifice is about. Ask them to pray to St. Paul Miki for his help to remember that everyone needs to hear the Gospel proclaimed no matter where they live.



We praise You, O God: we acclaim You as the Lord. Everlasting Father, all the world bows down before You. All the angels sing Your praise, the hosts of heaven and all the angel powers, all the cherubim and seraphim call out to You in unending song: Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of angel hosts! The heavens and the earth are filled with Your majesty and glory. The glorious band of apostles, the noble company of prophets, the white-robed army who shed their blood for Christ, all sing Your praises. And to the ends of the earth Your holy Church proclaims her faith in You. Father, whose majesty is boundless, Your true and only Son, who is to be adored, the Holy Spirit sent to be our advocate. You, O Christ, are the King of glory, Son of the eternal Father. When You took our nature to save mankind, You did not shrink from birth in the Virgin's womb. You overcame the power of death opening the Father's kingdom to all who believe in You. Enthroned at God's right hand in the glory of the Father, You will come in judgment according to Your promise. You redeemed Your people by Your precious blood. Come, we implore You, to our aid. Grant us with the saints a place of glory everlasting. Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance. Rule them and uphold them forever and ever. Day by day we praise You: we acclaim You now and to all eternity. In Your goodness, Lord, keep us free from sin. Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy. May Your mercy always be with us, Lord, for we have hoped in You. In You, Lord, we put our trust: we shall not be put to shame.