



Saint of the Month



Saint Scholastica
480-542 A.D.

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:
 - is proclaimed by the Church, after their death, to have lived a life of holiness
 - teaches others about Jesus by their example
 - lives like Jesus
3. To introduce one of our Church's saints, Saint Scholastica, telling as much of the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level
4. To learn that Scholastica 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 Scholastica's story
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saint Scholastica. Elaborate or abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners
3. **Pray: Dear God, Saint Scholastica trusted Your will. Help me to rely on You as she did. Amen.**
4. Use the follow-up questions.
5. Present follow-up activity below. (optional) Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

Saint Scholastica

Scholastica was born of wealthy parents in 480 in Nursia, Umbria, Italy and was the twin sister of Saint Benedict of Nursia, known as the leader of monks. She was very close to her brother throughout their childhood and they remained close until Benedict left home to go pursue his religious studies in Rome. They both dedicated their lives to God from an early age.

Scholastica continued to live at home with her father, as was proper for unmarried girls of this time to do, until his death. During this time Benedict completed his studies in Rome and began a monastery in Monte Cassino. (About 80 miles southeast of Rome) Having always loved her brother she moved to Monte Cassino, about five miles from his monastery. Once there, she began the first Benedictine convent, living with four other women. This meant the convent was cloistered and followed strict obedience and prayer, similar to her brother's monastery.

Benedict would make an annual trip to visit Scholastica, where they would meet outside her convent. During these meetings they praised God and talked about sacred things. At their last meeting Scholastica was in poor health and after dinner asked her brother to spend more time with her. He declined her request, saying it went against Benedictine rule to sleep away from the monastery. She begged him to stay and continue their spiritual conversation, but still he refused.

Kneeling down, she prayed to God asking that He may allow Benedict to stay. At this moment a tumultuous storm broke out with great winds and lightening. Benedict was upset and scolded his sister, "May God forgive you! What have you done?"

"I asked you to stay with me and you refused," she responded. "So I prayed to God that He may intercede and grant me my wish." Given the weather, Benedict was forced to stay. After returning to his monastery, Benedict got word that Scholastica had died.

Saint Scholastica was made a saint in the Pre-Congregational way. This means she was beatified and canonized before the institution of the modern investigation of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints was in place. This was common practice prior to the 11th century, where a local bishop, primate, or patriarch would declare saints, often due to popular devotion.

Saint Scholastica is the foundress of the women's branch of Benedictine Monasticism. Her feast day is February 10.

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

1. Saints Scholastica and Benedict would show love for God by sitting and discussing sacred things, such as how do you show God you love Him. With whom do you discuss sacred things?
2. Saint Scholastica trusted in God's will instead of making her own plans, like her brother did. What are some ways you can welcome the life God has selected for you?
3. It was considered improper during Scholastica's time for unmarried women to live on their own. Did this part of the story surprise you? How is the path for young discerning women different today?

Follow-up Activities:

Younger students:

1. Scholastica and Benedict were twins. Do you have a sibling? Write them a note telling them how much you love and care about them.
2. Break into small groups and discuss sacred things just as Scholastica and Benedict did. Who is your favorite saint and why? What was your favorite part of this story? What are some facts about the missions? Who is your favorite missionary?
3. Who are some other saints who were canonized Pre-Congregation? Hint: think about the apostles. Draw a picture of one of these saints and the wonderful things he or she did. Present your picture to the class.

Older students:

1. Research the Benedictine Monastery in Monte Cassino. What year was the current structure built? Write a short report on the facts you find, build a model, or make a PowerPoint presentation to the class,
2. Archbishop Fulton Sheen was head of the Pontifical Missions Society from 1950 to 1966. As of June 28, 2012, the Vatican officially recognized him as Venerable, the first step to sainthood. Research the current path to sainthood. How has it changed since the time of Saint Scholastica? Pray for Archbishop Fulton Sheen to become a saint.

All students:

1. The story of Saint Scholastica stressed the importance of family. Tell your family you love and appreciate them. Tonight over dinner retell this story to your family. Highlight your favorite part and what you found most interesting. Tomorrow in class discuss the conversations you had. What did you families observe?