



Saint of the Month



Saint Walburga
February 25

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

Born in Devonshire, England, around 710 AD Saint Walburga (also known as Walpurgis, Walpurgis, and Valpurga) was a member of a wealthy, holy family. Her father was a nobleman, who would one day be named Saint Richard. Her mother, who became Saint Winna, was the sister of the future Saint Boniface, and two of Walburga's brothers have been declared saints as well!

When Walburga was just eleven years old, her father and two brothers left England to go on a pilgrimage—a holy journey—to Rome. The father did not make it all the way and dies in the Italian town of Lucca, just north of their destination. One brother stayed in Rome to become a monk; the other continued on to the Holy Land and did not return home for years. Walburga was sent to live with nuns in a local monastery where she was educated in many topics, especially Latin, which was the language of the Church. Walburga also became adept at copying and decorating manuscripts. This was very important work at the time because the printing press had not yet been invented. Books were not readily available. She also excelled at *Opus Anglicanum*, which was a type of English needlework that used gold and silver threads on fine fabrics and was decorated with jewels. It was in high demand at the time across Europe.

Walburga spent twenty-six years living in community at the monastery.

During this time, Walburga's Uncle Boniface travelled to Rome, where both of his nephews now lived. He

recruited them to go to Germany to set up monasteries for men and women with the goal of spreading the Catholic faith in that country. Boniface then wrote to the Walburga's abbess—the nun in charge of the monastery—and asked her to send Walburga and other nuns to help in his efforts. Boniface became the first missionary to call women to aid in the cause of evangelization in another country!

Walburga, known for her gentle spirit and kindness, wanted to be obedient, as well as join her brothers. However, it would mean leaving the one place where she had lived and thrived for most of her life. She turned to God in prayer and felt in her heart God's call. In true missionary spirit, Walburga set out with thirty other women by boat.

When the voyage was over, the sailors on board told a miraculous tale of nearly capsizing in a storm. Walburga came on deck in the midst of it, knelt down and prayed, and the seas were calmed. They praised her for saving them; Walburga gave all credit to God.

Walburga became the abbess of a house of monks and nuns near the brother to whom she felt closest. She would eventually write his life story, including the tales of his travels in the Holy Land, making her an author as well. While the exact year is not known (either 777 or 779) Walburga died on February 25th. She was canonized in 870.

1. ***Pray: Saint Walburga, you led a life of innocence, kindness, and obedience. You also made sure to use the gifts that God gave you! Help us to follow your example by living with a Christian spirit while making the world a better place through the talents God has bestowed on us all. Amen.***

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

1. Saint Walburga's family seems to have been a real "saint machine!" How can your behavior call your family closer to God?
2. When asked to leave her home of twenty-six years and travel into the unknown, Walburga turned to God in prayer for the answer. How do you think she knew that God had answered her?
3. Does the story of Walburga and the nuns on the boat in the storm remind you of anything from Scripture? If you were one of the sailors, what would you have thought?

Follow-up Activities:

Younger students:

1. Saint Walburga was a missionary on the continent of Europe. Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary on the white beads—for the people of Europe and the missionaries who help them know that God loves them. Need World Mission Rosaries? Email mheil@propfaithboston.org.

Older students:

1. Saint Boniface invited his niece and her nuns along with his two nephews to come to Germany as missionaries because he thought that the task of teaching others about the one true God would be better done by a concentrated group, doing the same work all at once. Reflect on how a group effort is sometimes the best way to accomplish a task. Then meet with your class, in person or virtually, to plan a group fundraiser for MCA to help missionaries. Some ideas: Have a chore day at home at get paid for it; all promise to give up soda for February and contribute what you save; plan a weekly sacrificial dinner (think pancakes and applesauce) and give the difference in cost to the missions.
2. Arrange through the Missionary Childhood office for a missionary nun to speak to your class (we know plenty!) We can set up a Zoom or Skype call to fit your schedule. Learn more about a vocation to be a nun, a missionary or both!

All students:

1. Saint Walburga travelled from Devonshire, England to Heidenheim, Germany. In today's miles, that's a journey of 801 miles, and because of tunnels, you could drive it! Challenge each student in your class to raise a penny a mile—\$8.01—during the month of February to send to missionaries.
2. Saint Walburga was very close to her two brothers, Saints Willibald and Winnibald. Make a card or draw a picture for each of your siblings that shows how much you love them. Are you an only child? Remember that Saint Walburga was left in the care of others and the nuns she lived with became her "spiritual sisters." Adopt someone as your "spiritual sibling" and make the card or drawing for them, explain your new connection!