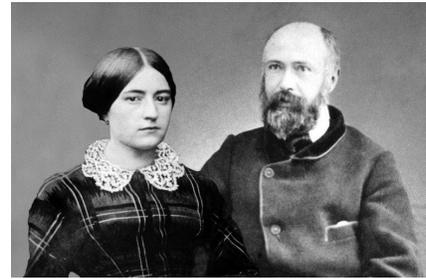




## Saint of the Month: Heaven's Heroes



### Saints Louis and Zélie Martin To Be Canonized October 18, 2015

**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 two of our Church's saints, Saints Louis and Zélie Martin telling as much of the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level
4. To learn that Louis and Zélie were saints because they 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 Louis and Zélie Martin's story.
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saints Louis and Zélie Martin. Elaborate/abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners.
3. *Pray: God of Love, You give us the example of Saints Louis and Zélie Martin to show us how to live ordinary lives with holiness. Help us to stay close to you, knowing that every word we say and every action we make can be our path to heaven. Help us to be people of prayer and love, especially in our homes. Amen.*
4. Use the follow up questions (below).
5. Present follow-up activity below (optional). Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

#### Saints Louis and Zélie Martin

On October 18, 2015, the Catholic Church will celebrate World Mission Sunday. Set aside every year as a day for the whole Church to reflect on our common baptismal call to be missionaries, World Mission Sunday has also in recent years become a day for canonizations—the creation of new saints to inspire us in our personal journey to holiness. This year, the Church adds Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, parents of Saint Therese of Lisieux and the first married couple to be canonized together, to the calendar.

Louis and Zélie Martin met and married after both of them tried to enter religious life and were rejected—Louis because he did not know Latin and Zélie because of poor health. Though disappointed, they were both very faith-filled people and knew that God must have another plan for their lives. Indeed, He did. After knowing each other

for only a few months, the couple were married, convinced immediately that they had met for a reason—to create a holy place on earth to raise a family. Both Louis and Zélie had thriving careers when they married—he was a watchmaker, she was a lacemaker. They lived in a politically turbulent time in France—families were forced to house foreign soldiers at their own cost and local people had very little extra money to spend on things like watches and lace. Business suffered for both of them. Louis and Zélie accepted each challenge and setback with faith that God would bring good from it. This attitude served them well as tragedy would strike their family often.

The Martin Family was blessed with nine children. Zélie, who chronicled her life through letters, declared that she wanted to raise them all to be saints. She wrote of wanting to “raise up her children for heaven”. They were all gifts from God. When four of their nine children died from various illnesses, the Martins relied on their faith. If each child was a gift from God, then they were simply returning to Him; surely they would be reunited in heaven one day!

When their youngest daughter, Therese, was only four, Zélie was found to have advanced breast cancer. She died at age 45 soon thereafter, leaving Louis to raise their five daughters. He continued their habits of daily Mass, regular prayer, and creating a house of love. On daily walks, they would stop into different churches to visit the Blessed Sacrament. It was Therese’s job to give a small donation to any poor person they might meet along their way.

After falling into ill health and suffering many strokes, Louis died after seeing all five of his daughters enter religious life. He joined his beloved Zélie in heaven on July 29, 1894. Their youngest daughter, Therese, was canonized on May 17, 1925 and named Patroness of the Missions in 1927.

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

1. Saints Louis and Zélie had plans for their lives that did not include marriage to each other—or anyone else! They accepted the change in their lives as God’s will. Do you think this was easy? Why or why not?
2. What about Louis and Zélie’s story shows how to deal with hardship in life?
3. How might the lives of Saints Louis and Zélie have been different if they had access to better medical care?

**Follow-up Activities:**

*Younger students:*

1. Saint Zélie Martin loved to write letters. She told people about her daily life, how hard she worked as a lacemaker and mother and how much she loved God. Write a letter to someone you love. Tell them about your every day activities and how much you love God, too!
2. Have a canonization party for the Martins! Decorate the room with lace, paper (or real) watches, pictures of the new saints and their daughter. Pray the World Mission Rosary—which are available at no cost from MCA.

*Older students:*

1. Saint Louis Martin was a watchmaker and very aware of the time! He prayed the universal prayer of the Church—the Liturgy of the Hours every day. Go to [DivineOffice.org](http://DivineOffice.org) every day; read or listen and pray along.
2. Go to [Missio.org](http://Missio.org) and read about Pope Francis’ newest initiative to help the poor in the missions. Pray for the people you read about. Organize an activity to help them reach their goal of helping themselves!

*All students:*

1. The Martin Family spent a lot of time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Take time out of your busy schedule and spend a half hour with Jesus in the tabernacle. Pray to the Martins and Saint Therese that your family may follow Jesus closer every day.
2. Saint Louis made sure his daughter always had something to give to the poor. Save your spare change in a jar this month and donate it to the Missionary Childhood Association in honor of the Martins.