

LESSON 22: Communion of Saints

AIM


Children will be helped to understand the vision of the Church as the community of the faithful - past, present and to come; and the Church's practice of venerating and communicating with saints, our ancestors in faith. (2.4.9)

OUTCOME

Learners understand the idea of the communion of saints and the practice of venerating saints.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Story (1) ⇨
- * Liturgical calendar (6)
- *  Worksheet (8)(12) ⇨
- * Materials for prayer cards (9)
- * Time line (13)
- * Materials for mobiles (14)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1 Tell the following **story**:

A few years ago a family was being evicted from their house. They were loading all their possessions onto a handcart so that they could move them to temporary accommodation. The whole operation was watched by a neighbour across the street, who noticed that the family seemed strangely unconcerned about the difficulties that awaited them.

At last he spoke to one of the children, almost without realising that he was uttering his thoughts aloud: "You poor child! You are so young and you have no home!"

The neighbour never forgot how a look of fright came into her face and tears into her eyes, as she said, "Oh, but we do have a home! We do! It's just that we've nowhere to put it!"

(*The Illustrated Catechism*. 1980. Redemptorist Publications, page 90)

- 2 Discuss the fact that a home is not made of bricks and tiles, nor luxury carpets and kitchen appliances. These things are important of course, but if we seek them first, we will quickly discover that the happiness of the home cannot be bought by accumulating comforts. The home is built on a much deeper foundation - the foundation of love. This foundation of love is too strong to be broken even by death. Love unites us with every member of our family - of **God's family**. It unites us in this life; it unites us in the next. Family ties unite us, whatever our physical circumstances.
- 3 Discuss how we **keep in contact** with those we love when we are away from them, for example by letter, telegram, e-mail, or telephone calls.
- 4 Discuss how we **keep memories alive** in our families and in our country: for example, we celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and special events. We also build statues and monuments to commemorate people, we name buildings, airports and streets after them. We give each person a burial place with a memorial stone. These actions help to keep memories alive. They bring people together and serve as an inspiration.
- 5 The members of God's family, whether they are on earth or in heaven, or on the way between, are closely united with one another, because among them all is the bond of love, which is not broken even by death. God's love unites them all. We call this the '**communion of saints**'

- 6 We keep the memory of members of God’s family alive in different ways. Use a **liturgical calendar** to show children some of the special days that are set aside in the church each year to remember special saints. Point out the significance of All Saints Day (1 November) and All Souls Day (2 November).


Some saints have been chosen by the Church to be canonized. They show us how to live holy lives. On 1 November each year, the church remembers everyone who is in heaven. We celebrate the Feast of All Saints.

When someone that we have known or loved dies, we are sad. We miss that person very much. But we believe that God has given each of us a life that lasts forever and that one day we will be together again. The Church sets aside a special day for us to pray for and remember those who have died. On 2 November each year, we celebrate the Feast of All Souls.

- 7 We **keep in contact** with the members of God’s family through prayer. We can pray for those still alive, and for those on their way beyond death. We can pray with the saints on earth and with those who have gone before us. We can also ask others to pray or intercede for us.

- 8 Conclude the lesson with a **prayer** selected from the worksheet  ⇒




ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 9 Encourage children to make a **prayer greeting card** for the family of someone who is sick or has died.
- 10 Motivate children to ask their families to set some time aside during the week when they can **pray together as a family**. Ask them to create a prayer corner for this purpose.
- 11 Let them learn the following **prayer for those who have died**. “Eternal rest grant unto (name) O Lord. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.”
- 12 Ask the learners to name and write about their **favourite saint**. Where would this saint come on the time line on the worksheet?  ⇒
- 13 Draw a **time line** for display in the classroom. Start with the birth of Jesus and then fill in important dates along the line.
- 14 Let each child make a **mobile** that represents the church community for them, like a sort of family tree. Call it OUR ANCESTORS IN FAITH. Hang the mobiles up in the classroom.

TO REMEMBER

By the communion of saints we understand the spiritual union of all the friends of God both living and dead.

A Communion of Saints

TIME LINE			
	Mary, Jesus	↓	
100	John		PRAYER TO SAINT JOHN
200			Beloved disciple of the Lord, faithful priest, teacher of the Word of God, help us to hunger for the Word, to be loyal to the Master, and to love one another.
300			
400			
	Augustine	↓	
500			PRAYER TO SAINT THÉROSE, THE LITTLE FLOWER
600	Benedict		The Lord said, “Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” Obtain for us, we beseech you, so to follow in your footsteps with humility and simplicity of heart that we may obtain the everlasting reward. Amen.
700			
800			
900			
1000		↓	
1100			PRAYER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE
1200	Francis of Assisi		Breathe in me, Holy Spirit, that all my thoughts may be holy. Act in me, Holy Spirit, that my work may also be holy. Draw my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy. Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.
1300			
1400			
	Joan of Arc	↓	
1500			
1600			
1700			
1800			
	Charles Lwanga	↓	
1900			
2000	Mother Teresa		

(Prayers from Basil Pennington. *Pocket Book of Prayers*. 1986. New York: Doubleday)

LESSON 23: Mary, the Mother of Jesus

AIM

To help learners understand that Mary, the mother of Jesus, has a privileged place in God's plan. (2.2.12)

OUTCOME

Learners understand the place Mary has in God's plan. (2.2.12)



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Heading or flashcard (1)
- * Bible (4)
- * Movements (7)
- * Bibles (8)(10)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 What is so special about **a mother**? (Encourage children to give their own ideas.) Put up a title that reads **MOTHERS ARE....**and get children to help you to describe mothers. They are kind, gentle, loving, forgiving, hard-working, long-suffering, ...
- 2 Who was **Jesus' mother**? Invite the learners to tell what they know:
 - Mary's parents were called Joachim and Anne.
 - She lived in Nazareth.
 - She was engaged to be married to Joseph who was a carpenter.
 - She was the mother of Jesus.
 - We don't know when she was born exactly but we celebrate her birthday on 8 September.
 - She knew Jesus all of his life - from his birth to his death and resurrection.
 Add any other relevant facts.
- 3 **Hearing or Listening?** Try this exercise. First, children must close their eyes and listen to all the sounds outside this classroom. Ask children to report what they hear. Then tell them to close their eyes again and listen to what they hear inside the classroom. Ask them what they hear. Point out that all these sounds were going on and you could hear them in the background. But until you stopped to listen, they just didn't register clearly and get through to you. Explain to the children that this is often what happens when God speaks to us. We may hear, but we really need to listen to God's voice in our lives.
- 4 Someone who really listened to God's word, was the young Jewish girl named Mary. She was a descendant of King David, and tried to keep God's laws and covenant. She looked forward to God's promise of a king. Read the **story of the Annunciation** - [Luke 1:26-38] Ask:
 - a) What was the angel's message?
 - b) Why was Mary frightened?
 - c) Why did the angel tell her not to be afraid?
 - d) Did Mary trust in God?
 - e) How do you know that God loved Mary very much?
- 5 Mary said **yes to God!** Mary was filled with love for God. Mary is our model of saying yes to God. From the very beginning of her life, the Holy Spirit was with her. Mary always lived in a way that showed she believed that God was with her. When she said yes to God through the angel, God was with her in an even deeper, more wonderful way. Mary humbly saw God's presence in everything that happened to her and she gave thanks and praise.

6 Mary was the mother of Jesus

Right through the difficult time of having to travel to Bethlehem for the census, and not being able to find proper accommodation there, Mary trusted in God. Jesus showed us that we should follow Mary. Jesus was talking to the crowds. A woman thought his mother must be pleased and proud of him, so she shouted, “Happy the woman who gave you birth.” [Luke 11:27] Jesus wanted her to appreciate the true greatness of his mother - her deep faith and love. So he replied, “Even happier are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” [Luke 11:28]

7 Let’s Celebrate!

The Hail Mary is the prayer in which we greet Mary in the words of God’s messenger and her cousin Elizabeth. Do you know this prayer?

You might like to add some movements when you pray it:

Hail Mary, full of grace,	Arms outstretched at the side, palms facing up
The Lord is with you.	Head bowed, hands joined together
Blessed are you among women.	Arms outstretched in front, palms facing up
Blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.	Genuflecting position, with both hands joined reverently
Holy Mary, mother of God,	Arms lifted high above the head
Pray for us sinners, now,	Head bowed, hands joined together again
And at the hour of our death.	
Amen.	Hands raised high overhead, palms facing upwards

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 8 Finding out about Mary:** The name Mary comes from the Hebrew MIRIAM which means “rebellion” or “hope of change”. Ask the learners to find a Miriam in the Old Testament. [Exodus 15:19-21]
- 9** Encourage children to write a **thank you letter** to their mothers (or mother figures). Remind them that grandmothers are also mothers!
- 10** Introduce the class to the prayer of Mary in the scriptures - the **Magnificat** [Luke 1:46-55]
- 11** Invite the learners to write out the **Hail Mary** prayerfully and decorate a beautiful frame around it.
- 12** Point out that there are many times during the church year when the special **facets of Mary’ life** are celebrated. Here are two of these feast days:
 March 25 - THE ANNUNCIATION: We celebrate Mary’s “Yes” to God when God asked her to be the mother of his Son.
 May 31 - THE VISITATION: We celebrate the long journey that Mary made to visit her elderly cousin, Elizabeth who was going to have a baby.

LESSON 24: Saints Parade

AIM

To celebrate belonging to the communion of saints in an assembly saints parade (5.4.11)

OUTCOME

Learners experience a celebration dedicated to the saints.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Preparation for Assembly:** Each child chooses a saint from a selection of story books or photocopies that you have prepared. Each learner prepares their saint's story on a card, with the name of the saint clearly printed on the front. Allow children to choose a symbol or item of dress depicting the saint of their choice, for example Luke the physician, Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, St Thomas the scholar, and Francis the nature lover.

You could organise the class in small groups for this work, instead of children choosing individual saints.

Prepare the class to open the assembly with a rousing rendering of *Oh When the Saints Come Marching In*. ⇒

- 2 **Assembly:** The learners will tell the assembly something of that saint's love of God as they parade past. Here is an example of a saints parade. You will need to adapt it to suit your class, and to include the saints that the class has chosen

SAINTS PARADE

(ideal for All Saints' Day)

Narrator: Today is a happy day. We celebrate the feast of all God's special friends. These friends loved God very much and they always tried to love God and all people while they lived on earth. These special friends of God are called saints.

The chorus response to each acclamation of sainthood will be sung by the class to a tune of your choice.

Mary, who first said "Yes" to God - mother of the Christ child (Child dressed as Mary gets up and starts the parade, accompanied by two children who solemnly raise and lower white flags)

Chorus: White flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Peter, Prince of the Apostles - Rock of the Faith and Keeper of the Keys! (Child dressed as Peter/ or carrying large keys gets up and joins Mary, passing through an archway formed by two children who raise and lower red flags as he passes through)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * 🎵 *Oh When the Saints Come Marching In* (1) ⇒
- * Stories of the lives of the saints (1)
- * Two large red and two large white flags or banners (these can be made of material or painted paper) (2)
- * Symbols and dress (2)
- * Bible (2)
- * Balloons (3)
- * Paper bags (4)
- * Book on saints (5)

Paul of the Gentiles - who encountered the Risen Christ (Child dressed as Paul gets up and joins Peter, passing through the same archway formed by two children who raise and lower the red flags as he passes through)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Philip the apostle - who brought Bartholomew to see the saviour (Child dressed as Philip follows the same procedure as the others).

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Andrew the apostle - the first-called of the followers of Christ (Child dressed as Andrew follows same procedure)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

John the beloved apostle -who stood at the Cross of Jesus (Child dressed as John/or carrying the symbol of an eagle, joins the others)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Luke the beloved doctor - scribe at the feet of Mary (Child dressed as Luke joins the parade)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Matthew the apostle - to whom Jesus said, "Follow me." (Child dressed as Matthew joins the others)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

James ' , 'brother of the Lord' - leader of the Church in Jerusalem (Child dressed as James joins the others)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Next is **Bartholomew** - a true Israelite in whom there was no trickery (Child dressed as Bartholomew joins the others)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Mark the gospel writer - pen for the words of Peter! (Child dressed as Mark joins the others)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Thomas the doubtful - Blessed are they who shall believe! (Child dressed as Thomas joins the others)

Chorus: Red flow the banners ho! Sing of the glory.

Narrator: The saints came from many different walks of life. There were:

Popes - Pius, John and Leo (Children bearing symbols join the parade)

Chorus: Pray for us.

Teachers - John Bosco, Elizabeth Seton, Dominic, Ignatius of Loyola (Children dressed, bearing symbols join the parade)

Chorus: Pray for us.

Social workers -Vincent de Paul (Child joins the others)

Chorus: Pray for us.

Musicians - Cecilia, you blessed the world with your music (Child carrying a symbol joins the others)

Chorus: Pray for us

Lawyers - Thomas More (Child carrying law books/clothing joins the others)

Chorus: Pray for us

Scholars - Jerome - you studied the Bible every day (Child carrying a Bible, places it on the lectern before joining the others)

Chorus: Pray for us

All holy people who do God's will

Chorus: Pray for us

Bible Reading: [Romans 12: 4 - 8]

Final Prayer: God, we rejoice today in the countless number of people who have gone ahead and enjoy the vision of you. Help us to live our lives fully in the light of your presence.

(Adapted from the RESPONSORIAL PSALM of 'Heroes: A Liturgy for Halloween and Saints' Day' in *How Green Is Green?*, LeBlanc & Talbot, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Illinois, USA)

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 3 Some of the children may like to **decorate a balloon** as their saint, this adds to the air of festivity.
- 4 Another idea is for children to **decorate paper bag puppets** or simple hand puppets rather than dressing up.
- 5 Some **reference books** on saints:
Phyllis McGinley: *Saint Watching*
Leo Foley: *Saint of the Day*
Leo Knowles: *Candidates for Sainthood*
Ethel Marbach: *Once-upon-a-Time Saints*
Francis Marion: *New African Saints*
Emily Ndungu: *Heroines of Faith*

MATERIALS

OH WHEN THE SAINTS

Oh when the saints go marching in,
oh when the saints go marching in,
I want to be in that number,
when the saints go marching in.

Oh when the drums begin to bang,
oh when the drums begin to bang,
I want to be in that number,
when the drums begin to bang.

Oh when the stars fall from the sky...

Oh when the moon turns into
blood...

Oh when the sun turns into fire...

Oh when the fires begin to blaze...

Oh when the Lord calls out the
names...

(traditional)