



Dear Friend,

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a journey of formation and reflection, and we are delighted to be a part of this experience.

In these downloadable PDF documents, you will find:

- ❖ **A Facilitator's Guide for children and *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook***: Includes a course overview, step-by-step instructions, discussion questions, and activity suggestions in the facilitator guide, and handouts for the participants. If you are using the guide on computer, tablet, or smartphone, the hyperlinks are enabled. If you are interested in these materials in Spanish, please contact Hugo Olaiz, associate for Latino/Hispanic resources, at holaiz@forwardmovement.org.

The Facilitator's Guide for Youth and Adults and Participant Handouts can be downloaded from Forward Movement at www.forwardmovement.org. These materials also are available in Spanish. Visit www.VivirElDiscipulado.org to learn more. A full-color print version of ***Meet the Saints: Family Storybook*** also is available for purchase and can be ordered from Forward Movement at www.forwardmovement.org. Individual copies are \$12, and \$10 each for ten or more copies.

You can find additional resources at www.livingdiscipleship-fm.org. We will continue to add resources and tools so please check back periodically. We also hope you will send ideas and best practices to use so we can share them with the wider community.

The development of *Living Discipleship* was funded by a generous grant from The Episcopal Church's Constable Fund. With this financial support, we are able to offer the curriculum free of charge as a download to any Episcopal church. In addition, Forward Movement is joining with The Constable Fund to offer ten free copies of the printed *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* to Episcopal congregations with an average Sunday attendance of 50 or less. Please contact Forward Movement at 800.543.1813 to place the order. (Shipping is additional.)

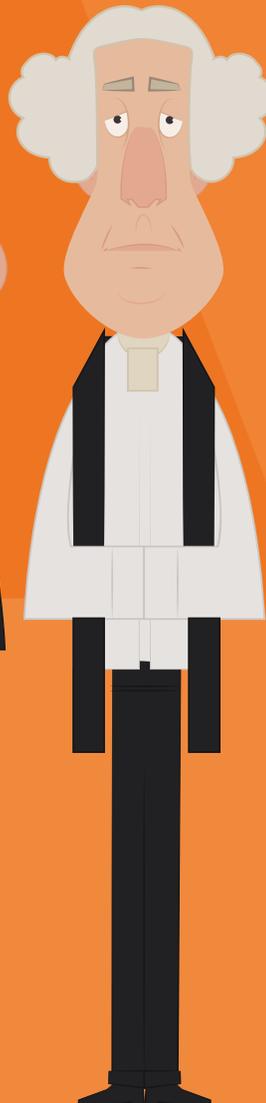
Our mission is to inspire disciples and empower evangelists, and we hope these resources encourage, engage, and transform you on your journey of faith.

Facilitator Guide

Meet the Saints

Family Storybook

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Introduction

Overview

Welcome to *Living Discipleship: Celebrating the Saints*. This curriculum is a year-long study of the lives of the saints, with twenty-six sessions that explore different named saints in The Episcopal Church's calendar. Designed for use in weekly Sunday formation time, each session is approximately an hour long. With twenty-six sessions, this means that *Living Discipleship: Celebrating the Saints* can function as the Sunday formation curriculum in a church for an entire program year. Yet the lessons are also easily adaptable: each class stands on its own and can be used independently or rearranged in any order. Thus your parish could choose to use only a selection of the lessons, engaging in a study of the saints for a semester or a season. Alternatively, you could use the sessions as a summer curriculum or even at a time outside of Sunday morning. The possibilities are endless.

Celebrating the Saints is offered as an all-ages curriculum, so it contains corresponding lessons for adults and children on the same topics each week. This all-ages format allows families to come to church and learn about the same general thing, each in their own class, and have a shared starting point from which to go home and talk, discuss, and debate about "what they learned in Sunday school." *Celebrating the Saints* includes *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook*, a resource designed to help families talk together about the things they are learning in Sunday school. *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* includes a story about each saint that parents can read to children, as well as some discussion questions for the family to talk over together at home.

The sessions included in this curriculum are designed to help children encounter the saints at their own level, and be formed by the faith of those who have gone before. Through *Meet the Saints*, children will be introduced to twenty-six saints over the course of the year. They will learn about different periods in the history of the church and how the saints lived out their faith in ages past. They will learn about the spread of the Church around the world, as they study saints from near and far and see the faith that unites them all. They will learn about all the different ways that the love of God in Christ has been made manifest in different times and places by vastly different people: in martyrs, monks, and musicians; through peasants, poets, and politicians. It is our hope that you, the teachers and facilitators will learn alongside the children you teach, and find your own faith enriched.

Welcome to a year of Celebrating the Saints.

About Living Discipleship

In the midst of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is nestled one of the most beautiful prayers in the Christian tradition. Paul is writing to his disciples, his students, those who have joined him on the path of following Jesus and who are learning how to live in light of Christ's love. To these early Christians, Paul writes, "I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power" (Ephesians 1:17-19).

This prayer, written nearly 2,000 years ago, resonates through the ages. Now, perhaps more than ever, what individual Christians need, what the Church needs, is to know "the hope to which God has called us... the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints... the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe." These three things represent the content of the Christian faith: the hope of God proclaimed to us in the Bible, the witness of the saints from ages past, and the great power God offers to each of us to live out our lives of faith here and now. These ideas cannot be grasped in a single moment but must be learned and absorbed and made real through a lifetime of discipleship. They are not facts to memorize but realities to encounter and experience.

We can, as a Church and as individuals, live more deeply into the reality for which Paul so fervently prays. Spiritual formation for all ages: adults, youth, and children, is one way we can seek the spirit of wisdom and revelation that God offers.

Living Discipleship is an all-ages curriculum designed to help individuals and communities know more fully the very things that Paul prayed for the Ephesians to find: the God revealed in Christ Jesus. *Living Discipleship* is structured in three years: one year on *Exploring the Bible*, one year on *Celebrating the Saints*, and one year on *Practicing our Faith*.

Living Discipleship: Exploring the Bible takes participants on a journey through the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. Our primary revelation of the hope to which God has called us is the gift of God's Word, the Bible. By focusing on the vast narrative of the scriptures, we can see the great story of God's love from the beginning of creation, through the life of Jesus Christ, and in our own time, guided by the Holy Spirit. Through the stories of scripture, we can learn that the hope God offered to the faithful in ages past is the very same hope to which God is calling us today.

Living Discipleship: Celebrating the Saints is a year-long exploration of the riches of God's glorious inheritance made real in the lives of the saints who have gone before us. The saints witness to us what the life of faith looks like, lived out in real time, and they challenge us to live out our own discipleship more fully and fearlessly. In our journey with the saints, we also learn something of our history as we look at monks, missionaries, prophets, doctors, evangelists, and more, and learn how dozens of different people in different places and times, with different gifts and backgrounds, have taken their place in proclaiming the kingdom of God.

Living Discipleship: Practicing our Faith offers a survey of the basic beliefs and practices of The Episcopal Church, focused especially on *The Book of Common Prayer* and our liturgical and sacramental traditions. These beliefs and practices remind us that we are the inheritors of the immeasurable greatness of God's power that transforms each of us and strengthens us to serve the world in Christ's name. In practicing our faith, we learn how to live as disciples, not merely one day a week but every day of the week.

Living Discipleship is a tool for churches and leaders who have the same prayer for their communities that Paul prayed so many years ago. It is, we hope, a resource in helping Christians come to know more fully God in Christ: the hope, the glorious inheritance, and the immeasurable power.

For each class, you will need the facilitator's guide and the family storybook (either copies of the print storybook for each child, or the electronic version, from which you can print out copies of the weekly handout for each student). The other necessary materials for individual classes are listed in each session. Most of the classes in this curriculum follow the same structure, so that there is a rhythm and continuity to the classes, even as we study different saints. This repetition can help children and adults know what to expect, even as they learn something new, and bring comfort, even when they are challenged or stretched. Thus, every lesson plan will follow a very similar structure, containing the same elements:

Opening Collect

- For each week, the opening collect is the one appointed for the assigned saint from the liturgical resources of The Episcopal Church. These prayers are rich with tradition, connecting us to the prayers of the Church through time.

Class overview

Encounter the saint

- The materials for each week include a story about the saint that can be read to the children or that the children can read together. Some weeks also include one or more suggestions for picture books that tell the lives of the saints. Sharing this story together is the way to introduce the life of the saint to the children. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but will instead give the students a snapshot of that saint.
- There are also reflection questions that can be used after hearing the story. This helps invite the students into a time of wondering.

Engage the saint

- Each week there is at least one suggested activity to engage some aspect of the assigned saint's life and witness. Additional suggestions for generic activities are included in the appendix, which could be substituted for any given week. This allows the teacher to adapt the curriculum; if you know that the suggested activity won't work for your class, you are welcome to choose another one.

Explore the connections between the saint and our lives

- A list of reflection and discussion questions is included for each week. This time of reflection is an important way for the children to connect the story of the saint from long ago and possibly far away with their own lives.

Concluding collect

- Each week you are encouraged to close with the collect of the assigned saint that began the day's session.

Order of the classes

The saints are listed in this curriculum in chronological order, both for ease of access and because that ordering allows a parish to use the curriculum to trace the development of church history and theology through the lives of the saints. But, of course, that is by no means the only possibility for how to encounter the lives of the saints. If you choose to change the ordering of classes, be sure to consult with the adult and youth leaders, so that everyone will still be "on the same page." A few additional options are suggested below:

- You could study the saints as grouped by theme (artists, prophets, teachers, missionaries/martyrs, etc.). This could allow for greater comparison and contrast among the weeks, giving room to explore how people have lived out similar vocations in different places and times in the life of the Church.
- You might choose to reorder the saints so that they coincide with seasons and events in the church year: Saint Francis could be studied on the Sunday closest to his feast, the Blessed Virgin Mary during Advent, or on a Sunday close to one of her feast days, and so on. This might be especially appropriate in parishes that observe some or all of the lesser feasts and fasts in their weekday worship.
- Choose the ordering of the saints in consultation with the adult and youth leaders, so that the interactive aspect of the curriculum, where all ages are studying the same thing, is not lost.

Display possibilities

This curriculum includes an image of each saint that is studied, for reference and for fun. These images, or others that you might find and use, allow for a variety of display possibilities. This is a wonderful visual reminder of the journey that the congregation is on as they engage the lives of the saints week by week. You can invite students to put up the saints one by one as they study them, either in the parish hall, in another central location, or in classrooms. This serves as a visual reminder that can be helpful, not only to children, but also to those of all ages. It allows you, either individually or as a group, to occasionally go back and look at the saints you've studied and remind yourselves about their stories. It also might encourage you to make connections that would otherwise be missed or raise questions that would be helpful to explore. We include a variety of display possibilities that you can adapt to your situation, but the options are limitless. Links to further images area available on the Living Discipleship website, under the Celebrating the Saints, then Resources tab. You may also view them by downloading the PowerPoint for this curriculum (also available on the website).

Some possible suggestions:

- Timeline: Make a timeline along one wall (or even around the entire room). You can put in a beginning date and end with "today." You can leave the line blank, or select some big historical events as time markers. Each week, as you study the assigned saint, put the image up at the appropriate place on your timeline. Take the opportunity periodically to trace the movement of the saints through history and see where you are headed.
- Cloud: Scripture describes the saints as "a great cloud of witnesses." Use that image for your saintly display. On a prominent wall, make a big cloud out of paper. Each week, you can add the picture of the assigned saint to the cloud. You could choose to place them randomly or to group them by theme.
- Stars: Another image often used for saints is "stars shining in darkness." Put up a dark blue or black backdrop on the wall. Cut out a variety of star shapes and put an image of a saint in each one. Each week, add the assigned saint's star to the wall. Watch over time as the lights fill the darkness.
- Map: The saints studied in this curriculum come from all around the world and are representative of the saints recognized by the Church. Put up a world map somewhere in your church. Make pins with the names or small pictures of the saints on them. Add each week's saint to the map as you study them. Notice the spread of Christian witness around the world.

Additional Classes

This curriculum is designed to cover twenty-six weeks: an introductory class, twenty-four saints, and a closing class. In the Appendix, we include suggestions for a few additional classes, which might be appropriate for certain contexts. These could be used in addition to the existing classes, lengthening the curriculum, or could be used as a substitute for one of the twenty-four saints classes. Additional class possibilities include:

- All Saints' Day class
- Saint of title (guidelines for designing a class about your church's name-saint, if s/he isn't already included in the curriculum)
- Art and iconography of saints: learn about some of the visual symbols used to designate certain saints. Explore your church buildings to see what saints are depicted and how you recognize them.
- "Patron" saints: have each person discover who their patron saint is (Were they born on a saint's feast day? Do they share a name with a saint? Is there a saint with whom they identify?) Challenge each person to learn something about their saint and then come back and share with the group.

Meet the Saints

Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the introductory material well in advance. You may also want to read the handout from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge and background about what saints are (and aren't!).
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * If you plan to read the children's book suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Copies of the storybook or handout for each student
- * Children's book (optional)
- * Recording of "I sing a song of the saints of God."
- * Dress up clothes (younger classes)
- * Copies of the Silly Song Template and Silly Song Challenge (older classes)

Prayer

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's appointed saint.)

Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your servants, may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last we may with them attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 250)

Encounter

Share the story with the class. You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.
- * Or, you could choose to read a children's book about saints:
 - *Can you Find Saints?* By Phillip Gallery

After sharing the story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Explore

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with today's story:

Option 1: Sing a Song of the Saints of God

Have the class sing together the song "I sing a song of the saints of God." (*The Hymnal 1982*, #293)

- You can sing the song a capella or invite your church musician to accompany you on piano.
- Or you could use a recording from YouTube to accompany your singing. This is a good option: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrQor_dX3IM

After you have sung the song, do one of the following:

* For younger children:

- Provide costumes or dress-up clothes, and invite the children to dress up as any of the saints that they heard about in the song (doctor, shepherdess, queen, etc.).
- Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine themselves as that saint. How would they act? What would they be doing?
- Play the song again and invite the children to "act out" the song as it is played.

* For older children:

- Using the Silly Song Template (found in the Resources section), have the class come up with choices of words to create a Silly Song version of "I sing a song of the saints of God." Write their word choices on a board or flip chart.
- Then, use the Silly Song Fill-in sheet to read (or sing!) the silly version of the song aloud to the class.
- Pass out copies of the Silly Song Challenge page. Divide the class into pairs or teams. Have the students work together to try to fill in the correct lyrics of the song (from memory—no cheating!) The first team to correctly fill in the lyrics wins!
- If no teams can correctly fill in the lyrics, sing or play the song again and have them listen for the correct answers.

Option 2: Follow the leader

Play a game of follow the leader with the class.

- Have the students line up single file behind you, the leader.
- Start with simple motions, things like clapping hands, rubbing your head, hopping on one foot.
- Over time, use more complicated movements, using a sequence of motions (tap head twice, touch nose,

then ear, then nose, then toes, etc.)

- For a more competitive game, set up two lines and have players sit down when they fail to correctly follow the leader. The team with the most still standing after a set amount of time "wins."

When you are finished playing the game, explore the following discussion questions together:

- Saints are people who follow Jesus: they follow the example of Jesus and apply the teachings and directions of Jesus in their lives.
- Sometimes we follow Jesus in simple and small ways, like we did at the beginning of the game. What are some simple, small ways that we can follow Jesus every day?
- Sometimes it is more complicated to follow Jesus, like when the leader did a series of tricky motions. What are some of the harder ways to follow Jesus in our lives?
- How do you think you are being called to follow Jesus more closely?

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- * The songs that we learn as children shape us in special ways. What are some of your favorite songs you learned when you were little? What did they teach you?
- * Who are some of the saints that you know about? What do you remember about them?

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- * Who was your favorite saint that we studied, and why was that person important to you?
- * What differences did you notice among the many saints that we studied?
- * What similarities stood out to you among the saints that we studied?
- * What did you learn about saints in this class that surprised you?
- * What did you learn about saints in this class that challenged you?
- * What are you called to do or change in order to respond to what you have learned?

Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saints' stories well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saints from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saints.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Children's book (optional)
- * Blindfolds (bandanas, strips of cloth, etc.)
- * Star shapes or copies of star coloring page
- * Scissors
- * Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- * Paper
- * Other art materials (yarn, stamps, stickers) if desired

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saints.)

Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your servants **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last we may with them attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever anever. Amen. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 250)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class. You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * How do you think Sarah felt when she heard she would have a child? When have you felt like that?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with the saints' stories:

Option 1: Trust

Have the class do some "trust walks." Divide the group into pairs and have one member of each group be the leader and the other be the follower. The follower wears a blindfold and has to trust the leader to guide them. For younger children, the leader can walk in front with the follower placing one hand on the shoulder of the leader. For older children, the leader can give the follower verbal directions, rather than using touch to guide. In each pair, they take turns, so that every child gets to lead and to follow. You can either set up one of the classrooms as an obstacle course (with chairs, books, etc. on the floor that they have to walk around), or have them navigate from their classroom, down the hallway, to another classroom or another part of the church. After everyone has taken his or her turn at a trust walk, discuss the following questions together:

- What was that like?
- How did you feel, counting on your partner to guide you?
- Did you make some mistakes or bump into anything? Why did that happen?
- Abraham had to go on a much longer journey than the one we took today. He didn't know where he was going, but he trusted God to guide him and lead him. What are some of the ways that God might guide us and lead us on our journey through life?

Option 2:

Provide an abundance of stars for each child. You may:

- Purchase star shaped cutouts from a craft store
- Print out enough copies of this or a similar star coloring page, so that each child may have one or more pages: http://www.teachersprintables.net/preview/Star_Templates
- Have older children cut their own star shapes using this tutorial: http://www.dltk-children.com/usa/fold_and_cut_star_shape.htm

Ask the children to name all the characters from today's story. You, the teacher, will decorate stars for each of them. Then ask the children to make or decorate stars to represent themselves, their family members, and other people they know and love (suggest that they might try to think of both friends and church members). They can draw a picture of the person inside the star; write the person's name, or color and decorate the star to represent that person.

Then tape (or otherwise affix) the stars all around the classroom, so that the walls and ceiling are covered with the stars. Invite the children to lie down or sit quietly for a minute to look at all the stars. Then discuss:

- ✿ How many stars do you think are here? How many would there be if everyone in this church decorated stars? How many might there be if God decorated stars for everyone God knows and loves?
- ✿ All of these stars (and all of the real stars in the sky!) represent all the members of God's family. How does it feel to know that you are a member of God's family? How do you think God wants us to treat the other stars, who are also members of God's family?

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ From what part of the world did your ancestors come? What do you remember hearing about your ancestors? What hardships might they have known?
- ✿ Have you ever moved or gone on a vacation? What do you need to take with you when you move or go on a vacation? What important things might God want us to pack on our journey? How does one pack things like faith and joy and courage?

Blessed Virgin Mary



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * If you plan to read one of the children's books suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Children's book (optional)
- * Blank notecards; paper; crayons, markers, or colored pencils; glitter, stickers, stamps, and other decorative art supplies, if desired (both engagement activities)
- * Colored embroidery floss and/or strings and beads (Faithful Friends engagement option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

○ God, you have taken to yourself the blessed **Virgin Mary**, mother of your incarnate Son: Grant that we, who have been redeemed by his blood, may share with her the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
(*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 243)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.
You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.
- * Or, you could choose to read a children's book about Mary. Some possibilities include:
 - *Mary: the Mother of Jesus* by Tomie dePaola
 - *Mary, Mother of Jesus* by Mary Joslin
 - *Mary* by Brian Wildsmith
 - *The Story of Mary, the Mother of God* by Dorrie Papademetriou

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * How do you think Mary felt when Gabriel appeared? When have you felt that way?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Mary's story:

Option 1: Encountering angels

The Bible tells us that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, but it doesn't tell us what Gabriel looked like. Lots of times we see pictures of angels in white outfits with big wings and halos, but the Bible doesn't say anything about that. Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine Gabriel appearing to Mary. Ask them to be quiet, not to answer, but just to listen to your questions. Then, while they have their eyes closed, slowly, quietly say:

- I wonder what Gabriel looked like. Did he look like a person? Or some kind of animal? Or something different all together?
- I wonder what size Gabriel was. Was he as big as a dragon, or as small as a fairy, or something in between?
- I wonder what color Gabriel was. Was he white, or black, or lime green, or many colors?
- I wonder how many wings Gabriel had. None or two or six or a hundred?
- I wonder what shape Gabriel was.

Then invite each student to draw a picture of Gabriel's appearance to Mary. Be sure to provide many different kinds of artistic materials, possibly including things like glitter, feathers, or fabric for decoration.

Option 2: Faithful friends

When Mary felt scared and alone, she turned to her cousin and friend Elizabeth, who brought Mary comfort and reminded Mary that God was always with her. Our friends and family are gifts from God; they share our joys and our sorrows.

Ask the students to think of a friend or family member who has helped them through a tough time. Maybe it is someone who played with them when they felt lonely, who comforted them when they were sad, or who helped them to not feel scared.

Have each student make a thank you note or friendship bracelet as a token of thanks to a faithful friend.

✿ For the thank you notes, provide blank cards and art supplies for the students to make their notes. Have them decorate the cards but also write a thoughtful note on the inside. On a piece of newsprint or a chalkboard, write some sample sentences to help the students get started. Possibilities include:

- Thank you for...
- I am glad you are my friend because...
- You helped me when...
- You showed me God's love by...

✿ For the bracelets, provide a variety of different kinds of materials for making bracelets.

- Younger children might simply string beads on thread or floss.
- Older children can make bracelets by braiding different colors of embroidery floss. A variety of tutorials for different ways of making bracelets can be found here: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/mackenziekrivant/15-summer-camp-style-friendship-bracelets-you-can-make-right#.alplN95jqv>
- Students might not have time to finish their bracelets during class. Be sure to provide zip-top bags so that they can take their materials with them and finish at home.

Tell the students to give the card or bracelet they made to their faithful friend this week. Encourage them also to pray for that friend, giving thanks to God for that person.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Sometimes the stories in the Bible seem to concentrate on grownups. Yet, as is true with Mary's story, it is clear that God calls on young people to do amazing things. What might that mean for you?
- ✿ Elizabeth was a good friend to Mary, helping her to remember that God was always with her. How can you be a good friend to others? Who is someone that you think God might want you to comfort or encourage? What can you do this week for that person?
- ✿ We don't always see angels, yet God often communicates with us in ways that we don't always understand. What are some ways in which God might be communicating with you?

Mary Magdalene



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Hard boiled eggs, egg dye materials, and egg decoration materials (Red Eggs engagement option)
- * Crescent rolls, melted butter, cinnamon sugar, large marshmallows, baking sheets (Resurrection rolls engagement option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Almighty God, whose blessed Son restored **Mary Magdalene** to health of body and of mind, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: Mercifully grant that by your grace we may be healed from all our infirmities and know you in the power of his unending life; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 242)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * How do you think Mary Magdalene felt when she heard Jesus say her name? When have you felt that way?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Mary Magdalene's story:

Option 1: Red eggs

The Orthodox Christian Church has a long-standing tradition surrounding Mary Magdalene and red eggs. Make copies of the handout below, and distribute them to all the students in the class. Read the story aloud to the class. <http://orthodoxeducation.blogspot.com/2009/04/red-egg.html>

Then, dye and decorate red eggs!

- If you have time and access to a kitchen, you can use the traditional method here: <http://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-make-onionskin-easter-e-81574>
- If you are limited on time or do not have access to a kitchen, hard boil the eggs in advance, and then use this method for dyeing: <http://theodorakis.net/recipes/redeggs.html>
- You could also bring eggs that you have already dyed red, and simply allow the children to decorate them. Provide gold and silver paint pens, religious stickers, etc.
- At the end of class, you can invite the children to crack the eggs, as a symbol of the way that Jesus cracked open the gates of death!

Option 2: Resurrection rolls

Mary Magdalene was one of the only people with Jesus when his body was buried and the first one to see the empty tomb.

Lead the children in making resurrection rolls to help tell the story of Jesus' burial and resurrection. If pictures are helpful, you can look at the tutorial here: <http://thelarsonlingo.blogspot.com/search/label/recipes?updated-max=2012-04-21T09:18:00-07:00&max-results=20&start=4&by-date=false>

Gather your materials. You need:

- Enough crescent rolls for each child to have one (there are eight per tube)
- Melted butter
- Cinnamon sugar
- Large marshmallows
- Baking sheet
- Preheat the oven to 350 degree

- As you read the story from (Matthew 17:57-61), have the children separate and flatten out the crescent rolls. Tell the students that the crescent rolls represent the cloth that Mary Magdalene used to wrap Jesus' body.
- Give each child a marshmallow. The marshmallow represents Jesus.
- Have each child dip the marshmallow in the melted butter. The melted butter represents the oils that Mary Magdalene would have used to anoint Jesus' body.
- Next dip the marshmallow in the cinnamon sugar (make sure it is nice and coated). The cinnamon sugar represents the spices that Mary Magdalene would have used to anoint Jesus' body.
- Then wrap the coated marshmallow tightly in the crescent roll, sealing it tightly. This represents the wrapping of Jesus' body with the cloths.
- Place the crescent rolls on a baking sheet, a few inches apart. Then place the baking sheet in the oven and close the door. This represents the sealing of Jesus' body in the tomb.
- Bake the rolls for ten to twelve minutes, then remove and allow to cool.
- Let the children open their rolls. They will be puffed up, but the marshmallow will be gone, just like when Mary Magdalene opened the tomb, and Jesus' body was gone!
- Close by reading Matthew 28:1-10.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Jesus did something that no one else can do: He came back from the dead with a new body. This is called the resurrection. How do you think you might have felt if you were Mary Magdalene at that moment?
- ✿ Have you ever lost someone you loved? A friend, a grandparent or parent, a cat or a dog? Describe how you felt.
- ✿ Have you ever gone to that person's grave? Have you ever buried an animal and marked its grave? How did it feel to visit that place?

Peter & Paul



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saints' stories well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saints from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saints.
- * Provide copies of Meet the Saints: Family Storybook for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Blank notecards; paper; envelopes and stamps; crayons, markers, or colored pencils; glitter; stickers, stamps, and other decorative art supplies, if desired (Letters of encouragement option)
- * Hula hoop or blanket (Fishers of men option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles **Peter and Paul** glorified you by their martyrdom: Grant that your Church, instructed by their teaching and example, and knit together in unity by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 241)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Peter and Paul's story:

Option 1: Fishers of men

Play "Fishers of Men" (a game like tag). Start out with one person as the fisherman, and everyone else as the fish. Place a hula hoop or blanket in the middle of the play area to be the "net." Whenever a fish is tagged they must go and stand in the net (hula hoop). The game is over whenever everyone has been caught.

Then, play the game again. This time, you begin with one person as the fisherman, and the rest as fish. But as soon as a fish is caught (tagged), s/he becomes a fisherman as well. The game ends when everyone is a fisherman.

After you've finished, ask the students: Which version of the game finished faster? Why?

- ✿ Jesus is like a fisherman. But when he "catches" us, we don't just go sit in a net (like the first version of the game), we become fishermen, just like Peter did (the second version of the game). How can we be like Peter, and "fish" for people?

Option 2: Letters of encouragement

After his conversion, Paul spent most of his life visiting Christians and writing letters of encouragement to them. In fact, the New Testament includes many of the letters that Paul wrote, and we often hear them in church on Sunday! Encouraging others is an important part of being a Christian.

Have each student write a letter of encouragement to someone.

- If your church has a partnership relationship with a church in another part of the world, write letters to people in your sister parish.
- Or you could ask the students to think of someone that they know is having a hard time, a friend or family member.
- Or you could get a list of sick or shut-in members of your parish, and have the children write letters to them.

In addition to drawing pictures, help younger students write at least one sentence. You might give them some ideas of things to include, such as:

- I am glad you are a part of my church family.
- I will keep you in my prayers; please pray for me too.
- Thank you for the time that you _____ or the way that you _____.

You can either mail the letters for the students or have the students take the letters home to deliver themselves.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Both Peter and Paul turned away from their old lives and went on to new lives, following and helping Jesus. What might their decisions mean for you? How can you follow Jesus?
- ✿ Both Peter and Paul used skills they already had to serve Jesus. Peter caught people for Jesus, much like he used to catch fish. Paul used the fire in his soul to turn people toward Jesus, instead of away from them. What skills and gifts do you have that you might use as you follow Jesus?

Luke the Evangelist



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * A piece of paper with a pre-drawn shape for each child (Different Strokes activity)
- * Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (Different strokes activity)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Almighty God, who inspired your servant **Luke** the physician to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of your Son: Graciously continue in your Church this love and power to heal, to the praise and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 244-5)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.
- * After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:
 - * What was your favorite part of today's story?
 - * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
 - * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
 - * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
 - * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Luke's story:

Option 1: Different strokes for different folks

Luke was one of four people who wrote gospels (the others are Matthew, Mark, and John). Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all tell the story of Jesus, but they do so in different ways. Mark tells the story quickly, Matthew adds more details, Luke adds songs, and John uses poetry. But they are all trying to tell the story of Jesus in their own ways, so that people for hundreds of years to come will recognize Jesus in their words. Some people find the differences between the gospels difficult and confusing, but they can also be beautiful and inspiring.

- Give each student a piece of paper with a shape drawn in the middle of it. It might be a small triangle, a many sided figure, a squiggly line or a zig-zag. Whatever the shape is, everyone should have the very same one.
- Then, ask each student to use the shape to draw a picture about Jesus. They can draw any picture of Jesus they want- baby or adult, a scene from Jesus life, etc. But it must use the shape as part of the picture.
- Tell the students they are to keep their eyes on their own paper, and not look at anyone else's page.

After giving the students ample time to draw, come back together and discuss the following questions:

- What do you notice about the pictures?
- What is the same about all the pictures?
- What are the differences between the pictures?

These pictures are like the different gospels. They share things in common, and they are all about Jesus. But each author (or artist) draws it a little bit differently!

Option 2: Everyday evangelism

Luke was an evangelist, which means he was someone who told others the stories of Jesus. At our baptism, we promise to be evangelists too! We say that we will "proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ." Luke wrote down the stories of Jesus, but it is our job to tell and show others about the love of Jesus.

Have the class do some role playing (you can either break into groups to do this, or do it all together). For each scenario, ask children to act out how they would tell people about the love of Jesus or how they would show people the love of Jesus. You can use the scenarios provided below, or invent your own.

- A new child at school is sitting all alone at a lunch table. Your friends are all sitting together at another table.
- A group of older children are making fun of/bullying a child on the playground.
- A friend is sad because her pet cat just died.
- A friend tells you about her soccer game on Sunday morning, and asks what you did on your Sunday morning.
- A friend says to you, "My mom and dad seem to be upset with me all the time. I don't know if anyone loves me at all."

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Luke was an evangelist, someone who told other people the good news of God. What are some ways that you can share the good news of God with others?
- ✿ Luke was a great storyteller. What are your favorite stories to tell? How did you learn to tell those stories? What is your favorite part of Jesus' story?

Perpetua and Her Companions



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * A large roll of butcher block paper
- * Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- * Scissors
- * Yarn, stickers, stamps, pom-poms, and other decorative art supplies, if desired

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

O God the King of saints, you strengthened your servants **Perpetua** and Felicitas and their companions to make a good confession, staunchly resisting, for the cause of Christ, the claims of human affection, and encouraging one another in their time of trial: Grant that we who cherish their blessed memory may share their pure and steadfast victory, and win with them the palm of victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 189)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class. You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Perpetua's story:

Option 1: Who am I?

Using a roll of butcher paper, have each child lie down and trace the student's outline on the paper. If needed to save time, you could draw an outline for each child before the class begins, and have them ready to go, but "tracing" each child is more fun. For younger classes, the teachers will need to trace all the children; older students might be able to trace one another, in pairs.

Draw (or instruct them children to draw) a large heart shape in the middle of each child's outline. The heart shape should be large and prominent, taking up most of the middle of the child (as though they are wearing a giant heart t-shirt).

Invite the children to decorate their outline to represent themselves. They can color their hair, eyes, etc. They can draw on their clothing things that they like (favorite animals, characters, etc.) or include pictures of things that they do (ballet, soccer). They can draw anywhere on their paper except inside the heart shape.

Invite older children to also write as many words as they can that describe who they are. These can be things that they do (soccer player, ballerina, etc.), descriptions of who they are (sister, friend, child, etc.), or character traits (funny, kind, etc.)

While they are decorating, go around and write in all caps, in the middle of each heart shape the word "CHRISTIAN."

When they are finished, lead the children in the following discussion:

- What are some of the ways that you identified yourself in your picture? What are some of the words that describe you?
- Today we heard a story about Perpetua. What do we know about her? What are some ways that you would describe her?
- Perpetua was lots of things—we know she was from Africa, and she was wealthy. She was a daughter, mother, and friend. She was kind and loyal and stubborn. But the most important thing about Perpetua, the thing that defined her, was that she was a Christian. It was the thing that was written in her very middle, in her heart. It was the biggest, most important thing that could be said about her.
- ✿ We are lots of things too. Some of us have yellow hair or black hair, green eyes or brown eyes. Some of us are sisters, some are sons, some are soccer players,

some are readers. But the most important thing about each of us, the thing that is written in our very middles, in our hearts, is the same as Perpetua—we are Christians. That means that we were created by God, we are loved, by God, we belong to God. No matter where we come from or where we go. No matter what anyone else says about us, or any of the other ways that we can describe ourselves. The most important thing about us is that we are Christians. We are Jesus' friends and followers.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Church congregations can often serve as big families. Are there any people in your church family that feel like extra parents or grandparents?
- ✿ Have you, like Perpetua, ever had a dream that helped you stay brave? Describe it or draw it.
- ✿ It is hard to lose a parent like Perpetua's son did, when his mother was killed. Although it doesn't happen very often, sometimes parents die or move away from their children. Do you know someone who has lost a parent to death or divorce? Or have you? How can God help us when that happens?

John Chrysostom



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Paper and pencils for each student

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

○ God, you gave your servant **John Chrysostom** grace eloquently to proclaim your righteousness in the great congregation, and fearlessly to bear reproach for the honor of your Name: Mercifully grant to all bishops and pastors such excellence in preaching, and faithfulness in ministering your Word, that your people may be partakers with them of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 151)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with John of Damascus's story:

Option 1: Field trip

Go on a "field trip" to the sanctuary of your church.

Remind the students that John Chrysostom's preaching was so good because he spoke to people in words that they could understand about the love of Jesus.

- ✱ Ask the students to sit in the pews and spend a minute or two reflecting on what they would say to the people in church about Jesus, if they were preaching the sermon.
- ✱ Older students can use a paper and pencil to jot a few notes. You might give younger students a sentence to finish, such as "The love of Jesus is like..."
- ✱ Then give each student the chance to stand in the pulpit and share his or her thoughts.
- ✱ Be sure to encourage the listeners to be kind and courteous.
- ✱ After every student has had the opportunity to stand in the pulpit and share some thoughts, reflect together on the following questions:
 - What does the church look like from the pulpit?
 - What did you notice?
 - What did it feel like to stand there like John Chrysostom did?

Option 2: Preaching

Invite your priest to come talk with the students about preaching.

- ✱ Tell the students to think of themselves as reporters, and help them come up with a list of questions to ask the preacher about how he or she writes a sermon, what it feels like to preach, what they think is the most important thing to say about Jesus, what is the best/worst thing about preaching, most embarrassing preaching moment, etc.
- ✱ Then allow the students to interview the preacher, taking turns asking questions. Help write their observations down on a flipchart or chalkboard.
- ✱ Allow time for the preacher to ask the students questions as well!
- ✱ If time allows, consider sharing some examples of John's preaching with the students:
 - "If the Lord should give you power to raise the dead, He would give much less than He does when he bestows suffering. By miracles you would make yourself debtor to Him, while by suffering He may become debtor to you. And even if sufferings had

no other reward than being able to bear something for that God who loves you, is not this a great reward and a sufficient remuneration? Whoever loves, understands what I say."

- "When you are before the altar where Christ reposes, you ought no longer to think that you are amongst men; but believe that there are troops of angels and archangels standing by you, and trembling with respect before the sovereign Master of Heaven and earth. Therefore, when you are in church, be there in silence, fear, and veneration."

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✱ What was your favorite part about the sermon this week (or last week)? What do you think makes a sermon good? What are some things that you could do to help you listen to the sermon carefully?
- ✱ Below is a prayer written by John Chrysostom. Read it aloud, or listen to someone else read it. What does it say? What might it say about the man who wrote it?

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

Patrick & Brigid



Preparation

- ❖ Be sure to read through the saints' stories well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saints from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saints.
- ❖ Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- ❖ If you plan to read one of the children's books suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- ❖ Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- ❖ Storybook or handouts for each student
- ❖ Copies of suggested children's books (optional)
- ❖ Paper, paint, crayons, markers, or colored pencils (for Shamrock activity)
- ❖ Pipe cleaners, strips of paper, ribbon, or raffia (for Brigid's cross activity)

Opening/Closing Collects

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saints.)

Almighty God, in your providence you chose your servant **Patrick** to be the apostle of the Irish people, to bring those who were wandering in darkness and error to the true light and knowledge of you: Grant us so to walk in that light that we may come at last to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 197)

Everliving God, we rejoice today in the fellowship of your blessed servant **Brigid**, and we give you thanks for her life of devoted service. Inspire us with life and light, and give us perseverance to serve you all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 197)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- ❖ Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- ❖ Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.
- ❖ Use one or more of the following children's books to share the stories of Patrick and Brigid:
 - *Patrick: Patron Saint of Ireland* by Tomie dePaola
 - *Brigid's Cloak* by Bryce Milligan
 - *The Life of Saint Brigid: Abbess of Kildare* by Jane Meyer

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- ❖ What was your favorite part of today's story?
- ❖ What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- ❖ Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- ❖ Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- ❖ Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Patrick and Brigid's stories:

Option 1: Brigid's cross

The observance of Saint Brigid's feast day (February 1) is widely celebrated in Ireland. People bake special oat cakes and set them on the windowsill in order to emulate Brigid's famous generosity. They lay out strips of cloth to symbolize her cloak. And they make replicas of Brigid's cross from straw.

- ✿ The legend of Brigid's cross says that, while praying at the deathbed of her father, Brigid was braiding straws and weaving them together into the shape of a cross. Seeing what she was doing, her father began asking her questions about the cross she was making—and about Christianity. He was so convinced by what she told him that he converted to Christianity and was baptized before he died. Brigid's cross became a tool for her to share her prayers and tell the story of her faith.
- ✿ Make your own Brigid's cross out of pipe cleaners, strips of paper, ribbon, or raffia.
 - This video offers helpful instructions on how to make Saint Brigid's cross: <http://www.icatholic.ie/how-to-make-st-brigid-cross/> Written-out instructions are here: <http://www.fisheaters.com/stbrigidscross.html>
- ✿ Take your cross with you when you leave church, and give it away to someone. Let them know that you have been—and will continue—praying for them, and you thought of them when you wove the cross. If they have questions, be ready to answer them!

Option 2: Shamrock story

Patrick and Brigid are remembered for sharing the message of Jesus in simple ways that people could easily remember. In fact, they both were known for using everyday objects to teach lessons about God. Brigid used the flame at her monastery to remind people of the light of Christ, always shining in the world. Many people believe that Patrick helped people learn about the Trinity by using a three-leaved shamrock, a plant that grows all over Ireland!

Have the students make their own shamrocks.

- One fun way is to use handprints. Have the students paint their hands green and make three handprints (touching in the center, at the base of the palm) into a shamrock shape. Use a finger to make the stem.
- Another easy shamrock can be made by cutting three hearts out of construction paper, then taping or gluing them in the center and adding a stem.

As the children are making their shamrocks, talk to them about how the shamrock can remind them of the Trinity. The shamrock has three leaves, as the Trinity has three persons: God the Father; God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each person of God is an integral part of the wholeness of God (would a shamrock still look like a shamrock if it only had two leaves?) Remind them that this doesn't mean God is exactly like a shamrock but just that a shamrock can help us remember that God is a Trinity—three in one and one in three.

Then, you can teach them this poem about a shamrock. They can write it on their shamrock, or simply say it.

Just like the leaves on each shamrock I see, there are three parts to the Holy Trinity. There is God the Father, and Jesus, God's Son, and the Holy Spirit, all three in one!

If time allows, read or sing St. Patrick's Breastplate, Patrick's famous hymn about the Trinity (*The Hymnal 1982, #370*).

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Patrick and Brigid were both teachers, who helped other people learn about God. Who are some people that have helped you learn about God? What are some of the things they have taught you?
- ✿ Patrick and Brigid both used everyday things like plants or light to help teach people about God. What are some everyday things that can help you to remember God and God's love?
- ✿ Patrick and Brigid are very important to the people of Ireland. Do you know where your family is from? Are there certain saints who are important to your heritage?

Augustine of Hippo



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, paint, and other art supplies

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Lord God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you: Help us, following the example of your servant **Augustine of Hippo**, so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may fully serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 361)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.
You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook/handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Some possible reflection questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year? Which one and why?
- * How do you think Augustine felt when he heard God speaking to him in a child's voice and saying, "Take up and read"? When have you felt like that?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Augustine's story:

Option 1: Exploring baptism

Being baptized was a very important part of Augustine's story. Take the children into the church and let them explore the baptismal font. You can invite your priest to come and talk to them about baptism, or you can lead a discussion yourself. Some possible activities include:

- ✱ With younger children, allow them to pour water into the font, to put water on their own foreheads, and to use the water to make the sign of the cross.
- ✱ Ask an altar guild member to set out the items that are used in baptism at your church.
- Some parishes use a baptismal shell to pour the water. The shell, with its connection to water, has been a symbol for baptism since the first centuries of the Christian church and can be found decorating the walls of places of ancient Christian worship. Allow the children to hold the shell or use it to scoop water.
- At a baptism, the Paschal candle is placed near the font, and some churches give people who are baptized baptismal candles. The light of the Paschal candle symbolizes the light of Christ shining in the darkness. The baptismal candles remind each baptized person of the presence of Christ's light with them and the way that they are called to let their light shine in the world. Invite the children to look closely at the Paschal candle. Ask them what symbols they see on it, what it is like, what it makes them think of. If your parish uses baptismal candles, let them touch and look at one. Explore questions such as: "What do candles help us do? What can candles remind us of? What do these candles make you think about?"
- All parishes use oils for "chrismation", marking the sign of the cross on the forehead of the newly baptized with oil blessed by the bishop, and saying the words, "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever." Allow the children to look at and smell the oil.

- ✱ Sit together near the font and invite the children to help you tell stories about what baptism is like. Ask them to remember the last baptism that they attended, in your church or another church. Invite them to close their eyes and think really hard about what it was like. Then ask them to help you finish the following sentences:

- "When I went to a baptism, I saw..."
- "When I went to a baptism, I heard..."
- "When I went to a baptism, I felt..."
- "When I went to a baptism, I said..."

Option 2: Grading Augustine

Design a report card from God for Augustine: Before he was baptized and after he was baptized. Consider categories, including standard ones such as:

- Respects others
- Intellectual capability
- Works well with others
- Behavior
- Learning skills
- Relationship with teachers/parents (especially mother)
- Effort

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✱ Consider your baptism. Have you been baptized? Do you remember it? Who are your godparents? Where were you baptized? In the service of Holy Baptism, we pray that those we are baptizing might have "an inquiring and discerning heart." How is that true of Augustine?
- ✱ Have you ever been told that you ask too many questions? How did it feel to hear that? What are some of the questions that you have about God?
- ✱ God wants to know everything that is on our minds. How do you best share what's on your mind with God?

John of Damascus



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Make sufficient copies of the handout so that each student will have one to take home.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Paper and pencils for each student (Symbols in our Church engagement option)
- * Copies of icons, boards, paint, paintbrushes, Mod Podge (Icons engagement option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Confirm our minds, O Lord, in the mysteries of the true faith, set forth with power by your servant **John of Damascus**; that we, with him, confessing Jesus to be true God and true Man, and singing the praises of the risen Lord, may, by the power of the resurrection, attain to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

(Lesser Feasts and Fasts, p. 93)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook/handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with John of Damascus's story:

Option 1: Symbols in our church

John of Damascus was one of the saints who helped us to know that it is okay to use images to decorate our churches, and that pictures of Jesus, the saints, and other religious symbols can help us to grow closer to God.

Take the students on an "image scavenger hunt."

- Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil. (If you have older students, you may have them take pictures with a cell phone).
- Tell them they have ten minutes to look all over the church for images and symbols. When they see an image or symbol, they should draw a picture or write a description of it on their paper.
- Encourage them to explore and look closely: Are there pictures in the windows? Decorations on the walls? Anything carved on the end of pews, on the pulpit, etc.? Remind them that some images might be big (paintings or stained glass) and some might be very small (carvings or decorations).

After they have had a chance to explore, gather together and share what you have found. Get a piece of newsprint and make a list of all the images that they found. Then discuss the following questions:

- Have you noticed these symbols or images before? Which ones are new to you?
- What does each symbol remind you of?
- Which symbol or image is your favorite? What do you like about it?
- What can these symbols and images teach us about God? Is there another symbol or image about God that you like that isn't in our church? What is it?
- If you could add one picture or symbol to our church, what would it be? How does that picture draw you close to God?

Option 2: Icons

John was a defender of icons, special pictures of Jesus, Mary, or other disciples that are used for prayer and to help people draw closer to God.

- ✿ Show your students some icons. See if your church or your clergy have any icons that you can borrow. If not, you can display images of icons via PowerPoint or print out some icons to pass around. The Museum of Russian Icons has a collection of high-quality images available here: <http://museumofrussianicons.org/en/education/family-school-programs/for-teachers-k-12/>

- ✿ Talk about the icons with the children. Ask them questions such as:
 - What do you notice about this icon?
 - What story does this icon tell?
 - What does this icon say about God?
 - How does looking at this icon make you feel?
- ✿ Explain to the children that Christians for a long time and all over the world have used icons to help them pray. The icons help a person focus their mind and heart on God.

Have the children make their own icons to take home. Provide a variety of different pictures of icons. You can:

- Print a number of different images from The Museum of Russian icons website. You can also use Google images to find icons or order an icon note card set from Forward Movement.
- Encourage the children to select an icon that is meaningful to them. Ask the children to pick one that helps them feel close to God.
- Provide a board for each student. Local craft stores or online stores carry many sizes of boards, often described as fiberboard, hardboard, or canvas panel. Alternatively, you could use thick poster board.
- Have each student paint the board gold, either with spray paint or regular paint. You can do this in advance, or allow the students to help you. Then use Mod Podge to affix the icon to the board.
- Invite the students to take their icons home and use them in prayer. Then, ask the students: How does it feel to hear these words?

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Two of John's famous hymns that we sing in church every Easter season are: "Come, ye faithful, raise the strain," (*The Hymnal 1982*, #199, #200) and "The day of resurrection! Earth tell it out abroad!" (#210). Do you recognize those hymns? Perhaps a musically inclined person could play or sing the hymns for you. Remember that they are about 1,300 years old and written by a person who loved Jesus a great deal.
- ✿ Consider in your mind a simple picture of your parents or grandparents. You know that the picture is not them, yet it helps you think of them; it helps you see them. How is that like looking at an icon?

Hildegard of Bingen



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * If you plan to read one of the children's book suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Copy of children's book (optional)
- * Copy of Bible verse to illustrate or blank paper
- * Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

God of all times and seasons: Give us grace that we, after the example of your servant **Hildegard**, may both know and make known the joy and jubilation of being part of your creation, and show forth your glory not only with our lips but in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 383)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.
- * Or, you could choose to read a children's book about Hildegard:
 - *Hildegard's Gift* by Megan Hoyt
 - *The Secret World of Hildegard* by Jonah Winter

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Hildegard's story:

Illuminated manuscripts

In Hildegard's time, there were no computers and printers; monks and nuns were responsible for copying the words of the Bible and other books by hand. When they copied holy books like the Bible, they often decorated the words and the pages with fancy designs. These decorated books were called illuminated manuscripts. In fact, Hildegard's own book of visions, called *Scivias*, is a famous illuminated manuscript.

Show some examples of illuminated manuscripts. You could either print them out and display them, or use a projector. Some possibilities are included below:

- ✿ These are illuminations from Hildegard's *Scivias*:
 - http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/ae/07angels-hildegard_von_bingen.jpg
 - http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/ba/Hildegard_von_Bingen.jpg
- ✿ And here are examples from some other works:
 - <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/69/CodexAureusCanterburyFolios9v10r.jpg>
 - <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/Illuminated.bible.closeup.arp.jpg>
 - http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/Haggadah_14th_cent.jpg
 - <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8e/KellsFol292rincipJohn.jpg>

Allow the students a chance to illustrate their own manuscript.

- ✿ For younger students, provide copies of different illustrated bible verses for them to color and decorate. Some possibilities include:
 - <http://flamecreativechildren.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Colour%20in%20prayers>
 - http://www.karladornacher.com/Docs/CB_OhSingColoringPage.jpg
 - <http://www.doodle-art-alley.com/bible-verse-coloring-pages.html>

- ✿ For older students, you can either provide copies of the bible verses above (big children and even grownups can enjoy coloring) or you can invite them to illustrate their own Bible verse from scratch. Some possible verses include:

- Philippians 4:13
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Ephesians 4:32
- Deuteronomy 6:5
- John 13:34
- John 14:6

- ✿ Whichever option you choose, encourage students to be creative, to use colors, patterns, and shapes to decorate all over the page (even inside letters) and to bring the scripture to life!

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ What do you think was the main message of Hildegard's visions?
- ✿ Sometimes it's hard to see things differently than other people do. What can Hildegard teach us about the value of the arts in our life of faith?
- ✿ Hildegard used her talents and gifts to tell other people about God. What do you think you're particularly good at, and how can you use your skills and gifts to tell people about God and Jesus?

Clare



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saints' stories well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saints from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saints.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * If you plan to read one of the children's books suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Only Clare's story is included in the children's storybook. If you would like to discuss Francis, use the materials in this guide or from another resource, such as the adult curriculum or suggested children's books.
- * For Engagement Option 1, you will need all the ingredients for the bread as well as bowls, mixing spoons, measuring cups, measuring spoons, and baking pans
- * For Engagement Options 2 and 3, you will need paper, pencils or pens, crayons or markers, and other art supplies, as desired

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saints.)

○ God, whose blessed Son became poor that we through his poverty might be rich: Deliver us from an inordinate love of this world, that we, inspired by the devotion of your servant **Clare**, may serve you with singleness of heart, and attain to the riches of the age to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 341)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook/handout themselves, silently.
- * Or, you could choose to read a children's book. Here are some possibilities:
 - *Clare and Francis* by Guido Visconti
 - *Saint Francis of Assisi* by Joyce Denham
 - *Francis, the Poor Man of Assisi* by Tomie de Paola
 - *Saint Francis of Assisi* by Demi

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story? What did you imagine in your mind as you heard the story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * How do you think Clare felt when she heard the army approaching? When have you felt like that?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with the story:

Option 1: Communion bread

Clare held up communion bread to the army and the presence of Jesus in that bread caused them to turn back and not attack. The bread that we use each Sunday in eucharist is both simple and extraordinary. Ask the priest if the children in your class can bake the communion bread to be used in worship. If your church already bakes its own bread, ask one of the bread-bakers to come teach them children and help them make the bread. If not, the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, an Episcopal monastic community, shares their bread recipe and bread-baking tips: <http://www.sjje.org/symbols.html#2>

Option 2: Creation prayers

Francis was famous for loving all of God's creation, not just people but also animals and even the sun and moon. In fact, Francis wrote a famous prayer of praise to God called *The Canticle of the Sun*. Read the canticle:

*Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!
All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing,
To You, alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name.
Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and You give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.
Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;
in the heavens You have made them bright,
precious and beautiful.
Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
and clouds and storms, and all the weather,
through which You give Your creatures sustenance.
Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.
Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You brighten the night.
He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.
Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth,
who feeds us and rules us,
and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive
for love of You;
through those who endure sickness and trial.
Happy those who endure in peace,
for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.
Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Bodily Death,
from whose embrace no living person can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those she finds doing Your most holy will.
The second death can do no harm to them.
Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks,
and serve Him with great humility.*

Ask the students to think about some things in creation (animals, plants, water, earth, light, etc.) that they are thankful for. Have each student write a prayer of thanks to God for creation. Ask them to illustrate their prayer.

Option 3: Serving others

Clare spent her life helping the poor because Jesus wants us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bring good news to those who are sad, sick, or in prison.

- Think of someone that you know who is sad or sick. Write or draw one thing that you could do to help them.
- There are people here in our city and people around the world who don't have enough to eat or water to drink or clothes to wear. Write or draw something that you could do to help them.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Clare's given name was *Chiara*, the Italian word for bright light. She was indeed a bright light for many. What is the story behind your name? How might you be a bright light for others?
- ✿ Clare's father had planned a traditional life for her of marriage and children, but God had other things in mind for her, and she listened to God. What might God be calling you to do with your life?
- ✿ Clare held up the Body of Christ to frighten the enemy, yet it was bread blessed by a priest that she was holding in her hands. Have you seen a priest bless bread and wine on Sunday morning? How is Jesus with us in that moment, and in that bread?

Martin Luther



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * If you plan to read one of the children's books suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * A copy of the children's book (optional)
- * Copies of the Code handout (Cracking the Code engagement option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

○ God, our refuge and our strength: You raised up your servant **Martin Luther** to reform and renew your Church in the light of your word. Defend and purify the Church in our own day and grant that, through faith, we may boldly proclaim the riches of your grace which you have made known in Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 173)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.
- * Or, you could choose to read a children's book about Martin Luther:
 - *Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World* by Paul Maier
 - *Martin Luther: What Should I do?* by Catherine MacKenzie

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Martin Luther's story:

Option 1: Cracking the code

When Martin Luther was alive, ordinary people couldn't read the Bible. The Bible in his day was in Latin, a language that most people didn't know. Martin Luther thought that everyone should be able to read the Bible for themselves, so he translated the Bible into the language that ordinary people could read. It was a difficult and complicated task, kind of like cracking a code.

Pass out the coded message worksheets (in the Resource section) to everyone in the class. Have the students work in groups to "crack the code" and reveal what the message says. When a group thinks they have decoded the message, they can check their answer with the teacher. Make sure that every group gets a chance to finish decoding before sharing the answer! (For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8)

After all the groups have cracked the code, say:

This was just one short verse in the Bible. Can you imagine what it would have been like for Martin Luther to translate the entire Bible?

Option 2: What do you believe?

Martin Luther thought it was important that each person be able to clearly understand and communicate his or her beliefs. His 95 theses were a careful statement of the things that he believed about God.

Give the students five minutes to think about the most important things that they believe about God. Have each student write down five things they believe and then pin or tape them up to the wall of your classroom.

Allow the students to take turns reading their "theses" aloud to the class. As each one finishes, invite them to join Martin Luther and say: "Here I stand, for I can do no other."

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Martin Luther dedicated much of his life to making sure that ordinary people could read the Bible. Do you read the Bible? When and how? What is your favorite Bible story? Why do you like it?
- ✿ Martin Luther thought it was important to use both our hearts and our minds to help us know the right thing to do. How can you listen to your heart when making tough decisions? How can you use your mind?
- ✿ Have you ever been as scared as Martin was? Did any good come out of it? If so, what?

Thomas Cranmer



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's stories well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*
- * Paper and pencils, flip chart and marker for writing

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Keep us, O Lord, constant in faith and zealous in witness, that, like your servants Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, and **Thomas Cranmer**, we may live in your fear, die in your favor, and rest in your peace; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 421)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class. You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Thomas Cranmer's story:

Option 1: Explore *The Book of Common Prayer*

Go on a field trip to your church's sanctuary to find *The Book of Common Prayer*, or bring copies into your classroom. Although this book has had some loving editions over the years, this is the book that Thomas Cranmer weaved together. If it weren't for his good work, we would not have this book, and every church in the Anglican Communion has one, in just the right language for that land—the language of the common people.

- ✿ Have your teacher or priest take you on a tour through the *Prayer Book*, showing the different parts.
 - Where are the psalms?
 - Where is the Holy Eucharist?
 - Where is Morning Prayer?
- ✿ End your journey through the *Prayer Book* with the service of Compline on page 117. By doing so, you will be joining Thomas and millions of other people, including nuns and monks from the Middle Ages, who have said this service before they went to bed.

Option 2: Collect prayers

Thomas Cranmer gave us some of our most beautiful prayers, prayers that are prayed by Christians around the world. Many of the prayers in *The Book of Common Prayer* are "collects." Collects are a special form of prayer that use a certain form.

- ✿ Read (or have the children read aloud) a few examples of collects. Possibilities include:
 - The Collect for Purity (p. 355)
 - A Collect for Mission (p. 101)
 - Collect for Young Persons (p. 829)
 - Collect for a Birthday (p. 830)
 - The Collect for Thomas Cranmer (in this lesson)
- ✿ Ask
 - What do you notice about these prayers?
 - Do they sound similar? How so?
 - Have you heard any of these prayers before? When?
- ✿ Tell the students that a collect is a prayer that follows a certain pattern. Most collects:
 - Begin with a name of God (eg: Almighty God, Lord Jesus Christ, Loving God, etc.)

- Describe a specific thing about God (who knows all our needs, who stretched out his arms of love, etc.)
- Ask for God to act (cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, help us to love, etc.)
- Say what they hope will happen (so that we may perfectly love you, so that we may serve others, etc.)
- End with a reference to Jesus or the Trinity (through Jesus Christ or "to whom with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever.)
- Amen.

- ✿ Invite students to write their own collect. Write the following outline on the board or on a flip chart.

_____ (name for God) who
_____ (write something God does or is), please
_____ (write something you hope God will do for you or us) so that
_____ (write what you hope will happen as a result through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

You can either have students work individually, work in groups, or you can guide the entire class in writing a number of collects together (prompting or suggesting things to fill in the blanks at first).

Allow time at the end for everyone to copy down the collects you write (or collect them and make copies to distribute the next week). Invite the students to continue praying their collects at home, and consider opening or closing class using some of their own collects.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ What stands out for you about Thomas Cranmer? What questions might you have about him? Or, if you were talking with him, what would you ask him?
- ✿ Why is it important for people to pray in the language they know best? What languages do people in your family speak? Are they different or the same as the ones you and your friends use?
- ✿ Do you have a favorite prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer*? What is it and why do you love it?

George Herbert



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's stories well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Paper, pencils, markers, crayons for each student

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Our God and King, you called your servant **George Herbert** from the pursuit of worldly honors to be a pastor of souls, a poet, and a priest in your temple: Give us grace, we pray, joyfully to perform the tasks you give us to do, knowing that nothing is menial or common that is done for your sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 179)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class. You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with George Herbert's story:

Option 1: List poem

George Herbert was a poet; he used words in creative ways to describe and shape his experience with God. Invite the students to create their own poem. An easy way to do this with even the youngest students is to write a list poem. For older students, you might choose to write the poems individually. For younger students, you might work together as a class to write a single poem, with everyone contributing to the work.

Give students a subject for their poem. Possible subjects include:

- God's love
- Jesus
- Church
- Forgiveness

Have the students write down a list of everything that comes to mind when they hear that word or phrase, with one thought or idea per line. If they get stuck, jog them along with questions such as:

- What does it look like? (feel like, smell like, etc.)
- What do you like about it?
- What does it remind you of?

When the students run out of thoughts, their poem is finished! You can invite them to decorate or illustrate their poem in the margins if time allows.

Look here to see examples of list poems: <http://lets-explore.net/blog/2009/10/list-poems/>

Option 2: Shape poems

George Herbert wrote many kinds of poems, but some of his most memorable are his shape poems. They are poems where the words that he used were written or typed in a shape that reflects the meaning of the poem. For example, he wrote a poem entitled "Easter Wings", where the words are shaped like a pair of wings. You can show students an image of the poem here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concrete_poetry#/media/File:GeorgeHerbertEasterWingsPatternPoem1633.jpg

For older students:

- Invite the students to draw the outline of a simple shape so that it nearly fills a piece of paper.

- Suggest possible shapes such as a cross, a heart, wings, a hand, etc.
- Tell them that they are going to write their own shape poem.
- Instruct them to fill the shape with a poem about the shape, using words, phrases, or sentences.

For younger students (too young to write):

- Draw the shape on a board or flip chart.
- Invite the students to work together to help you build a shape poem, sharing words, phrases, or sentences that you write to fill the shape.
- Or, you could read some of George Herbert's poetry, and invite the students to draw the shape that comes to mind when they hear the poem.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Do you like to write? Or paint? Or draw? Or play music? How can those gifts be a sign of God working in you?
- ✿ Is there a hymn, song, or poem that makes you feel close to God (it doesn't have to be "religious")? What is it and how does it draw you near to God?
- ✿ There were a lot of different things that George Herbert could have done, but he felt God "tugging at his heart" and that guided his path. Have you ever felt God tugging at your heart? What was that like?

J.S. Bach



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * If you plan to read the children's book suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Children's book (optional)
- * Paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, paint, and other art supplies (Musical art option)
- * A CD player, computer, speakers, or other way to play a piece of Bach's music (Musical art option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Almighty God, beautiful in majesty and majestic in holiness, who teaches us in Holy Scripture to sing your praises and who gave your musicians **Johann Sebastian Bach**, George Frederick Handel and Henry Purcell grace to show forth your glory in their music: Be with all those who write or make music for your people, that we on earth may glimpse your beauty and know the inexhaustible riches of your new creation in Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Holy Women, Holy Men* p. 49 |)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.
- * Or, you could choose to read a children's book about Bach:
 - *Sebastian: A Book about Bach* by Jeanette Winter

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Bach's story:

Option 1: Church music

Invite your church musician and/or choir director to come visit your class. Allow the students to interview that person about church music. Some questions they might ask include:

- How are the hymns chosen each Sunday?
- What Bach pieces are used in our church?
- How can music help people feel closer to God?
- Why does the choir sing some music, while the congregation sings others?
- What instruments do we use in our church?
- What is your favorite song we sing in church and why is it your favorite?

If time allows, and your church musician is willing, take the students on a tour of the music space in your church. Ask the church musician to show them the instruments (organ, piano, bells, chimes, etc.) and how they are played. If possible, ask the musician to play them a selection from Bach's work!

Option 2: Musical art

Bach used both the words and the notes in his music to help people understand the story of God and grow closer to Jesus. The way that the music was written and the way the instruments were played (loud or soft, high notes or low notes, fast or slow) made people imagine different things and feel different feelings. We are going to listen to a piece of Bach's music. Draw or paint what you hear in the music. Does the music make you feel sad or happy? Does it make you think of a certain place or person? What do you imagine when you listen to it? Don't worry: there are no right or wrong answers!

Make a variety of art supplies available around the room, and give each child a large piece of paper. Encourage them to spread out, either at tables or even on the floor and around the room. Play a recorded piece of Bach's music and invite the children to listen and draw or paint what they hear in the music. Possible suggestions for music to play include:

- ✿ BWV 232: Mass in B Minor, IV and V: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=AEClskif0mU>
- ✿ 4th movement from Cantata 140: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVStMZcNOAA&app=desktop>

As the engagement time is ending, invite the students to show the class what they made and talk about why they created what they did.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ When you engage in your favorite activity, how do you ask God to be a part of it? How might you dedicate your activities to God, like J.S. Bach did?
- ✿ Bach wrote his music "S.D.G.", for God's glory alone. How might we offer the music we sing or play in church only to God's glory?
- ✿ Twenty hymns in *The Episcopal Church Hymnal 1982* were composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. One of the most famous is "A Mighty Fortress is our God" (Hymns #687, 888). The words were written by Martin Luther, the Lutheran theologian that was Bach's greatest influence. Grab a hymnal and read along. Or sing along, if possible. What do you think is the most important theme? How do the words complement the music?

Charles Wesley



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Lord God, you inspired your servants John and **Charles Wesley** with burning zeal for the sanctification of souls, and endowed them with eloquence in speech and song: Kindle in your Church, we entreat you, such fervor, that those whose faith has cooled may be warmed, and those who have not known Christ may turn to him and be saved; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 187)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Charles Wesley's story:

Spread the word

Charles Wesley was an evangelist, which means he was someone who told others about the love of Jesus. In fact, Charles Wesley traveled all over the country preaching and teaching so that as many people as possible would hear the message of the Bible. At our baptism, we promise to be evangelists too! We say that we will "proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ."

Play a game of "telephone."

- ✿ For smaller groups, the whole class can work as one team. For larger groups, divide the class into teams of eight to ten children. Have each team sit in a straight line.
- ✿ You whisper a message to the first person in the line. That person then has to whisper the message to the next person, who then whispers it to the next person, all the way down the line. The last person in line says the message out loud. For younger children, use shorter or simpler messages. For older children, give them a challenge! Some possible messages:
 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)
 - I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. (Psalm 139:14)
 - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5)
 - Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:27)
 - Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7)
 - By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- ✿ After you finish, ask the group:
 - Did we get the message right at the end? If not, what changed?
 - Why do you think the message changed?
 - What are some ways that we can be sure to get the message to the end clearly?

Then, play a game of movement telephone. This is like regular telephone, except the message is a series of actions, rather than words.

- ✿ For smaller groups, the whole class can work as one team. For larger groups, divide the class into teams. Have each team sit in a straight line. Have all the members of the team close their eyes. They cannot open their eyes until the person next to them taps them on the shoulder to show them the movement.
- ✿ Show the first person the movement.
 - For younger groups the movement might be simple—one or two steps. For older groups, add multiple motions in a row. Possible motions include: crossing and uncrossing arms; making a funny face; touching eyes, ears, nose, elbow, etc.; standing up and sitting down; jumping or turning around; sticking out your tongue; and many more!
 - The first person then taps the shoulder of the next person. That person opens his or her eyes and watches the movement. Then that person taps the shoulder of the next person and shows the movement.
 - When you get to the end, have everyone open their eyes and watch the last person do the movement.
- ✿ Then ask the group the same questions. Also ask:
 - Was it easier to pass the message (verbal) or the movement? Why do you think that is?
 - What are ways that we can share God's word through our actions?

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ What is one of your favorite hymns that we sing in church? What about it do you like?
- ✿ Charles Wesley kept working at his faith until it blossomed for him. What is something you've worked hard at, and perhaps had a setback or two, before it came alive for you?
- ✿ Charles Wesley's brother John was an important partner for him in his life of faith. Who are some important partners in your life of faith? What do they do to help support you?
- ✿ You be a good friend to others? Who is someone that you think God might want you to comfort or encourage? What can you do this week for that person?
- ✿ We don't always see angels, yet God often communicates with us in ways that we don't always understand. What are some ways in which God might be communicating with you?

Samuel Seabury



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's stories well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Information about your bishop, including the diocesan address (Letters to the bishop option)
- * Paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, paint, and other art supplies

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

We give you thanks, O Lord our God, for your goodness in bestowing upon this Church the gift of the episcopate, which we celebrate in this remembrance of the consecration of **Samuel Seabury**; and we pray that, joined together in unity with our bishops, and nourished by your holy Sacraments, we may proclaim the Gospel of redemption with apostolic zeal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 435)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Samuel Seabury's story:

Option 1: Bishop's mitre

Samuel Seabury was the first bishop of The Episcopal Church. Have you ever noticed that bishops wear a special kind of hat? That hat is called a mitre, and some people say that it's a reminder of the flames of Pentecost that rested on the apostles' heads after they were given the Holy Spirit.

Today we are going to make and decorate our own mitres.

- ✿ Use one of the tutorials below to show the students how to fold a piece of paper into a mitre.
 - <http://www.catholicmissionaryfamily.com/2011/02/paper-bishop-miter-or-pope-hat.html>
 - Steps 1-10 of this tutorial: <http://www.origami-instructions.com/origami-flat-cap.html>
 - If you use a large piece of paper (approximately 20" x 27"), the students will be able to wear the mitre. Or, you can make smaller mitres that they simply decorate.
- ✿ After they have folded the paper, invite them to decorate it their mitre.

Option 2: Letters to the bishop

Samuel Seabury was the first bishop of The Episcopal Church, and we still have bishops in our church today. Use your diocesan website or newsletter to find out some information about your bishop and share that information with the students. Be sure to include:

- Your bishop's name
- Show the students your bishop's picture. There may be one hanging on a wall in your church, or you may find one on the diocesan website
- A few facts about your bishop: where he or she is from, how long he or she has been bishop, family members, hobbies, etc.

Then, invite the students to write letters or cards to the bishop! They can choose to:

- Tell the bishop what's on their mind about the church
- List any questions they might have about being a bishop
- Thank the bishop for the hard work s/he does or write a word of encouragement
- Share something they learned about Samuel Seabury

Collect all the letters (perhaps including a letter of your own with explanation) at the end of the class, and mail them to the bishop, using the address from your diocesan website. If the bishop writes in response, be sure to share the response with your class.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Have you ever seen the bishop at our church? What do you remember about the bishop's visit?
- ✿ The mitre is one of the symbols of the bishop; another symbol is the crozier, or bishop's staff. A bishop's staff is shaped like a shepherd's crook. That's because bishops are like shepherds, who lead their flocks on behalf of Jesus, the Great Shepherd. Have you ever seen a shepherd with a sheep? Why are Christians compared to sheep in God's eyes?
- ✿ We heard in Samuel Seabury's story that everyone has a part to play in the church family. What do you think is your part to play in our church family?

Enmegahbowh



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Baby name book or Internet search (What's in a name option)
- * Copies of pinwheel for peace handout for each student (Pinwheel option)
- * Paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, paint, and other art supplies

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Almighty God, you led your pilgrim people of old with fire and cloud: Grant that the ministers of your Church, following the example of blessed **Enmegahbowh**, may stand before your holy people, leading them with fiery zeal and gentle humility. This we ask through Jesus, the Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 285)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * How do you think Enmegahbowh felt when he was in the boat? When have you felt like that?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Enmegahbowh's story:

Option 1: What's in a name?

Enmegahbowh's name means "one who stands before his people." In Native American tradition, names are very important. Do you know where your name came from or what it means?

Help each student look up the meaning of their name, using a baby name book or a website such as <http://www.babycenter.com/baby-names> or <http://www.behindthename.com>

Ask each student: Do you think that what your name means is true about you? Is it who you are or who you hope to be?

Then, help each student use their name to make an acrostic (a word puzzle in which the first letter in each line forms the name).

- Use your name (or Enmegahbowh's) as an example, and work on it together on a board or flip chart.
- Write your name in all capitals on the far left hand side of the page, then come up with descriptions about yourself that begin with each letter of your name.
- Try to use both single words and phrases, to help give the students ideas.
- Then, give each student a large piece of paper. Instruct them to write their name, in large, capital letters, vertically on the far left hand side of the page.
- Tell them to write a word or phrase describing themselves that begins with each letter of their name.
- Encourage them to take time brainstorming to come up with words that are an accurate reflection of their personality. For younger students, you might help brainstorm some ideas by writing words up on a board or flip chart.
- If they have extra time when they've finished, they can decorate their name acrostic.
- Invite the students to share their name acrostic with the class.

Option 2: Pinwheels for peace

Enmegahbowh lived in a time when there was much tension among people new to this country and those who had lived here a long time. He saw himself as a peacemaker. Even when his life was in danger, he wouldn't use violence or act in anger. As a result, his life was a sign to people about how to follow Jesus and live in peace.

Ask the students: What are some ways that you can be a sign to people about how to follow Jesus and live in peace?

One movement for peace is very simple; it's called pinwheels for peace. People are invited to make pinwheels and place them out in their yards or in public places to help spread a message of peace (Their slogan is "imagine whirled peace", a pun on "imagine world peace"!.) Using the template and instructions below, invite each student to decorate and make a pinwheel to spread a message of peace. http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/pinwheelsforpeace/pinwheel_template.html

Encourage the students to put their pinwheels somewhere where they can see them, and remember to follow Enmegahbowh's example of peaceful living in their daily lives.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ The story of Jonah was very important to Enmegahbowh. What is your favorite Bible story? What character in the Bible do you feel connected to and why?
- ✿ Enmegahbowh most often referred to God as "the Great Spirit." How might this help us understand God better?
- ✿ Enmegahbowh was the first Native American priest in the United States. Have you had the experience of being first at something? What was that like?

C.S. Lewis



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student.
- * A copy of the book or a clip from the movie version of one of *The Chronicles of Narnia* (for *Chronicles of Narnia* activity)
- * Paper, pencils, markers, colored pencils, or other art supplies (Images of God activity)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

○ God of searing truth and surpassing beauty, we give you thanks for **Clive Staples Lewis**, whose sanctified imagination lights fires of faith in young and old alike. Surprise us also with your joy and draw us into that new and abundant life which is ours in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 465)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Lewis story:

Option 1: Chronicles of Narnia

C.S. Lewis' most famous (and most child-friendly) work is *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. Read a selection aloud to the class from one of the books. You could read the first chapter of any of the books, or read your favorite chapter or excerpt.

- ✿ Or, show the class a clip from one of the film adaptations of the books. You can find copies of the movies at the local video store, or find clips on YouTube or another video service.
- ✿ After you have read the selection or viewed the clip, discuss the following questions:
 - What did you notice about this story?
 - What about this story reminded you of yourself?
 - What about this story reminded you of God?

Option 2: Images of God

In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, C.S. Lewis imagines God as a great lion named Aslan. Here are some of the things that he writes about Aslan:

- “They say Aslan is on the move—perhaps has already landed.” And now a very curious thing happened. None of the children knew who Aslan was any more than you do; but the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different. Perhaps it has sometimes happened to you in a dream that someone says something which you don’t understand but in the dream it feels as if it had some enormous meaning - either a terrifying one which turns the whole dream into a nightmare or else a lovely meaning too lovely to put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life and are always wishing you could get into that dream again. It was like that now. At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in its inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer. (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Chapter 7)
- Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight, At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more, when he bares his teeth, winter meets its death, and when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again. (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Chapter 8)

- “He’ll be coming and going. One day you’ll see him and another you won’t. He doesn’t like being tied down - and of course he has other countries to attend to. It’s quite all right. He’ll often drop in. Only you mustn’t press him. He’s wild, you know. Not like a tame lion.” (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Chapter 17)
- And of course he knew none of the true stories about Aslan, the great Lion, the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea, the King above all High Kings in Narnia. But after one glance at the Lion’s face he slipped out of the saddle and fell at its feet. He couldn’t say anything but then he didn’t want to say anything, and he knew he needn’t say anything. (*The Horse and His Boy*, Chapter 11)

C.S. Lewis was one of many people who imagined God in different ways. Even in the Bible we hear different visions of what God and Jesus are like: a Good Shepherd, a loving Father, a Light.

Invite the students to close their eyes and imagine God.

- What does God look like?
- What does God smell like?
- What does God feel like?
- What does God sound like?

Provide paper and pencils or art supplies so that students can write or draw the God of their imaginations. Give time at the end for students to share and explain their words or drawings.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ C.S. Lewis and his friends believed that the stories we read when we are young help shape us, even when we become grown-ups. What are some of your favorite stories? What do they teach you about God—and about yourself?
- ✿ C.S. Lewis believed that imagination was a gift from God. How do poets and musicians and writers and artists use their imagination to make the world a better place? How do you use yours?
- ✿ C.S. Lewis changed his mind about God; at first he didn’t believe in God, but soon he came to know and love God very, very much. Have you ever changed your mind about something? What was that like?
- ✿ Jesus with us in that moment, and in that bread?

Frances Perkins



Preparation

- ❖ Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- ❖ Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- ❖ Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- ❖ Storybook or handouts for each student
- ❖ Bags and food or toiletries (for Helping others activity)
- ❖ Paper, crayons, markers, or colored pencils (for Pray always activity)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Loving God, we bless your Name for **Frances Perkins**, who lived out her belief that the special vocation of the laity is to conduct the secular affairs of society that all may be maintained in health and decency. Help us, following her example, to contend tirelessly for justice and for the protection of all in need, that we may be faithful followers of Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Holy Women, Holy Men*, p. 369)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- ❖ Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- ❖ Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- ❖ What was your favorite part of today's story?
- ❖ What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- ❖ Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- ❖ How do you think Frances Perkins felt when she noticed the people in the factory working so hard without rest? When have you felt that way?
- ❖ Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Frances Perkins's story:

Option 1: Helping others

Frances Perkins noticed the people who needed to be helped and the things in this world that needed to change. But she didn't just notice them; she also worked to make a difference, to change the things that were not right, and to help people who needed to be helped. Frances believed that it was every Christian's job to work to make the lives of other people better and to help those in need.

Find a local shelter that needs toiletries or bag lunches that the students can help assemble.

- Depending on the need, have the students make the sandwiches, sort the toiletries, and/or stuff the bags.
- You can also have the students decorate the bags with pictures or encouraging messages, or make a note to include inside each bag.
- While they are making sandwiches or sorting items into the bags, invite the students to brainstorm other ways that they can make a difference in the world.
- Be sure to arrange in advance a time to deliver the bags to the shelter or have them picked up.

Option 2: Pray always

Frances Perkins wasn't a priest or a monk or a nun; she was an ordinary, everyday person, just like you and me. But she knew that prayer was important for everyone—not just priests or monks or nuns but also ordinary, everyday people like you and me. She prayed all the time, and it was praying—talking to God and being in God's presence—that helped give her the strength to do the things that she did.

There are lots of different ways that we can pray: in church, at bedtime, saying prayers at meals. But there are other ways that we can pray, even in our ordinary, everyday lives, in surprising ways.

* Finger Prayer

Did you know your hand can help you to pray? You can use your fingers to help you remember the different people and things that God asks us to pray for. Follow along with your fingers.

- Your thumb is closest to you. Use it to remember to pray for those you love—your friends and family.
- Your pointer finger points the way. Use it to remember to pray for the Church, its members and its mission, which helps point us toward Jesus.

- Your middle finger stands tall. Use it to remember to pray for those in leadership: the president and the government; teachers and leaders. (Remember, Frances Perkins was a leader in the government, and she did amazing things!)
- Your ring finger is the weakest and cannot stand well on its' own. Use it to remember to pray for those in need: those who are sick, sad, or suffering.
- Your pinkie finger is the smallest. Use it to remember to pray for yourself and your own needs. Usually, after we have prayed for others, we are able to see our own needs more clearly.

Have children trace their hand on a sheet of paper, and write or draw what they should pray for with each finger. They can take it home as a reminder that they can use their fingers to help them pray anywhere and everywhere!

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- * Prayer was very important to Frances Perkins. When do you pray? Does your family have special prayers? What are they?
- * Frances Perkins believed that even one person could make a difference. What are some things that you can do to help other people at your school? In your neighborhood? At church?
- * Frances Perkins stood up for other people when no one else was standing up for them. Have you ever seen someone bullied? How did you (or how could you) respond?

Martin Luther King Jr.



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * If you plan to read one of the children's books suggested, be sure to purchase it or check it out from the library in advance.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * A copy of the children's book (optional)
- * Paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, other art supplies (for I have a dream activity)
- * Chalkboard or whiteboard, eraser, chalk or dry erase markers (Our big words activity)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Almighty God, by the hand of Moses your servant you led your people out of slavery, and made them free at last: Grant that your Church, following the example of your prophet **Martin Luther King**, may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may secure for all your children the blessed liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 227)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class. You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.
- * Or, you could choose to read a children's book about Dr. King:
 - *Martin's Big Words: the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* by Doreen Rappaport
 - *I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King Jr.*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Martin Luther King's story:

Option 1: I have a dream

Martin Luther King Jr.'s most famous speech is the one where he speaks about his dream. His dream is not for himself; he doesn't wish for presents or a world made of chocolate or that he can fly. His dream is a big dream; it is a dream for others, it is a dream for freedom and hope, it is a dream for the whole world.

Close your eyes and envision your dream, not for yourself, but for others and for the whole world.

Then draw or write about your dream.

Option 2: Our big words*

Words are powerful things. The words that we use to talk to and about one another can build people up or break them down, can help or can hurt. Martin Luther King Jr. knew about the power of words. In his life, people used hurtful, nasty words to talk to and about him and other people of color. But Martin Luther King Jr. chose to use words in a different way. He preached and taught with words that were meant to heal divisions, make peace, and build people up.

- ✿ In the middle of a chalkboard or whiteboard, write: "Our Big Words" in large letters.
- ✿ Ask the students to name words that are hurtful or harmful, ways that people talk to or about one another that can cause pain (if needed, give them suggestions like "stupid", "hate", "ugly", etc.). Write the words on the board all around, filling as much space as possible.
- ✿ Then ask the students:
 - How does it feel to hear these words?
 - How would it feel to use these words?
 - How would you feel if these were the kinds of words that you heard all the time?
- ✿ Then, remind the students that we have the power to choose our words. We can use words to heal instead of hurt.
- ✿ One by one, invite the students to come up and erase one of the hurtful words, and replace it with a word that could help or heal. Continue until all of the hurtful words have been replaced. Ask if they can think of even more helpful words to add to the board.
- ✿ Then, ask the students:
 - How does it feel to hear these words?

*This activity is especially appropriate if you use the children's book *Martin's Big Words*, but it works even if you do not read the book.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Have you ever had an experience where you have been judged by the color of your skin? If so, what was that like?
- ✿ Do you have any friends with a different skin color than you? Have you ever talked about it? Does it make a difference?
- ✿ Why might it be good to get to know people from different backgrounds? Where might be a good place to do that?

Harriet Bedell



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook* for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Paper, pencils, markers, crayons for each student (Rule of Life option)
- * Missionary speaker OR names and addresses of missionaries (Missionaries option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Holy God, you chose your faithful servant **Harriet Bedell** to exercise the ministry of deaconess and to be a missionary among indigenous peoples: Fill us with compassion and respect for all people, and empower us for the work of ministry throughout the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 121)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Harriet Bedell's story:

Option 1: Rule of Life

Harriet Bedell was known for her "Rules of Life." They were the list of rules that helped to govern how she lived and the choices she made. Harriet Bedell's Rules of Life were:

1. God is first. 2. Don't worry. 3. Put all in the hands of God. 4. Don't think or talk about troubles. 5. Don't do two things at the same time. 6. All life involves sacrifice.

- * Write Harriet's rules on a board or flip chart. Say: "These were Harriet's rules of life, what might yours be?"
- * Invite the students to write their own six "Rules of Life."
 - Tell them to spend five minutes reflecting silently on what they think are the most important things to remember. Some questions they can think about that might help include:
 - What principles can help guide your daily lives?
 - What ideas might help you remain focused on the big picture?
 - What things do you hope that you will remember when you are faced with tough decisions?
 - What ways of thinking and acting do you hope to be remembered for by others?
- * After their reflection, students should try to encapsulate their thoughts into six rules. After everyone is done, invite people to share some or all of the rules that they developed.
- * Discuss together:
 - What things are the same as Harriet's rules? What are different?
 - Do you think these rules will cover almost anything? Is there anything important that is left out?

Option 2: Missionaries

Harriet Bedell spent most of her life as a missionary: teaching and serving Jesus in a faraway place. We still have missionaries in our church today: some serving in the United States and some overseas. Help your students engage with the idea of missionaries by:

- * Invite a missionary to come and speak to your class. Ask your priest or diocesan office to help you find someone who has served as an Episcopal missionary.
- * Or, write cards or letters of encouragement to some of The Episcopal Church's missionaries. The Episcopal Missionary Roster, listing current missionaries from each diocese, can be found here: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/mission-personnel>. You can help the children come up with things to say in their cards such as:
 - "Thank you for sharing Jesus around the world!"
 - "You are in our prayers."
 - A verse from scripture

Option 3: Deacons

Deacons are called to be a bridge between the church and the world, by bringing the needs of the world to the church, and by bringing the church to the world. Does your church have a deacon? If so, invite that person to come and talk about this special ministry.

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- * Harriet spent her whole life as a missionary and teacher, teaching people about Jesus. Who are some of the people in your life who have taught you about Jesus?
- * Some people thought Harriet couldn't do the things she did because she was a woman. Later in life, people thought she couldn't do her work because she was older. Have you ever done something that people didn't think that you could do? What did that teach you?
- * Harriet traveled from Alaska to Florida and many places in between, following Jesus on a big adventure. What kind of adventure would you like to go on with Jesus?

Óscar Romero



Preparation

- * Be sure to read through the saint's story well in advance. You may also want to read the handout for the saint from the adult curriculum, so you can have some additional knowledge about this week's saint.
- * Provide copies of Meet the Saints: Family Storybook for each student or make copies of this week's handout.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activity.

Materials

- * Storybook or handouts for each student
- * Copies of suggested children's books (optional)
- * Dominoes (Dominoes option)

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saint.)

Almighty God, you called your servant **Óscar Romero** to be a voice for the voiceless poor, and to give his life as a seed of freedom and a sign of hope: Grant that, inspired by his sacrifice and the example of the martyrs of El Salvador; we may without fear or favor witness to your Word who abides, your Word who is Life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be praise and glory now and for ever. Amen. (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 211)

Encounter

Share the story of this week's saint with the class.

You may choose to:

- * Read the story aloud from the storybook or handout. Either the teacher can read the story, or, for older students, you can have children join in reading the story, alternating by paragraph.
- * Have the students read the story from the storybook or handout themselves, silently.

After sharing the saint's story, guide the children in some reflection on the story. Questions include:

- * What was your favorite part of today's story?
- * What did you imagine in your mind as you were hearing today's story?
- * Was there a part of today's story that confused you or that you wondered about? What was it?
- * Did this story remind you of any of the other stories we have heard so far this year?
- * Where did you see God in this story?

Engage

Choose one of the following activities to help your class engage more deeply with Óscar Romero's story:

Option 1: Would you rather?

Óscar Romero had to make some tough choices in his life. He could have chosen to be rich and comfortable, but he chose to stand with the poor and vulnerable. He could have chosen to stay quiet and be safe, but he chose to speak out, even though it was dangerous. Play a game of "would you rather?" with the class.

- ✿ Have everyone stand up in the center of the room, and ask one of the suggested questions. Designate one side of the room for each of the two choices, and tell the students to move to the side they choose. No one can stay in the middle; they must choose one or the other. After everyone has made their choice, invite a few people to share why they chose that side. Then ask the next question, assign sides for each option, and have the students move to their selection, repeating the process with each question.

Some possible questions include:

- If you could fly or be invisible, which would you choose and why?
- If you could be as big as a giant or as small as a fairy, which would you choose and why?
- If you could be popular or rich, which would you choose and why?
- If you had to be blind or deaf, which would you choose and why?
- If you could eat a whole cake by yourself or share one slice with a friend, which would you choose and why?
- You see someone being bullied. You can stand up for them and get laughed at, or stay quiet and be popular. Which would you choose and why?

With older students, you can invite some of them to suggest questions to the group.

- ✿ After you've finished playing the game, discuss together the following questions:
 - Which was the hardest choice to make?
 - How did you decide which side to choose?
 - Some of these questions were silly, and some were serious. How do you face the serious questions in your daily life?
 - When was a time when you felt proud about a difficult decision you made?
 - When was a time when you regretted (or felt badly) about a difficult decision you made?

Option 2: Dominoes

Óscar Romero was one person, but he was a part of making a big difference in the world. It is often easy to think that one person can't make a difference or that it's not worth it to speak up in a single, small, circumstance.

Use dominoes to help share how one person can affect change. Set up two dominoes—one close to you and one two to three feet away. Tell the students that the domino next to you is Óscar Romero, and the domino far away is peace and justice in El Salvador.

Óscar Romero is just one person: How can his life and witness possibly help achieve peace in El Salvador? (Knock the Óscar domino over—leaving the faraway domino untouched.)

But, what if Óscar Romero makes a difference in someone's life? What if he preaches and five people hear him and decide to live more peacefully? (Pull out five more dominoes, and put them in line behind the Óscar Romero domino). And what if they each teach two more people about the love of God? (Add ten more dominoes to the line) And those people also touch lives. (Add more dominoes, until the train reaches from the Óscar Romero domino to the final, peace and justice domino). Then, what happens? (Knock all the dominos over.)

- It's easy to think we're small and can't make a difference. But a lot of little things can add up!
- Ask the students to name a problem they wish they could affect. Place one domino near you, and the other (the "problem") three to four feet away.
- Have the class help you build a path from their domino to the problem, adding dominoes and naming ways they could touch others or change things to reach the solution.
- Let them help you knock down the line!

Óscar Romero (continued)

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- * How do you think Óscar Romero leaned on God when he felt scared?
- * Óscar told the truth, even when it was scary or dangerous. Have you ever had to tell the truth when it was scary? What was that like?
- * What good news about God do you think that people most need to hear?
- * Use dominoes to help share how one person can affect change.
- * Set up two dominoes—one close to you and one two to three feet away.
- * Tell the students that the domino next to you is Oscar Romero, and the domino far away is peace and justice in El Salvador.
- * Oscar Romero is just one person: How can his life and witness possibly help achieve peace in El Salvador? (Knock the Oscar domino over—leaving the far away domino untouched.)
- * But, what if Oscar Romero makes a difference in someone's life? What if he preaches and five people hear him and decide to live more peacefully? (Pull out five more dominoes, and put them in line behind the Oscar Romero domino). And what if they each teach two more people about the love of God? (Add ten more dominoes to the line) And those people also touch lives. (Add more dominoes, until the train reaches from the Oscar Romero domino to the final, peace and justice domino). Then, what happens? (Knock all the dominos over)
- * It's easy to think we're small and can't make a difference. But a lot of little things can add up!
- * Ask the students to name a problem they wish they could affect. Place one domino near you, and the other (the "problem") three to four feet away.
- * Have the class help you build a path from their domino to the problem, adding dominoes and naming ways they could touch others or change things to reach the solution.
- * Let them help you knock down the line!
- * You can repeat the process over and over again for different problems, brainstorming ways to add dominoes to the line and make a difference.

Celebrate the Saints

Preparation

- * Tell the students the previous week to come dressed as their favorite saint. Each student should bring a note card to class with the saint's name written on one side, and one fact they remember about that saint on the other.
- * Gather the materials needed for this week's engagement activities.

Materials

- * Saints' costumes
- * Saint Bingo cards and candy or other markers
- * Saint objects
- * Saint picture and halos
- * Copies of list of saint names

Opening/Closing Collect

(Begin and end the class by praying the collect appointed for today's saints.)

Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your servants, may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last we may with them attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 250)

Encounter/Explore

This week there is no story to read; instead, the entire class is intended as a celebration and culmination of the year. This would be a good time for all of the youth and children to join together for a celebration, or even for all ages (including adults) to combine classes.

At the previous week's class, ask everyone to come in dressed up as their favorite saint from this year's class (bring a few extra dress up items, for those students who forget). Each student should bring a note card to class with the saint's name written on one side, and one fact they remember about that saint on the other.

Begin class by having each student "introduce" themselves and say the one fact about their saint.

Then, the rest of the class time is for games and fun! Options are included below, but feel free to be creative and come up with your own ideas. You can use as many of these options as time allows:

- * **Parade of Saints.** Teach the students the words to "When the Saints Go Marching In." Provide instruments or noise makers, and take the students on a parade around the church grounds, singing and making music to "When the Saints Go Marching In"!
- * **Saints Bingo.** Play a game of saints bingo. Build the cards at <http://print-bingo.com>. Distribute saintly bingo cards to each member of the class, and play a game of bingo. For added fun, use candy as the space markers.

- ✿ Guess the saint. Place 8-10 objects representing some of the saints you've learned up in the front of the room. Have students (working alone or in teams) guess which saint is suggested by each object. Possibilities include:
 - *The Book of Common Prayer* (Thomas Cranmer)
 - Bishop's mitre (Samuel Seabury)
 - Nativity (Blessed Virgin Mary)
 - Bible, open to the gospels (Luke the Evangelist)
 - Fish or rooster (Peter)
 - Egg (Mary Magdalene)
 - Icon (John of Damascus)
 - Three-leaf clover (Patrick)
 - A piece of sheet music (Bach)
 - A hymnal, open to one of the hymns he wrote (Charles Wesley)
 - A wolf, or other stuffed animal (Francis)
 - A ciborium or priest's communion wafer (Clare)
 - A lion or copy of *The Chronicles of Narnia* (C.S. Lewis)
- ✿ Pin the Halo on the Saint. Print out or draw a large (poster-sized) picture of any of the saints. Cut three golden halos from construction paper. Have children take turns being blindfolded and spun around and try to "pin the halo on the saint"!
- ✿ Sainly scavenger hunt. Distribute copies of the class handout with the list of saints. Give the class twenty minutes to go around the room "meeting" the other saints. For each saint, you must learn one fact about that saint and write it down on your handout. At the end of the twenty minutes, the person who has met the most saints (and has the most correct facts) wins!

Explore

After the activity, come back for some final reflection together. Ask the students these questions and give them time to reflect and share.

- ✿ Who was your favorite saint that we studied, and why was that person important to you?
- ✿ What differences did you notice among the many saints that we studied?
- ✿ What similarities stood out to you among the saints that we studied?
- ✿ What did you learn about saints in this class that surprised you?
- ✿ What did you learn about saints in this class that challenged you?
- ✿ What are you called to do or change in order to respond to what you have learned?

Resources

List of Saints

(and date of death, if known)

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob	Martin Luther (1546)
Blessed Virgin Mary	Thomas Cranmer (1556)
Mary Magdalene	George Herbert (1633)
Peter and Paul	J.S. Bach (1750)
Luke the Evangelist	Charles Wesley (1788)
Perpetua and her Companions (202)	Samuel Seabury (1796)
John Chrysostom (407)	Enmegahbowh (1902)
Patrick and Brigid (461, 523)	C.S. Lewis (1963)
Augustine of Hippo (605)	Frances Perkins (1965)
John of Damascus (760)	Martin Luther King Jr. (1968)
Hildegard of Bingen (1179)	Harriet Bedell (1969)
Clare of Assisi (1253)	Óscar Romero (1980)

Engagement Activity Possibilities

Each saint has specific activities related to his/her life and ministry. For various reasons, the suggested activities may not suit your context. If so, you are welcome to come up with a different engagement activity. Below are some possibilities that would work for almost any saint.

* Art/Iconography

- Look at three to five different images of the saint. Images of most saints can be found at www.commonswikimedia.org.
- Compare and contrast them with each other, exploring questions such as:
 - * What moment in the saint's story does this image represent?
 - * What did the artist do to reflect the personality of the saint?
 - * Which image looks most like you pictured the saint in your mind? Why?
 - * What about this depiction surprises you?
 - * What might you do differently if you were the artist portraying the saint?

* In their own words

- Share an excerpt from the saint's writing (something that can be read aloud briefly, or something that can be printed and distributed with time allotted for everyone to read the provided excerpt.)
- Invite everyone to listen, and then spend some time in quiet reflection.
- Explore questions such as:
 - * How does this comfort us? How might it challenge us?
 - * Although this was written at a different time in history, how might it speak to our world today?
 - * What might this teach us about God?
 - * What might this teach us about ourselves?
 - * Is there anything you feel called to do or change in response to this reading?

- ❁ Scripture study
 - Read one (or more) of the lessons appointed for the saint's feast day. The lessons appointed for each saint can be found in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* or by searching the saint's name on the *Holy Women, Holy Men* website: <https://liturgyandmusic.wordpress.com/category/holy-women-holy-men/>
 - Explore questions such as:
 - * Why do you think this lesson was chosen for this particular saint?
 - * Is this the scripture you would have chosen for this saint? Why or why not? Can you think of other options or stories you might have picked?
 - * How did the saint live out this scripture in his/her life?
- ❁ Compare/contrast
 - Take this week's saint and a saint studied in a previous week. Compare and contrast the two.
 - * Get newsprint and divide it into two columns: similarities and differences.
 - * Have people name the things they think fall on each side.
 - * Then explore questions such as:
 - * What striking differences do you see? What are the core similarities?
 - * What might the differences tell us about what it means to be a saint?
 - * What might the similarities tell us about what it means to be a saint?

More ideas

- ❁ **Make it a movie**—Ask students or groups to imagine making the saint's story into a movie. Ask them to "cast" the main parts and choose which scenes they would portray. Where would they shoot the movie? What special effects would they need? Is there anything they would change or leave out? Why?
- ❁ **Modern Day Remix**—Break into groups of two. Spend time having the groups come up with a modern-day version of the saint's story. Ask each group how they would tell the saint's story in an email or even in a tweet! Most groups will do better if they spend time writing down their thoughts first, then reading them to the group.
- ❁ **Story Commercial**—Have participants divide into pairs and come up with a retelling of the saint's story that is thirty seconds or less, like a commercial that grabs your attention. What qualities or characteristics would they highlight in sharing the story of this saint?

- ❁ **News Report**—Have your group put together a mock news report that would retell the saint's story, including eyewitness interviews. Have someone be the newscaster, someone the saint, others "eye witnesses."
- ❁ **Newspaper Headline**—Break into pairs and have each group come up with a newspaper headline and the first sentence of a news article about this saint. What section of the paper would this saint's story appear in? How would this saint's story be treated if it were a "news" article today?

Additional discussion questions:

- ❁ What one question would you ask this saint if you encountered him/her today? How do you imagine s/he might respond?
- ❁ Does this saint remind you of anyone you know? How so?
- ❁ Today's saint lived in a different time and a different place than we do. How is the saint's world and time like ours? How is it different?
- ❁ What can this saint's example teach us about how we live out our faith in our daily lives?
- ❁ What part of this saint's story most closely connects to something you've experienced in your life?
- ❁ How could this saint be a part of your faith life?

Design your own class

While we have done our best to include a wide variety of saints in our curriculum, there may be a saint that you would particularly like to study who is not on our list. This could be your church's name saint or some other saint who is particularly meaningful to your local community. If so, we encourage you to design your own class about that saint, using the framework provided below.

Opening collect

Begin by praying the collect for the saint's feast day. The collect appointed for each saint can be found in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* or by searching the saint's name on the *Holy Women, Holy Men* website: <https://liturgyandmusic.wordpress.com/category/holy-women-holy-men/>

Encounter

Provide a one-page overview of the saint including the items listed below. This overview should be distributed to each class participant as a handout and will be used at the beginning of each class session so that everyone gathered can learn a bit about the saint assigned. The content should include:

- ✿ Fast Facts
 - Dates (birth, death, other important dates)
 - Location/place (where did the saint live and do ministry?)
 - Brief life story (five to ten bullet points about the person including key life moments, distinguishing features, etc.)
- ✿ Did you know?
 - Two or three surprising/interesting/funny facts about the saint
- ✿ Tell me a story
 - Provide a slightly more detailed outline of one particular story from the saint's life that illustrates his/her particular gifts and witness
- ✿ In his/her own words
 - Include one to three representative quotes by or about the saint
- ✿ Images
 - Find three to five common license images of the saint that would enrich the curriculum (www.commons.wikimedia.org is a good source for images).

There are many good resources you could consult for this information. Some suggestions include:

- ✿ Books:
 - *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* and *Holy Women, Holy Men*

are publications of The Episcopal Church that include a very brief biography of each saint.

- *Stars in a Dark World: Stories of the Saints and the Holy Days of the Liturgy* by Fr. John Julian OJN includes a more in-depth biography and reflection on each saint.
- *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* by Mark Galli includes some of the major historical saints.
- A search of your local library's website or Amazon.com will likely give you at least one book on the saint of your choice.

✿ Websites

- A search of www.lentmadness.org will pull up biographies and other fun information about a wide variety of saints who have been featured in Lent Madness over the years.
- For those saints who are also honored in the Roman Catholic Church, information can be found at www.catholic.org/saints
- Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org) is often a surprisingly reliable source on the saints. Because it is an open source website that anyone can edit, you should be careful to verify what you read there before it is presented.

Engage

After the group has read through the handout and talked about what they find striking, give one or two options for activities that allow deeper engagement with an important aspect of the saint's life and witness. For the engagement option(s) provide detailed instructions, prompts, and any special set-up or materials needed.

Some ideas for engagement activities:

- ✿ If the saint is known for a particular spiritual practice, provide a way for participants to try that practice.
- ✿ If a saint is a prophetic witness, are there modern parallels? How might we witness in our context?
- ✿ Explore art, poetry, and/or prayer in relation to this saint. Excerpts from writings by the saint are particularly appropriate.
- ✿ Can the saint teach us about a particular culture or place? Can you explore how that saint's legacy is expressed in that place today?
- ✿ Is the saint connected to particular events in church history that you could discuss?

Explore

Provide five to ten small group discussion questions for this saint. These questions might include some of the following general questions, as well as some questions specific to the particular saint.

- Why do you think this person is a saint?
- How did this person exemplify holiness?

- What particular gifts or strengths did this saint have?
- How did this person use his/her gifts to God's glory?
- What else might this person have done with his/her gifts? What other life could he/she have chosen?
- What does this saint teach us about God?
- What might this person teach us about our lives as people of faith?
- What surprises you about this saint?
- How does this saint's story comfort you?
- How does this saint's story challenge you?

Concluding Collect

- ✿ Close by praying a collect for the saint's feast day or other appropriate collect.
- ✿ This might be the same as the opening collect or might be different.

Session 1: Silly Song Handout

Silly Song Word List

Verb 1: _____

Plural noun 1: _____

Adjective 1: _____

Adjective 2: _____

Verb 1: _____

Verb 2: _____

Profession 1: _____

Color: _____

Adjective 3: _____

Noun 1: _____

Adjective 4: _____

Profession 2: _____

Past-tense verb: _____

Number: _____

Adjective 5: _____

Person's name: _____

Place 1: _____

Place 2: _____

Place 3: _____

Plural noun 2: _____

Silly Song Challenge

I _____ a song of the _____ of God,
_____ and _____ and true,
Who toiled and _____ and _____ and died
For the Lord they loved and knew.
And one was a _____, and one was a queen,
And one was a shepherdess on the _____;
They were all of them _____ of God, and I mean,
God helping, to be one too.

They loved their Lord so dear, so dear,
And his love made them _____;
And they followed the _____ for Jesus' sake
The whole of their _____ lives long.
And one was a _____, and one was a priest,
And one was _____ by a fierce wild beast;
And there's not any reason, no, not the least,
Why I shouldn't be one too.

They lived not only in ages past,
There are _____ still.
The world is _____ with the joyous _____
Who love to do _____'s will.
You can meet them in school, or in _____, or at sea,
In _____, or in trains, or in _____, or at tea;
For the _____ of God are just _____ like me,
And I mean to be one too.

Silly Song Fill-In

I [verb 1] a song of the [plural noun 1] of God,
[adjective 1] and [adjective 2] and true,
Who toiled and [verb 1] and [verb 2] and died
For the Lord they loved and knew.
And one was a [profession 1], and one was a queen,
And one was a shepherdess on the [color];
They were all of them [plural noun 1] of God, and I mean,
God helping, to be one too.

They loved their Lord so dear; so dear;
And his love made them [adjective 3];
And they followed the [noun 1] for Jesus' sake
The whole of their [adjective 4] lives long.
And one was a [profession 2], and one was a priest,
And one was [past-tense verb] by a fierce wild beast;
And there's not any reason, no, not the least,
Why I shouldn't be one too.

They lived not only in ages past,
There are [number] still.
The world is [adjective 5] with the joyous [plural noun 1]
Who love to do [person's name] will.
You can meet them in school, or in [place 1], or at sea,
In [place 2], or in trains, or in [place 3], or at tea;
For the [plural noun 1] of God are just [plural noun 2] like me,
And I mean to be one too.

Correct Song Lyrics

I sing a song of the saints of God,
Patient and brave and true,
Who toiled and fought and lived and died
For the Lord they loved and knew.
And one was a doctor, and one was a queen,
And one was a shepherdess on the green;
They were all of them saints of God, and I mean,
God helping, to be one too.

They loved their Lord so dear, so dear,
And his love made them strong;
And they followed the right for Jesus' sake
The whole of their good lives long.
And one was a soldier, and one was a priest,
And one was slain by a fierce wild beast;
And there's not any reason, no, not the least,
Why I shouldn't be one too.

They lived not only in ages past,
There are hundreds of thousands still.
The world is bright with the joyous saints
Who love to do Jesus' will.
You can meet them in school, or in lanes, or at sea,
In church, or in trains, or in shops, or at tea;
For the saints of God are just folk like me,
And I mean to be one too.

Session 23

Martin Luther King Jr.
Code, key

A = 	R = 
B = 	S = 
C = 	T = 
D = 	U = 
E = 	V = 
F = 	W = 
G = 	X = 
H = 	Y = 
I = 	Z = 
J = 	1 = 
K = 	2 = 
L = 	3 = 
M = 	4 = 
N = 	5 = 
O = 	6 = 
P = 	7 = 
Q = 	8 = 

Session 23: Break the Code

♄□□ ♀△ ♃□☉♁♂ △□◆

♁☉◆♂ ♀♂♂■ ◆☉◆♂♂

◆♁□□◆♂♁ ♄☉♁◆♁, ☉■♂

◆♁♁♁ ♁◆ ■□◆ △□◆□

Martin Luther King Jr.
Code, page 2

♄□□ ♀△ ♃□☉♁♂ △□◆

♁☉◆♂ ♀♂♂■ ◆☉◆♂♂

◆♁□□◆♂♁ ♄☉♁◆♁, ☉■♂

◆♁♁♁ ♁◆ ■□◆ △□◆□

Session 26: Sainly Scavenger Hunt

Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob: _____

Blessed Virgin Mary: _____

Mary Magdalene: _____

Peter & Paul: _____

Luke the Evangelist: _____

Perpetua: _____

John Chrysostom: _____

Patrick & Brigid: _____

Augustine of Hippo: _____

John of Damascus: _____

Hildegard of Bingen: _____

Clare of Assisi: _____

Martin Luther: _____

Thomas Cranmer: _____

George Herbert: _____

J.S . Bach: _____

Charles Wesley: _____

Samuel Seabury: _____

Enmegahbowh: _____

C. S . Lewis: _____

Frances Perkins: _____

Martin Luther King Jr.: _____

Harriet Bedell: _____

Óscar Romero: _____

Meet the Saints

Family Storybook



Meet _____ **the Saints** _____ **Family Storybook**

**Melody Wilson Shobe
and
Lindsay Hardin Freeman**

Forward Movement • Cincinnati, Ohio

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Introduction

Welcome to *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook*! If you are a parent or teacher reading this, you are blessed to have God's young ones in your care. And if you are a kid reading this, you are blessed because Jesus holds children very close to his heart.

In this storybook, you will meet some of the great **saints** of our church (You can even color some of them!). These saints are not always what you would expect. Some of them were priests, but some were poets. Some were monks, and some were musicians. Some were old and some were young. Some lived in Jesus' time, while others lived only a few years ago.

All of them were tough, brave—and most of all, **faithful**. They loved God with all their hearts and souls and minds and strength. And they loved Jesus so much they were willing to follow him wherever he led, even if it wasn't safe.

The lives of the saints were not always easy. They had hard times, were hurt or sad, and even died. Yet they have much to **teach** us, for we also live in hard and difficult times. Sometimes we feel hurt or sad or scared. Sometimes people we love get sick or even die.

And it is in those times, most of all, that we need our faith. It is in those times that Jesus holds us more tightly than ever. The lessons of our spiritual ancestors—the saints of God—help us to know how to be brave, how to survive, how to help others, and how to always call on God.

The truth is, the saints of God aren't just people who lived long ago and far away. The saints of God are just folks like you and me. They surround us, a great cloud of witnesses, the communion of saints. As we learn about them, we learn about the life of faith. As we grow close to them, we grow close to Jesus, who **loves** each of us, calls us by name, and makes us his saints.

So let's get ready to **celebrate** the saints. Have fun and hold on to your hats, because the journey of following Jesus is always a wild ride.

Blessings,

Melody Wilson Shobe &
Lindsay Hardin Freeman

Meet the Saints



Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your servants may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last we may with them attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 250)

Tell me a story

Lesbia Scott loved her children very much, and she loved music very much. When her children were small, they would ask her to write songs for them. “Write us a song about the birds singing,” one child would ask. And she did. “Sing to us about our picnic!” another child would beg. And she did.

Lesbia Scott also loved God very much. So, many of the songs that she wrote were hymns: songs of praise to God, songs about love and faith and hope. Lesbia wanted her children, and children everywhere, to learn about God, and she knew that one of the best ways to learn about something is to sing about it!

One day, Lesbia decide to write a song for her children about saints. She wanted them to learn about and remember what saints are like, how they live, and where they can be found. So she sat down with her pen.

“What are saints like?” Lesbia wondered. And as she read the Bible and studied the lives of the saints in history, she learned: Saints are patient, and brave, and true. They know Jesus and love Jesus. But saints aren’t superheroes. They are folks like us, people who are doctors, or shepherds, or soldiers, or moms. They don’t have special powers. They do amazing things, not because they are powerful, but because God is powerful, and it is God working through them who does the amazing things. Saints aren’t perfect. They sometimes stumble and fall; they sometimes mess up. But even when they fail, they return to God, and try once again to follow Jesus, their Lord.

“How do saints live?” Lesbia wondered. And as she prayed the prayers in *The Book of Common Prayer* and observed the feast days of the saints, she realized: Saints live all sorts of different lives. Some are teachers, and some are students. Some are princes, and some are poor. Some live long lives, and some die young. Some are boys, and some are girls. But all saints, no matter where they come from or who they are, try to do the right thing, even when it’s hard, because they want to follow Jesus no matter what.

“Where can saints be found?” Lesbia wondered. As she looked at the witness of history and tradition and opened her eyes to the world around her, she discovered: Saints are in all places and all times. Some lived a long time ago, and many live still today. Sometimes saints spend their times in churches, and sometimes they spend their time at the mall or at school or in the park. Sometimes, saints are the people who you would least expect, and they are found in the last place you would think to look.

Lesbia thought about all these things, and as she thought, a song began to come together in her mind. It was a song that would teach her children, and teach thousands of children in ages to come, about what it means to be a saint. Here’s some of what she wrote:

*I sing a song of the saints of God, Patient and brave and true, Who toiled and fought and lived and died
For the Lord they loved and knew. And one was a doctor, and one was a queen, And one was a shepherdess
on the green; They were all of them saints of God, and I mean, God helping, to be one too.*

Let’s talk

The songs that we learn as children shape us in special ways. What are some of your favorite songs you learned when you were little? What did they teach you?

Who are some of the saints that you know about? What do you remember about them?

Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob



Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your servants **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last we may with them attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 250)

Tell me a story

Thousands of years ago, in the faraway land of Haran,* there lived a man named Abraham and his wife Sarah. All of their friends had children, and many became grandparents and great-grandparents. But Sarah and Abraham were childless.

One night, when Abraham was outside, looking up into the beautiful night sky, God spoke to him. “Abraham,” said God. “I will make for you a great nation. But you must leave home. Go to a place that I will show you, a place that will be brimming with wonderful things to eat and see. You will have more descendants than there are stars in the sky.”

Hmmm, thought Abraham. I’m already an old man. How can this be?

Abraham went home and told Sarah what God had said, and they did what God told them to do: they left home.

Back then there were no cell phones, computers, cars, planes, or hotels. Abraham and Sarah struck out into true wilderness, much of it harsh desert: cold by night and boiling hot by day. From time to time, they set up camp, accompanied by their servants, some family members, and their sheep. It was a hard and rugged journey.

As year after year went by, and Sarah did not become pregnant, they studied the night sky wondering just what God had meant: “You will have as many descendants as there are stars in the sky.”

Then, one day, three men (angels in disguise) seemed to materialize right out of the desert sand. Abraham invited them to share a meal. And, as they ate, one burst out with extraordinary news. “By this time next year, Sarah will have a son!”

Immediately there was the sound of laughter. Sarah, who was overseeing meal preparations, heard the man’s prediction and burst out laughing from behind the tent wall.

“How can this be at my age? Is it even possible? Abraham is one hundred years old, and I am ninety!”

A year later, Isaac—whose name means “to laugh”—was born. Isaac grew up and married Rebekah, and they were the parents of twin boys: Esau and Jacob (who later in life had his name changed to Israel by God).

Promises from God are always kept. Today, there are indeed as many descendants of Abraham as there are stars in the sky—and if you listen very hard, you still might hear Sarah’s joyful laughter.

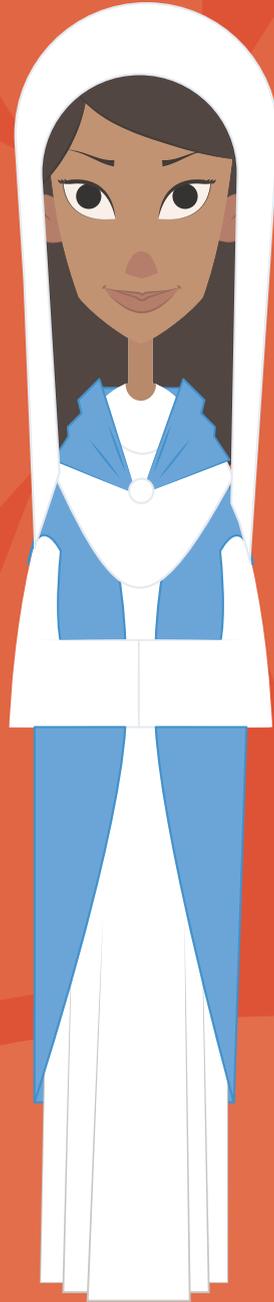
*Haran is in modern-day Turkey.

Let’s talk

From what part of the world did your ancestors come? What do you remember hearing about your ancestors? What hardships might they have known?

Have you ever moved or gone on a vacation? What do you need to take with you when you move or go on a vacation? What important things might God want us to pack on our journey? How does one pack things like faith and joy and courage?

Blessed Virgin Mary



O God, you have taken to yourself the blessed **Virgin Mary**, mother of your incarnate Son: Grant that we, who have been redeemed by his blood, may share with her the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 243)

Tell me a story

Mary's feet flew over the rough ground, scrambling up the hilly path toward the home of her cousin, Elizabeth. Clutching her small cloth bag to her chest, the teenage girl furiously blinked back tears, longing to fall into the older women's arms.

Despite the difference in their ages, Mary knew that she could tell Elizabeth anything. The old woman was like a mother bear: fierce and loving, protective and daring. Perhaps because she'd never had children of her own, Elizabeth cherished Mary as a beloved daughter, one who was always welcome in the tiny house she shared with her husband Zechariah.

At that moment, Mary badly needed some comforting arms. Only hours earlier, she'd been home, alone, enjoying the solitude—an unusual moment in her large family. And in had swooped an angel, surrounded by brilliant rainbow columns of light, shimmering and weaving around his tall frame. She knew at once it was the angel Gabriel from scripture.

For once, Mary was speechless. And words rarely failed this bright and well-spoken girl. “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” announced Gabriel. What? An angel is here to see ME? The Lord is with me?

“Do not be afraid, Mary.” Too late. She was afraid. “You will become pregnant, and bear a son. He will do great things and his kingdom will never end!” She knew that the angel meant now. Not years down the road, but now. “How can this be? I'm not married yet, and I've never known a man.”

“The Holy Spirit will come over you. And the child will be called holy and will be the Son of God. And your cousin Elizabeth, who thought she could never have a child, has also conceived. Nothing is impossible with God!” Gabriel waited. And Mary knew that somehow an answer was required. She could say yes or no. It was up to her. Her voice rang out: “Let it be to me according to your word.”

Shaking her head at what seemed an unbelievable scenario, Mary finally reached Elizabeth's house, hot and out of breath. But before she could even knock, the door flew open. Into Elizabeth's arms she fell. “Blessed are you!” Elizabeth said. “The baby in my womb is jumping for joy!”

Within minutes, Mary's tears of worry turned to tears of joy. Words tumbled forth from Mary as she praised God, in a song that today we call the *Magnificat*.

In nine short months, Jesus was born to his loving and protective parents, Mary and Joseph. Elizabeth and Zachariah's son, who was born three months after this meeting, grew up to be a wild and holy man: John the Baptist. As he had done in his mother's womb, he shared his love for Jesus without holding back.

With God, all kinds of things can happen, good things that we might not expect. And even though we may be afraid sometimes, God's love always surrounds us, much like that bright and shiny light that surrounded Gabriel. Look for it—and look for ways in which God might surprise and delight you.

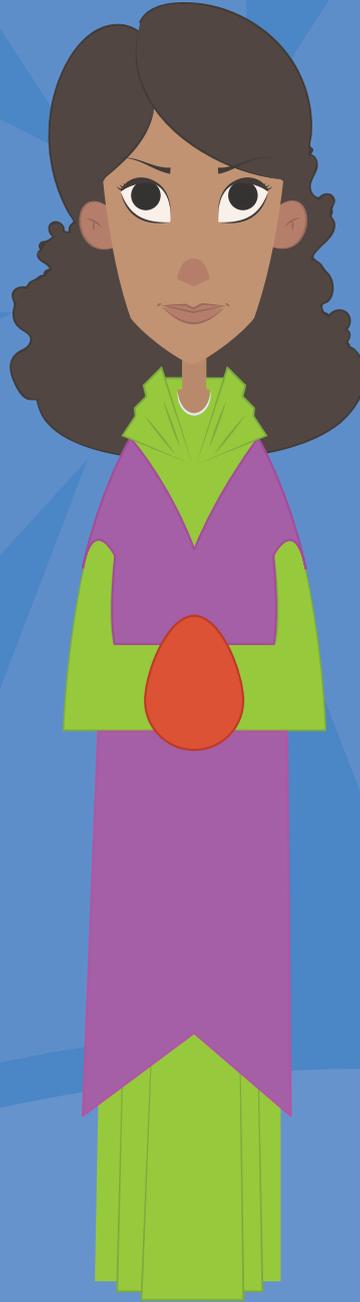
Let's talk

Sometimes the stories in the Bible seem to concentrate on grownups. Yet, as is true with Mary's story, it is clear that God calls on young people to do amazing things. What might that mean for you?

Elizabeth was a good friend to Mary, helping her to remember that God was always with her. How can you be a good friend to others? Who is someone that you think God might want you to comfort or encourage? What can you do this week for that person?

We don't always see angels, yet God often communicates with us in ways that we don't always understand. What are some ways in which God might be communicating with you?

Mary Magdalene



Almighty God, whose blessed Son restored **Mary Magdalene** to health of body and of mind, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: Mercifully grant that by your grace we may be healed from all our infirmities and know you in the power of his unending life; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 242)

Tell me a story

It was the worst of days, and it was the best of days. The worst part came first.

Mary Magdalene's best friend, Jesus, had been killed just two days before. He had died on the cross. She had loved Jesus. And he had loved her deeply in return. She had been lonely and troubled and ill, and he healed her. He introduced Mary Magdalene to his friends, and they became her new family. Best of all, he helped her to know and love God.

Mary Magdalene knew deep inside that being a friend meant being there in bad times as well as good. Unlike many of Jesus' other friends, she had stood at the cross to give him strength. And she knew that sometimes part of loving someone who has died meant saying goodbye.

So on a cold, dark morning after the Jewish sabbath, Mary Magdalene walked slowly toward Jesus' tomb, knowing that she would not see him again—but wanting to be as close to him as she could. She knew what to expect. There would be a cave where Jesus' body lay, and a large rock blocking the cave entrance so that no one would bother Jesus' remains.

But when she reached the tomb, the rock had been moved! Her stomach twisted. Someone must have taken Jesus' body. All she wanted to do was say goodbye, and now even that was not possible.

Quickly she ran to Simon Peter's house, one of Jesus' other followers. At a lightening pace, he and another disciple named John raced to the tomb. John reached it first but stepped back to let Peter have the first look. Peering into the tomb, Peter sighed and shook his head, for the body was gone. John went in, but he too, saw only the cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped.

Strong for so long, Mary Magdalene's heart yearned for Jesus. Crying, she stood alone outside the tomb—yet she would not abandon her friend and Lord. Finally, she knelt to peer into the darkness—yet the darkness was dark no longer. Two angels dressed in white met her eyes.

“Woman, why are you weeping?” What? What? “Woman, why are you weeping?” they asked.

“Because they have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have laid him.”
And then a voice came from behind her.

“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?” Leave me alone, she thought.
Can't you see that everything has gone wrong?

“Mary.” That voice again! And then she knew. There Jesus stood, fully and finally recognizable. He had come back from the dead. He was alive in a new body.

“Go tell the others, Mary,” said Jesus. “Tell them that I love them and that they will see me, just like you did.”

And that's what she did. She was the very first person to see the risen Lord.

Let's talk

Jesus did something that no one else can do: He came back from the dead in a new body. This is called the resurrection. How do you think you might have felt if you were Mary Magdalene at that moment?

Have you ever lost someone you loved? A friend, a grandparent or parent, a cat or a dog?
Describe how you felt.

Have you ever gone to that person's grave? Have you ever buried an animal and marked its grave?
How did it feel to visit that place?

Peter & Paul



Almighty God, whose blessed apostles **Peter and Paul** glorified you by their martyrdom: Grant that your Church, instructed by their teaching and example, and knit together in unity by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 241)

Tell me a story about Peter

First, let's share a story about Peter, who fished for a living, and how he came to know and love Jesus. A strong and rugged man, Peter and his partners had spent all night out on Lake Gennesaret fishing—or rather, trying to catch fish. Sadly, their nets remained empty.

But little did he know who would need his boat that morning: Jesus. Hundreds of people had come to hear Jesus talk, and he needed a safe spot from where he could teach. Rather than get pushed into the water by the excited crowd, Jesus got in Peter's boat and asked him to take it from shore.

When Jesus finished talking, he looked over at Peter, then pointed toward the horizon. "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

"But we fished all night and caught nothing!" said the tired Peter. Then he looked one more time at Jesus.

"At your word, I will let down the nets," Peter said.

Within minutes, the nets were so full of fish that they began breaking. Peter yelled for his partners to come help, and their boats became completely full—in fact, they almost sank under the weight.

When Peter finally reached shore, he fell on his knees, for he had seen a miracle. The rough-and-tumble fisherman turned from the job he knew and began a new life: following Jesus. In time, he would become one of Jesus' most important disciples.

Tell me a story about Paul

Sometimes people are hard to figure out. And early on, Paul was an angry and bitter man. Known first by the name of Saul, he didn't like people who followed Jesus and did everything he could to arrest them and throw them in jail. At that time, it was against the law to be a Christian, and Saul went after Christians with a vengeance.

Armed with arrest warrants in his bag and hatred in his heart, Saul headed for Damascus, sure that he could find Christians there. As he approached the town, a blinding light from heaven flashed all about him, throwing him to the ground. In that blaze of light he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Paul replied: "Who are you, Master?"

"I am Jesus, the one who you are chasing down. Get up, and go into the village, where you will be told what to do."

Slowly Saul stumbled to his feet. From the outside, he looked the same, save a few bruises. But from the inside, he knew things had gone terribly wrong, for he was blind. To Damascus he went, but he did not eat nor drink.

Little did he know that a man named Ananias (An-na-Nigh-us) had also heard from God.

"Go right over to a street called Straight Avenue," Ananias heard God say. "There you will find a man named Saul, who is dreaming you will lay hands on him so that he can see again."

"Saul is a terrible person!" said Ananias. "He will arrest us and persecute us!"

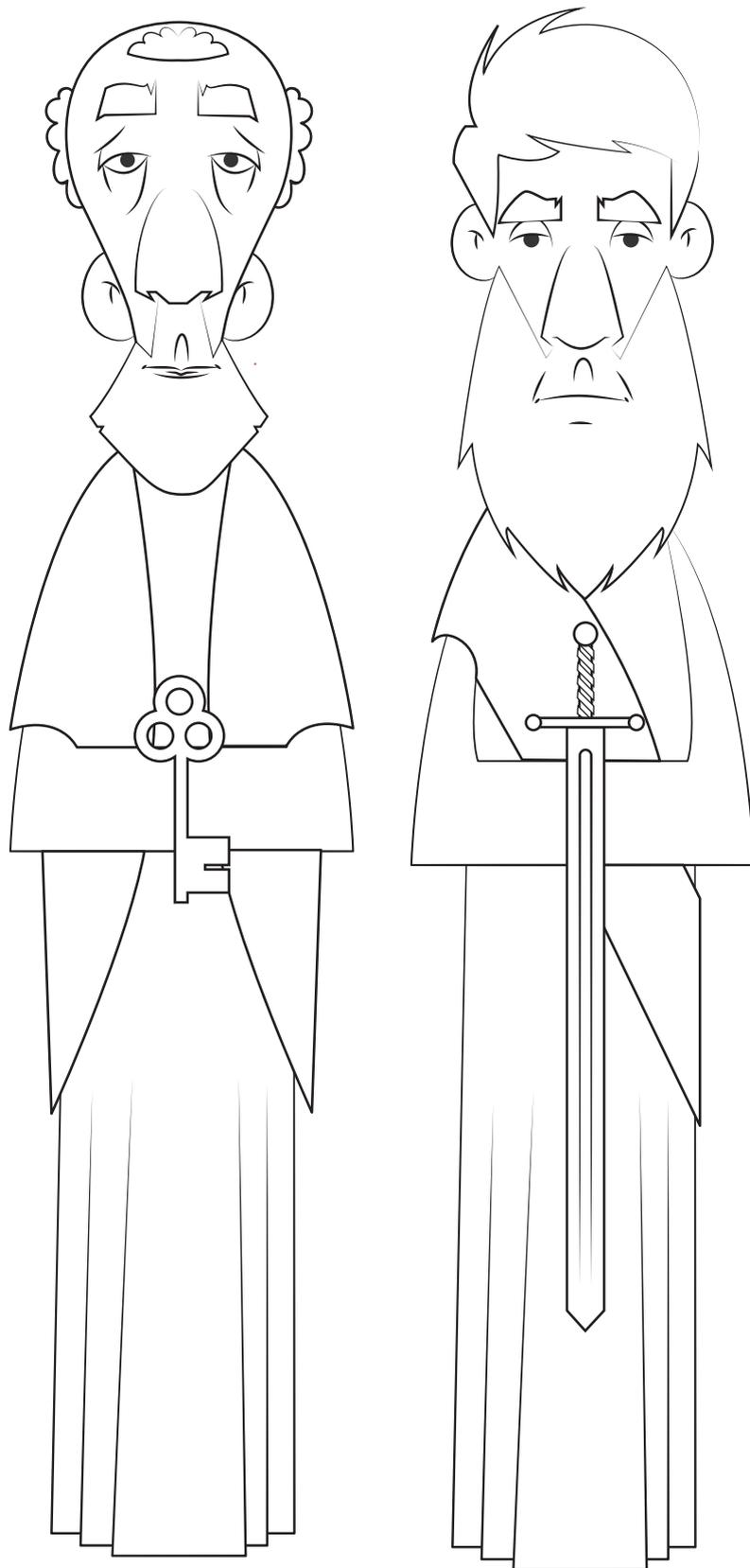
“Go,” said God. “Go. I’ve chosen Saul to be my special representative. He will do good things that you cannot even dream of.”

Ananias did as God had commanded. He put his hands on Saul’s eyes, and large scales dropped away from Saul’s face. Not only could Saul see, but he was on fire for Jesus. For the rest of his life, he was known by the name of Paul, and he worked tirelessly to bring people to God. He founded churches throughout the region and often wrote letters to the new congregations, letters that we continue to hear in church every Sunday.

Let’s talk

Both Peter and Paul turned away from their old lives and went onto new lives, following and helping Jesus. What might their decisions mean for you? How can you follow Jesus?

Both Peter and Paul used skills they already had to serve Jesus. Peter caught people for Jesus, much like he used to catch fish. Paul used the fire in his soul to turn people toward Jesus, instead of away from them. What skills and gifts do you have that you might use as you follow Jesus?



Peter & Paul

Luke the Evangelist



Almighty God, who inspired your servant **Luke** the physician to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of your Son: Graciously continue in your Church this love and power to heal, to the praise and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 244-5)

Tell me a story

There are four gospel writers in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They are each a little different. Luke was a friend and coworker with the apostle Paul and spent two years in jail with Paul for believing in Jesus. Luke was also a doctor, and, as you might guess, good with details.

The gospel writers sometimes have different accounts of the same event. And that is understandable. Think of four people you know: friends, parents, grandparents, siblings. If each of them were to describe Christmas or Easter, they would all tell the story differently. It's like that with the gospel writers. They all love Jesus. They all love God. They all want people to know the story. But they describe events a little differently.

Luke wrote and spoke in Greek, the language of Plato and Aristotle and Socrates. While the other gospel writers and Jesus were Jewish, Luke was not. He was called a Gentile. The word "gospel" means good news. And telling the good news story of God's love for us in Jesus is called "evangelism," so Luke was one of the world's first evangelists.

A loving and kind man, Luke had a special place in his heart for prayer and praising God. Poetry flowed from his heart, especially when recounting stories about Jesus and how people found their happiness in him. Here is an example of a story that only Luke told:

When Jesus was a baby, his parents did what all Jewish parents of firstborn boys did: They brought him to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate him to God. In the temple was an old man named Simeon. Deep in Simeon's heart, he knew one thing: that God's son would be born and would save the world. Waiting a lifetime might have driven other people crazy. But Simeon, a patient and holy man, kept praying.

One day the Holy Spirit told him it was time: Jesus was near. Breathing deeply, he rushed to the temple—and there was Jesus, the Son of God! As was the custom, he took the baby into his arms and blessed him.

"Lord, I can now die in peace," said Simeon. "With my own eyes I have seen the salvation of the world, a light for all, and glory for the people of Israel."

Simeon died a happy old man. He knew that God would keep his promise, and God did. Such a story made Luke happy as well. Perhaps, at the end of his life, he felt a little like Simeon did: his eyes had known the glory of God, and he had done all he could to tell the world about Jesus.

As Luke would say, "Praise be to God!"

Let's talk

Luke was an evangelist, someone who told other people the good news of God. What are some ways that you can share the good news of God with others?

Luke was a great storyteller. What are your favorite stories to tell? How did you learn to tell those stories? What is your favorite part of Jesus' story?

Perpetua and Her Companions



O God the King of saints, you strengthened your servants **Perpetua** and Felicitas and their companions to make a good confession, staunchly resisting, for the cause of Christ, the claims of human affection, and encouraging one another in their time of trial: Grant that we who cherish their blessed memory may share their pure and steadfast victory; and win with them the palm of victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**
(*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 189)

Tell me a story

There is an old belief that children cannot bear hard stories. Yet you may have experienced times when life was hard or unfair. Sometimes people we love go away, or even die. Sometimes the actions of friends, parents, or teachers hurt us. Sometimes the world itself seems scary. That's why it's a good thing to learn the stories of saints.

Saints knew that bad things happen, but they also knew that God loved them. And God loves us, too, more than we can ever know. Even in the darkest of nights, God is always with us, always on our side, always our protector, our friend, our companion.

Few saints knew that truth better than Perpetua (per-PEH-tshoo-uh), who lived about 150 years after Jesus and Paul and Mary Magdalene. Born into a wealthy family in North Africa in about 181 CE, she didn't know much about Jesus or God at first. The more she learned as she prepared to be baptized, however, the more she fell in love. She decided that nothing was more important than Jesus, and she decided to put him first in everything that she did.

In those days, people did not have the freedom to believe in God that most of us have today. Early Christians, in fact, often faced life and death decisions. If they did not swear their allegiance to the Roman Empire, sadly, they were often killed. Sometimes soldiers put them to death. Other times they were eaten by hungry lions in public arenas.

Despite this threat, Perpetua and her servants, Felicitas (fuh-LEE-see-tas) and Revocatus (re-VOH-ki-tuhs), stayed firm. Jesus was their best friend, and they would be his. Even after they were jailed for their faith, they did not waver or change their minds. One of the hardest things for Perpetua was that this meant she had to be separated from her young son. No mother wants to leave her child, but Perpetua decided that the best way to be a mother was to be true and honest and strong about who she was, first and foremost: a Christian, even though it put her life at risk.

Have you ever had a dream that you remembered when you woke up? Perpetua had vivid dreams while in prison that helped her be brave. Once she dreamed she was climbing a ladder to heaven, and another time she saw herself battling the devil—and winning. Even though her father asked her several times to swear that she was loyal to the emperor over God, she would not do it.

Finally, Perpetua was killed because of her faith. To the very end, she kept Jesus at the center of her thoughts and actions. Other Christians were forced to watch her final moments. Her final words to them remain an inspiration to us today: “Stand fast in the faith and love one another!” she said. “And do not let what we suffer be a stumbling block to you.”

Let's talk

Church congregations can often serve as big families. Are there any people in your church family who feel like extra parents or grandparents?

Have you, like Perpetua, ever had a dream that helped you stay brave? Describe it or draw it.

It is hard to lose a parent like Perpetua's son did, when his mother was killed. Although it doesn't happen very often, sometimes parents die or move away from their children. Do you know someone who has lost a parent to death or divorce? Or have you? How can God help us when that happens?

John Chrysostom



O God, you gave your servant **John Chrysostom** grace eloquently to proclaim your righteousness in the great congregation, and fearlessly to bear reproach for the honor of your Name: Mercifully grant to all bishops and pastors such excellence in preaching, and faithfulness in ministering your Word, that your people may be partakers with them of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 151)

Tell me a story

Saints never lived easy lives, for it takes great inner and outer strength to follow Jesus. And although saints can be people of all ages, it takes much vigor to stand up for God for a lifetime.

John Chrysostom (Kriz-zos-tum) was one of those who did. Strong as steel and fiery as the Fourth of July, he was such a good preacher that his name, Chrysostom, means “golden-mouthed.” Early Christians flocked to hear his sermons. Legend has it that listeners became easy targets for pickpockets because they became completely transfixed on John’s preaching, and they weren’t paying attention to anything else.

What made his preaching so good? Three things: he loved Jesus, he told the truth, and he particularly loved poor and ordinary people. In his day, preachers would often speak from the altar, located far away from the listeners. But not John. He was the first to speak from a moveable stand called a pulpit, so that he could be as close as possible to the congregation. God’s love rolled out of him like waves on a beach: never-ending and with great power.

Church and cathedrals are often quiet places. Yet when John preached, applause was so loud that it would rise to the ceiling, bouncing off the stone walls. Such affirmation might have gone to some people’s heads. But not John. He remained a humble servant of God, finding just the right words from deep in his prayer-filled soul.

Living in a time of great political upheaval, John’s influence was felt far and wide among the people of Constantinople. On the side of the common man and woman, John often criticized those in power, including friends and fellow church leaders, when he felt they weren’t living up to the high standards God wanted. And that is what eventually got him in trouble. Empress Eudoxia (U-dox-ee-a), the highest-ranking woman in eastern Greece, started out as his friend, but John made no secret of the fact that he believed she was living a lavish lifestyle. When she had a silver statue of herself built on the cathedral steps, John publicly criticized her.

Angry beyond words at the fiery preacher, Eudoxia argued for the leaders of the church to throw him out of power, and eventually, she succeeded. John was taken on a forced march through the deserts of eastern Turkey, and there he died.

When Pope Innocent found out about the way John had been treated, he insisted that church leaders apologize. In every century since then, John’s words and brilliant preaching style have risen like a beautiful kite in the sky: dancing near the heavens, never to be forgotten, one of a kind.

Let’s talk

What was your favorite part about the sermon this week (or last week)? What do you think makes a sermon good? What are some things that you could do to help you listen to the sermon carefully?

Below is a prayer written by John Chrysostom. Read it aloud, or listen to someone else read it. What does it say? What might it say about the man who wrote it?

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

Patrick & Brigid



Almighty God, in your providence you chose your servant **Patrick** to be the apostle of the Irish people, to bring those who were wandering in darkness and error to the true light and knowledge of you: Grant us so to walk in that light that we may come at last to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 197)

Everliving God, we rejoice today in the fellowship of your blessed servant **Brigid**, and we give you thanks for her life of devoted service. Inspire us with life and light, and give us perseverance to serve you all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 155)

Tell me a story about Patrick

Trying in vain to find a comfortable spot, Patrick leaned back against the sharp rocks for what seemed the thousandth time. Cold and jagged, they reminded him of how much he missed his bed at home and how long it had been since he'd laid down without a care. He thought of how he'd come to Ireland six years before: kidnapped, bound, and carried away from England's shores by pirates. In slavery since, he had tended sheep on the lonely mountain slopes of northwest Ireland.

As lonely as his hours were, Patrick knew the presence of God: strong, bright, comforting. Within the span of a single day, he would say as many as two hundred prayers. Picture Patrick: strong, lanky, rugged, and in continual conversation with Jesus, the true Shepherd.

One night a vision—as lofty as the mountains and as bright as the stars—convinced Patrick to run away from his master in search of freedom and home. Covering some two hundred miles by foot, he arrived at a port where a ship was about to set sail. Penniless, he convinced the crew to allow him safe passage.

Eventually Patrick found his way back to Britain and into the joyful arms of friends and family. But it wasn't enough. Years of walking with God on those Irish hills had changed him into a mountain of a man: immovable in his faith and dedicated to guiding others to Christ. He studied theology and the Bible and was ordained a priest in the Church.

And then came the shocking news, straight from Patrick's heart: he would move back to Ireland, the place where he had toiled so long in slavery. He knew the language and the customs, and he longed to share the news of Christ. While Christianity had touched Ireland's shores hundreds of years previously, the majority of the Irish did not know Jesus in their hearts like Patrick did.

Full of fire, Patrick returned to Ireland. Over the years, he baptized thousands, became a bishop, ordained priests to start new communities of faith, and fought off evil whenever it crossed his path. Rough and rugged and protective of God's people, he remains beloved today and is Ireland's patron saint. On March 17, his special day, wear green in his memory!

Tell me a story about Brigid

Brigid of Kildare was full of stories and life and spirit. She loved all that God had created, and she honored the way the Irish celebrated nature. Through their eyes, she came to love the rugged beauty of the Irish sea, the deep black of the night, and the day-to-day rhythm of sunrise to sunset. Legend has it that before Ireland came to know Christ, fires burned in honor of pagan gods. When Brigid started her community at Kildare, she declared that fire was the light of Christ and that it would bring new life to Ireland.

Every day a monk or a nun would ensure that the fire stayed alive: cracking, sizzling, smoking with warmth and heat. When Brigid died in 470, the flames burned, uninterrupted, for over 1,000 years, until monasteries were destroyed during the Reformation. In 1933, the fire was relit by Brigid's Order and continues to burn to this day.

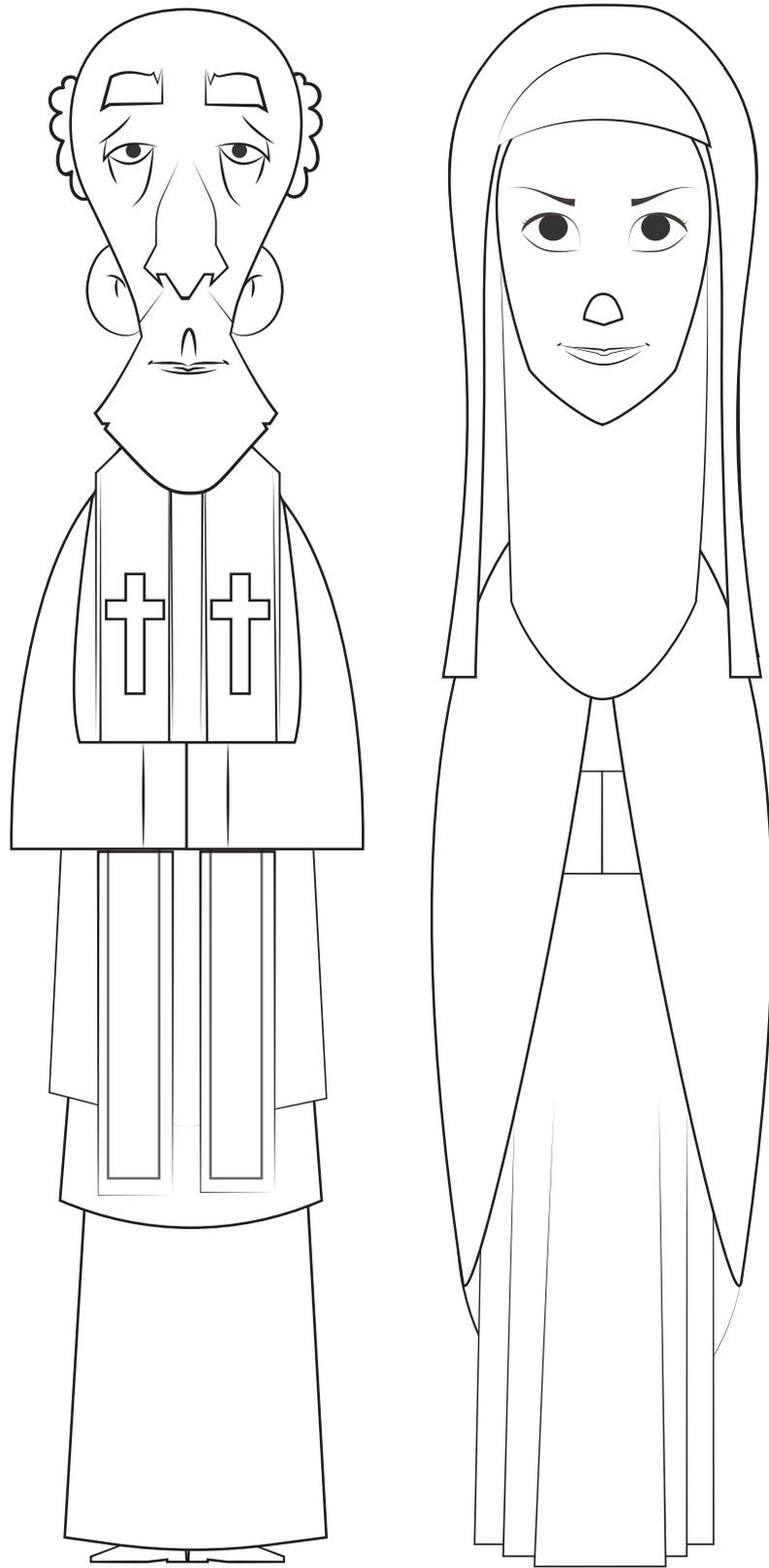
Brigid was known for her great work among Ireland's poor and her labor as an evangelist—one who shares the good news of Jesus. As her community engaged in Bible study and taking care of God's holy word, she shared food and milk with lepers and outcasts, cured the sick, and healed the blind. She was said to have an inexhaustible supply of butter that she would give to anyone who asked. Her joy was in seeing those around her well fed and nourished in soul, spirit, and body. Like Patrick, she continues to be honored and loved in Ireland today. It is said that the ashes of Patrick and Brigid are buried together and that they continue to protect the Irish people, whom they loved so dearly.

Let's talk

Patrick and Brigid were teachers who helped other people learn about God. Who are some people that have helped you learn about God? What are some of the things they have taught you?

Patrick and Brigid used everyday things like plants and light to help teach people about God. What are some everyday things that can help you to remember God and God's love?

Patrick and Brigid are very important to the people of Ireland. Do you know where your family is from? Are there certain saints who are important to your heritage?



Patrick & Brigid

Augustine of Hippo



Lord God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you: Help us, following the example of your servant **Augustine of Hippo**, so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may fully serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 361)

Tell me a story

Sometimes our feelings can be like thunderstorms, full of rage and passion, violence and fury. Other times they can be like soft summer winds: peaceful and soothing.

Augustine of Hippo knew both those extremes. As a young man in northern Africa in the third century, he partied loudly, had too many girlfriends, and swore often. His mother, Monnica, was dreadfully worried about him. No matter what she did and how much she prayed, her son seemed terribly out of reach.

Despite his love for parties, Augustine was a top student. He drank up books like they were water, always thirsty for knowledge. Philosophy and law were favorite subjects. He grew up and became a professor, teaching the subject of rhetoric (re-tore-rick), which is the study of how best to use language to influence others.

Yet words, despite their power, can be empty. Augustine's strong mind and nimble soul kept pushing him to ask deep questions. What is God like? Who is this man called Jesus that I've heard so much about? If he loves me and wants the best from me, what does that mean for the way I act? All the while, his mom kept praying that her son would come closer to Jesus.

Finally, in his early thirties, Augustine began the process of study that would lead to his baptism. In those days, most people weren't baptized as babies. Adults were allowed to present themselves for baptism only after long periods of reading the Bible, asking deep questions, and meditating on the nature of God. And Augustine, more than many others, needed that time.

Pacing back and forth in his garden one day, he longed for clarity. Questions about faith and God flooded his brain like spring rains. A brilliant thinker, he would not reduce his faith to simple yes and no answers. And it was in that moment of intense inner dialogue that a child's voice over the garden wall broke through the stillness with four simple words: "Take up and read." Augustine believed that God was speaking to him through that child's voice, and he wanted to obey.

Opening his Bible, he read the first thing he saw: "Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires (Romans 13:3-14).

The words spoke straight to him. Augustine was ready. He asked to be baptized, and his life turned around. With as much passion as he had brought to living wildly, he put aside everything else and became a great church leader, writer, and bishop, one who deeply influenced the Christian church, even unto this very day.

Let's talk

Consider your baptism. Have you been baptized? Do you remember? Who are your godparents? Where were you baptized? In the service of Holy Baptism, we pray that those we are baptizing might have "an inquiring and discerning heart." How is that true of Augustine? What does that mean for you?

Have you ever been told that you ask too many questions? How did it feel to hear that? Why is it important to ask questions about our faith?

God wants to know everything that is on our minds. How do you best share what's on your mind with God?

John of Damascus



Confirm our minds, O Lord, in the mysteries of the true faith, set forth with power by your servant **John of Damascus**; that we, with him, confessing Jesus to be true God and true Man, and singing the praises of the risen Lord, may, by the power of the resurrection, attain to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 93)

Tell me a story

Whether we're young or old, most of us don't like fighting. The saints of God faced that same problem. They didn't like fights either, but because they stood up for Jesus, they often landed right in the middle of big conflicts.

John of Damascus was no exception. Born into a prominent Christian family in the Muslim town of Damascus, Syria, John chose to be a monk at about age forty, close to the year 740 CE. Monks live simple but deep lives: they pray, write, grow food, study, and worship God. They promise to live a life of poverty, to stay single, and to do what God and their leader tells them to do. Their first job is prayer, and because they live so deliberately, they are said to live a contemplative lifestyle.

Knowing that prayer takes many different forms, John wrote magnificent poetry, deep theological essays, and beautiful hymns. On Easter Day, two of his hymns, "Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain" and "The Day of Resurrection! Earth Tell It Out Abroad!" are still sung at many churches around the world.

Like John, his fellow monks looked deeply into themselves to find the best way to express God's love. Some meditated for hours. Others copied and illustrated Bible passages. All spent considerable time on their knees in prayer. Monks believe that we can discover God, not only by looking out at the world God made and at Jesus, but also by looking deeply within ourselves as well. That is part of why monks pray so much.

In such times, where God is close and the human spirit is receptive, brilliant art and literary forms often emerge. In John's monastery and others, monks created icons: a special art form where the artist carefully draws and then paints a picture of Jesus, Mary, the disciples, or their followers. If you've looked at a painting in a museum, or spent time creating a painting yourself, you know the energy and thought that goes into such work.

Unfortunately for John and for his fellow monks, the Iconoclastic Controversy (Eye-conno-clastic Con-tro-versie) exploded onto the world stage right at that time. Known as "breakers of images," the Iconoclasts demanded that all such images were to be destroyed. Their reasoning? The second commandment that God gave to Moses said that God's people were not to worship any graven images, just God.

John came to the rescue, with carefully thought-out theological reasons. He said that to draw strength from such images is a way of growing closer to God, not farther away. He knew that objects that bring people closer to God was not the same as worshiping the object itself. And even though he was Christian, he was protected by the Muslim community in his right to practice his religion as he saw fit.

John lived a long and full life and died at the age of seventy-four. Looking back, he must have seen the pieces of his life all fit together: a Christian upbringing, life in Muslim community, the influence of the East, a community in which to grow and to express his thoughts, the love of fellow monks, and the expression of God's love in artistic and intellectual work.

John of Damascus had lived a very good life, indeed, and he touches our lives still, every time we sing one of his Easter hymns.

Let's talk

Two of John's famous hymns that we sing in church every Easter season are: "Come, ye faithful, raise the strain," (*The Hymnal 1982*, #199, #200) and "The day of resurrection! Earth tell it out abroad!" (#210). Do you recognize those hymns? Perhaps a musically inclined person could play or sing the hymns for you. Remember that they are about 1,300 years old and written by a person who loved Jesus a great deal.

Consider in your mind a simple picture of your parents or grandparents. You know that the picture is not them, yet it helps you think of them; it helps you see them. How is that like looking at an icon?

Hildegard of Bingen



God of all times and seasons: Give us grace that we, after the example of your servant **Hildegard**, may both know and make known the joy and jubilation of being part of your creation, and show forth your glory not only with our lips but in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 383)

Tell me a story

Have you ever seen a picture of the ocean? Oceans look beautiful and majestic in pictures or on TV. But have you ever seen the ocean up close...touched it, smelled it, felt its power and its size? An ocean is much different in person. You can walk and play along its edge, or you might fly over it and look at it, but it's so deep in places that no one has ever been to the bottom of it.

Or consider campfires. On TV, they look interesting, no doubt. But when you stand next to them, you will see crackling and hissing and have to jump back if you get too close. They can whip up and burn out of control on a moment's notice—or they can be so tame that you can toast marshmallows over them.

Some people have a tendency to treat God like a tame fire or a placid ocean. But like both, God isn't someone we can box in, or even fully define. We know that God is love, but God's love is bigger and deeper than the universe...and the universe is bigger than we can even imagine.

Hildegard of Bingen, a famous mystic, writer, and healer who was born in 1098 in Germany, understood and expressed the depths of God better than just about anyone. For most of her life, she saw dazzling visions of God and Jesus: brilliant, colorful, musical, life-changing images in three dimensions. But not knowing what people would think, she kept her visions locked tightly inside.

When she was eight years old, her parents sent her to live with a woman named Jetta, an anchorite (ang-KUH-rahyt). Anchorites lived their whole life in a very small room, like a prison cell, where they would pray and chant prayers. Such a commitment was seen as a noble profession...but apparently for her (and thankfully for us), God did not think it the right vocation for Hildegard.

At age fifteen, Hildegard committed herself to being a Benedictine nun. Like other monastics, she devoted herself in prayer and study to God, committing to a life of poverty, chastity (remaining single), and obedience. When she was thirty-eight years old, she was elected as abbess, or leader, of the women. And then five years later, she experienced a turning point in her life.

Hildegard told of the brilliant vision she had seen, and the words she had heard: "O fragile one, ash of ash and corruption of corruption, say and write what you see." And from that point, that's just what Hildegard did. Over the next ten years, she recorded hundreds of visions—ones that she had seen for years but was scared to share. No longer did she have to keep them bottled up within her. No longer would she stumble under their intensity.

She was a visionary, to be sure. She was also a poet, composer, theologian, playwright, doctor and twelfth-century pharmacist, developing over 200 herbal remedies. She even wrote about healing people from cancer—a disease that stymies doctors today.

Religious leaders, including the Pope, respected her and sought her opinion. At age sixty-five, she began a four-part preaching tour, which was highly unusual (and wonderful) for a woman to undertake.

Hildegard knew that God is not always understandable and is much deeper than we can know. And that is like Hildegard herself, for she developed a coded language of over 900 words, with an alphabet of twenty-three letters. To this day, no one has been able to successfully crack the code.

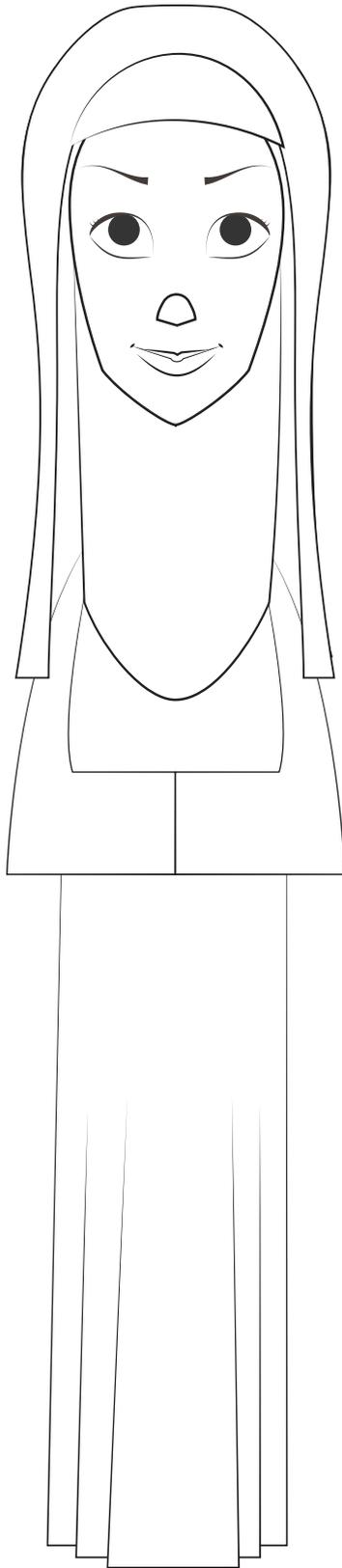
When Hildegard died, at the age of eighty-one, her sisters reported that a bright light from heaven in the shape of a cross passed over their convent. Was it Hildegard joining her beloved Jesus in heaven? Or was it Jesus coming to hold her in his arms and see her safely home? Like her secret language, no one knows for sure. What we do know is this: the world is a far better place because of artists and creative thinkers like Hildegard of Bingen.

Let's talk

What do you think was the main message of Hildegard's visions?

Sometimes it is hard to see things differently than other people do. What can Hildegard teach us about the value of the arts in our life of faith?

Hildegard used her talents and gifts to tell other people about God. What do you think you're particularly good at? How can you use your skills and gifts to tell people about God and Jesus?



Hildegard of Bingen

Clare of Assisi



O God, whose blessed Son became poor that we through his poverty might be rich: Deliver us from an inordinate love of this world, that we, inspired by the devotion of your servant **Clare**, may serve you with singleness of heart, and attain to the riches of the age to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 341)

Tell me a story

The frantic sounds of battle—horses neighing, soldiers shouting, swords being unleashed—awoke Sister Clare, an ill forty-year old woman. Not that she was sleeping much these days, for the battle outside her walls had been raging for days. But tonight was different. Enemy warriors were on the move, preparing to climb up the walls of her small home. Within a few minutes, they could be smashing windows and doors, drawing knives to the throats of Clare and her sisters.

And these were no normal set of sisters. Clare and her companions lived in community, as if they were sisters, doing all they could to serve the poor in Jesus' name. They went barefoot, slept on the floor, lived only on what others shared with them, and did not marry or have children so that they might be highly focused on their work.

In that moment Clare stood tall. She knew what she must do. She would call on God. Praying as she sped down a dark hallway, Clare thought of the night so long ago that had changed everything. Her father had wanted her to marry, yet she had heard another voice calling her: the voice of God. She had run away one night, much like this one, to join the work of Francis, a monk and servant of the poor who was her friend. He had inspired her like no other.

Clare entered a small chapel, where the women gathered up to seven times a day to pray and sing hymns of praise. Quickly she found what she sought: bread and wine blessed by a priest and set aside.

Once back in her room, she marched bravely to the small window that overlooked the little town. And then she did what a priest at an altar does: she held the bread up as a sign of Jesus' presence and protection.

The soldiers fled.

Was it the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ? Was it something else? Clare did not know what the next day would bring, but she knew this much: that she would give it all to God.

She went back to bed and became strong and healthy again, to work for Jesus.

Let's talk

Clare's given name was *Chiara*, the Italian word for bright light. She was indeed a bright light for many. What is the story behind your name? How might you be a bright light for others?

Clare's father had planned a traditional life for her of marriage and children, but God had other things in mind for her, and she listened to God. What might God be calling you to do with your life?

Clare held up the Body of Christ to frighten the enemy, yet it was bread blessed by a priest that she was holding in her hands. Have you seen a priest bless bread and wine on Sunday morning? How is Jesus with us in that moment, and in that bread?

Martin Luther



O God, our refuge and our strength: You raised up your servant **Martin Luther** to reform and renew your Church in the light of your word. Defend and purify the Church in our own day and grant that, through faith, we may boldly proclaim the riches of your grace which you have made known in Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 173)

Tell me a story

Have you ever been so scared so that you were shaking, almost unable to move? That kind of fear and trembling struck a young man named Martin Luther in Germany some 500 years ago—and it had worldwide ramifications.

Here's what happened: Martin's father had decided that his son should be a lawyer. Lawyers are helpful to have in a family, and they usually earn good money. But a trip home from visiting his family changed his life. Martin climbed aboard his faithful horse and started the trip back to school. Peaceful clouds overhead began acting like angry warriors, thrusting and parrying, using every available tool—thunder, lightening, hail, and hurricane-strength winds—to blast the world apart. Or so it seemed to Martin.

When a fierce lightening bolt seemed to lunge right for him, a prayer burst from his lips: "Help, Saint Anna, I will become a monk!" (Saint Anna is the Blessed Virgin Mary's mother and Jesus' grandmother.) Martin kept his promise, taking standard monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—and leaving his father outraged.

But God must have known that Martin's voice was desperately needed to set things right. As sometimes happens with institutions, the Roman Catholic church had fallen on hard times, and clergy were doing terrible things. Some priests were accepting money to supposedly offer forgiveness to people who had already died, even if the people had committed terrible sins when they were alive.

The fact that clergy were accepting this kind of payout enraged Martin Luther, who knew that the Church's main mission was to help the common man and woman and to take care of those whom Jesus would serve first: the poor and the outcast. And Martin knew something else as well: we can't earn our way to heaven based on our behavior. We are granted eternal life through our faith, our trust in God's love for us. No amount of good deeds by themselves can do the trick.

In a surge of anger toward the church's poor leadership, Martin nailed 95 points of belief—known as "theses"—to the heavy wooden doors at the castle church in Wittenburg. It was like broadcasting his thoughts on the Internet, as a challenge. "Here I stand," he said, according to those who knew and loved him. "Here I stand, for I can do no other."

His brave words encouraged other scholars to step forth and help the church change its ways. Like breaking waves on a beach, what was positive about the church stayed, and what was negative washed away, all across Europe and England. Because of the Protestant Reformation and the invention of the printing press, people were finally able to read the Bible for themselves, approach God directly, and recover the joy of faith.

So the next time you feel yourself scared, and want to change course on something you are doing, listen carefully, as did Martin. It just may be the voice of the Holy Spirit talking—and the Spirit may have important work for you to do, too.

Let's talk

Martin Luther dedicated much of his life to making sure that ordinary people could read the Bible. Do you read the Bible? When and how? What is your favorite Bible story? Why do you like it?

Martin Luther thought it was important to use both our hearts and our minds to help us know the right thing to do. How can you listen to your heart when making tough decisions? How can you use your mind?

Have you ever been as scared as Martin was? Did any good come out of it? If so, what?

Thomas Cranmer



Keep us, O Lord, constant in faith and zealous in witness, that, like your servants Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, and **Thomas Cranmer**, we may live in your fear, die in your favor, and rest in your peace; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 421)

Tell me a story

Picture a very dark night. Perhaps you've been camping and know how dark it is outside in the woods at night. Or think of your room when all the lights are off—it's hard to see anything! Now visualize a candle in that space—instantly things are different. You can see; you know where you are, all is clear.

Saints are like that: lights in a dark world. They fight evil powers because they follow the brightest light of all: Jesus. Their faith burns brightest especially when all seems lost, and they light the way for us, even centuries later.

Thomas Cranmer of England was one of those great light-bearing saints, although it came at great expense to him. He spoke English—albeit an old-fashioned English, full of words like “thee” and “thou” and “mayest” and “holpen.” And he lived in a dangerous time we call the Protestant Reformation.

When we go to church on Sunday, much of what we actually say is because of Thomas. That's because he was what we call the “architect” of our *Book of Common Prayer*. Architects take ideas and raw materials and put them together to make buildings. Thomas built the first *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549 by masterfully weaving together ancient prayers and hymns, Bible readings, and his own, beautifully written, new prayers.

It was as if he and the other Protestant reformers, Martin Luther from Germany and John Calvin from Switzerland, were building a beautiful new garden for the church: a garden where Christians could stroll with Jesus and sit down and talk to him, one-on-one. Before then, church services had been in Latin, not the language of the people. Some top church leaders were corrupt, promising things they could not give. Thomas and the others worked to pull the bad weeds so that all would be clean and new.

Yet evil lurked right outside the walls of that garden. Thomas had served as Archbishop of Canterbury and advised King Henry VIII, who desperately wanted a son to survive him on the throne. King Henry is known in history for marrying eight different women in search of that healthy son. Thomas struggled to help him but was tossed like a ship at sea during political and religious chaos in England.

When King Henry died, Thomas was at his bedside, ever the loyal companion. England's next successor to the throne was a woman that neither Henry nor Thomas wanted: Henry's daughter, Mary. Within a few short months, Thomas was a marked man. Queen Mary, known as Bloody Mary, had Thomas imprisoned, and eventually burned at the stake in Oxford.

Despite the flames, and perhaps because of them, Thomas stood up even more strongly for his beliefs and for the Lord Jesus Christ. Quoting Saint Stephen, a young man who had been killed for his faith shortly after the death of Jesus, Thomas called out: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit...I see heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.”

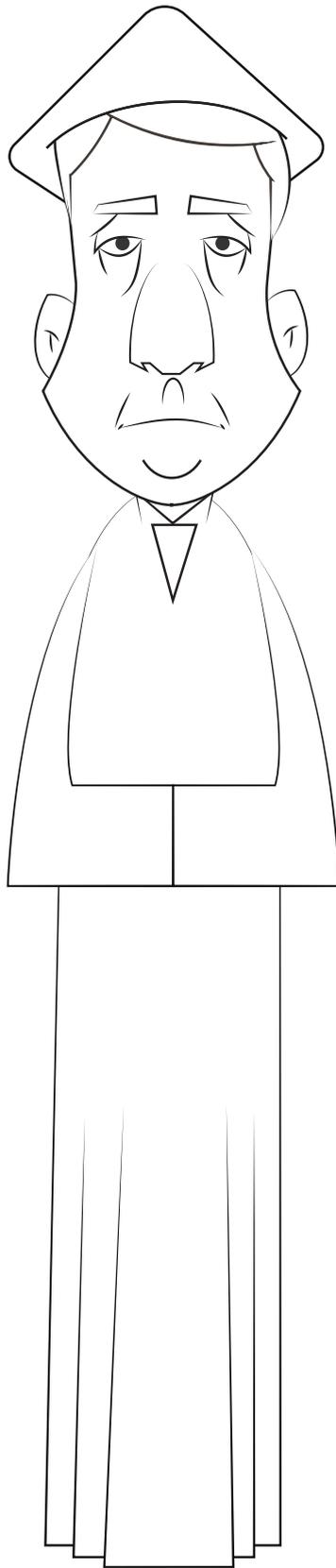
Thomas' great gift to the church was in crafting beautiful prayers for all to say together. It is said that because of his work, angels and archangels in heaven sing more clearly, and more in unison, than ever before.

Let's talk

What stands out for you about Thomas Cranmer? What questions might you have about him? Or, if you were talking with him, what would you ask him?

Why is it important for people to pray in the language they know best? What languages do people in your family speak? Are they different or the same as the ones you and your friends use?

Do you have a favorite prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer*? What is it and why do you love it?



Thomas Cranmer

George Herbert



Our God and King, you called your servant **George Herbert** from the pursuit of worldly honors to be a pastor of souls, a poet, and a priest in your temple: Give us grace, we pray, joyfully to perform the tasks you give us to do, knowing that nothing is menial or common that is done for your sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 179)

Tell me a story

As night settled in on the small village of Bemerton, England, George Herbert—pastor, poet, and priest—could have done what most townspeople did: sit before his warm hearth and turn into bed early. But George was a writer, and he did what writers must do: he put pen to paper and wrote.

Listen to the poetry that flowed from his soul:

King of glory, King of peace, I will love thee
and that love may never cease, I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request, thou has heard me
and those didst note my working breast, thou has spared me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven, I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven, I will raise thee.
Small it is in this poor sort to enroll thee,
e'en eternity's too short to extol thee.

(The Hymnal 1982, #382)

By day, George did what clergy do: he visited the sick and prayed with them, baptized babies, buried the dead, preached, and led worship on both weekdays and on Sunday. And by all accounts, this work gave him great joy and helped him enter more deeply into his writing. He wasn't just writing into empty space. He was writing about how God's love transformed his life and the lives of those he served.

Ordained to the priesthood at the relatively late age of thirty-six, he could have been a professor at Trinity College in Cambridge, where he had been a brilliant student and orator, speaking for the community on public occasions. Or he could have been a lifetime member of Parliament, where he had served for two years.

Yet something was pulling at his heart. And that something was the life of writing. God was calling him into a life of reflection as both priest and writer. Answering that call in a small parish, among country people, George composed hundreds of written pieces, including a number of poems and hymns that are popular today.

George died at the age of thirty-nine from tuberculosis. Fortunately, just before his death, he turned his masterpiece, *The Temple*, over to his good friend Nicholas Ferrar.

"If you think these poems might help any poor dejected soul, see if you can get them published," George said. "And if not, burn them!"

Thankfully Nicholas Ferrar realized the value of his friend's poems and published them as soon as he could.

Close your eyes now and listen to the words of George Herbert, a priest, pastor, and poet. And if you have an organist or musician among you, play the music as you sing, for we find this hymn in our hymnal as well.

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
such way as gives us breath;
such a truth as ends all strife;
such a life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
such a light as shows a feast;
such a feast as mends in length;
such a strength as makes his guest.

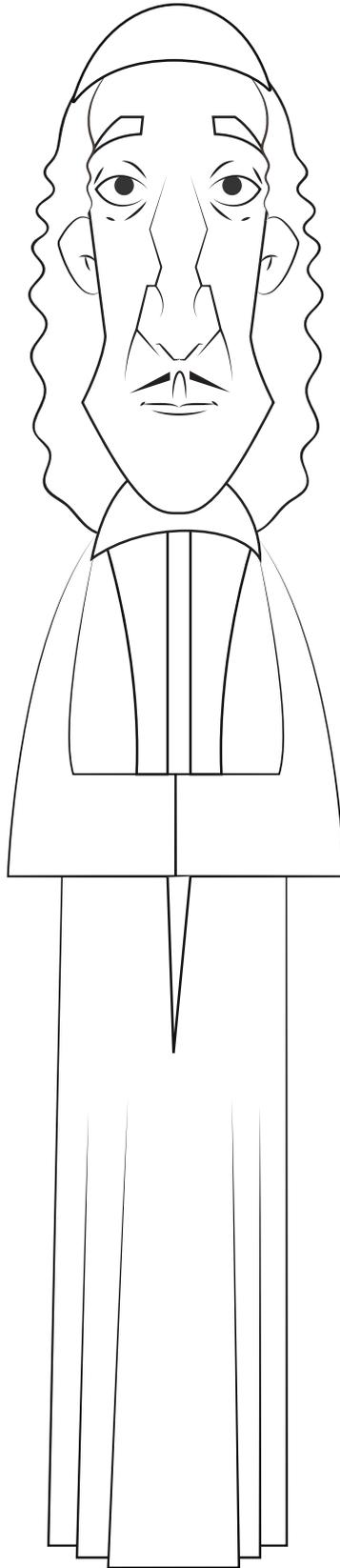
Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
such a joy as none can move; such a love as none can part;
such a heart as joys in love.
(The Hymnal 1982, #487)

Let's talk

Do you like to write? Or paint? Or draw? Or play music? How can those gifts be a sign of God working in you?

Is there a hymn, song, or poem that makes you feel close to God (it doesn't have to be "religious")? What is it and how does it draw you near to God?

There were a lot of different things that George Herbert could have done, but he felt God "tugging at his heart" and that guided his path. Have you ever felt God tugging at your heart? What was that like?



George Herbert

Johann Sebastian Bach



Almighty God, beautiful in majesty and majestic in holiness, who teaches us in Holy Scripture to sing your praises and who gave your musicians **Johann Sebastian Bach**, George Frederick Handel and Henry Purcell grace to show forth your glory in their music: Be with all those who write or make music for your people, that we on earth may glimpse your beauty and know the inexhaustible riches of your new creation in Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Holy Women, Holy Men*, p. 491)

Tell me a story

Pretend that you are in a beautiful old Lutheran church in the small town of Leipzig, Germany, in the eighteenth century. Stretching across the red brick floor are beautiful color panels, thrown down by the early morning sun pouring through stained glass windows. Roosters crow outside. Church bells toll. And then, as a blast of organ music seems to shake the building, you realize you are not alone.

Looking up toward the organ loft, you see a white-haired man. Now he is playing soft and melodic sounds, now wild and discordant notes. He stops. He scribbles. He talks to himself. He hums. And then he is at it again: a cadence of music, writing, singing, sighing, and more music.

A piece of paper flutters down from the loft, full of hand-written musical notes, signed with the initials: "S.D.G." You wonder: What's the man's name? Who could S.D.G. be?

And then the door to the sacristy opens. In walks a priest, to whom you hand the paper.

"Do you know who's up there?" he asks. You shake your head.

"That's our church musician, Johann Sebastian Bach," the priest says. "But he signs 'S.D.G' on most of his church music. In Latin it means, *Soli Deo Gloria*...Glory to God alone."

"Good morning, Mr. Bach," the priest waves up. "Just some simple church music tomorrow? You know, just regular Sunday church music."

The eighth child in a musical family, Johann soaked up music like a young oak tree. He grew to be one of the most famous composers in the history of the world. Nearly all of his music was written for use in churches.

Brilliant artists are not always appreciated in their own time, and Bach was no exception. His creative music did not always fit what people were expecting on a Sunday morning. But when it was all done, Bach followed the voice within him, and this voice has lasted. Most importantly, Johann Sebastian Bach understood what and who he was creating for: *Soli Deo Gloria*. Glory to God alone.

Let's talk

When you engage in your favorite activity, how do you ask God to be a part of it? How might you dedicate your activities to God, like J.S. Bach did?

Bach wrote his music "S.D.G.", for God's glory alone. How might we offer the music we sing or play in church only to God's glory?

Twenty hymns in The Episcopal Church hymnal were composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. One of the most famous is "A Mighty Fortress is our God" (Hymns 687, 888). The words were written by Martin Luther, the Lutheran theologian that was Bach's greatest influence. Grab a hymnal and read along. Or sing along, if possible. What do you think is the most important theme? How do the words complement the music?

Charles Wesley



Lord God, you inspired your servants John and **Charles Wesley** with burning zeal for the sanctification of souls, and endowed them with eloquence in speech and song: Kindle in your Church, we entreat you, such fervor, that those whose faith has cooled may be warmed, and those who have not known Christ may turn to him and be saved; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 187)

Tell me a story

Have you learned to ride a bike? Have you planted a garden? Have you studied really hard for a particular test at school? Have you cared for a dog or a cat or a fish?

If so, you would probably agree that success does not happen within a few minutes. You need to feed dogs and train them over time. Riding a bike takes practice. Gathering—and eating—vegetables from a garden takes planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting. And being good at school means doing the hard work, day after day, and year after year.

And sometimes, as hard as you work at something, it may not go the way you want. Sometimes animals die, despite our love and care for them. Sometimes we fall off our bikes. Sometimes gardens wither away or weeds overtake them. And even if you've studied hard at school, you may not be good at a particular subject.

It was like that for Charles Wesley back in eighteenth-century England. Born into a family of nineteen children (he was the eighteenth child), he and his brother John were faithful and dedicated members of Christ Church, Oxford. Gathering regularly with his friends for Holy Communion, Bible study, and prayer, Charles and his friends were teased by other students—snidely called “Methodists”—because they were so methodical in prayer.

Yet because they loved God, they persevered, using an early edition of the very *Book of Common Prayer* that we use in The Episcopal Church today. Following in the footsteps of their father, Charles and John were ordained as priests in the Church of England and then set out for the United States as missionaries.

Their high hopes, however, were soon dashed. Their message was not heard in America, and they returned to England within a few years. Yet their faith in Jesus continued to burn strong within them.

On Pentecost Sunday—May 21 in 1738—Charles felt what he described as “heart palpitations.” John felt the same sensation within several days. Their faith told them that it was God speaking within them, turning their already-warm hearts for God into burning hearts. Enlivened by a new wave of energy, Charles and John preached across England to those especially on the margins of society: the working poor, the homeless, and those in poverty. They still believed in deep practices of prayer and study, known as The Method, but at the heart of their faith was a personal relationship with Jesus and his ability to change every human heart.

Preaching in every field and factory possible, the faith of Charles and John Wesley led to a massive revival in England. And Charles did more than preach. One of the greatest hymn composers of all time, he wrote over 6,000 hymns, many of which are sung in churches today, including The Episcopal Church. Charles knew that hymns brought people closer to God by speaking to our hearts through music and poetry combined.

Though Charles remained a faithful member of the Church of England until the day he died, his vision and energy also gave birth to the Methodist Church, which now, in various forms, numbers more than 100 million members around the world.

Charles Wesley's faith was not born on that fateful day where he felt his heart race. He had prepared the way for Jesus through years of prayer, Bible study, and reflection with other Christians. He had experienced years of difficult times in his ministry and taunting from fellow students.

Yet he kept the flames of faith tended in his heart—and from them, God was able to bring forth a blazing fire, one that would inspire millions of people around the world to know and love God. As Charles said so well said in one of his hymns: “Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees; and looks to God alone; Laughs at impossibilities, and cries it shall be done.”

Let's talk

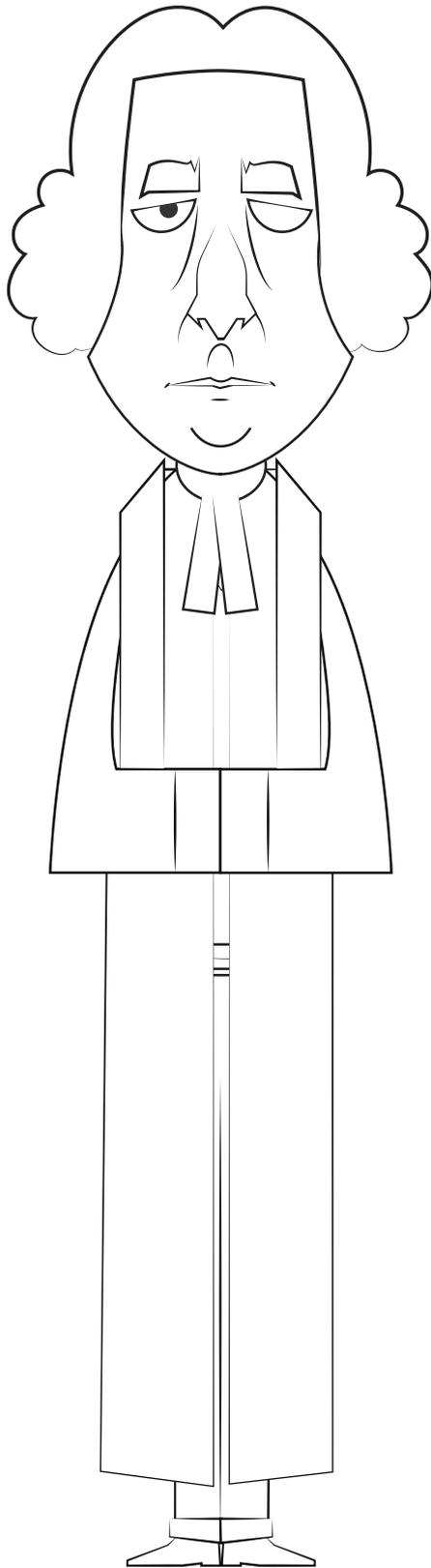
What is one of your favorite hymns that we sing in church? What do you like about it?

Charles Wesley kept working at his faith until it blossomed for him. What is something you've worked hard at, and perhaps had a setback or two, before it came alive for you?

Charles Wesley's brother John was an important partner for him in his life of faith.

Who are some friends or family members that are important partners in your life of faith?

What do they do to help support you?



Charles Wesley

Samuel Seabury



We give you thanks, O Lord our God, for your goodness in bestowing upon this Church the gift of the episcopate, which we celebrate in this remembrance of the consecration of **Samuel Seabury**; and we pray that, joined together in unity with our bishops, and nourished by your holy Sacraments, we may proclaim the Gospel of redemption with apostolic zeal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 453)

Tell me a story

Have you ever seen a bishop? Bishops are an important part of The Episcopal Church. And for that matter, so are you.

Our church family works a bit like your own extended family. You might have cousins, or brothers or sisters. You were born to parents. And somewhere back there, whether you have known them or not, are your grandparents and great-grandparents. Everyone has a part to play, and everyone is equally valuable in God's eyes.

In our Episcopal Church family, we have what we call three orders of ordained ministers: bishops, priests, and deacons. Priests bless the bread and wine at the altar and help us remember that Jesus died for us. Deacons remind us to go out into the world and serve others and bring the concerns of the world back to the altar. Bishops ordain people to be priests and deacons, confirm others to be God's everyday agents in the world, and lead dioceses—or groups of churches—so we can all stick together.

The largest group of ministers in the Church, however, is known as the laity. That is about 99 percent of all the members of the Church, which includes YOU! The laity's main job is to make Jesus known in the world: in the workplace, in schools, in hospitals, and at home.

Knowing what you now know, think about when this country was just becoming the United States of America. Like families do sometimes, the country was going through a complicated time.

There were no bishops, and even priests and deacons had to go to England to be ordained. Yet at that time, England and America were fighting with each other. Clergy had to swear allegiance to King George of England, and they were often mistrusted and beaten for their allegiance to England.

For a while, churches just locked their doors, hoping the problem would solve itself. But problems rarely do. As our country grew stronger and more independent, clergy in Connecticut decided that the Church here in America really did need its own bishop. It is good when families can be strong, and they wanted our church family to be strong.

They elected a priest from Connecticut, Samuel Seabury, to go to England and seek ordination. Samuel agreed and sailed off across the rough Atlantic Ocean, putting his future in God's hands. Once in England, however, Samuel was turned down by English bishops because he would not swear allegiance to King George.

Samuel, however, would not be put off. He believed that God had called him to make the new church strong in America. Eventually he found his way to Scotland, and because Scotland was not happy with Britain at the time either, several bishops there were pleased to ordain Samuel Seabury as America's first bishop.

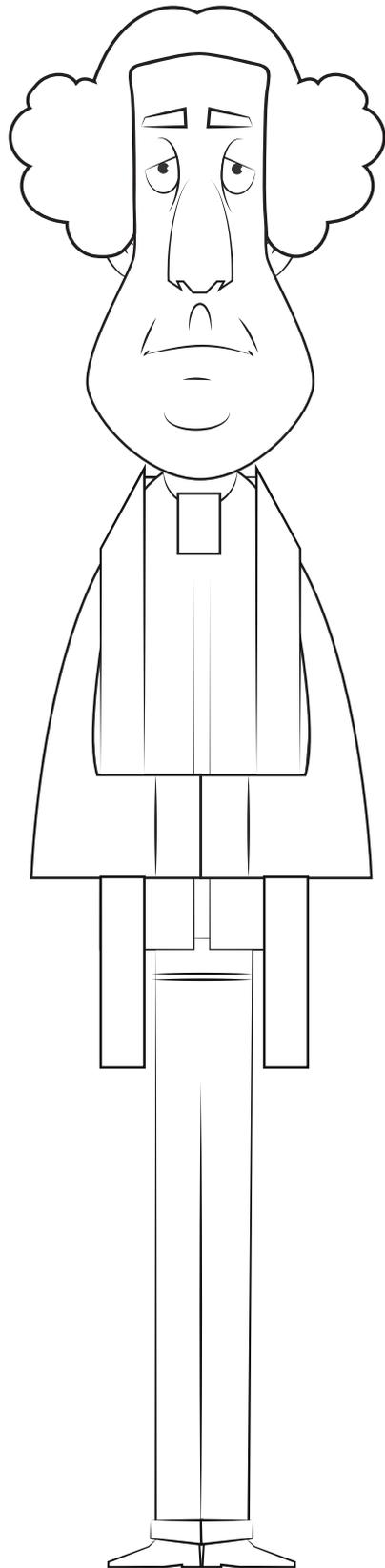
Tensions were still strong when Samuel arrived home—but The Episcopal Church in America was standing now on its own two feet, much like the new young United States of America. Over the years, England and the United States grew to be close friends, or allies, and The Episcopal Church in America grew stronger as well. Today there are over 300 active bishops in the Church doing the job they are called to do: ordaining, confirming, and leading.

Let's talk

Have you ever seen the bishop at your church? What do you remember about the bishop's visit?

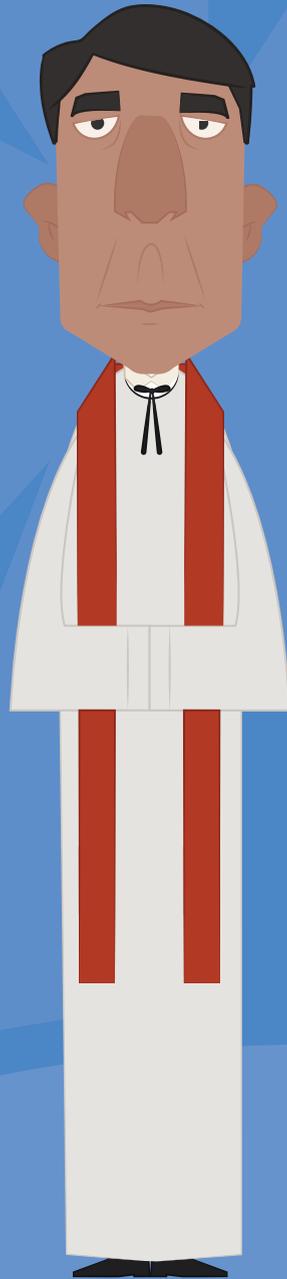
The mitre is one of the symbols of the bishop; another symbol is the crozier, or bishop's staff. A bishop's staff is shaped like a shepherd's crook. That's because bishops are like shepherds, who lead their flocks on behalf of Jesus, the Great Shepherd. Have you ever seen a shepherd with a sheep? Why are Christians compared to sheep in God's eyes?

We heard in Samuel Seabury's story that everyone has a part to play in the church family. What do you think is your part to play in our church family?



Samuel Seabury

Enmegahbowh



Almighty God, you led your pilgrim people of old with fire and cloud: Grant that the ministers of your Church, following the example of blessed **Enmegahbowh**, may stand before your holy people, leading them with fiery zeal and gentle humility. This we ask through Jesus, the Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 285)

Tell me a story

What should have been a pleasant sail that day on Lake Superior for Enmegahbowh (N-muh-gab-bwah), and his wife, Iron Sky Woman, was anything but calm. Each wave seemed to scream its own warning. Risk! Peril! Chaos!

Despite the danger, however, Enmegahbowh knew he had made the right decision. Trained as a medicine man for his Ottawa tribe in Canada and brought up as a Christian with Methodist roots, he worked as a missionary in the upper Midwest. Most recently, he had operated a small mission school for Native children in northern Minnesota—but then discovered the Methodists planned to abandon their mission work.

Discouraged, he decided to return home. Surely God could use him there. With each minute the waves grew bigger and more menacing. Flinging the boat around like barn cats do with mice, the waves seemed intent on crashing the vessel—and its trembling passengers—into the frigid waters.

In that moment, looking into the jaws of death, Enmegahbowh heard a voice. “Ah, my friend Enmegahbowh, I know you,” it said. “You are a fugitive. You have sinned and disobeyed God. Instead of going to the city of Nineveh, where God sent you to spread his word to the people, you started to go, and then turned aside. You are now on your way to the city of Tarshish...”

Enmegahbowh knew at once to whom the voice belonged: the Old Testament prophet Jonah, swallowed by a whale himself while running away from work God had called him to do—preach the word of God in the far-away city of Tarshish. But Jonah didn’t want to go to there, for the people had been known to be evil and murderous. After three days, God caused the whale to spit out Jonah onto a beach. Straightaway, the prophet went to Tarshish—and his words were well received.

I hear you, God, thought Enmegahbowh. I hear you. Like Jonah, Enmegahbowh listened—and reversed his course. Upon embarking, he met the Rev. Josiah Gear, who welcomed him into The Episcopal Church, giving him *The Book of Common Prayer*. Josiah also introduced him to Bishop James Lloyd Breck, who was planting churches throughout the West.

Enmegahbowh was soon ordained to the priesthood, the first recognized Native American priest in the United States. Committed to the cause of nonviolence, Enmegahbowh worked as a bridge between the Native American community and those who were new to this country. Brave and stalwart, he saved the lives of those in both communities—and suffered for this as well, for it is hard being a peace worker.

Enmegahbowh’s work among the Native Americans was legendary. He oversaw the development of biblical and worship material in Ojibway, and he helped build strong communities of faith throughout northern Minnesota and adjacent states. After fifty-four years of working among his people, Enmegahbowh died at the age of ninety-five, full of years, and a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. Like the prophet Jonah, Enmegahbowh did what God wanted him to do...and the world was a better place for it.

Let’s talk

The story of Jonah was very important to Enmegahbowh. What is your favorite Bible story? What character in the Bible do you feel connected to and why?

Enmegahbowh most often referred to God as “the Great Spirit.” How might this name help us understand God better?

Enmegahbowh was the first Native American priest in the United States. Have you had the experience of being first at something? What was that like?

C.S. Lewis



O God of searing truth and surpassing beauty, we give you thanks for **Clive Staples Lewis**, whose sanctified imagination lights fires of faith in young and old alike. Surprise us also with your joy and draw us into that new and abundant life which is ours in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 465)

Tell me a story

Imagine what you would see if you could walk around in the head of C.S. Lewis—one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. You might see a giant lion named Aslan. You might see a lamppost in the woods, drawing you into one of the greatest book series of all times, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. You might see children named Peter and Lucy and Edward and Susan, fighting a shape-changing white witch.

On the other hand, given C.S. Lewis' day job as an English professor at Oxford and Cambridge, you might hear reflections on playwrights such as Shakespeare and Marlowe and poets like Spenser and Keats. You might hear his thoughts as he meets weekly in an Oxford pub called "The Bird and Baby" for lunch on Tuesdays with friends, to discuss weighty subjects like trolls, hobbits, theology, imagination, and God.

Ah, God!

Despite being one of the world's most beloved Christian writers, C.S. Lewis declared he was an atheist when he was fifteen years old. An atheist is someone who does not believe in God. Many of us are baptized and sometimes take God for granted. But not C.S.—or Jack, as his friends called him. (C.S. stood for "Clive Staples," which seemed a bit formal for his friends.)

It was all or nothing for him, which is why, when he found his faith fifteen years later, he became one of the most articulate spokesmen for Christianity of the twentieth century: writing books, delivering radio talks, attending church, speaking on moral values based on God's love, and gathering with friends. He describes the night he finally and fully believed, at Magdalen College, part of Oxford University:

"You must picture me alone in that room at Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me in the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." (Surprised by Joy)

A deeply honest writer, C.S. Lewis was not afraid to plunge into the depths of his imagination—and God's very being. He was a writer who was not afraid to ask the hardest questions of God and to turn his heart inside out with searching. C.S. Lewis' words have enlivened the faith and hearts of millions of believers—because he trusted in God's gift to him and to us—that of imagination.

Listen to him describe the subject of faith using—what else?—his imagination:

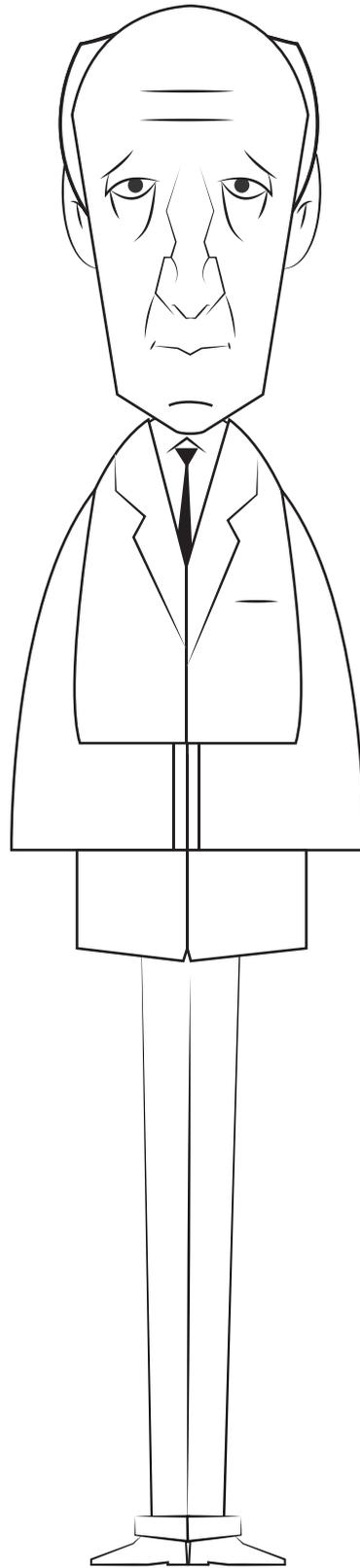
"Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself." (Mere Christianity)

let's talk

C.S. Lewis and his friends believed that the stories we read when we are young help shape us, even when we become grown-ups. What are some of your favorite stories? What do they teach you about God—and about yourself?

C.S. Lewis believed that imagination was a gift from God. How do poets and musicians and writers and artists use their imagination to make the world a better place? How do you use yours?

C.S. Lewis changed his mind about God; at first he didn't believe in God, but soon he came to know and love God very, very much. Have you ever changed your mind about something? What was that like?



C.S. Lewis

Frances Perkins



Loving God, we bless your Name for **Frances Perkins**, who lived out her belief that the special vocation of the laity is to conduct the secular affairs of society that all may be maintained in health and decency. Help us, following her example, to contend tirelessly for justice and for the protection of all in need, that we may be faithful followers of Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Holy Women, Holy Men*, p. 243)

Tell me a story

From the time she was a young girl, Frances Perkins noticed things. Born in 1850 into a family in Boston, people told Frances that poor people were responsible for their own poverty. But she watched and noticed that many poor people worked very hard, just as hard as rich people, yet they remained poor. Frances noticed this, and she wondered.

Frances attended Mt. Holyoke College in western Massachusetts, graduating with a degree in chemistry and physics. One day in college, Frances visited the textile mills along the Merrimack River north of Boston. In the mill, Frances noticed that the workers were young women her age—yet they didn't get to go to college like she did. As she looked around, Frances noticed that the factory was dangerous and cramped, with too many people working in a small space. Most of the people in this mill worked six or seven days a week, breathing air filled with toxins that made them sick. Frances noticed this, and she wondered.

While getting her master's degree at Columbia University, she joined The Episcopal Church and was confirmed. Then, in New York in 1911, she witnessed a horrific event: the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, in which almost 150 young women and men died because they were trapped in a burning building and couldn't escape.

For others, it was simply another tragic fire. But as Frances watched, she noticed things. Frances noticed that the doors to the factory were locked, so that the workers couldn't get out when the fire started. Frances noticed that there were no exits or escape routes to keep people safe. Frances noticed that because the workers in the factory were poor, people seemed to think they mattered less. Frances noticed that the poor factory workers had no one to stand up for them.

Frances noticed and wondered. As she noticed, questions gnawed away at her heart. As she wondered, God's Holy Spirit stirred inside her. Frances realized that noticing and wondering was not enough. Frances decided to use her gift for noticing and wondering to do something: she would strive to protect workers from those who would abuse them, she would work to make the lives of the poor better; she would push for the rights of all people. In 1929, Frances Perkins became New York's commissioner of labor—the same year as the Great Depression, a time in which many people went hungry due to lack of jobs.

Frances didn't let tough times stop her. Frances noticed that many people worked hard, but their jobs were dangerous, so she urged workers to gather into unions, and she helped write new safety policies. Frances noticed that sometimes even when people worked hard, they weren't always paid fairly, so Frances helped institute a minimum wage and limit the number of hours in the work week. Frances noticed that children were being forced to work in factories instead of allowed to go to school and learn, so she helped write laws to end child labor.

Frances Perkins was so good at noticing and wondering and working in New York that in 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed her to be the secretary of labor—the first time a woman was appointed to the president's cabinet. Serving for twelve years, she was the main force behind many of the laws that help protect people all over our country today: Social Security; the forty-hour work week, minimum wage, and the law that says if hourly wage earners work more than forty hours, they must be paid extra money.

A woman of prayer and deep faith, Frances spent many weekends on her knees, praying, at a Maryland convent. When Frances noticed something, she prayed to God about it. When Frances wondered about something, she asked Jesus to help her. When Frances began working to change the world, she trusted that it was God's Holy Spirit working in her and through her.

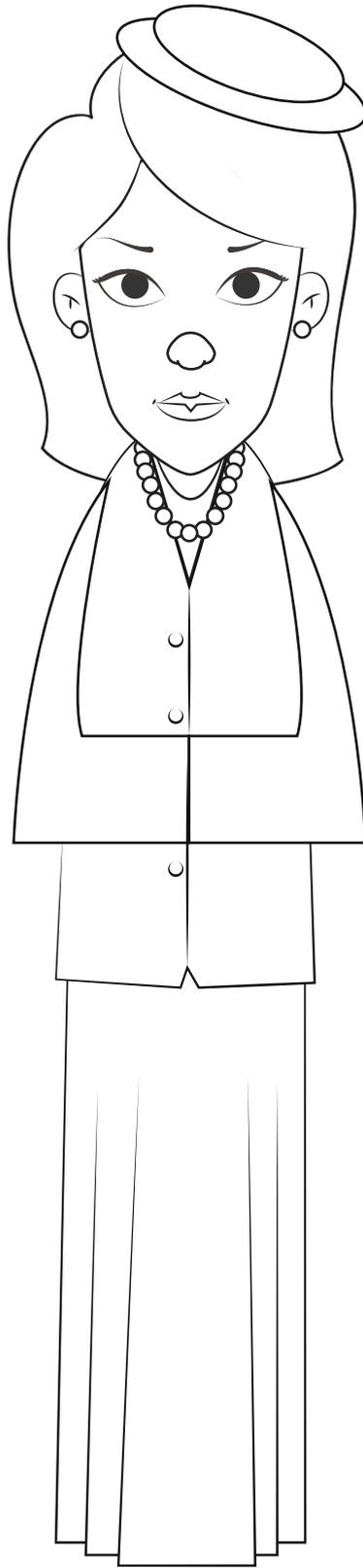
The next time you have a fire drill at school, or hear about your parents paying Social Security taxes, or your grandparents and others receiving Social Security benefits, think of Frances Perkins, and give thanks for her gifts of noticing, and wondering, and working to change the world.

Let's talk

Prayer was very important to Frances Perkins. When do you pray? Does your family have special prayers? What are they?

Frances Perkins believed that even one person could make a difference. What are some things that you can do to help other people at your school? In your neighborhood? At church?

Frances Perkins stood up for other people when no one else was standing up for them. Have you ever seen someone bullied? How did you (or how could you) respond?



Frances Perkins

Martin Luther King Jr.



Almighty God, by the hand of Moses your servant you led your people out of slavery, and made them free at last: Grant that your Church, following the example of your prophet **Martin Luther King**, may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may secure for all your children the blessed liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 227)

Tell me a story

Hatred and violence are hard things to understand, especially when God wants us to love each other and strive for peace.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a man who gave his life for peace, even though he knew what it was like to be hated. An African-American, Baptist preacher, and holder of a doctorate degree from Boston University, Martin stood up for others because he knew how wrong it was to be judged on the color of one's skin. Martin grew up in a time when segregation—which means separating people based on their skin color—was practiced routinely. Schools for whites and blacks were separate. Some restaurants refused to serve blacks. People even used different drinking fountains. Housing for many black Americans was substandard, as was education and health care.

Knowing that segregation was wrong, he was determined to change the structures that kept punished people for their skin color. His work first took him to Montgomery, Alabama, where he served as pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. At that time, a young woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. In those days, black people had to stand in buses and other public transportation while white people sat down.

Martin knew that wasn't fair, so he and others organized marches and protests to draw attention to the problem of segregation so that people would stop being judged on their skin color. Sometimes the marches became violent, with many black Americans, and some white Americans, getting hurt and killed, but Martin stayed committed to the ways of non-violence and peace. He told people about Jesus, and how Jesus wanted everyone to be treated fairly and equally. And he preached to his followers that dignity and nonviolence was the way forward.

Between 1957 and 1968, Martin Luther King traveled over six million miles and spoke over 2,500 times. On August 28, 1963, Martin gave a speech to almost a quarter of a million people from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. He was a leader for what is known as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. And this is what he said:

*I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow,
I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.
I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed:
“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.”
I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves
and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood...
I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they
will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.*

Sadly, five years later, after many more speeches and marches and sermons, Martin Luther King was killed by an assassin. Like other saints, however, we know that his brave work and spirit live on, making a difference to this very day—and we trust, through eternity.

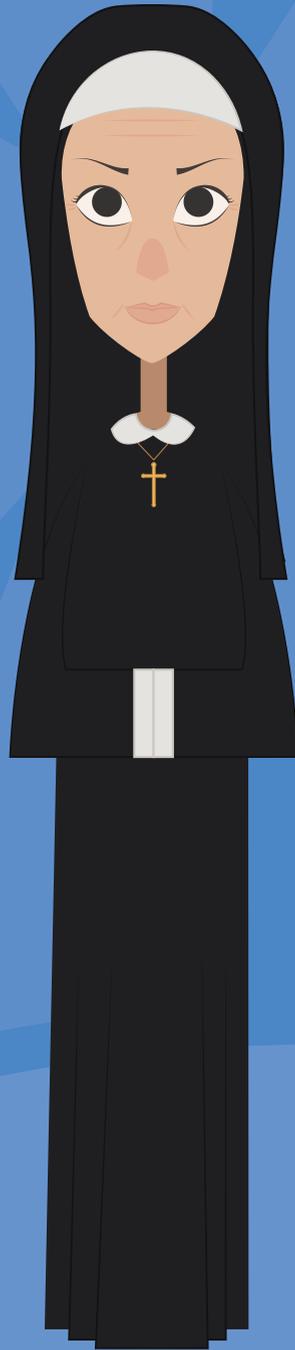
Let's talk

Have you ever had an experience where you have been judged by the color of your skin? If so, what was that like?

Do you have any friends with a different skin color than you? Have you ever talked about it? Does it make a difference?

Why might it be good to get to know people from different backgrounds? Where might be a good place to do that?

Harriet Bedell



Holy God, you chose your faithful servant **Harriet Bedell** to exercise the ministry of deaconess and to be a missionary among indigenous peoples: Fill us with compassion and respect for all people, and empower us for the work of ministry throughout the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 121)

Tell me a story

Some people think that sixty-eight might be considered old. When Harriet Bedell turned sixty-eight, she was told by her bishop that she had to retire. What the bishop didn't know was this: Harriet, one of the toughest people around—and a missionary deacon, had no intention of retiring.

She negotiated with the bishop for her to receive \$50 a month in pension payments (almost as much as her monthly salary) and the right to work as long as her health held out. Serving for another seventeen years, she was often heard to say, "There is no retirement in the service of the Master."

Serving the Master, as Harriet so fondly called Jesus, was indeed her passion. She had trained to become a schoolteacher. Until the second half of the twentieth century, teaching was one of the few professions open to women. Yet Harriet's heart burned with a different kind of flame: missionary work among the poor.

Because she was a Christian, she believed that Jesus wanted her to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit those in prison, and share news about God. Men did those kinds of things routinely, so why not her?

In the past, prophets had worn mantles, or cloaks, that identified them as people who proclaimed God's word. Harriet needed training to put on the full mantle of mission. She began her studies at the New York Training School for Deaconesses, where she could explore theology and the Bible and learn about mission. Women were not allowed to become priests then, nor could they attend seminary. So Harriet took charge, gently forcing open doors that had, until that point, remained closed.

After a yearlong course, she graduated and was sent to the Whirlwind Mission in Oklahoma to serve among the poor. There, she did all she could to care for the sick, educate women and children, and build organizations so people could free themselves from poverty.

Nine years later, the mission closed. Because of her missionary and teaching experience, Harriet was next called to Alaska to serve among the Native population in the tiny and isolated town of Stevens Village. There, Harriet was finally ordained as a deaconess. Today we use the word "deacon" instead. But in 1922, women ordained to that ministry were called deaconesses—and Harriet herself would insist we get her title right. Deaconesses served the poorest of the poor, and were often, like Harriet, very poor themselves.

One more major move for Harriet lay ahead when funds for the Alaska mission also ran short. While on a speaking tour, she visited the Seminole Indian Reservation in southern Florida and knew that was where God desired her to serve. She wasted no time in moving to the Blade Cross Indian Reservation, where she worked for the next thirty years.

Missionaries like Harriet are the best of the best. They don't live in fancy houses while those they serve can barely eat. They don't have three-course meals when simple soup suffices. Harriet lived and worked among the poor, not only helping them to rise above poverty but also working to change systems that kept poverty over their heads like never-ending storm clouds.

Bedell rode her beliefs like a wild stallion—persistently and often into the wind. George Huntoon, an executive with whom she worked, once said, “When the Deaconess got after you for something, I found it was best to acquiesce and comply with her request because she would keep after you until you got it done for her.” When Huntoon tried to avoid one of Bedell’s requests by creeping down the fire escape, she figured out the deception and met him at the bottom.

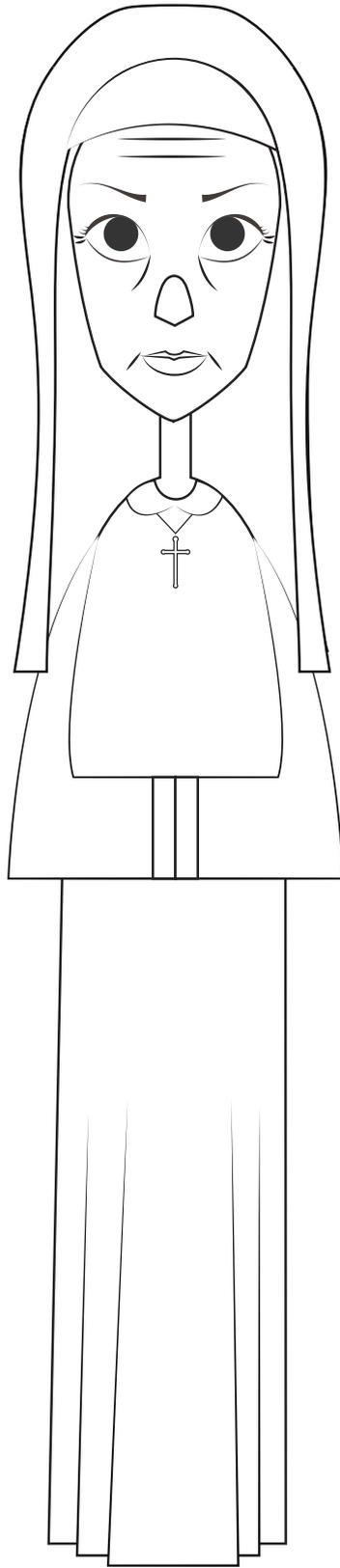
Harriet Bedell: deaconess, tireless worker, advocate for the poor, and most of all—an ardent follower of Christ.

Let’s talk

Harriet spent her whole life as a missionary and teacher, teaching people about Jesus. Who are some of the people in your life who have taught you about Jesus?

Some people thought Harriet couldn’t do the things she did because she was a woman. Later in life, people thought she couldn’t do her work because she was older. Have you ever done something that people didn’t think that you could do? What did that teach you?

Harriet traveled from Alaska to Florida and many places in between, following Jesus on a big adventure. What kind of adventure would you like to go on with Jesus?



Harriet Bedell

Óscar Romero



Almighty God, you called your servant **Óscar Romero** to be a voice for the voiceless poor, and to give his life as a seed of freedom and a sign of hope: Grant that, inspired by his sacrifice and the example of the martyrs of El Salvador, we may without fear or favor witness to your Word who abides, your Word who is Life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be praise and glory now and for ever. **Amen.** (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, p. 211)

Tell me a story

Have you ever heard news so good you couldn't help but share it? Have you ever heard something so wonderful that you couldn't keep it to yourself? Have you ever known a story so amazing that you wanted to tell it to everyone, everywhere, all the time?

Born in El Salvador in 1917, Óscar Romero was a shy boy who loved books... and he loved God. At the age of thirteen, he decided he would like to be a priest. He went to Rome where he read and studied many books: the Bible, the lives of the saints, and the writings of the great teachers of the church.

And as he read, Óscar learned some good news. He learned the good news of God, who created each one of us in his image. He learned the good news of Jesus, who loved us so much he gave his life for us. He learned the good news of the Holy Spirit, who promises to live in our hearts and move in our lives, so that we can serve God in the world. In the Bible, Óscar read the words of Jesus, who said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:1-10)

This was good news, great news, the best and most amazing news. It was news so wonderful that Óscar couldn't keep it to himself. He had to tell someone; he had to tell everyone. And so he did.

Óscar Romero became a priest, and then a bishop, and then the archbishop of El Salvador. He traveled all over his country, preaching and teaching the good news of Jesus. Óscar told people that the poor were blessed, and that we needed to help everyone have food and water and homes and safety. Óscar told people that peacemakers are children of God, and we must turn away from all violence and killing. Óscar told people the good news of God's great love in Jesus Christ.

But at that time in El Salvador, where Óscar lived, the government was corrupt. The rich wanted to keep all their riches for themselves; they didn't want to share what they had with the poor. The powerful wanted to keep all the power, so they used violence to scare and kill the people who disagreed with them. The rich and the powerful in El Salvador did not want Óscar to tell people the great good news of God's love for the poor and the lowly.

But Óscar just couldn't keep quiet. He couldn't help but share the amazing news of God's love for all people. Over and over, Oscar preached and taught that all people were made in the image of God, that all people were worthy of love and care, that all people deserved food and shelter and safety.

Óscar begged the soldiers in El Salvador to lay down their weapons. "The peasants you kill are your own brothers and sisters. When you hear the voice of the man commanding you to kill, remember instead the voice of God. Thou Shall Not Kill... In the name of God, in the name of our tormented people whose cries rise up to heaven, I beseech you, I beg you, command you, stop the repression."

Óscar knew that it was dangerous to keep saying these things, to preach what Jesus had taught, to declare God's love to the world. He knew that the government and the soldiers didn't like to hear that they would have to change their behavior. But he also knew that God's love is stronger than anything, even death. So he kept sharing God's great news.

On March 24, 1980, Óscar was celebrating Holy Communion with a group of nuns when he was shot and killed. His assassin was never caught.

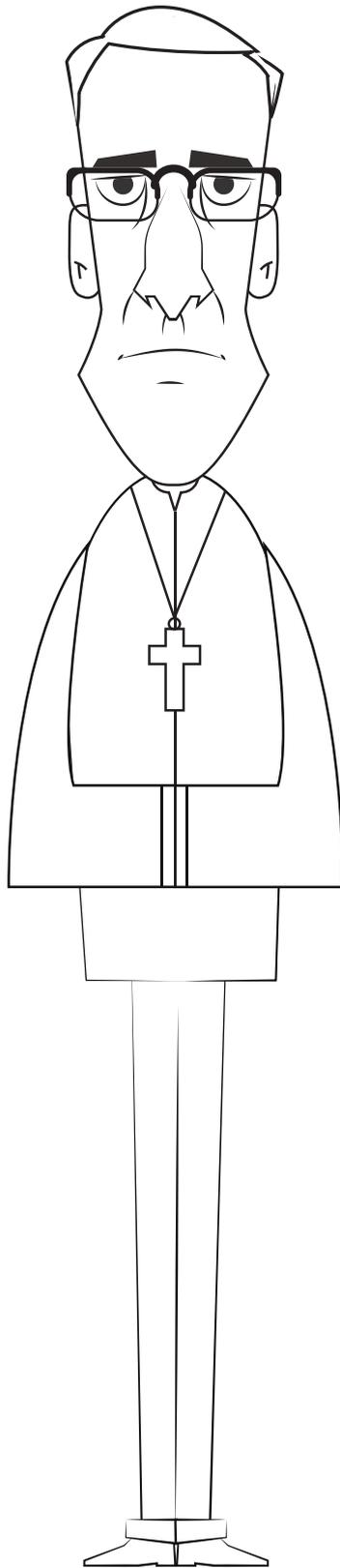
Óscar Romero had news that was too good not to share: the great good news of God's love in Jesus Christ. He preached and taught and shared that news no matter what, until the very end of his life. Because of Óscar Romero, many hundreds of people heard and believed the good news of God. They learned that they were created in God's image. They heard that they were loved by Jesus. They believed that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Eventually, El Salvador found peace—in large part, because Óscar Romero and others like him kept proclaiming the good news of God, no matter what.

Let's talk

How do you think Óscar Romero leaned on God when he felt scared?

Óscar told the truth, even when it was scary or dangerous. Have you ever had to tell the truth when it was scary? What was that like?

What good news about God do you think that people most need to hear?



Óscar Romero

resources

Meet the Saints: Family Storybook can be used as part of a Christian formation program or for families and children at home. A Facilitator's Guide is available for teachers and leaders at www.forwardmovement.org. Additional resources can be found at www.livingdiscipleship-fm.org.

Picture Book Suggestions

Below is a list of picture books on various saints that can be used along with the curriculum.

Mary, the mother of Jesus

- *Mary* by Brian Wildsmith. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2002.
- *Mary, Mother of Jesus* by Mary Joslin. Loyola Press, 1999.
- *Mary: the Mother of Jesus* by Tomie dePaola. Holiday House, 1995.
- *The Story of Mary, the Mother of God* by Dorrie Papademetriou. St. Vladimirs Seminary Press, 2000.

Patrick and Brigid

- *Patrick: Patron Saint of Ireland* by Tomie dePaola. Holiday House, 1992.
- *Brigid's Cloak* by Bryce Milligan. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2002.
- *The Life of Saint Brigid: Abbess of Kildare* by Jane Meyer. Conciliar Press, 2009.

Hildegard of Bingen

- *Hildegard's Gift* by Megan Hoyt. Paraclete Press, 2014.
- *The Secret World of Hildegard* by Jonah Winter. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2007.

Claire

- *Clare and Francis* by Guido Visconti. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

Martin Luther

- *Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World* by Paul Maier. Concordia Publishing, 2004.
- *Martin Luther: What Should I do?* by Catherine MacKenzie. CF4Kids, 2010.

J.S. Bach

- *Sebastian: A Book about Bach* by Jeanette Winter, HMH Books for Young Readers, 1999.

Martin Luther King Jr.

- *Martin's Big Words: the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* by Doreen Rappaport. Hyperion Book CH, 2001.
- *I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King Jr.*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Schwartz & Wade, 2012.

Below is a list of children's books that explore saints more broadly.

- *Loyola Kids Book of Saints* by Amy Welborn. Loyola Press, 2001.
- *Can you Find Saints?: Introducing Your Child to Holy Men and Women* by Philip D. Gallery. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2003. Available through Forward Movement.
- *115 Sainly Fun Facts* by Bernadette McCarver Snyder. Liguori Press, 1993.
- *The Church History ABCs: Augustine and 25 Other Heroes of the Faith* by Stephen J. Nichols. Crossway Press, 2010.

about the authors

Melody Wilson Shobe is an Episcopal priest who has served churches in Rhode Island and Texas. A graduate of Tufts University and Virginia Theological Seminary, Melody is currently working on curriculum development for Forward Movement. Melody, her husband, and their two daughters live in Dallas, Texas, where she spends her spare time reading stories, building forts, conquering playgrounds, baking cookies, and exploring nature.

Lindsay Hardin Freeman is a Minnesota-based Episcopal priest, author, and mother. She is the author and /or editor of six books, including the award-winning *Bible Women: All Their Words and Why Matter* and *The Scarlet Cord: Conversations with God's Chosen Women*. She also has written a children's book, *The Spy on Noah's Ark and Other Bible Stories from the Inside Out*. She is married to the Rev. Leonard Freeman (a poet, priest, and teacher) and has two sons and four stepchildren.

about Forward Movement

Forward Movement is committed to inspiring disciples and empowering evangelists. While we produce great resources like this storybook, Forward Movement is not a publishing company. We are a ministry.

Our mission is to support you in your spiritual journey, to help you grow as a follower of Jesus Christ. Publishing books, daily reflections, studies for small groups, and online resources is an important way that we live out this ministry. More than a half million people read our daily devotions through *Forward Day by Day*, which is also available in Spanish (*Adelante Día a Día*) and Braille, online, as a podcast, and as an app for your smartphones or tablets. It is mailed to more than fifty countries, and we donate nearly 30,000 copies each quarter to prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes. We actively seek partners across the Church and look for ways to provide resources that inspire and challenge.

A ministry of The Episcopal Church for eighty years, Forward Movement is a nonprofit organization funded by sales of resources and gifts from generous donors. To learn more about Forward Movement and our resources, please visit us at www.forwardmovement.org (or www.adelanteenelcamino.org).

We are delighted to be doing this work and invite your prayers and support.