

6th & 7th Grade Homestudy Lesson #13
The Communion of Saints

GOAL

The purpose of this lesson is to use the lives of the saints to inspire you while also giving you a chance to respond to the universal call to holiness.

THE CREED

Begin the lesson by carefully praying the Nicene Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose
again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

**I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.**

Amen.

Lectio Divina

Read Revelation 7:9-17

How is God speaking to you through this passage?

What did this verse teach you about heaven and the Communion of Saints?

Read Revelation 7:9-17 again

TEACHING

Do you want to go to heaven?

Do you want to be a saint?

Do you want to be holy?

What is the funny thing about all three questions? They are all essentially the same question. Who wants to go to heaven? Probably all of us. But when asked how many of us want to be holy and become saints, we become a little more hesitant.

What is a saint? **By definition, a saint is anyone that is in heaven with God.** So if you don't want to be a saint, you don't want to go to heaven. **How do you become a saint? By being holy.**

UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS

Jesus has called all of us to be saints – to be holy. He said, “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). We think of saintly people as being great martyrs, hardcore pray-ers or really old people. We think of them as being perfect and we have a hard time connecting with them because we don't think they are like us. We don't realize that there are saints who lived normal lives. St. Dominic Savio died when he was 15. St. Augustine liked to party and was known to hang around with prostitutes until he had a conversion. St. Gianna Molla was a mother who sacrificed her life for her daughter in the 1970s. Her children and husband were at her canonization. St. Maximillian Kolbe was a priest who gave his life in a Nazi Concentration Camp so that another man with a family could live. St. Francis of Assisi came from a wealthy family before he took a vow of strict poverty.

Many times, we don't realize that we have the grace from God to be a saint. Holiness has nothing to do with spiritual gifts, being a priest or nun, being really old or living a long time ago. Being holy is about living every day of your life for God. Some days we may do really well and other days we may fail, but as we strive to be holy, we turn back to God, seek reconciliation and strive to do better. Being holy begins with the little things in your life: praying, attending Mass, and being kind to your friends and strangers. If you go to heaven, you are a saint. God wants us all to be saints; we are all called to holiness. We are all called to learn to fall in love with God and to seek and follow His will. He gives us the grace to be holy.

ROLE OF SAINTS IN THE CHURCH

Why does the Church recognize particular saints in heaven? The Church wants us to have many role models. Even more so, the Church wants us to pray with these saints for the same grace and zeal that they had.

Why do Catholics pray to saints? Why not just pray to Jesus?

First of all, **we do not pray to the saints, we pray with the saints and ask them to pray for us.** Also, we do not worship saints like we worship Jesus. **We honor and venerate saints for pointing us to Jesus.** Asking a saint to pray for you is not that different from asking a friend or a family member to pray for you. The saints are in heaven. The Scripture that we read states that the great multitude is in heaven proclaiming the glory of God. If we have brothers and sisters in heaven, why can't we ask them to pray for us? In fact, they are closer to God and in a greater position to intercede than we are. The saints give us the model for how to get to heaven. Many different saints show us many different ways to God and many different ways to be holy. We may never have the word "saint" next to our name in a book, but we are still called to find ways we can live our lives, everyday, for Christ. We can look to the saints to learn ways to be holy.

By following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, we may discover we are too dependent on our material goods and they get in the way of our relationship with God; or the example of St. Thérèse of Lisieux (the Little Flower) and learn to serve people in every small way that we can. There are saints we can ask to pray with and for us regarding anything we are going through in our lives: studying/school, struggling with purity, vocations, family issues, travel, music, sports, etc. There are some great websites you could look at to find out who the patron saint of each of these things.

SEND

Do a search for "Catholic patron saint of..." Search for a saint who is the patron of something that you are interested in or that is personal to you (ie. the patron saint of: musicians, athletes, travelers, scientists, etc.)

Read about the saint, ask that saint to pray for you, and answer the following questions:

- What saint did you choose?
- What is he/she the patron saint of?
- What is an interesting fact that you learned about this saint?
- How can you grow in holiness by following his/her example?

QUESTIONS

1. What is a saint?

2. Why does the Church think saints are important?

3. What is the Universal Call to Holiness?

4. What can you do to better emulate the lives of the saints in your own life?