

## **6th & 7th Grade Homestudy Lesson #19**

### **Saint Joseph and Saint Patrick**

#### **GOAL**

The goal of this lesson is for you to learn more about St. Joseph and to be inspired by him to listen to and follow God's will. Additionally, you will discover St. Patrick's gift to evangelize others and your own baptismal call to evangelization.

#### **MAIN IDEAS**

- Saint Joseph was the earthly father of Jesus Christ, he was a righteous man with a strong faith.
- Saint Joseph had prophetic dreams that revealed God's will to him and he always acted upon these dreams and followed God's will.
- We can learn from St. Joseph's example about listening to the Lord and following His will in our lives
- We celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph on March 19
- St. Patrick was a man of strong faith who brought Catholicism to the country of Ireland.
- We celebrate the Feast of St. Patrick on March 17

#### **TEACHING**

##### **ST JOSEPH**

##### **With the Heart of a Father**

Saint Joseph has a unique role in Christianity as the husband of Mary and the earthly father of Jesus. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and second person of the Holy Trinity, fully human and fully divine. Entering into humanity meant that Jesus was born into this world into a family — just like every human being — and God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother and St. Joseph to be His earthly father. He was the one who was appointed with the task to protect and provide for Jesus and Mary. There is very little in the Bible about the early years of Jesus' life and His childhood growing up in Nazareth. There are, however, some notes that different pope's have offered for reflection on these "hidden years" of Jesus' life as well as the role of St. Joseph during His childhood.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI states: "Joseph fulfilled every aspect of his paternal role. He must certainly have taught Jesus to pray, together with Mary. In particular, Joseph himself must have taken Jesus to the Synagogue. [...] In the rhythm of the days He spent at Nazareth, in the simple home and in Joseph's workshop, Jesus learned to alternate prayer and work, as well as to offer God His labor in earning the bread the family needed." (Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, December 28, 2011)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, so if He listened to and honored St. Joseph on Earth — and He did — then He will still listen to and honor St. Joseph now in heaven. (Hebrews 13:8) Saint Joseph is a powerful intercessor in heaven for each of us, and we can ask him to pray for us with his fatherly heart, and trust that He will act — and that Jesus will listen to and honor his requests.

## **Dream On**

There are no accounts of words spoken by St. Joseph, but Scripture tells of several messages he received in his dreams. The messages he received in his dreams were to keep his engagement to Mary when she was found with child and to name the child “Jesus”, to leave Bethlehem and flee to Egypt to avoid Herod’s soldiers (Matthew 2:13), to return from Egypt to Israel (Matthew 2:19-20), and to go to Galilee instead of Judea (Matthew 2:22).

## **Pause and read Matthew 1:20, Matthew 2:13, and Matthew 2:22**

We also see in these Scripture verses that each of these dreams were followed by immediate action. Saint Joseph does not mull over these messages, if he should or should not follow them, or even question how things will turn out. Rather he trusts in God and acts. He so fully trusts God’s plan that he follows each of these instructions no matter how difficult the task, and all of them had their difficulties. Just imagine traveling the 90 treacherous miles on foot with an infant from Bethlehem to Egypt while also trying to hide from Herod’s soldiers who want to kill your baby. He also fully trusted in God no matter how confusing the message was, like how Mary could be pregnant through the Holy Spirit with Jesus who is God. He trusts, and he acts right away.

Pope Francis said: “Even through Joseph’s fears, God’s will, his history and his plan were at work. Joseph, then, teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture.”

## **Go to Joseph**

When we reflect on St. Joseph’s life and the ways he listened to and trusted God, we see his example of holiness. Saint Joseph models for us what it means to trust and follow God and live a life of holiness. **Saint Joseph is a great model for justice.** We don’t know a lot about St. Joseph, but we do know that he was a “just” man, which tells us he was good, holy, and incredibly strong in faith. **Saint Joseph is a great model for fatherhood.** Being the earthly father of God is a big deal, especially when we reflect on all the difficulties and trials they faced. **Saint Joseph is a great model for protection.**

Protecting the Blessed Virgin Mary and Jesus from harm was difficult — people were actively trying to kill Jesus from the time of his birth — but he kept them safe, relying on God’s help. **Saint Joseph is a great model for working hard.** He was a skilled carpenter and craftsman, which required a lot of physical strength and creative skill. **Saint Joseph is a great model for trusting in the will of God.** Even though he did not have all the answers himself, he trusted that God had a plan and humbly did whatever God told him to do.

We can “go to Joseph” by imitating his example of living and by praying for his intercession. We can pray for his intercession using a variety of titles for Joseph, each one highlighting a different aspect of Joseph’s life. Saint Joseph was a good and holy person called to do extraordinary things for God. And you are called to be and do this, too. Imitating his example of love, trust, humility, and hard work is well within reach for those who persevere and rely on God’s help.

ST PATRICK

### **Biography**

St. Patrick was born circa 387 in Roman Britain (near Scotland). When Patrick was 16 years old, a group of Irish warriors attacked the area in which he lived and took Patrick as a slave into Northern Ireland for six years. His master pressed him into service of tending his flock of sheep. Patrick interpreted his enslavement as punishment for his lack of faith in previous years. He committed his life to such deep prayer that he would often not feel the elements around him. His enslavement would prove helpful to him in later years as he learned to speak the Celtic language perfectly and learned the details of the druid religion (both of which would help him confront the people and knowledgeably refute the pagan religion).

After six years of being a slave, Patrick escaped and returned to his homeland. Patrick devoted his life to Christ and became a priest ready to do whatever Christ asked of him. He worked for many years as a missionary throughout Britain, but had a vision in which he heard the voices of the Irish saying, “O holy youth, come back to Erin, and walk once more amongst us.” Patrick was commissioned to go to Ireland to bring people back to the Church and he was ordained a bishop. The Catholics living in Ireland had become disorganized and their faith was tainted by a common heresy of the time. Because he spoke the Celtic language and was humble in his approach, he was able to evangelize, baptize, reenergize churches that were no longer active, build new churches, and develop seminaries for local ministry. During his ministry, he ordained over 350 bishops to serve in Britain and Ireland. Almost everywhere that Patrick traveled to in Ireland, he converted souls to the Catholic faith.

Patrick's ministry was not without danger. In a country deeply rooted with pagan beliefs, those who opposed the Christian faith were willing to take desperate measures to quiet Patrick. In his own book, Patrick admits to being jailed at least 12 times for preaching the Gospel and one of the times he was actually condemned to death. He challenged kings and pagan religious leaders who opposed him face to face with the truth of the Gospel. **St. Patrick died on March 17, the date we celebrate his feast day.** Today, St. Patrick's legacy can still be found throughout parts of Great Britain.

## **Evangelization**

Evangelization is a big fourteen letter word that simply means "to share." **When we were baptized, we were commissioned to join the Church in evangelizing the world.**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that, Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, 'that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life.' For lay people, 'this evangelization . . . acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world' (#905).

In every aspect of our lives, we are to proclaim Christ to all people. Then we must approach others with faith, hope, and love. Evangelizing others isn't always easy. Sometimes when we share the Gospel we will feel like we aren't getting anywhere. Continue to pray that God will give you the strength to share no matter what. Reflect on what St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the Gospel at all times, if necessary use words." And take a moment to ask St. Patrick to say a prayer for you as well.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. When do we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph? St. Patrick?

2. What does it mean to be a “model” for something? What are 3 things that St. Joseph models for us?

3. What did you learn about St. Joseph through this lesson? What did you learn about St. Patrick?

4. What does “evangelization” mean?

5. How did the story of St. Patrick inspire you to evangelize others?

SEND

## **Prayers to Saint Joseph and Saint Patrick**

Ask St. Joseph to pray for you while reciting the following Litany of St. Joseph:

### **The Litany of St. Joseph**

*Provider for the Son of God, pray for us*

*Zealous protector of Christ, pray for us*

*Head of the Holy Family, pray for us*

*Joseph, most just, pray for us*

*Joseph, most brave, pray for us*

*Joseph, most obedient, pray for us*

*Joseph, most faithful, pray for us*

*Mirror of patience, pray for us*

*Lover of poverty, pray for us*

*Model for workers, pray for us*

*Glory of family life, pray for us*

*Support in difficulties, pray for us*

*Hope of the sick, pray for us*

*Patron of the dying, pray for us*

*Terror of demons, pray for us*

*Protector of Holy Church, pray for us*

Recite the following prayer written by St. Patrick:

### **St. Patrick's Breastplate**

*Christ shield me this day:*

*Christ with me,*

*Christ before me,*

*Christ behind me,*

*Christ in me,*

*Christ beneath me,*

*Christ above me,*

*Christ on my right,*

*Christ on my left,*

*Christ when I lie down,*

*Christ when I arise,*

*Christ in the heart of every person who thinks of me,*

*Christ in every eye that sees me,*

*Christ in the ear that hears me.*

*Amen*