



## **Presentation: Saints by Our Side**

### *Leader Guide*

This event provides participants with the opportunity to get to know the saints better through an introduction, a series of dramatic “interviews,” activities, and prayer. Please feel free to adapt this opening presentation to fit the needs and preferences of your parish.

### **Welcome**

Welcome! We are so glad you are here. Today we have gathered together with families and friends to learn about our faith and get to know some of the saints who have been among the heroes and role models of the Church.

### **Overview**

Who can tell me what a saint is? (*a holy person, a model for us*) The Church recognizes and honors people who showed their love for God in ways that are lasting inspirations and models for all of us. Some saints showed their love for God in lives of service, and others showed their love by giving their lives for their faith. Some saints worshiped God by writing beautiful prayers that we still pray today or by writing books that help us to learn more about God’s love for us. But in every case, the saints are people who followed Jesus and continued his work and mission in the world. Let’s see how many saints we can name right now. (*Invite people to name.*) Of all these saints, do you know who is the greatest of all the saints? (*Mary*) Mary, the Mother of God, is the greatest of saints because she always listened to God and did his will. She used her gifts from God and let everything that she said, did, or thought reflect her faith in God and her love of God.

### **The Saints Are Models of Holiness**

The Church honors people like Mary and the saints because they responded to God’s grace working within them, so they were able to do amazing things and inspire people to know and to serve God more deeply. Why do you think the Church wants us to know about the saints? (*The saints can inspire us and provide good examples of how to follow Jesus.*) The Church gives them the official title of “saint” to let us know that these are people who show us how to live as Christians. Saints are people whom you and I can turn to for inspiration, advice, and help in our everyday lives.

*Continued on next page*



## **Presentation: Saints by Our Side**

*Leader Guide (continued)*

### **The Saints Are People Too**

You may be thinking to yourself, “Sure, the saints are special. But there’s no way I could be super holy like them.” Remember: The saints are not superhuman; they are *real* people. They grew up like we did, in good circumstances and in bad. They had families and friends, went to school and worked. Some saints were nuns or priests; others were married or single. Some were young, and others were old. We may think the saints were perfect, but they weren’t. They were just like us. Sometimes they sinned, and sometimes they failed. Some saints were even people who were hard to get along with. But they believed in God’s forgiveness and kept trying to do God’s will. They gave their whole heart and life to God even when it was difficult to follow Jesus.

### **God Wants Us to Be Saints**

God wants all of us to be saints. In fact, when Saint Paul wrote his letters to the very first Christian groups, he sometimes addressed them as “saints.” By doing this, he was acknowledging that they were leading good and holy lives here on earth and that they, like us, are on the way to salvation through Christ. So the word *saint* is not just an official title that the Church gives certain people, but it is also a word that says who we are as people who dedicate our lives to God. We pray that, through the grace of God, we may join the saints in heaven and live forever in God’s presence.

You may be wondering “Exactly how do we do that?” Thanks to Baptism, we are given the most important element to becoming a saint: God’s grace. With God’s grace, we can make choices that will cause us to be spiritually stronger and healthier and that bring us closer to God. We also have the Bible, the very Word of God, to guide us and to help us follow Jesus. But sometimes, it helps to have a few pointers to see how grace and the Gospel can help us in our everyday life.

### **We Are a Part of the Communion of Saints**

That’s where the saints come in. We can turn to them for help. Think of it this way—in life, we are like runners in a long race. Runners don’t run alone, do they? They have coaches who teach them how to be strong and healthy, they have friends who cheer them on, they have other runners who inspire them

*Continued on next page*



## **Presentation: Saints by Our Side**

### *Leader Guide (continued)*

and give them good advice. Just as runners aren't alone in their race, neither are we. We have God and the whole Communion of Saints by our sides.

The saints knew that Jesus had shown us what is good, and they used the Gospels as their guide. They made it a habit to be tuned into God in all that they did. In the long race of their lives, the saints also had certain spiritual exercises to stay spiritually fit. They prayed often and worked hard for God. The saints knew that they were God's hands on earth, helping others, even though they might find themselves in tough situations.

### **Introduce the Saint Interviews**

Let's meet some of the saints and learn the stories of their lives. Each one of them can give us tips to help us truly be saints of God.

#### ***(Interviews with Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, Saint Francis of Assisi, and Blessed Luigi and Maria Quattrocchi—see scripts)***

Let's show these saints of God how much we appreciate them spending time with us today. *(round of applause)* As you can see, each saint is someone we can learn from. You may relate to some saints more than to others; that's why the Church has given us so many. Let's learn about some other saints!

### **Introduce the Activity Centers**

In the Saint Posse Activity Center, you will learn about patron saints and research the patron saints of your family.

In the Meet Your Match Activity Center, you will learn about some of our most beloved saints. Then you'll use what you've learned to play a guessing game.

In the Saint Clip Activity Center, you will make a beaded clip with a medal of your favorite saint. Fasten the clip to your jacket or backpack or house keys as a reminder that the saints are with you wherever you go.

Finally, create your own delicious and healthy snack at the Trail Mix Activity Center, keeping in mind that just as a healthy diet of food nourishes our physical well-being and gives us energy, a healthy dose of prayer and inspiration from the saints nourishes our spiritual well-being and energizes our faith.

*Continued on next page*



## **Presentation: Saints by Our Side**

*Leader Guide (continued)*

### **Introduce the Take-Home Kits**

Before you begin to work in the activity center of your choice, be sure to pick up one of these Take-Home Kits and write your family's name on it. Each one is filled with resources that will tell you more about the saints, including the process of becoming an official saint of the Church. *[Hold up a Take-Home Kit and give a short description of the items in it.]*

Once we finish with the activity centers, we will all gather again for a prayer service.

*[If you are going to incorporate some of your parish resources (such as dance troupe or choir), this is a good time to introduce and thank the people who will be performing.]*

### **Transition to Activity Centers**

