

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

INQUIRY SESSION: SAINTS

Inquiry Session (Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare

You will need a flip chart or whiteboard and markers for this session.

Set the space with chairs in a circle and in the center place a candle and a Bible. (Mark the Scripture citations noted in participant materials.)

If possible, also display prayer cards, statues and medals for various saints, and a copy of a Catholic collection of saints' stories appropriate for children and youth.

If needed, have name tags. Have some refreshments available, too.

Gather (10–15 minutes)

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Invite each child to share his or her name and something good that happened since the last time the group gathered.

Take time to find out how the children are doing.

Ask whether they had an experience of prayer or church since the last session.

2. Invite volunteers to respond to the following questions:

How would you describe someone who is a hero?

Who are your heroes? Why?

3. Read together the **My Story** section of the participant page and discuss the questions found there.

Expand (15–20 minutes)

1. Ask the children what they know about saints.

Invite them to share the names and stories of any specific saints they've heard of or read about.

2. Read and discuss the **God's Story** section of the participant page.

3. Build upon **God's Story** by highlighting the following discussion points:

- The word "saint" means "holy." Saints are holy persons. This means that they live in close connection with God.
- Every person in Heaven is a saint. Some people are called "saint," such as Saint John Paul II or Saint John XXIII.
- The saints of the Church each did something special in life or had a special quality (virtue) of faith that we might want to imitate. For example, Saint John XXIII was known for his spirit of joy.
- Mary, the Mother of God, is the most important saint of the Church because she was the mother of Jesus.
- Every person, including everybody on earth today, is invited to be a saint. We become saints by being holy. (We become holy by staying connected to God!)
- Catholics pray a prayer called the Litany of the Saints. In this prayer, we ask the saints to help us.

4. Read aloud each of the Scripture citations listed below. After reading each citation, ask volunteers to share what the passage tells us about becoming a saint.

1 Corinthians 6:1-2 (Lawsuits Before Unbelievers)

Romans 1:7 (Greeting)

Matthew 13:43 (The Explanation of the Parable of the Weeds)

Our Response (15–20 minutes)

1. On the flip chart or whiteboard write the first name of each member of the group.

Point out those who are named after a saint, and share what you know about those saints. (Use the book of the lives of the saints to help you. Invite older children to search for the various names in the book, too.)
2. Explain that reading about the lives of saints helps us learn what it means to be holy. Their stories help us learn how to be faithful friends of Jesus in our own daily lives.
3. Invite the children to listen to the story of a saint whose writings help people know how to live holy lives.

Use the participant page, or in your own words share the story of Saint Francis de Sales.
4. Share the names of some of your favorite saints, and talk about their qualities.
5. Also talk about patron saints—saints who are so named because their own travels, occupations, or life stories offer a special connection to a particular group of people on earth today.

Patron saints the children might enjoy knowing about include

- Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of children, who loved and cared for the welfare of all children
- Saint John Bosco, one of the patron saints of youth, who provided shelter and cared for the needs of poor and uneducated youth and taught them the Gospel
- Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and the environment, who had a deep love of all of creation

- Saint Anne, the patron saint of mothers, who was the mother of Mary
- Saint Joseph, the patron saint of fathers, who was the earthly father of Jesus

6. Share with the children that the Church honors all saints on the Solemnity of All Saints, November 1 of each year.
7. Point out the ***Faith Words*** section of the participant page. Review the faith words with the children.

Pray (2–3 minutes)

Conclude today's session by singing or saying a Litany of the Saints. Include the names of saints mentioned by the children throughout today's session.