



The Episcopal Thread

On the Sunday closest to All Saints' Day, Episcopal churches will ring out with the hymn "For all the saints, who from their labors rest" (Hymn 287, *The*

Hymnal 1982, New York, NY: Church Publishing, 1985).

All Saints' Day is one of seven Principal Feasts observed in the Episcopal Church. The *Prayer Book* states that, though the seven feasts "take precedence of any other day or observance," All Saints' Day "may always be observed on the Sunday following November 1, in addition to its observance on the fixed date." (*BCP*, p. 15)



Gathering

As children enter the classroom, engage them in a simple activity that relates to

today's lesson.

If you have a dress-up box, invite the younger children to dress up as a saint. Younger children might also enjoy coloring pictures of different saints throughout the centuries. Older children always enjoy a few minutes of fellowship time when they can share stories and develop friendships.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer.



Telling the Story

Choose a few different saints and read or tell their stories. (See page 12 in the Appendix for a list of books on saints. If your church has a patron saint after which it is named, tell his or her story.)

Don't forget to talk about the saints who are known only to God—people we have known and loved who have done God's work of love and service in this world. Such unknown saints may include our own friends and family.

If you wish, read **Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 44:1-15**, a relevant passage for All Saints' Day. Then move on to today's Prayer, saving any discussion for later, while having snacks.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your classroom.

Materials

- small table with a cloth to cover it
- 2 candles or a single large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional*: flowers (real, fake or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read one or two verses of scripture to help the children connect the story that they just heard with the Bible. If working with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)
44:1-2

For older children: Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)
44:1-2, 8-9, 14-15

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus:
(*Read the selected passage.*)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks for God's presence in our lives during the past week. Ask children to share any experiences in which they have felt that God has guided them. This helps the children to gradually gain an awareness of God's constant presence in their everyday lives.
- Welcome prayers of intercession. Encourage children to pray for themselves or for others who are in any need or trouble.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as this

one from our *Prayer Book*:

- Bless, O Lord, this food to our use and us to your loving service, in Jesus' name. *Amen.*
(*BCP*, p. 835)

This is an excellent time, while sharing a snack, to begin talking about today's story. Invite the children to name familiar saints. They may think of the saints who are celebrated in the church: St. Valentine, St. Nicholas. St. Patrick. They may also think of people in the Bible: St. Paul, St. Stephen. And if they belong to a church with a patron saint, they may mention one of these: St. Luke, St. Thomas, St. Mary Magdalene. You may want to come prepared to talk about the more familiar saints and who they are, for example, St. Nicholas and St. Valentine.

Then move on to these questions:

- Why were these people known as saints?
- What makes them saints? (*they followed God, did the right thing, loved other people*)
- Are there people you know who have these qualities?
- Can you think of them as saints also, even though they are still alive?

Another question that you might ask, especially of older children, is:

- Are saints always well known?
 - What about the woman who lived very poorly, in a little house, and who gave millions of dollars to charity when she died?
 - What about the people who give a little each day to the poor, when nobody notices?

Help the children to see that saints may be here with us on earth as well as dwelling in heaven.



Memorization

There is no memorization for this lesson.



Weaving Our Faith

Before the closing prayer, pull the strands of this lesson together by asking questions such as:

- What did we talk about today?
- What stories did we hear?
- What are we celebrating today?

To help the children remember today's story, remind them of these key words:

- *saint*
- *service (serving God)*



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into

the church worship service or back to their homes with God's love and blessing. The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- Dear Lord God, thank you for all of our saints whom you have sent to show us your way of love. Thank you for our families and for our friends who are saints to you. Make us your saints and help us to live as you want us to live, loving you and loving our neighbors as ourselves. This we ask in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

End the class with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

The children respond:

- Thanks be to God!



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

SAINTLY BANNERS for Intermediate

Children learn about different saints and make banners to honor them.

Materials:

fabric or butcher paper
dowels
string
scissors
glue or fabric glue
fabric pens or markers
information on saints

Directions:

Invite each child to choose a saint that he or she would like to learn about and create a banner for that saint. Give the children these directions:

1. Find out the following about your chosen saint:
 - the saint's symbol
 - the character and qualities of the saint
 - events in the saint's life
2. Cut a banner out of fabric or butcher paper.
3. Glue a dowel onto one end of the banner and attach a string for hanging.
4. Design and cut out the saint's symbol from felt and glue it to the banner.
5. Add words that describe the saint's character and qualities.

Invite each of the children to share with the class the meaning of their saint's symbol, why this person is considered a saint and one short story from the saint's life.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

STORIES OF SAINTS for Primary, Elementary

Children learn stories about saints, dress in costumes and act out the stories.

Materials:

box of miscellaneous clothing to use as costumes
stories of saints

Directions:

Invite the children to act out stories of saints:

1. Break the class into two or three small groups and assign one saint to each group.
2. Ask the children to learn stories about the life of their particular saint and then have them dress in costumes and act out stories for their classmates.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

SAINT PENNANTS

for Preschool, Primary

Children make pennants of favorite saints, either recognized by the church or known to God alone. Children can make saint pennants of their grandparents, friends, relatives or even themselves. All who follow God may be considered saints.

Materials:

instant print camera and film or digital camera and printer or half sheets of paper
construction paper or felt
dowels or balloon sticks
markers or fabric pens
fabric paint and brushes
glue
tape

Preparation:

Cut the construction paper or felt into pennant shapes, one for each child.

Directions:

Take a photo of each child or have the child draw a picture of him- or herself. If a child wishes to honor someone else as a saint, have the child draw a picture of that person on the half sheet of paper. Then invite the children to make saint pennants. Help the younger children as needed.

Give the children these directions:

1. Glue your picture or photo onto a pennant shape.
2. Write the name of your saint under the picture, then decorate the pennant. If you wish, write the saintly qualities of your saint on your pennant.
3. Tape a dowel or balloon stick onto the end of your pennant.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

for Preschool, Primary

The Communion of Saints is the whole Body of Christ held together by Christ throughout the generations and alongside of us. If we could see all of them, they would be stretched along time and space, backwards to the past and side by side in the present.

Children make crowns or lines of people representing this great Communion of Saints, the Church victorious.

Materials:

stiff metallic gift wrap or construction paper
scissors
clear tape
stapler
pencils
markers or crayons

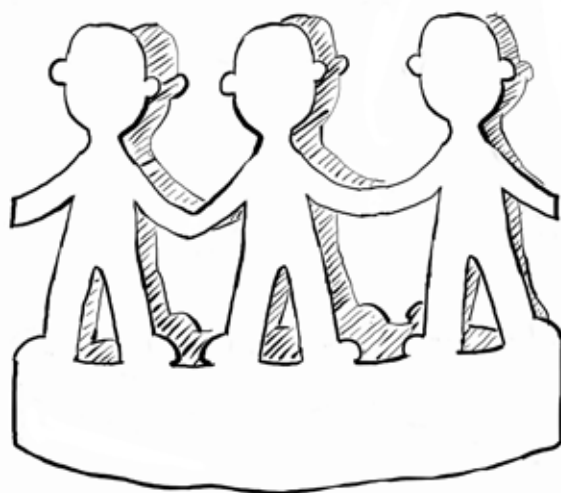
Preparation:

Cut the metallic or gift paper into 6" x 18" strips, one for each child.

Directions:

Hand out the strips of paper and invite each child to make a crown or line of saints. Help the younger children as needed. Give the children these directions:

1. Fold the strip of paper, accordion-style, into six segments, each 6" x 3".
2. On the top segment, outline the body of a person on a 1" pedestal and cut it out, cutting through all the thicknesses at once.
3. Unfold the strip of paper and color the people.
4. To make a crown, staple the ends together and cover the staples with tape.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

SAINTS GAME for Primary

Children play a singing game that affirms their membership among God's saints.

Materials:

empty pop bottle

Directions:

Invite the children to play the Saints Game:

1. Teach the children to sing this variation of "When the Saints Go Marching In":

Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, when the saints go marching in.
Oh, Lord, I want to be in their number,
When the saints go marching in.
Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Jesus wants Saint (*child's name*) in that number,
When the saints go marching in.

2. Gather the children in a circle. Place the bottle in the center of the circle and spin it. Whoever the neck of the bottle points to when it stops spinning is the first saint. The children sing the second verse as this child marches around outside the circle.
3. After the verse, the child spins the bottle to determine the next saint, who joins the first child in marching around the circle. The remaining children repeat the second verse with this child's name.
4. Continue until all the children have been made saints and sung to.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

PRAYER MATS for Elementary

Children make prayer mats to encourage prayer as the saints of God prayed.

Materials:

denim fabric
scissors
fabric paints or fabric pens
optional: light-weight fabric filling

Preparation:

Cut a piece of denim fabric for each child. The piece does not need to be large; 3' x 2' or smaller will work for a mat.

Directions:

Hand out the pieces of denim and invite each child to make a prayer mat. Give the children these directions:

1. Lay the fabric flat. Use the fabric paints or pens to print an encouragement to pray, such as: *Pray without ceasing* or *For God is my salvation*.
2. Paint decorations on the mat, around the words.

Variation:

Cut two pieces of fabric per child. Stuff lightly with fabric filling and sew together for a padded mat.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

AUTOGRAPHED SHIRTS

for Elementary, Intermediate

Children (the saints) autograph t-shirts for everyone in the class.

Materials:

- plain white t-shirts
- fabric paints or pens

Directions:

Pass out the t-shirts and invite the children to autograph everyone's shirt. Give the children these directions:

1. Using the fabric paints or pens, go around the room and sign your name on everyone's t-shirt. You may also add a picture or symbol.
2. Let the t-shirts dry, then put them on over your clothing or take them home to wear later.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

STAINED GLASS CANDY ART for Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children make stained glass pictures with candy.

Materials:

translucent hard candies, such as LifeSavers® and butterscotch candies
corn syrup
craft sticks
small bowls or cups
clear shelf paper
pencils
scissors

Preparation:

Cut the shelf paper into strips approximately half the width of the paper (9" x 18"). Take off the adhesive backing and fold the two sticky sides together to make a stiff clear square. Make one square for each child.

Pour a little corn syrup into the bowls or cups, one cup for each child.

Directions:

Give each of the children a clear square of contact paper, a bowl or cup of corn syrup, a craft stick and some candies and invite each child to make a candy picture. Help the younger children as needed. Give the children these directions:

1. With a pencil, outline the basic shape of your picture on the shelf paper square, Then outline a simple picture or design. It may be a word, such as *LOVE*, with a simple border or it may be a picture such as a cross or butterfly.
2. If you want, cut the frame to another shape (circle, triangle, arch).
3. Dip the craft stick into the corn syrup and spread it on the back of a piece of candy. Then press the candy onto the frame to make the design. Do this until the entire design or picture has been made with candies.
4. Let the corn syrup "glue" dry before holding your picture up to the light.

