

THOUGH MANY, WE ARE ONE

UNIT 2

Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

Lesson 9

All Souls' Day

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Lesson Overview

Students will learn about the Communion of Saints, why we observe All Souls' Day and ways that we can celebrate within our school or classroom.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Religious Education:

BL2.2 (Gr. 4) Summarize what the Church teaches about the three states of life that exist after death: Heaven, Purgatory and Hell.

BL2.3 (Gr. 4) Connect the Church's belief in the resurrection of the Body and life everlasting to belief in the Communion of Saints and the practice of praying to and for those who have died.

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS & CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS

The **Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations** evident in this lesson include:

CGE 1j Recognizes that "sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey" and that the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of redemption.
CGE 6d Values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer.

Guiding Questions (coming out of the Big Idea)

Big Idea:

- The Communion of Saints includes three groups: those in heaven, those in purgatory, and those on earth who are trying to follow Christ.
- Those in purgatory need our prayers.

Scripture Passages:

Wisdom 3:1-9
2 Maccabees 12:42-46

LEARNING GOALS

At the end of this lesson, students will know, understand and/or be able to:

- The three groups in the Communion of Saints
- Understand that our prayers and offering of Mass will help the souls in Purgatory to achieve eternal life.

Success Criteria, based on the Learning Goals, can be co-constructed as a class in language meaningful to students. The success criteria help students understand what to look for during the learning and what it looks like once they have learned. They identify the significant aspects of student performance that are assessed and/or evaluated (i.e., the “look-fors”) in relation to curriculum expectations.

INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS AND CONTEXT

NOTE:

All Soul’s Day is also known as Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed. Roman Catholics celebrate Mass or visit cemeteries in remembrance of those who have gone before us and are believed to be in Purgatory. The prayers are our way of releasing these souls in purgatory and allowing them to go to heaven. Catholics believe in life after death and that we can still interact with people who have gone before us through prayer just as we can ask our family to pray for us. Candles are lit to dispel the darkness in purgatory. Candles are also a sign of our constant prayers.

Materials:

- **What is the Communion of Saints?** (*Appendix A*)
- **Communion of Saints worksheet** (*Appendix B*)
- **Drawing materials, scissors, glue**
- **Prayers for the Dead** (*Appendix C*)

Internet Resources:

- All Saints and All Souls (from Catholic Education Resource Center)
<http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/all-saints-and-all-souls.html>
- All Souls Day (from Catholic Online)
<http://www.catholic.org/saints/allsouls/>

Video Resources:

- Bolt, Owens, & Bailey
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxZLXulyRuc>.
- Reflections on All Souls Day
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVOMdgGUI1Y>

MINDS ON

- Establishing a positive learning environment
- Connecting to prior learning and/or experiences
- Setting the context for learning

Watch the video *Bolt, Owens, & Bailey* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxZLXulyRuc>.

Teacher voice:

Each of these runners practised hard to reach their goal, but they did not do it alone. Can you think of some of the people who helped them to become champions? What did they do to support them? (*Students may suggest coaches, parents, teammates, friends, trainers, doctors, and God*)

Teacher Voice:

As Catholics, our goal in life is to be united with God forever in heaven. Although we don’t know when this is going to be, we need to be preparing for it by loving and helping others. But we don’t do this alone. We have the help of God the Father who created and loves us, of Jesus who died for us, and of the Holy Spirit who is always with us. And we have the help of the saints who are praying for us. Let’s find out more about saints.

ACTION

- Introducing new learning or extending/reinforcing prior learning
- Providing opportunities for practice and application of learning (guided → independent)

Distribute or project the information sheet “What is the Communion of Saints?”

Read through the information together, answering any questions students may have.

Purgatory is a difficult concept for students. The name means ‘a place of cleansing’ and comes from the same root as the word purify. The souls in purgatory are good people who are not quite ready to be with God. A simplified comparison can be made to getting ready for a party or a wedding. We shower or bathe so that we are clean and can present our best selves at this special event. Some people take longer to prepare than others but eventually we all look our best.

Purgatory is an opportunity to cleanse our souls. The souls in purgatory are good people but they still have to make up for some of their sins and be purified before they can be with God in heaven. When we commit sins and are sorry, God forgives us, but we still need to make up for the damage caused by those sins. If we do not do that while we are on earth, we will have to make up for them in purgatory. Some souls will require a longer time in purgatory than others. We pray for all those who have died, that they might soon be with God in heaven.

CONSOLIDATION

- Providing opportunities for consolidation and reflection
- Helping students demonstrate what they have learned

Give each student a copy of the Communion of Saints worksheet (*Appendix B*). Have them draw or glue pictures of canonized saints in the upper section, and pictures of themselves, their family and friends, teachers, pastors, etc. in the bottom section. In the middle section they can draw or write the names of people they know who have died, for whom they will pray.
(*This can be reproduced on larger paper if desired.*)

Pray for the dead. (*See Appendix C*)

Invite students to bring in pictures of members of their families or friends who have passed away. Students can show their picture and talk about their relationship with their deceased person.

CONTINUED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Further extensions to this lesson might include:

1. In small groups students can create a Book of Remembrance. Students create a blank page for each class in the school. Each class is invited to write the names of their deceased friends and family members on their page. A cover can be designed and the book can be bound when class pages are collected.

2. Watch the video *Reflections on All Souls Day*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVOMdgGU1Y>
3. Visit a local cemetery where students could look for relatives or friends. Do a cemetery search to find interesting headstones, sayings on the stones, the oldest gravestone, etc.

Appendix A –

What is the Communion of Saints?

- **All Saints day** is a day is when we celebrate ALL the saints in Heaven. It's a day to pray to the saints and ask them to intercede for us. This includes ALL the saints, even the ones that we don't realize are saints. Even though they are not canonized, they are still saints. So we celebrate them all and ask for their intercession.
- **All Souls day** is a day we focus on prayer for those who have died and are suffering in Purgatory. These souls need our prayers to help them to get into Heaven. This is a special day dedicated to prayer for these needy souls.

There are three groups in the Communion of Saints:

The **first group** includes all the saints in heaven. This group is the part we almost always think about when someone mentions the Communion of saints. We call this group the **Church Triumphant**. So what does triumphant mean? Normally, when we say someone is triumphant we mean that they won or succeeded in what they were trying to do. For example, a runner is triumphant when he wins a race.

The **second group** in the Communion of saints is the **Church Suffering**. This group is made up of the poor Souls in Purgatory. These are people who have died but are not yet holy enough to enter into Heaven. They need our prayers to help them become pure enough to enter Heaven. They cannot enter into Heaven without our prayers, so always be sure to remember the Souls in Purgatory when you pray.

Now the **third group** is one we all know well, but often times don't think of as "saints". The third group is called the **Church Militant** and it's made up of living people here on Earth who strive to follow God's will. This group can include the Pope, bishops, priests, and anyone who is living their lives the way the church teaches. All of us can belong to this group, but we must do as the saints in Heaven have shown us: we must live for God and try to do God's will in all things.

Appendix B

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

<p>CHURCH TRIUMPHANT (in Heaven)</p>
<p>CHURCH SUFFERING (in Purgatory)</p>
<p>CHURCH MILITANT (on Earth)</p>

Appendix C

Prayers for the Dead

God our Father,
Your power brings us to birth,
Your providence guides our lives,
and by Your command we return to dust.

Lord, those who die still live in Your presence,
their lives change but do not end.
I pray in hope for my family,
relatives and friends,
and for all the dead known to You alone.

In company with Christ,
Who died and now lives,
may they rejoice in Your kingdom,
where all our tears are wiped away.
Unite us together again in one family,
to sing Your praise forever and ever.

Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.