

**Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> 2019**

## **1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson Plan: Church History (C12)**

- I. **Welcome** children to the small group as they arrive. Take attendance.
  
- II. **Opening Prayer (10-15 minutes)**
  - Gather around your prayer table- turn on the candle, bless the children with holy water if you'd like
  - Opening Song- I Will Choose Christ- follow [this link](#) for the youtube video. You can also find it in the 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Small Groups Playlist. Encourage your small group to sing along!
  - Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:16-20  

Using the Catholic Children's Bible, find this scripture reading together and have someone read it out loud. Ask your group: What command did Jesus give to his apostles? (to make disciples of all nations). Then ask if they think this command was just for the apostles or for everyone.
  - Write down any prayer intentions for the basket
  - Read the following prayer or do a spontaneous prayer. Begin and end with the sign of the cross. *Loving God, today we thank you for your presence with your people throughout history. Since the time of Jesus, your Holy Spirit has always guided the Church and showed ordinary people like us how to follow you. We thank you for the special worldwide Church that we are a part of. Help us to have fun, stay safe, and grow in relationship with you in our session today. Amen.*
  
- III. **Check-ins (5-10 minutes)**
  
- IV. **Journey of Faith (15-25 minutes)**
  - Make a timeline on the board as you're going through the history of the Church. Let children write important events on it. This will help to keep them engaged and will be great for visual learners. Or if you'd like to have each child make their own timeline on a piece of paper you can do that. This will

help the children keep track of the sequence of events and stay engaged since it's a lot of information!

- If you'd like, before you get into the stages of the Church described here, you can watch [this video](#) about the Early Church.
- There is a ton of information in this lesson and it will be too much for younger kids, so you can go ahead and just mention/ summarize some points if you're teaching first or second grade (even with the older grades you don't have to read everything word for word). I think everyone can handle the first paragraph on History: a Family Story, and most everything on the second inside page is manageable. But the middle part is a lot. Here are some main points that I pulled out to help you simplify all that information:
  - 300s: the Roman Emperor Constantine made Christianity legal, which helped it to grow. Before that point, Christians were persecuted (punished) for their beliefs.
  - Throughout the history of the Church, there have been arguments and disagreements about what we believe, and sometimes that causes separation and division, which is why we have so many religious denominations today.
  - 1054: The Eastern Orthodox Church separated from the Church in Rome because they disagreed about the pope's role and how the Church talked about the Holy Spirit.
  - 1500s: A monk named Martin Luther brought up some problems that he had with things that were being done in the Church. Eventually, this led to many different people breaking away from the Church and starting their own Churches. These people are called Protestant because they were created as a result of people protesting things going on in the Church
- While talking about the Protestant Reformation, emphasize that we share one baptism and one God with other Churches, even if we may disagree with them on some things. The children in your group probably know many people who are Protestants and there is nothing wrong with belonging to another faith tradition!

- While talking about religious orders, this might be a good time to ask what your group knows about different religious orders. We've had two different orders serve here at St. Gerard's, the Redemptorists and the Franciscans, so the children in your groups may have a little bit of understanding of what it means to be part of a religious community. They also met some Visitandine sisters at our Family Night in December!
- If you'd like to do the last page to review a few of the terms and try to make sense of this lesson you can. Here are the answers: People- Ambrose, Constantine. Orders/Groups- Jesuits, Franciscans. Churches- Lutherans, Orthodox. Events- Schism, Council.

#### **V. Activities (to fill the rest of the time you have)**

- Discussion- Family History- 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

Ask the children in your group what they know about their family history. Have everyone who is comfortable sharing tell the group what they know. Ask the following question: why is knowing your history important? Why is it good to learn about where our family comes from and what they've been through? Why do we learn about what has happened in the Church in the past?

- Saint Scavenger Hunt- 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

If you didn't get to this activity when we talked about Mary and the Saints but you were interested in it, you could do it this week; the lives of the saints are part of our Church history! I wrote this activity as a fun way for kids to learn about the Saints who we've named our rooms after. Have someone read each short paragraph written from the point of view of a Saint and then they'll have to figure out which Saint it is. You can choose to break your group into teams and race each other or work all as one team and walk around to the rooms together to look at the options. Or if you'd rather keep them together in your room, you can just give them a word bank and write the possible answers on the board (out of order) and look up each of those options to match them to the paragraph. You can find the activity on the website where you find lesson plans.

- Identifying Religious Orders in the Church- 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

I found [these really cool infographics](#) that give you a snapshot of nine of the many many religious orders in the Church. This might be something cool to pull up on your screen and look through. Unfortunately, the Redemptorists didn't make the cut! You might want to have a discussion on what similarities you see between the different order and what things really stand out and make a certain order unique. I think an important point to make is that each order has a different perspective and history and different ideas on how to pray and live, but all religious orders are just trying to follow Jesus in their own unique and authentic way.

- Video- Vatican II in brief- 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

[This video](#) talks about Vatican II and gives a pretty good idea of why it was necessary and what changes happened in the Church because of it.

- Video- Tradition: Who we are- 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

[This is a nice short video](#) that talks about the importance of tradition and traditions that have been handed down throughout centuries in the Church.

- Song- Future Not My Own- 1st-4th

I think an appropriate way to end a session where we've talked about our history is looking forward to the future. If you'd like, you can play [this song](#), Future Not My Own by Matt Maher. It's based on a prayer written for the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Oscar Romero and it's all about how we all have to do our small part and then trust that God is in control of the rest.

## VI. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray the Our Father together. Remind the children that this prayer has been with the Church from the time of Jesus and is still prayed in many Christian denominations today.

- The words to the Our Father can be found in the Catholic Prayers app under "Basic Prayers" if you want to put them up on the screen.