


Mary, OUR LADY

RESOURCE PACKET



a Kendall Hunt Company



**Mary, Our Lady.
Our Lady of Lourdes,
Our Lady of Fatima,
Our Lady of the Rosary,
Our Lady of Sorrows,
Our Lady of Guadalupe.
Mary, Our Lady.**

“Our Lady,”

one of the many titles by which we know our Blessed Mother, is a title of honor and respect. Indeed, Catholics throughout the world honor her and claim her to be “Our Lady.” The list of titles for Mary that begins with those words of respect and reverence are too numerous to count here. But the resources offered in this collection will engage children and youth in learning six stories behind Marian titles that begin with the words “Our Lady.”

Each story, each devotion, reveals Our Lady’s compassion, intercession, faithfulness, and goodness. Many of the stories include mention of images, statues, chapels, and churches created and built to designate the places where Mary appeared, listened, and interceded on behalf of those who cried out to her in prayer.

Each resource begins with the story of the devotion being highlighted. It is best to tell each story in your own words, in a way best suited for the ages of the children and youth in your class or group.

Following the story are simple suggestions for helping the young people make faith connections, as well as simple suggestions for age-appropriate cross-curricular activities. These suggestions are offered for primary, intermediate, and junior high-aged children.

Through these six stories and activities, may we all come to know and love Our Lady more deeply, and may we too call upon her help and intercession in our daily lives.

- 1. Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones**
- 2. Our Lady of Abundance**
- 3. Our Lady of the Candles**
- 4. Our Lady of Good News**
- 5. Our Lady of the Grasshopper**
- 6. Our Lady of the Smile**

A photograph of a person sitting on a sidewalk. The person is wearing a dark jacket, a green and white plaid shirt, and a brown leather boot. A cardboard sign is propped up next to them, with the words "HOMELESS" and "PLEASE HELP" written on it. A metal cup containing several dollar bills is placed on the ground next to the person's hand. The background is a concrete sidewalk.

Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones

FEAST DAY: MAY 12



The Story

Over 600 years ago, in Valencia, Spain, a home was built to care for abandoned children. The home was placed under the care of Mary, Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones. But there was no statue or image of her to place in the home. Those in charge had no idea of how they would ever find or afford such a thing.


One day, three teenagers knocked on the door of the home. They explained that they needed food and a place to stay. They had no money to offer, but they did have a talent. They could create a statue for the home! All they needed were supplies to create the statue and a private room in which to work. Those in charge had no idea how three teens could create such an important work of religious art, but they welcomed the teens into their home and they gave the teens the supplies needed to create the statue.

For three days the teens worked behind closed doors. Those in charge would knock on the door to see if the teens needed food or additional supplies for the statue, but there was never an answer. Finally, on the third day, those in charge broke open the door only to find that the teens were not there.

But in the center of the room stood a beautiful statue of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

Many people came to pray before the statue of Our Lady, asking for healing, help, and protection. Devotion to her grew so much that Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones became the patroness of the city of Valencia. The abandoned ones she protected grew to include the abandoned children, adults, and elderly.

Our Lady's arms embrace all. Her protection is over all.



Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones ACTIVITIES

For Primary Grades

Materials Needed:

- **Ten or more images of Mary** (under various titles, such as *Seat of Wisdom*, *Star of the Sea*, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*; statues; stained glass windows; *Madonna and Child* from various cultures; icons; *Immaculate Heart of Mary*; and so forth)
- **Costumes and props** (optional)
- **A copy of *The Elves and the Shoemaker*** (several age-appropriate versions are available)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Ask the children how many of them have statues or images of Mary in their homes. Invite them to describe the statues or images and to tell where those statues or images are located in their homes.
2. Show the images of Mary you have prepared. Ask the children to name their favorites and to tell why those are their favorites.
3. Explain that statues and images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints remind us that they are with us, praying for us, and watching over us.
4. Invite the children to enjoy the story about the statue of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

Telling the Story

Tell the story in your own words, as is appropriate for the age of the children you are teaching. This would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the class to say together the name of the statue described in the story.
(*Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones*)
2. Ask a volunteer to tell the meaning of the word abandoned. (*Left behind; deserted*)
3. Ask why a statue of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones was important for the home.
(*It was a home for abandoned children; the statue was a reminder that Mary was with them, protecting them and watching over them*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Remind the children that the teens in the story had no money to offer the home, but they had talents to share to help the home.
2. Invite the children to think about the talents God has given to them. Encourage the children by pointing out the talents you see in each of them too.
3. Ask the children how they can use their talents to help others and to serve God.

Curriculum Connection: Math and Language Arts

Before Telling the Story

1. Take the children on a walk through your parish church, school, or religious education center.
2. Invite the children to work with partners to count the number of images of Mary they see while on the walk.
3. When you return to the classroom, compare counts.
4. Invite the children to name and describe their favorite images.

After Telling the Story

1. Read aloud the story of The Elves and the Shoemaker.
2. Draw two columns on the white board or flip chart. Name one column "Alike" and the other column "Different."
3. Ask the children to think about the stories of Our Lady of the Abandoned and The Elves and the Shoemaker. How are the stories alike? How are the stories different? Record their responses in the columns on the board.
4. Review the children's responses.

And Furthermore . . .

Mount several of the images of Mary (*see Materials*) on foam board or poster board. Place different images on your classroom prayer table throughout the year. Each time you present a new image, remind the children of the title of Mary depicted in the image. Use that title in classroom prayer. For example: Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones, pray for us!

For Intermediate Grades

Materials Needed:

- **Several images of Mary** (*under various titles, such as Seat of Wisdom, Star of the Sea, Our Lady of Guadalupe; statues; stained glass windows; Madonna and Child from various cultures; icons; Immaculate Heart of Mary; and so forth*)
- **Costumes and props** (*optional*)
- **Print or internet access to copies of recent and current parish bulletins and diocesan newspapers**
- **Internet access or print resources on Catholic Campaign for Human Development** (usccb.org); **Catholic Relief Services** (crs.org); **Unbound** (unbound.org); **Maryknoll missionaries** (Maryknoll.org); **and your diocesan Social Justice, Family Life, and/or Migrant Ministries offices**

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Ask the young people if they have statues or images of Mary in their homes. Invite them to describe the images and to tell where the images are located.
2. Show the images of Mary you have prepared (*see Materials*) and name the title of Mary depicted in each image. Invite the young people to discuss how the titles are reflected in the artistic representations.
3. Remind the young people that images and statues of Jesus, Mary, and the saints remind us that they are praying for us and watching over us, and that we are all a part of the Communion of Saints.
4. Invite the young people to listen to a story of Mary, honored by the title of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

Telling the Story

Tell the story in your own words, as is appropriate for the age of the young people you are teaching. This would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Ask volunteers to explain why a statue of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones was important for the home. (*The home was for abandoned children; the statue was a reminder that Our Lady was watching over them and protecting them.*)
2. Invite the young people to say who they think the three teenagers could have been. (*Welcome all suggestions.*)
3. Ask the group what messages the story teaches. (*For example, the importance of religious images, how our prayers are answered in unexpected ways, how our talents can be used for the glory of God, how Mary watches over us all, and so forth*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Invite the young people to work with partners. Give each pair of students at least one copy each of a parish bulletin and diocesan newspaper, or invite them to access the materials on the internet.
2. Have the young people search the bulletins and diocesan papers for examples of ways the Church is caring for the abandoned ones of today—those in need of homes, food, medicine, and care. Invite each pair of students to prepare a short report on their findings.
3. Invite the sharing of reports. Lead a class discussion of the students' findings.
4. If possible, decide on a class outreach that would benefit abandoned children, such as a toy drive or book collection for a local orphanage, children's home, or family shelter.

Curriculum Connection: Math and Social Studies

Before Telling the Story

1. Take the young people on a walk through your parish church, school, or religious education center.
2. Invite the young people to work with partners to count the number of images of Mary they see while on the walk. Have them organize their count according to the types of artistic representations: statues, icons, stained glass windows, paintings, tapestries, and so forth.
3. When you return to the classroom, discuss the types of artistic representations the young people saw and compare counts.
4. Invite the young people to name and describe their favorite images. Ask what images they saw that they have never noticed before.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to work in small groups to research one Catholic outreach that ministers to the abandoned ones in the world today. Assign each group a ministry, such as your diocesan Social Justice, Family Life, or Migrant Ministry office; Catholic Campaign for Human Development (usccb.org); Catholic Relief Services (crs.org); Unbound (unbound.org); and Maryknoll missionaries (Maryknoll.org).
2. Ask the groups to prepare ten- to fifteen-minute presentations on their chosen or assigned ministries and to include what the ministry does, what countries it serves, what ages it serves, and ways that young people can help the ministry. Encourage the young people to prepare a digital display or poster that shows some of the people served by the ministry and some of the projects currently supported by the ministry.

And Furthermore . . .

Mount several of the images of Mary (*see Materials*) on foam board or poster board. Place different images on your classroom prayer table throughout the year. Each time you present a new image, remind the young people of the title of Mary depicted in the image. Use that title in classroom prayer. For example: Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones, pray for us!

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- Several copies of recent parish bulletins
- Journals or writing paper
- Pencils or pens

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to find an image of Mary they particularly like, and to note if the image has a title, such as Mary, Seat of Wisdom; Mary, Star of the Sea; Madonna and Child; Our Lady of Fatima; and so forth.
2. Invite the young people to share their images with the group. If the images have titles, discuss whether the title and the image seem to be a good match.
3. Ask the young people to recall why Catholics have images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints in their churches and in their homes. *(As a reminder that Jesus, Mary, and the saints watch over us; as a reminder that we too are a part of the Communion of Saints)*
4. Invite the young people to listen to a story of Mary, honored by the title of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

After Telling the Story

1. Ask volunteers to explain why a statue of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones was important for the home. *(The home was for abandoned children; the statue was a reminder that Our Lady was watching over them and protecting them.)*
2. Invite the young people to say who they think the three teenagers could have been and why the teenagers wanted to work in secret. *(Welcome all suggestions.)*
3. Ask the group what messages the story teaches. *(For example, the importance of religious images, how our prayers are answered in unexpected ways, how our talents can be used for the glory of God, how Mary watches over us all, and so forth)*

Putting Faith into Action

1. Remind the group that the teenagers had no money to pay for their food and lodging, but they offered to use their artistic talents to create a statue for the home.
2. Invite the young people to take a few minutes to quietly reflect on their own talents. What are their talents? How can they serve God by using those talents?
3. Invite group discussion in response to the reflection questions.

4. Distribute parish bulletins and invite the young people to work with partners. Invite the young people to search several recent bulletins for opportunities to serve. Have the partners list the opportunities suitable for young people their age.
5. Invite a sharing of findings. Post results on the white board or on a flip chart, then invite the young people to share more opportunities of which they are aware.
6. Encourage the young people to consider serving the parish or the larger community in one or more of the ways you have discussed and listed.

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to discuss those they feel are the abandoned ones of today and why.
2. Brainstorm what would be signs of hope to these abandoned ones.

After Telling the Story

1. Have the young people write letters to Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones. Suggest a simple greeting, such as, "Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones;" an opening sentence, such as, "Today I am asking you to watch over _____ because _____;" and additional sentences that say more about the abandoned ones and implore Our Lady's protection and care.
2. Invite volunteers to share their letters. After each letter is read, invite the group to pray aloud, "Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones, pray for us."

And Furthermore . . .

Invite volunteers to create a mural with an image of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones and the words, "Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones, pray for us!" Leave room around the image and words for the young people to post pictures of and articles about abandoned ones in the world today. Encourage the young people to take time to read the articles, look at the images, and pray to Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

A young girl with dark hair and bangs is laughing joyfully, her eyes closed and mouth wide open. She is wearing a colorful plaid dress with shades of blue, green, yellow, and pink. Her arms are raised in the air, and she appears to be in a sun-drenched outdoor setting, possibly a garden or park, with trees and foliage in the background. The lighting is bright and warm, creating a bokeh effect in the background.

Our Lady of Abundance

FEAST DAY: JANUARY 5



The Story

Nearly five hundred years ago, the region known as Puglie in Italy did not have a drop of rain for over three years. This ruined the crops, and the people of the region were desperate for the water the rain provided.

Then the women of Cursi, Italy began to pray to our Blessed Mother, Mary. They begged Mary to help them by providing rain for the crops and water for the animals and the people.

Mary heard the women's prayers, and she soon appeared to a shepherd named Baglio Natali. The first time Baglio saw Mary, he became afraid and ran away. But Mary called him back, calmed his fears, and told Baglio who she was.

She told Baglio to go and tell the parish priest to gather the people of Cursi and to bring them to the spot where she appeared. She explained that she wanted a church to be built on the spot, and that when the church was built, she would take all of the people of Cursi and the region known as Puglie under her protection. Mary also promised that by the end of the year, the crops would be so successful that every barn would be filled to overflowing.

And Mary asked one more thing. She asked Baglio to change his way of life because she wanted him to spend his life serving the people of Cursi in their new church.

Baglio told the pastor what he had seen and heard, and the pastor believed him. The pastor gathered together the people of Cursi and they processed to the spot where Mary had spoken to Baglio. They all knelt and prayed to Mary.

As they processed back to Cursi, clouds began to form overhead, and rain fell. The people, though they were soaking wet, were filled with great joy. It rained for three days!

As others heard the story, they traveled to the spot where Mary had appeared and offered their own prayers of petition and thanksgiving to Mary. And, in time, the church was built and dedicated in honor of Our Lady of Abundance. Baglio became a hermit who spent the rest of his life looking after the church and praying for its people.

Later in history, the church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. But the people of the region remembered all that Mary had done for them. They built a new church in honor of Our Lady of Abundance. On the high altar there is an image of Our Lady holding Jesus in her arms. In their hands are sprigs of olives and ears of corn, symbols of an abundant harvest.



Our Lady of Abundance

ACTIVITIES

For Primary Grades

Materials Needed:

- Costumes and props (*optional*)
- Nine half sheets of poster board, each containing one letter of the word “Abundance”
- An envelope containing small pieces of paper with the letters of the word “abundance” (*one letter for each child; duplications are fine*)
- Large sheets of drawing paper, one per child
- Paints or crayons and markers

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Ask the children if they know the meaning of the word abundance.
2. Invite the group to brainstorm things they have in abundance. List their thoughts on the white board or flip chart.
3. Explain to the children that today’s story is about Mary, Our Lady of Abundance. Invite them to listen to the story.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of Abundance. This is an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to name their favorite parts of the story of Our Lady of Abundance.
2. Recall the role the women of Cursi played in the story. (*They began to pray to Mary for help.*)
3. Recall the role the shepherd, Baglio Natali, played in the story. (*He listened to Mary; he shared Mary’s message with the pastor; he changed his way of life so that he could serve the Church.*)

4. Recall the role the pastor played in the story. (*He believed what Baglio told him; he gathered the members of the parish to process to the place where Mary had appeared to Baglio.*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Explain that all of the people in the story put their faith into action. The women prayed. Baglio listened, shared the message, and changed his way of life. The pastor believed and led his parishioners to the spot where Mary had appeared. And at that spot, all of the parishioners knelt and prayed.
2. Invite the children to recall what happened because all of the people had faith and prayed. (*It rained; the crops filled the barns to overflowing.*)
3. Ask what the people did to show their thanks. (*They built a church at the place where Mary had appeared to Baglio, and when the church burned down, they built a new church.*)
4. Brainstorm with the children ways they can and do put their faith into action too. (*Pray, go to Mass, help others, read the Bible, receive the Sacraments, and so forth.*)
5. Create a poster or bulletin board titled “We Put Our Faith into Action” that contains a list of all of the suggestions the children offer.

Curriculum Connection: Math and Language Arts

Before Telling the Story

1. Before telling the story, play a game of “True or False.”
2. Invite volunteers to come to the front of the group and state, “I have an abundance of _____.” Allow the volunteers to decide what word they will use to fill in the blank—cats, stuffed animals, marbles, patience, money, pencils—the goal is to stump the group.
3. Invite the group to guess whether the volunteer’s statement is “true” or “false.”
4. Play until all who wish have had a turn or two.

After Telling the Story

1. Recall the meaning of the word abundance.
2. Write the letters of the word abundance on the white board or flip chart.
3. Brainstorm things that begin with the letters, such as apples, bananas, umbrellas, nickels, and so forth. Write the children’s ideas on the white board or flip chart. After adding each item to the list, ask, “Can you have an abundance of (*apples*)?”
4. Invite each child to draw a letter from the envelope (*see Materials*).
5. Explain to the children that they are to think of something that begins with the letter they have chosen, using ideas listed on the white board or flip chart, or ideas of their own. Then they are to use the drawing paper and art supplies (*see Materials*) to draw an abundance of their chosen item. When they finish their drawings, they are to count how many of their items they drew (*for example, 27 apples or 104 nickels*), but to keep their counts a secret.
6. While the children are drawing, post the poster board letters of the word abundance, leaving space for the children to hang their finished artwork near the appropriate letters.
7. Invite the children to share their drawings with the group, and to invite the others to guess how many of items each child drew.
8. Display the artwork.

And Furthermore . . .

Review with the children the list of things they have in abundance (*see Before Telling the Story*). Suggest taking up a collection of some of those things—especially toys and games, books, and clothing—for a parish or community outreach to children and families.

For Intermediate Grades

Materials Needed:

- **Costumes and props** (*optional*)
- **Writing paper**
- **Pencils or pens**
- **Materials on Laudato Si' from the Catholic Resources section of rclbenziger.com** (*specifically, "Activities with Children for a Better World" section on water*)
- **Materials needed for the Laudato Si' activities you have chosen** (*refer to the "Activities with Children for a Better World" resource*)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite a volunteer to explain the meaning of the word abundance.
2. Ask the young people to name things they have in abundance. List their responses on the white board or flip chart.
3. Encourage the young people to listen for examples of abundance in the story of Our Lady of Abundance.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of Abundance. This would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to work with partners to recall the story. Ask the pairs to identify the main characters in the story and the roles they played, as well as examples in the story of abundance.
2. Lead a group discussion of the young people's thoughts. (*Main characters: women, Baglio, pastor, parishioners; Roles played: prayer, relating Mary's message, processing to the spot, building a church; Abundance: faith and prayer, rain, crops, thanksgiving. Welcome additional responses and ideas.*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Have the young people continue to work with partners to create acrostics using the letters of the word abundance.
2. Challenge the young people to think of a word or phrase that begins with each letter and describes one way they can show they have an abundance of faith in God. Begin by doing one example together. For example, for the letter "d," devotion to Jesus and Mary; devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; doing for others; denying ourselves and taking up our crosses; doing what Jesus asks us to do.

3. Invite the young people to share their acrostics with the group.

Curriculum Connection: Math and Social Studies

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to share what they know about droughts. What is a drought? What are some famous droughts in history? How do droughts impact crops, people, and livestock?
2. Ask the young people to listen for the connection between a drought and Our Lady of Abundance as you tell her story.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to tell what part a drought had to play in the story of Our Lady of Abundance. (*The people had suffered a long drought; Our Lady of Abundance heard their prayers for rain.*)
2. Engage the young people in the activity or activities you have chosen to do from the Laudato Si' "Activities with Children for a Better World" resource (*Catholic Resource section at rclbenziger.com*).

And Furthermore . . .

Brainstorm with the young people ways we use the gift of water every day. Ask them to name ways we waste water and ways we can conserve water. List their thoughts on the board. Vote on one way you will, as a group, quit wasting water, and one way you will make a stronger effort to conserve water. Ask the young people to invite their family members to join them in these efforts too.

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- Print resources and/or internet access for research on the Dust Bowl, the Dry Fifties, the North American Drought of 1988-1989, the causes of drought, and ways to prevent a drought

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite a volunteer to explain the meaning of the word abundance.
2. Ask the young people to name things they have in abundance. List their responses on the white board or flip chart.
3. Encourage them to listen for examples of abundance in the story of Our Lady of Abundance.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of Abundance.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to work with partners to recall the story. Ask the pairs to identify the main characters in the story and the roles they played, as well as examples in the story of abundance.
2. Lead a group discussion of the young people's thoughts. (Main characters: women, Baglio, pastor, parishioners; Roles played: prayer, relating Mary's message, processing to the spot, building a church; Abundance: faith and prayer, rain, crops, thanksgiving. Welcome additional responses and ideas.)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Have the young people review the things they earlier said they had an abundance of.
2. Ask if they need the abundance. If so, why? If not, what actions might they take to share their abundance with others in need?
3. If possible, organize a "Sharing Our Abundance" collection of games, books, clothes, sporting equipment, and so forth to benefit a parish or local outreach to those in need.

Curriculum Connection: History and Science

Before Telling the Story

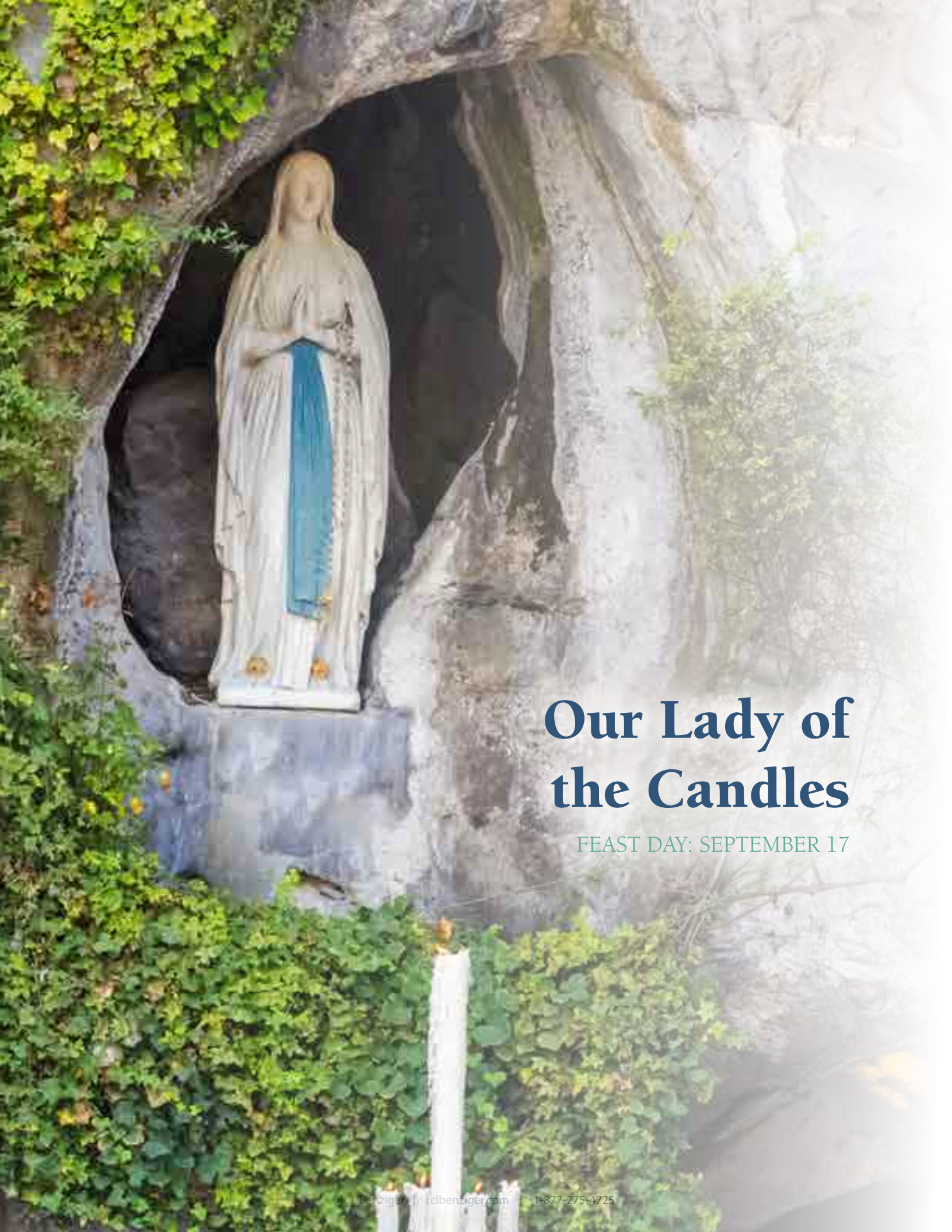
1. Invite volunteers to share what they know about droughts. What is a drought? What are some famous droughts in history? How do droughts impact crops, people, and livestock?
2. Ask the young people to listen for the connection between a drought and Our Lady of Abundance as you tell her story.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to tell what part a drought had to play in the story of Our Lady of Abundance. (*The people had suffered a long drought; Our Lady of Abundance heard their prayers for rain.*)
2. Divide the young people into five groups. Assign each group one of the following topics: The Dust Bowl, The Dry Fifties, The North American Drought of 1988-1989, The Causes of Drought, and Ways to Prevent a Drought.
3. Ask the young people to prepare ten- to fifteen-minute reports on their topics, including illustrations if available. The reports should highlight both the history or explanation of their topic and its impact on the crops, the livestock, and the people.
4. Invite the small groups to share their completed reports with the class.


And Furthermore . . .

Brainstorm with the young people ways that we use the gift of water every day. Ask them to name ways we waste water and ways we can conserve water. List their thoughts on the board. Vote on one way you will, as a group, quit wasting water, and one way you will make a stronger effort to conserve water. Ask the young people to invite their family members to join them in these efforts too. If time allows, invite the young people to create posters or social media messages that promote water conservation and help raise awareness of ways we waste the precious gift of water.



Our Lady of the Candles

FEAST DAY: SEPTEMBER 17



Explain that this story takes place in the Canary Islands. Use a world map or globe to point out the location of the islands. You may also wish to share some fun facts about the islands. Several lists are available online.

The Story

Long ago, in the year 1400, two shepherds sought shelter from a storm in a cave. In the cave, they found a statue. The shepherds had never seen a statue before, and at first, they thought it was a living person. They motioned for the statue to go away. When the statue did not move, one of the shepherds threw a rock at it. But when he tried to throw the rock, his arm would not move! The other shepherd took out his knife and tried to cut one of the fingers on the statue, but his own finger began to bleed instead!

The two shepherds were so frightened that they left their belongings and their sheep and ran from the cave. They went to tell their chief, who told them to go and bring to him what they had seen. So, the shepherds went back to the cave and found the statue. When they picked it up, the shepherd who had the wound on his finger was instantly healed.

The chief knew that the statue was special, and he displayed it in a way so that it had a place of honor. A few nights later, when he went out to check on the statue, he heard beautiful music and saw several strange beings of light setting candles around the statue. The chief and his people had never before seen candles, because there were no bees on the islands to make wax.

The people built a special place for the statue, and for many years there was music, light, and a beautiful fragrance all around the statue that no one could explain. People brought offerings of fruits and flowers. They knew this was a special place.

Over a hundred years later, one of the boys on the island was captured and taken to Spain. There he learned about the Christian faith. He told missionaries about the people of the island, and they traveled there to share the Christian faith.

The story of the statue spread, and one group of people from another island felt that the statue should not be in the care of those who were not Christians. So, they stole the statue for their own church, and they gave it a special place of honor. But when they returned the next day, the statue had turned its back on the people, and they could not turn the statue around. Then, many people on the island became sick. They soon realized that they needed to return the statue to its rightful owners.

Devotion to Our Lady of the Candles spread to Spanish countries, South America, and the Philippines. It is said that, on occasion, large quantities of a very good quality wax are found on the island, and that even today candles and candle stumps are found near the cave where the shepherds found the original statue of Our Lady of the Candles.



Our Lady of the Candles

ACTIVITIES

For Primary Grades

Materials Needed:

- Costumes and props (*optional*)
- Internet examples/demonstrations of the Whistle Language still used on the Canary Islands

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Ask the children if they've ever found or seen something and wondered, "How did that get there?" Encourage them to share their experiences. Be sure to share an example of your own.
2. Invite the children to listen for two things that got to the island without anyone knowing how they did so. (*"How did that get there?"*)

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of the Candles, as is appropriate for the age of the children you are teaching. The story of Our Lady of the Candles would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to name their favorite parts of the story of Our Lady of the Candles.
2. Invite volunteers to name the two things that got to the island without anyone knowing how they did so. (*The statue and the candles*)
3. Ask the children who they think were the beings of light. (*Welcome all suggestions.*)

Exploring Our Catholic Faith

1. Explain that many think the beings of light in the story were angels of God.
2. Invite the children to share what they know about angels. (*Welcome all responses.*)
3. Remind the children that God gives every person a guardian angel. Guardian angels protect us and guide us.
4. Teach or review with the children the Angel of God prayer. Encourage them to pray this prayer often.

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts

After Telling the Story

1. Share with the children that the Canary Islands are known for many things, including the use of a Whistle Language.
2. Play for the children examples of this language (*several examples are available online*).
3. Ask if they would like to speak using a whistle language, and why or why not.
4. Explain that the language was developed so that people far away from each other could hear each other. (*Whistles carry, spoken words do not.*) If it's a beautiful day, take the children outside and prove this theory by having a child speak to your group from a distance and by having that child whistle to the group. Which is more easily heard?
5. Work together to develop a whistle code for a few simple words and sentences, such as, "It's time to eat," "Walk the dog," or "Do your homework!"

And Furthermore . . .

Just for fun, develop a whistle code for the words, "Yes," "No," "Please," and "Thank You." Use these whistle codes for the remainder of the lesson, or for the remainder of the week! Encourage the children to teach the whistle codes to their family members, and to use the codes with their families.

For Intermediate Grades

Materials Needed:

- **Costumes and props** (*optional*)
- **Bibles** (*one for every young person, if possible*)
- **Supplies for making candles** (*simple examples and directions are easily found on the internet, such as rolled beeswax candles, crayon candles, or cracked ice candles*)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Ask the young people if they've ever found or seen something and wondered, "How did that get there?" Encourage them to share their experiences. Be sure to share an example of your own.
2. Invite the young people to listen for two things that got to the island without anyone knowing how they did so. (*"How did that get there?"*)

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Our Lady of the Candles, as is appropriate for the age of the young people you are teaching. The story of Our Lady of the Candles would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to name their favorite parts of the story of Our Lady of the Candles.
2. Invite volunteers to name the two things that got to the island without anyone knowing how they did so. (*The statue and the candles*)
3. Ask the young people who they think were the beings of light. (*Welcome all suggestions.*)

Exploring Our Catholic Faith

1. Explain that many think the beings of light in the story were angels of God.
2. Invite the young people to share what they know about angels. (*Welcome all responses.*)
3. Remind the young people that God gives every person a guardian angel. Guardian angels protect us and guide us. Read together Psalm 91. Ask a volunteer to reread verses 9-13. Invite the young people to describe in their own words what these verses say about angels as our protectors. Recall that the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels on October 2.
4. Explain that in the Bible, angels also deliver God's message to people. Read together Luke 1:26-38. Invite the young people to describe in their own words the message of the angel Gabriel to Mary.

5. Remind the young people that the Church celebrates the Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels, on September 29. Share the meanings of their names: Michael (*Who is like God?*), Gabriel (*God's Strength*), and Raphael (*God's Remedy*). Their roles are protector (*Michael*), messenger (*Gabriel*), and healer (*Raphael*).

Curriculum Connection: Art

After Telling the Story

Invite the young people to create candles in the manner in which you have chosen.

And Furthermore . . .

Invite the young people to take home a copy of the story of Our Lady of the Candles and the candles they have created. Encourage them to put their candles on their family prayer tables or kitchen tables, perhaps with a statue or image of Our Lady they may already have at home. Suggest that they invite their families to gather at the prayer table or kitchen table to hear the story of Our Lady of the Candles and to pray for all who need her light to shine on them today.

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- Writing paper and pencils or pens
- Props and costumes (see “And Furthermore” at the end of this lesson)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Use a globe or a map to show the young people where the Canary Islands are located.
2. Invite them to work with partners to quickly research and create a list of five to ten fun facts about the Canary Islands.
3. Ask volunteers to share their findings with the group.
4. Vote on the top three most interesting facts.
5. Explain that the story of Our Lady of the Candles took place on one of the Canary Islands, and invite the young people to listen for the most interesting or unusual details they hear in the story.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of the Candles.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to share the most interesting or unusual details they heard in the story.
2. Ask the young people what they feel is the significance of finding Our Lady of the Candles on that particular island. Remind them that the people on that island were not Christian and did not know what a statue even was. (*Welcome all suggestions.*)

Exploring Our Catholic Faith

1. Remind the young people that the Catholic Church uses sacramentals, such as statues, to remind us of God’s love and to help us draw closer to God.
2. Ask the young people if the statue of Our Lady of the Candles helped the people of the island know God’s love and draw closer to God. (*Welcome their thoughts and opinions.*)
3. Recall with the young people that the three types of sacramentals are blessings, sacred objects, and sacred actions. Brainstorm examples of sacramentals that fit into each of these three categories. List examples, by category, on the white board or flip chart. As you do so, invite the young people to name where they have experienced or seen these sacramentals used in the prayer and liturgy of the Church. (*Blessings: for people, places, objects, and special activities; Sacred objects: Bibles, crucifixes, rosaries, medals, holy water, holy oil, blessed ashes, blessed palms, blessed candles, church bells, statues, holy cards; Sacred actions: the Sign of the Cross, the sprinkling of Holy Water, the anointing with oil, the laying on of hands; and so forth*)

4. Invite the young people to name sacramentals they own or their families own, and ask how and when these sacramentals are used in their lives or in their homes.

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts

After Telling the Story

1. Recall with the young people three important characters in the story: the shepherds, the chief, and the statue.
2. Ask each young person to choose one of the three characters and to write a poem, play, song, or story about Our Lady of the Candles from that character's perspective. Suggested titles or focuses for the story might be:
 - The Shepherds: The Treasure in the Cave
Frozen in Place
My Miraculous Healing
 - The Chief: A Treasure to be Shared
I Knew She was Special
I Couldn't Believe what I Saw!
 - The Statue: My Journey to the Island
The Reason I Came
Why I Turned My Back on Them
3. Invite volunteers to share their stories with the group.

And Furthermore . . .

The story of Our Lady of the Candles would be a wonderful story to expand and dramatize for younger children. Consider working with the young people to create a play, or to create several vignettes based on their writings. Use props, costumes, and period music to enliven the play(s), and plan to present your work to younger children and/or to parents.



Our Lady of Good News

FEAST DAY: SEPTEMBER 16



The Stories

There are two stories that will help us learn about Our Lady of Good News. Both stories took place in Italy many years ago.

The first story took place in an inn in Palermo, Italy, where a church in honor of Holy Mary of Good News stands today. One night, a traveler paid for a room in the inn, and wanted to make a fire in the room so that he could get warm. He picked up a piece of dirty, old board to add to the fire. It looked like a piece of board that had once covered a wall.

The traveler tried to cut the board with an axe, but the board would not break. He hit it again and again, but his axe did not even make a scratch on the board. He told others about this unusual experience, and they all decided that it must be a secret board of some kind. So, they cleaned the dirt from the board and found an image of Our Lady painted on it. She was holding the baby Jesus in her arms, and two angels were placing a crown upon her head.

The people told the archbishop, who formed a procession of the local priests to bring the image of Our Lady to his palace. The archbishop cleaned the board even more, and as he cleaned, the image became even more colorful and beautiful. The archbishop placed the image on an altar in his palace, and many people came to pray before the image. Many prayers were answered, and many miracles occurred. Later, a special church was built to honor Mary.

The second story about Our Lady of Good News took place in that same church many years later.

A Church leader was praying in the church when a messenger came to him. The Church leader asked the messenger, "Do you bring good news?" The messenger said, "Yes!" and then went on to explain that enemies of the Church who were seeking to harm Christians decided to settle their differences peacefully. This is when the church's name was changed from the Church of Holy Mary to the Church of Holy Mary of Good News. The image itself became known as Our Lady of Good News.



Our Lady of Good News

ACTIVITIES



For Primary Grades

Materials Needed:

- Costumes and props (*optional*)
- Reflective music for prayer time
- Drawing paper and crayons or colored markers
- Small odds and ends of colored papers and trims; odds and end buttons and bottle caps; any small bits of potential collage materials that might be considered not worth keeping
- Half sheets of poster board (*one per child*)
- Glue sticks or glue and heavy tape

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

Ask the children if they've ever found a treasure in the trash or on a sidewalk or in a parking lot. What was the treasure? Why did they want to keep it? Do they still have their treasures?

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Our Lady of Good News, as is appropriate for the age of the children you are teaching. The stories of Our Lady of Good News would be excellent stories to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to name the treasure the traveler discovered. (*The board with the image of Our Lady of Good News*)

2. Ask what was special about the treasure. (*Welcome all replies, but emphasize that the man could not break it, the treasure became more beautiful as the archbishop cleaned it, and prayers were answered and miracles happened for many people who prayed before the image.*)
3. Ask the children what is the message of the story of Our Lady of Good News for us today. (*Welcome all responses, and suggest that one message might be to always take a second look at things, including people!*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Remind the children that God created everything that is, including people. In the Bible, in the Book of Genesis, it says that as God created each part of creation, "God saw that it was good." (*See Genesis 1:10.*) God asks us to see everything he created as good too!
2. Play some quiet, reflective music and invite the children to quietly think about all of the beautiful things God has created and all of the beautiful people who are a part of their lives.
3. Have the children draw one of the things or people they thought about.
4. Invite volunteers to share what they have drawn, and display the drawings in the classroom or in the hallway. Label the display, "God saw that it was good!"

Curriculum Connection: Art

After Telling the Story

1. Display all of the art materials you have gathered for today's project.
2. Recall with the children that the image of Our Lady of Good News was originally in a pile of scrap wood, meant to be burned. Explain that all of the art materials they see are things that would normally be thrown out too.
3. Remind the children that just as the scrap piece of wood turned out to have a beautiful image of Our Lady of Good News, the scrap materials before them can turn out to be something beautiful.
4. Invite the children to use poster board as a base for making beautiful pictures and images and creations using the art materials that would normally have been thrown away.
5. Display the finished creations, again labeling the display, "God saw that it was good!"

And Furthermore . . .

Just for fun, challenge the children to choose one item on the art materials table or from the classroom recycle bin that would be something they would normally throw away. As a class, brainstorm three to five ways that item could be reused or repurposed. Invite several volunteers to choose items, and continue the brainstorming session.

For Intermediate Grades

Materials Needed:

- Costumes and props *(optional)*
- Reflective music for prayer time
- Small strips of paper and pencils or pens
- A basket
- A statue or image of Mary *(placed on your classroom prayer table)*
- Half sheets of poster board *(one per young person)*
- Glue sticks or glue and heavy tape
- Small-sized recyclable materials such as paper goods, bottle caps, plastic silverware, tin foil, cardboard boxes, packaging, and so forth

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

Ask the young people if they've ever found a treasure in the trash or on a sidewalk or in a parking lot. What was the treasure? Why did they want to keep it? Do they still have their treasures?

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Our Lady of Good News. These would be excellent stories to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to name the treasure that the traveler discovered. *(The board with the image of Our Lady of Good News)*
2. Ask what was special about the treasure. *(Welcome all replies, but emphasize that the man could not break it, the treasure became more beautiful as the archbishop cleaned it, and prayers were answered and miracles happened for many people who prayed before the image.)*
3. Ask the children what is the message of the story of Our Lady of Good News for us today. *(Welcome all responses, and suggest messages such as: hard work pays off, always stop to take a second look at something before you just get rid of it, and you never know what you'll find.)*

Putting Faith into Action

1. Ask the young people when in the story the image became its most beautiful. *(When the archbishop put extra effort into cleaning it even more than the traveler had)*
2. Invite the young people to suggest what we can learn from the archbishop's example. *(Welcome all responses, and suggest: see the beauty in all things; arriving at what is truly beautiful takes time and effort; treat what is precious with respect and care.)*
3. Play some reflective music and ask the young people to spend time in prayer, thinking about things in their lives—and people in their lives—they need to give more care and attention to.

4. Invite the young people to write their prayers on the slips of paper you have provided, and to place their prayers in the basket at the foot of the image of Mary on your prayer table.
5. Conclude by inviting a young person to hold the basket of prayers high as you pray, "Our Lady of Good News, pray for us!"

Curriculum Connection: Art

After Telling the Story

1. Display all of the recyclable materials you have gathered for today's project.
2. Recall with the young people that the image of Our Lady of Good News was originally in a pile of scrap wood, meant to be burned. Explain that all of the recyclable materials are things that are normally thrown out too.
3. Remind the young people that just as the scrap piece of wood turned out to have a beautiful image of Our Lady of Good News, the recyclable materials before them can turn out to be something beautiful.
4. Invite the young people to use poster board as a base for making original creations from the recyclable materials.
5. Display the finished creations, labeling the display, "Give it a Second Chance!"

And Furthermore . . .

Just for fun, have the young people work in groups of four or five. Invite each group to choose three items from the recyclable materials table. It is fine if groups choose the same or similar items. Give the young people fifteen minutes to identify five to ten uses for each of the recyclable items they chose. Invite the small groups to share their suggestions with the entire class.

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- The “Recycle” page from the Laudato Si’ Catholic Resource at rclbenziger.com
- Supplies (if needed) for the “Recycle” activity you choose (from *Laudato Si’*)
- Recyclable materials such as aluminum cans, bottles, paper goods, bottle caps, plastic silverware, tin foil, cardboard boxes, packaging, plastic bags, and so forth
- Glue, strong tape, paper clips, twine, and brads
- Paints and markers (optional)
- Additional art supplies (optional)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

Ask the young people if they’ve ever gone through their belongings and found a treasure—something precious to them that they’d forgotten they had. Invite them to share their experiences, and ask if they still have their treasures.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Our Lady of Good News.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to share the most interesting or unusual details they heard in the stories.
2. Ask the young people what lessons we can learn from the stories of Our Lady of Good News. (*Welcome all responses, and suggest: we can find treasure—something of meaning and value—anytime and anywhere; sometimes we don’t know what we have; sometimes it takes effort to find what is truly beautiful and precious; and we need to treat what is beautiful and precious with care.*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Explain to the young people that one of God’s greatest, most precious gifts to us is the gift of creation, especially the gift of people. God gave us the responsibility of caring for all that he created.
2. Further share that Pope Francis wrote about caring for creation in his encyclical letter, *Laudato Si’*.
3. With the young people, do the activity or activities you have chosen from the *Laudato Si’* Catholic Resource at rclbenziger.com.

Curriculum Connection: Art

After Telling the Story

1. Recall with the young people that from a dirty board meant for firewood came a beautiful image of Our Lady of Good News. Remind them that uncovering the full beauty of the image took the extra effort of the archbishop.
2. Explain that the recyclable materials, like the board, were meant to be discarded. Invite the young people to work in groups of three to discover what beauty can come out of the recyclable materials.
3. Instruct the young people to create sculptures out of the materials, using the clips, brads, tape, glue, and twine to hold together their creations. They may use paints, markers, and other art supplies (*if available*) to decorate their work.
4. Once the sculptures are completed, invite the young people to name their sculptures and to share the Good News their sculptures are bringing to the world today. Encourage them to be creative!
5. Invite the small groups to share their creations and their stories with the entire class.

And Furthermore . . .

Use mural paper or butcher paper to create a graffiti wall in your classroom. Invite volunteers to write the heading “Good News” somewhere on the graffiti wall in large letters. In the coming week, encourage the young people to write on the wall any bits of good news they hear—a compliment, a Scripture quote, something they read, a news headline, a song lyric. At the end of the week, take time to share together the Good News recorded on the graffiti wall. Conclude by praying, “Our Lady of Good News, pray for us!”

A close-up photograph of a brown grasshopper perched on a green stem. The grasshopper is facing left, with its long antennae and legs clearly visible. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The text 'Our Lady of the Grasshopper' is overlaid on the right side of the image in a dark blue, serif font.

**Our Lady of the
Grasshopper**



The Story

Over a hundred and fifty years ago, in the area near Cold Springs, Minnesota, grasshoppers ate all the crops the farmers planted for many years in a row. Things became so hard that on April 26, 1877, the governor of Minnesota called for a day of prayer. The people prayed, asking God to save their crops.

The priest who served the area, Father Leo Winter, asked his parishioners to build a chapel to honor Mary and to gather to pray there on Saturdays. His parishioners did what Father Winter suggested. They built a chapel and they gathered there every Saturday to ask Mary to save their crops and to spare them from further harm. By September 8 of that year, the Feast of the Nativity (*Birth*) of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the grasshoppers were gone. The building of the chapel, the faithfulness to gathering on Saturdays for special prayer, and the end of the trouble with the grasshoppers renewed the faith of the Catholics and strengthened their sense of being a parish community.

The Catholics in that area never forget how the Blessed Virgin Mary answered their prayers. They remain devoted to Mary to this day. The original chapel was destroyed by a tornado in June of 1894, but the chapel was rebuilt and dedicated in October of 1952. Every summer, Catholics gather for a novena of Masses on Thursday nights, leading up to a special procession and celebration on August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Although the Chapel is named in honor of the Assumption, people call it the Grasshopper Chapel and honor Mary there as Our Lady of the Grasshopper. In the chapel itself, a statue shows Mary with a grasshopper under each foot.

Note: Although no official feast day is assigned for the celebration of Our Lady of the Grasshopper, she is honored by the people in the Cold Springs, Minnesota, area on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*August 15*).



Our Lady of the Grasshopper ACTIVITIES



For Primary Grades

Materials Needed:

- Costumes and props *(optional)*
- Print resources about grasshoppers and/or internet access *(optional)*
- Coloring page with an image of a grasshopper *(one per child)*
- Crayons or markers

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the children to share what they do when something hard is happening in their lives. *(Welcome all responses, and be sure to highlight that one suggestion is to pray.)*
2. Ask them to listen for the hard thing that happens in this story and for what the people decided to do.

Telling the Story

Tell the story in your own words, as is appropriate for the age of the children you are teaching. This would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to share what happened in the story, and what the people decided to do. *(Grasshoppers ate the crops; the people followed their pastor's advice to build a chapel and to gather there for prayer to Mary that their crops would be saved.)*
2. Invite volunteers to share what they think is the message of the story. *(Welcome all responses, and be sure to highlight how Mary cares for us and hears our prayers; we can take our concerns and prayers to Mary. Also highlight the importance of not giving up, but of being faithful in prayer.)*

3. Ask why the people call Mary “Our Lady of the Grasshopper.” Remind the children that “Our Lady” is a title of great respect and honor. (*The people prayed to Mary and the grasshoppers stopped eating their crops.*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Ask the children to name some hard things that are happening in people’s lives and in the world today. (*Homelessness, hunger, sickness, war, joblessness, loneliness, and so forth.*)
2. Choose a day of the week to pray together to Mary for one of the hard things you named in #1 above. Create a title for Mary to use at the beginning of your prayer, such as: Our Lady of the Homeless, Our Lady of the Hungry, Our Lady of the Sick, Our Lady of Peace, Our Lady of the Jobless, Our Lady of the Lonely, and so forth. Decide on a number of weeks to offer the prayer. (*Nine weeks would be a novena, a “special time of prayer.”*)
3. At the end of your designated time of prayer, talk about how it felt to pray to Mary each week, like the people in the story did. Encourage the children to continue to pray to Mary in times of need and in happy times too.

Curriculum Connection: Science

Before Telling the Story

1. Before telling the story, either research or invite the children to research fun facts about grasshoppers, such as:
 - Grasshoppers are normally 2- to 5-inches long. (*Use a ruler to show these lengths.*)
 - Female grasshoppers are usually longer than male grasshoppers.
 - Grasshoppers change colors to fit in with their environment so that you cannot always see them.
 - Grasshoppers like to eat corn, wheat, barley, and alfalfa.
 - There are over 11,000 kinds of grasshoppers.
 - People in Africa, China, Central and South America eat grasshoppers.
2. Invite the children to listen for the role grasshoppers play in the story of Our Lady of the Grasshopper.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the children to tell what role grasshoppers play in the story. (*They ate the crops.*)
2. Give each child a picture of a grasshopper to color. Several free coloring pages are available on the internet. Remind the children that grasshoppers change colors to fit in with their environment. Invite them to color their grasshoppers in their backyards, on a beach, in a jungle, or in a cornfield.
3. After all of the children have finished coloring, invite volunteers to share their drawings with the class.

And Furthermore . . .

After completing this lesson on Our Lady of the Grasshopper, display the children’s drawings with the caption, “Our Lady of the Grasshopper, pray for us!”

For Intermediate Grades

Materials Needed:

- **Costumes and props** (*optional*)
- **Print resources about grasshoppers and/or internet access**
- **Half-sheets of drawing paper**
- **Wax crayons**
- **Toothpicks** (*one per young person*)
- **Coins** (*one per young person*)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to share what they do when something hard is happening in their lives. (*Welcome all responses, and be sure to highlight that one suggestion is to pray.*)
2. Ask them to listen for the hard thing that happens in this story and for what the people decided to do.

Telling the Story

Tell the story in your own words, as is appropriate for the age of the young people you are teaching. This would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to share what happened in the story, and what the people decided to do. (*Grasshoppers ate the crops; the people followed their pastor's advice to build a chapel and to gather there for prayer to Mary that their crops would be saved.*)
2. Invite volunteers to share what they think is the message of the story. (*Welcome all responses, and be sure to highlight how Mary cares for us and hears our prayers; we can take our concerns and prayers to Mary. Also highlight the importance of not giving up, but of being faithful in prayer.*)
3. Ask why the people call Mary "Our Lady of the Grasshopper." Remind the young people that "Our Lady" is a title of great respect and honor. (*The people prayed to Mary and the grasshoppers stopped eating their crops.*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Ask the young people to name some hard things that are happening in people's lives and in the world today. (*Homelessness, hunger, sickness, war, joblessness, loneliness, and so forth.*)
2. Choose a day of the week to pray together to Mary for one of the hard things you named in #1 above. Create a title for Mary to use at the beginning of your prayer, such as: Our Lady of the Homeless, Our Lady of the Hungry, Our Lady of the Sick, Our Lady of Peace, Our Lady of the Jobless, Our Lady of the Lonely, and so forth. Decide on a number of weeks to offer the prayer. (*Nine weeks would be a novena, a "special time of prayer".*)

3. At the end of your designated time of prayer, talk about how it felt to pray to Mary each week, like the people in the story did. Encourage the young people to continue to pray to Mary in times of need and in happy times too.

Curriculum Connection: Science and Art

Before Telling the Story

1. Before telling the story, invite the young people to work with partners to find five interesting facts about grasshoppers.
2. Invite the partners to share their findings with the class. Vote on the top five most interesting facts shared.
3. Invite the young people to listen for the role grasshoppers play in the story of Our Lady of the Grasshopper.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to tell what role grasshoppers played in the story. (*They ate the crops.*)
2. Give each young person a half-sheet of drawing paper and crayons. Invite the young people to color their backyards, a jungle, a beach, or a cornfield. Their drawings should fill the entire half-sheet of drawing paper.
3. After they have completed their drawings, have the young people cover over their artwork with black crayon. Then invite them to exchange their drawings with another young person in the class.
4. Tell the young people to use a toothpick to draw the outline of a grasshopper on their mystery half-sheets of paper. Then invite them to remove the black crayon inside their outlines with the edge of a coin.
5. When all of the young people have uncovered their grasshoppers, invite them to guess whether their grasshoppers are in the backyard, in a jungle, on the beach, or in a cornfield.

And Furthermore . . .

After completing this lesson on Our Lady of the Grasshopper, display the young people's artwork with the caption, "Our Lady of the Grasshopper, pray for us!"

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- **Bibles** (*one per pair or small group*)
- **Print resources about plagues and/or internet access**

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to explain in their own words the meaning of the word plague. (*A disastrous evil or infliction*)
2. Ask if any of the young people recall stories of plagues as told in the Bible. (*Welcome all responses.*)
3. Remind the young people that one of the major stories about plagues told in the Bible involved Moses, Aaron, and the Pharaoh. Read aloud, or invite volunteers to read aloud, Exodus 7:1-13. Then divide the group into partners or small groups, and have each pair or small group read and prepare a summary of one of the following Scripture passages, each of which describes a plague.
 - Exodus 7:14-24
 - Exodus 7:25—8:11
 - Exodus 8:12-15
 - Exodus 8:16-28
 - Exodus 9:1-7
 - Exodus 9:8-12
 - Exodus 9:13-35
 - Exodus 10:1-20
 - Exodus 10:21-29
 - Exodus 11:1-10
4. Invite the partners or small groups to share, in order, summaries of the ten plagues.
5. Ask the group why God sent the plagues to Pharaoh and his household. (*To get Pharaoh's attention; to prove to Pharaoh that the Lord alone is God; to get Pharaoh to set the Israelites, God's people, free*)
6. Invite the young people to listen to the story of Our Lady of the Grasshopper.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of the Grasshopper.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to share what happened in the story, and what the people decided to do. (*Grasshoppers ate the crops; the people followed their pastor's advice to build a chapel and to gather there for prayer to Mary that their crops would be saved.*)
2. Invite volunteers to share similarities and differences between the story and the biblical

account of the plagues. *(Welcome all answers. Highlight that the people in Minnesota turned to God and Mary in prayer and devotion, while Pharaoh's heart remained stubborn and hard. Also highlight the connection between the grasshoppers eating the crops and the eighth plague, the locusts [which are a type of grasshopper].)*

3. Ask why the people call Mary "Our Lady of the Grasshopper." Remind the young people that "Our Lady" is a title of great respect and honor. *(The people prayed to Mary and the grasshoppers stopped eating their crops.)*

Putting Faith into Action

1. Ask the young people to name some hard things that are happening in people's lives and in the world today. *(Homelessness, hunger, sickness, war, joblessness, loneliness, and so forth.)*
2. Choose a day of the week to pray together to Mary for one of the hard things you named in #1 above. Create a title for Mary to use at the beginning of your prayer, such as: Our Lady of the Homeless, Our Lady of the Hungry, Our Lady of the Sick, Our Lady of Peace, Our Lady of the Jobless, Our Lady of the Lonely, and so forth. Decide on a number of weeks to offer the prayer. *(Nine weeks would be a novena, a "special time of prayer".)*
3. At the end of your designated time of prayer, talk about how it felt to pray to Mary each week, like the people in the story did. Encourage the young people to continue to pray to Mary in times of need and in happy times too.

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite half of the class to work in pairs or small groups to research some of the worst plagues in history. Ask them to prepare a ten- to fifteen-minute presentation on their findings. *(Plagues in history include smallpox, the Spanish flu, and the Black Death.)* Encourage them to include progress made in ending the plagues too.
2. Invite the other half of the class to work in pairs or small groups to research modern-day plagues. Ask them to prepare a ten- to fifteen-minute presentation on their findings. *(Modern-day plagues include malaria, cholera, and typhus. You may also want to include the coronavirus.)* Encourage them to include progress made in ending the plagues too.

After Telling the Story

Invite the pairs or small groups to share their presentations on modern-day plagues and plagues in history, and on progress made in ending the plagues.


And Furthermore . . .

Introduce your students to the overseas work of Catholic Relief Services, particularly in the areas of health and water safety. Go to crs.org to learn more.



Our Lady of the Smile

FEAST DAY: MAY 13



The story of Our Lady of the Smile highlights an event in the life of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus (*Thérèse of Lisieux*). You may wish to begin by telling the young people her story, which is presented in both *Blest Are We Faith in Action* and *Be My Disciples*, as well as at SaintsResource.com.

The Story

One of the most-loved saints of the Catholic Church is Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, also known as Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Her parents, Louis and Zélie Martin, are saints of the Catholic Church too!

Thérèse's mother died when Thérèse was only four years old. Her sister, Pauline, who was sixteen at the time, then began to look after Thérèse. But five years after their mother's death, Pauline left home to join the Carmelite sisters. Thérèse was heartbroken. She thought she would never see Pauline again. That thought made her physically ill. She suffered from high fevers, her body shook all over, and Thérèse could no longer speak.

Looking for ways to comfort and calm Thérèse, her family moved a favorite statue of Our Lady of Victory from their garden to Thérèse's room. One night, when Thérèse was having an especially hard time, her sister Marie knelt in front of the statue and prayed to Our Lady to heal Thérèse. Two other sisters, Leonie and Celine, entered the room and knelt and prayed with Marie. When Marie looked over to check on Thérèse, she noticed that Thérèse's eyes were fixed on the statue. But it was not the statue Thérèse saw; it was the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Later, when Thérèse was able to talk about what she saw, she explained that Mary's face was beautiful, but Mary's smile was what had most caught her attention. After several minutes of just gazing upon Mary's smile, tears had fallen from Thérèse's eyes, and she was healed.

This is what began the devotion to Our Lady of the Smile.



Our Lady of the Smile

ACTIVITIES

For Primary Grades

Materials Needed:

- **Costumes and props** (*optional*)
- **Photographs of familiar school and parish staff members** (*teacher or catechist, principal or DRE, pastor, maintenance staff, music minister, secretary, and so forth*)
- **Supplies to make smile awards** (*round circles of yellow construction paper, crayons, ribbon, tape or glue sticks*)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the children to name those who have smiled at them today, and how those smiles made them feel. Also ask who they have smiled at and why.
2. Ask them to listen for who smiles in today's story, and how that smile helped the story's main character, Thérèse.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Our Lady of the Smile, as is appropriate for the age of the children you are teaching. The story of Our Lady of the Smile would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to name their favorite parts of the story of Our Lady of the Smile.
2. Invite volunteers to name the person who smiled (*the Blessed Virgin Mary*) and how her smile helped Thérèse (*Thérèse was healed*).

3. Talk together about ways our smiles help and heal others. (*For example: Our smiles help sad people be happy. Our smiles help lonely people feel less lonely. Our smiles make others smile too.*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Invite the children to name those they know who need a smile today. List their thoughts on a flip chart or whiteboard.
2. Create a Litany to Our Lady of the Smile by naming those mentioned in #1 (*above*) in a prayer of petition, and by responding, "Our Lady, smile upon your children." (*For example: For our pastor, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children. For our parents, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children.*)

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies and Art

Before Telling the Story

1. Before telling the story, play a game of Whose Smile is It?
2. Cover the top half of each of the photographs you have gathered (*see Materials*).
3. Explain that you are going to show the group the smiles of people who are familiar to them from the school, parish religious education program, or parish. After you have shown each photograph, you will ask the group, "Whose smile is it?" The goal is to correctly guess all of the people pictured.

After Telling the Story

1. Distribute art supplies for the smile awards (*see Materials*). Show an example of a smile award. It is a round yellow circle with a smiley face drawn on it and a piece of ribbon attached to the bottom of the circle. Invite each child to create three or more smile awards. Offer help as needed.
2. After all of the children have finished creating their smile awards, explain that they are to give the awards to people who smile at them today and they are to say, "Thank you for smiling at me today."

And Furthermore . . .

At the next class or session, invite the children to name who they gave their smile awards to and why. Conclude the sharing by praying, "Our Lady of the Smile, pray for us!"

For Intermediate Grades

Materials Needed:

- Costumes and props *(optional)*
- Writing paper
- Pencils or pens

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to name those who have smiled at them today and how those smiles made them feel. Then ask them to name those at whom they have smiled.
2. Ask if they have ever felt God smiling upon them. If they wish to do so, invite them to share something about that experience.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Our Lady of the Smile, as is appropriate for the age of the young people you are teaching. The story of Our Lady of the Smile would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to describe the power of a smile as presented in the story of Our Lady of the Smile.
2. Invite volunteers to describe what could be the power of the smiles we give to others each day. *(For example: Our smiles can be signs of friendship and concern to those who are feeling lonely or tired. Our smiles can say "I'm glad you're here" to a parent who's just getting home from work or to a friend we haven't seen in a while. Our smiles can help younger brothers and sisters stop crying when they are feeling afraid or are upset.)*

Putting Faith into Action

1. Invite the young people to name those they know who need a smile today. List their thoughts on a flip chart or whiteboard.
2. Create a Litany to Our Lady of the Smile by naming those mentioned in #1 *(above)* in a prayer of petition, and by responding, "Our Lady, smile upon your children." *(For example: For our pastor, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children. For our parents, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children.)*

Curriculum Connection: Creative Writing

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to recall what they shared about how the smiles of others have impacted them and about the power of the smiles we give others each and every day.

2. Write on the white board or flip chart the following titles:
 - The Smile that Changed My Life
 - God Smiled on Me Today
 - I Saw Our Lady Smile
 - The Smile that Got Away
 - Ten Reasons to Smile
3. Distribute writing paper and pencils or pens.
4. Ask the young people to choose one of the five titles listed on the white board or flip chart and to write a children's story, poem, song, or short story that fits the title they have chosen. Encourage them to illustrate their work.
5. Invite volunteers to share what they have written.

And Furthermore . . .

Display the young people's stories, poems, and song lyrics with a sign that says, "Our Lady of the Smile, pray for us!"

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- **A large bulletin board or poster board display of the smiles of famous persons with whom the young people would be familiar** (*Church leaders, government leaders, athletes, actors, singers, and so forth*) (*As an alternative, prepare this as an interactive digital display.*)
- **Art supplies** (*paper and glue sticks, modeling clay, paints and paper, colored Markers and poster board, materials for collages, and so forth*)

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite each young person to recall someone or something that made them smile today.
2. Discuss with the group the power of a smile. (*For example: A smile can cheer us up. It can lift us out of a bad mood. A smile can reassure us. It can let us know we are loved.*)
3. Invite the young people to listen to the stories of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Our Lady of the Smile.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Our Lady of the Smile.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to recall what they previously said about the power of a smile.
2. Invite volunteers to describe the power of the smile as told in the story of Our Lady of the Smile. (*Our Lady's smile helped heal Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus.*)
3. Invite volunteers to share further thoughts about the power of a smile and how a smile can help heal others' suffering and sorrow.

Putting Faith into Action

1. Invite the young people to name those they know who need a smile today. Encourage them to think globally as well as locally. List their thoughts on a flip chart or whiteboard.
2. Create a Litany to Our Lady of the Smile by naming those mentioned in #1 (*above*) in a prayer of petition, and by responding, "Our Lady, smile upon your children." (*For example: For children who live in poverty and fear, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children. For those in our community who do not have enough food to eat, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children. For our parents, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children.*)

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies and Art

Before Telling the Story

1. Display the faces you have gathered. Assign a number to each face. (*See Materials*)

2. Place beside the display numbered slips of paper and pencils or pens.
3. Invite the young people to write in the names of those whose smiles are on display.
4. After all of the young people have completed writing their guesses, reveal the correct names.

(Note: If you have prepared the above as an interactive digital display, adjust the directions accordingly.)

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to choose art materials (*see Materials*) to create their own images of Our Lady of the Smile.
2. Ask volunteers to show and explain their creations to the group.

And Furthermore . . .

1. Display the Our Lady of the Smile creations with a sign that reads, "Our Lady of the Smile, pray for us!"
2. Introduce the young people to or invite them to research two international efforts that help restore smiles to the faces of children: Operation Smile (operationsmile.org) and Smile Train (smiletrain.org). If the young people research these organizations, invite them to share their findings with the group.
3. Invite the young people to close their eyes and to quiet themselves. Ask them to imagine that they are looking at the face of Our Lady of the Smile, and she is smiling upon them. Invite them to think about what Our Lady of the Smile would say to them today. What would they say to her in return? After several moments of quiet reflection, conclude by praying, "Our Lady of the Smile, pray for us!"