

MEET SAINT DAVID OAKERHATER

LEARN: David Oakerhater was Cheyenne warrior who was imprisoned during the Indian Wars of the late 1800s. At this time, it was believed that Native Americans should completely be assimilated into the dominant white culture and their own culture should be completely eradicated. During his time in prison, he converted to Christianity. After he was freed, he moved to Oklahoma to minister, preach and open a school for Native American children.

ACT: David Oakerhater was considered a missionary to his own people. Think about an activity or hobby in which you participate. How can you serve God within that hobby or activity? How can you preach the Good News through your actions in that activity. Come up with at least three ways and try them out at your next opportunity.

PRAY: O God of unsearchable wisdom and mercy, you chose a captive warrior, David Oakerhater, to be your servant, and sent him to be a missionary to his own people, and to execute the office of deacon among them: Liberate us, who commemorate him today, from bondage to self, and empower us for service to you and to the neighbors you have given us; through Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen. - *From Holy Women, Holy Men*

MEET SAINT DORCAS

LEARN: Tabitha was a woman from Lydda, which was in Judea south east of the coastal city of Joppa. She was known for her good works and loving care for the people around her, particularly in sewing garments for the local widows. When she died, word was sent to Peter, who immediately traveled the 12 mile walk and healed Dorcas through prayer to God in Christ.

ACT: Try out a sewing project. For younger hands try a lacing board or lacing yarn through hole-punches around the circumference of a paper plate. For older children, try a simple lacing craft kit or check out a simple cross stitch and give it as a gift.

PRAY: Use the sewing to create a prayer rhythm. Pray one prayer as you thread the needle through and another as you pull the needle up. You can also just say God bless _____ (for whoever you are sewing the gift).

MEET SAINT FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LEARN: Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery on a farm on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1838. A believer in justice and freedom for all, he was a writer and abolitionist, working hard towards the end of slavery in the United States.

ACT: Consider a justice issue about which you care deeply. (Examples: poverty, environment, hunger, education, racism, classism, sexism, etc.) Write a letter to someone in power about this issue. Tell them why you care about it and what you think should be done about it.

REFLECT: The prophet Micah tells us: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8) Consider how you are called to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.

MEET SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

LEARN: Teresa lived in Spain during the 1500s. She was a Carmelite nun who had a very active prayer and meditation life. She had frequent visions of God. Also she worked hard to reform monasticism in her region

ACT: Teresa wrote about her active prayer life. Begin a prayer diary/journal, where you write down (or have someone write for you) the things you pray for and if you discern any answers from God. Try to keep this diary for a least a week.

REFLECT: Did keeping a diary/journal improve your prayer life?

MEET SAINT GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR

LEARN: Gregory's father was tried, convicted and executed for killing the king. Gregory was bought up in the church. He married a devout Christian woman, Miriam, and had 2 children. He later joined a monastic community and come home to Armenia to evangelize his homeland. In legend, Gregory was thrown into a pit for 12 -15 years by Trdat, the son of his father's enemy. Trdat went crazy and Gregory was brought from the pit and healed him with his preaching and prayer.

ACT: Loving people who make us sad or angry or forgiving people who have hurt us is a very tough job for many Christians. Make a prayer chain - strips of paper stapled into rings- with prayers for people who have hurt or angered you written on it. Put your chain somewhere you can see it as a reminder to pray for even your enemies. Invite your family to contribute to your chain.

REFLECT: How does it feel to give your angry feelings to God in prayer?

MEET SAINT BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR

LEARN: Brendan is an early saint from Ireland, known for his voyage for the Land of Delight over 7 years. He founded a few monasteries in his lifetime. His voyage, with little historical evidence behind it, is legend, with Brendan searching for Paradise.

ACT: With the inspiration of Brendan, explore your neighborhood. (With an adult's permission and/or with he/she as your crew.)

- What is the terrain of your neighborhood?
- What is in your neighborhood?
- Who lives in your neighborhood?
- Come home and draw a map of your neighborhood.

PRAY: Pray for your neighbors. Find a time each day, maybe added to your dinner time or night time prayers to take out your map and pray for your neighbors and your neighborhood. How can you be preach and live the Gospel in your neighborhood?

MEET SAINT JOHN KEBLE

LEARN: John Keble was a poet and one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement, a movement in the Anglican church towards more formal liturgy and incorporation of some of the older traditions. (This movement is considered the beginning of Anglo-Catholicism.)

ACT: Use the Book of Common Prayer and pick one of the Daily Office services (Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer or Compline.) Worship together as a family. If possible, consider using incense as a visual reminder of prayers rising to God.

REFLECT: What was it like to pray as a family using a liturgy? What did you like? What felt unfamiliar?

MEET SAINT THECLA

LEARN: Thecla was converted to Christianity by Paul and he taught her to fear no one but God. She bravely preached the Gospel even though it was illegal. She was sentenced to death by the Roman government twice, once by burning at the stake, once by being eaten by lions. Both times she was saved miraculously.

ACT: Read one (or more) of these stories about people who were brave in their faith:

- Joseph in the book of Genesis
- Moses, Aaron & Miriam in the book of Exodus
- Ruth & Naomi in the book of Ruth
- Esther in the book of Esther

REFLECT: With your parent(s), check out a newspaper or the local news, make a list of times people were brave for their faith or where you think someone (maybe you) needs to be brave and step in with faith to preach and act for the Gospel.

MEET SAINT FRANCIS

LEARN: Saint Francis was from the town of Assisi in Italy. He was born to a wealthy family, but decided instead to live a life of poverty, preaching and service. He is known as the patron saint of animals and founded the Franciscan Order.

ACT: Spend some extra time with animals. Make a bird feeder from a pine cone, peanut butter and birdseed, take your dog for an extra long walk, make a toy for your cat and play for a bit.

PRAY: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

MEET SAINT JOHN WYCLIFFE

LEARN: John Wycliffe was an English teacher at Oxford. He advocated for the Bible to be translated into the languages people spoke (the Bible was only in Latin,) and advocated for Scripture as the way to lead a moral life. He was very critical of clergy who used their power badly, unfairly or immorally.

ACT: Read Psalm 23 in 3 different translations. (If you are bi-lingual, check out the passage in both languages.) Some possibilities are King James, New Revised Standard and "The Message," (which is not a translation but a modern paraphrase of the text.) What do you notice in the wording? Which do you prefer?

REFLECT: What is the benefit to the different translations? What do you think could be concerns?

MEET SAINT BALTHAZAR

LEARN: Traditionally Balthazar is the name given to one of the wise men seeking Jesus by the light of the star of Bethlehem. The name traditionally has represented an Arabian scholar, however in recent years, he is often depicted as from Ethiopia or from the general region of Africa. His gift to the baby was Myrrah, a gift of an embalming spice, symbolizing Jesus' future sacrifice.

ACT: Think about who you are. If you were to give a gift to God that represented who you are and what God means to you, what would that gift be? Would it be a thing or an act? Write it down and place it in the offering plate on Sunday, offering that gift of your time, talent or intention to God.

PRAY: Write out your full name on a piece of paper. Write down things your name represents, what your name means to your family, and things you are good at. When you are done, pray to God in thanksgiving for all that you are and ask God to help you become the disciple God needs you to be.

MEET SAINT CECILIA

LEARN: Cecilia lived in the Rome in the 200s. She was a faithful follower of Christ during a time when it was illegal to be Christian. She was killed along with her husband and his brother as punishment for being Christian around 230 AD. She is now the patron saint of music.

ACT: Learn the song "I sing a song of the Saints of God" found in our hymnal #293. If you play an instrument, learn the tune on the instrument. Learn to sing the first verse if you are not yet a reader.

REFLECT: Think about the last line "for the saints of God are just folk like me, and I mean to be one, too." What does it mean to be a saint of God? How can you try to be one, too?

MEET SAINT BEDE

LEARN: Bede, also called the Venerable Bede, was a English monk and scholar, who is best known for his Ecclesiastical History of the English People. Living in the late 600s to early 700s, he also translated many of the early Christian writings for the Anglo-Saxons in England. His scholarship was integral to the Christianity developing in England.

ACT: Write up or draw a brief history of your family. Interview your parents, siblings and grandparents and find out your family's story.

REFLECT: Where do you think God is in your family story?

MEET SAINT CUTHBERT

LEARN: Cuthbert lived in northern England, on the border of what now is Scotland during the 7th Century. During his life, there were tensions between the Roman Christianity spreading from the south and the Celtic Christianity, spreading from what is now Ireland. He was a monk, an abbot and then retired to be a hermit, (live by himself in prayer and meditation,) and then was asked to be a bishop. He was beloved during his time and served his people in the name of Jesus.

ACT: Sit by yourself in silent prayer for 15-20 minutes. Tell God what you love about the world, tell God what you are concerned about, but also be sure to sit in silence, leaving space for God to answer you.

REFLECT: How did it feel to sit and pray by yourself? Was it hard to sit and still your mind and leave space for God to answer? What was the hardest part? What was the easiest?

MEET SAINT MOLLY BRANT

LEARN: Molly Brant was a member of the Mohawk tribe during the time of colonial America. She was raised in the Church of England, however and was loyal to the English government. She had a common law marriage with the Superintendent of Northern Indian Affairs and had 8 children. She sided with the British during the American Revolution and moved to Canada after the war.

She worked very hard in the support of the Iroquois and was prominent in her local Anglican church. Her legacy in the US has been negative until recently since she sided against the Colonies during the Revolutionary War.

ACT: Read a book about an American who was not considered a part of the dominant culture of their time. Consider an American who's heritage was not from Western Europe or who was not a protestant Christian.

REFLECT: It is often easier to be a part of the majority - to identify or act like what it seems like more people are doing. Have you ever experienced feeling left out or not being a part of the majority? What did that feel like? How can you be a friend to someone who is feeling left out of the group?

MEET SAINT SWITHUN

LEARN: Swithun was the Bishop of Winchester in the 9th century. We know very little about his actual life. In the 11th century, he became a legendary figure, based on a life written of him, which is not considered to give actual facts about the man. He is known for a number of miracles including restoring a basket of broken eggs.

ACT: Make a meal for your family (with the permission/ assistance of an adult.) Perhaps make eggs for breakfast, muffins, cheese and fruit for lunch or pasta for dinner. Serve your family their food, making sure they have everything they need.

PRAY: Be sure to say a blessing before you eat. Remember in your prayers all the hands that have been a part of growing, sorting and selling your food. Remember, too, all the people who are hungry and will not be getting a meal this day Finally, pray for the person/people who usually make meals in your household.

MEET SAINT HADEWIJCH

LEARN: A Dutch writer, poet and wanderer from the 13th century, little else is known about Hadewijch. From her extensive knowledge of language, scholars have assumed that she came from a wealthy family, but somehow became estranged. In her poetry, she used the style of the time, poems about courtly (romantic) love, but chose instead to write about the love from and to God.

ACT: Write your own love poem to God. You can ask an adult to write it for you, if you are still learning to write, or you can draw all the things you love about God.

PRAY: Ask an adult to help you download the song "His Banner Over Me is Love." You can learn the words and even learn the hand motions to the song.

MEET SAINT JUAN DIEGO

LEARN: Juan Diego was a native of Mexico. In the mid 1500s, he said he saw an image of the Virgin Mary on four separate occasions, and received an image of Mary on cloak as a testimony to the truth of his vision. His vision is the basis of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a wide-spread devotion in Mexico. He was a devout Catholic and was the first Native American to be made a Catholic saint.

ACT: Our Lady of Guadalupe inspires pilgrimages. Walk a labyrinth, if you are able to, or take a walk that you can do quietly and prayerfully. Repeat it a few times, try going more slowly, going faster, hoping, with your arms up, with your arms out, with your eyes looking down, and maybe even once on your knees.

REFLECT: Did various speeds or postures change the way you prayed?

MEET SAINT EGERIA

LEARN: Egeria took a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the late 4th century. She took notes on her journey and near the end, wrote an extensive letter back to a circle of ladies back home in the area around modern day Spain and Portugal. Her letter is an amazing account of early Christian worship and has been a reference point for liturgical seasons and worship.

ACT: Go to church, take notes about the worship service. Who comes? What does the building look like? What happens during worship? What do you sing?

REFLECT: What do you like about the worship service? What do you not like? About what would you like more information? What patterns did you notice? If possible, ask a priest to sit down with you. Tell him/her your observations and ask your questions.

MEET SAINT HILDEGARD

LEARN: Hildegard was an 11th century nun, who also was a composer, mystic, abbess, and visionary. She composed three volumes of visionary theology, but she also researched plants and nature, particularly in her work in the convent gardens. She believed that healing using God's creation was a spiritual gift from God.

ACT: Check out a book about scientist/doctor who helped further our ability to help and heal illness. Look into recipes using herbs, plants or household items to help an illness. (Baking soda for a sting or elderberry for a cold.) With a parent's permission/supervision, try to make a few recipes.

PRAY: Thank God for doctors, nurses, scientists and all the medical personal who spend their lives caring for others who are injured or sick. Pray for humanity's continued growth in wisdom to cure things we haven't been able to cure. Pray for the people who are sick, particularly for those people sick with diseases that we don't know how to cure yet.

MEET SAINT BARBARA

LEARN: Barbara was an early Christian, who was placed in a tower by her father to hide her from the world. She rejected marriage proposals offered to her. She confessed to her father that she was a Christian and he handed her over to the authorities. Although the authorities tortured her, her wounds would heal each night. Finally, she was sentenced to be beheaded, which her own father carried out. She is considered a martyr, a person who dies for their faith.

ACT: Using blocks, cardboard or another building material, build yourself a fort. Using painter's tape, or if possible, write directly on the inside of your fort things that scare you. Write down all your fears, even if they seem silly to other people. On the outside, write words that describe God.

PRAY: Read aloud, (or ask someone to read to you) Psalm 91. You can also listen or sing "On Eagle's Wings," which is a hymn based on the psalm.

MEET SAINT THOMAS KEN

LEARN: Thomas Ken was an English cleric in the 17th century. He was most famous for his hymn compositions, particularly the Doxology "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above, ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

ACT: Learn how to sing the doxology. A very popular tune is the Old 100th.

REFLECT: A doxology praises God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Make your own 3 line doxology, praising God in three persons.

MEET SAINT DIONYSIUS THE GREAT

LEARN: Dionysius was the Pope of Alexandria in the 3rd century. (Before the Bishop of Rome was considered the pope.) He was a scholar and felt particularly called to intellectually dispute heretics (people who had theological disagreements with the church.) He was the bishop when a mob of pagans attacked the Christians with stones and other weapons. He also was the bishop when the Emperor decided to purposefully seek out Christians to kill them. He stood firm about forgiving those Christians who worshiped pagan gods because they were scared from the persecution. He also took special care of the people in his city when a plague epidemic struck.

ACT: Put together a care package for a person who is sick from your church or neighborhood. Include a card letting them know that you are praying for them.

PRAY: "O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: Mercifully accept our prayers, and grant to your all of your children who are sick the help of your power, that his sickness may be turned into health, and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." From *The Book of Common Prayer*

MEET SAINT IRENE THE GREAT

LEARN: Irene was the daughter of the governor of Licinius during the reign of Constantine. Her father locked her in a tower to protect her and a tutor sent to teach her taught her about Christ. At first, her conversion was met with her father's disapproval, but when he tried to have her stampeded by horses, he was trampled instead. She prayed for him and he was healed, and he converted. He resigned his governorship, but the new governor imprisoned her for her Christianity. She was tortured and later beheaded. She is remembered as a Christian scholar and a faithful Christian.

ACT: Check out a book about the saints from your local library. There are some great choices in your local kids' nonfiction section. For older readers, Foxe's Book of Martyrs, is a famous classic.

REFLECT: What if your faith was against the law? How would you feel? What would you do?

MEET SAINT BRIGID OF KILDARE

LEARN: One of Ireland's patron saints, along with Patrick and Columba. She was an early Christian nun and abbess. Her saint's day, Feb. 1st is the same as a pre-Christian pagan goddess' feast day, leading some to believe that she never actually lived and that she was a pagan story made Christian. Brigid along with seven companions organized the very first women's monastery in Ireland. One of the ministries of the monastery was a school for art including metal work and illumination.

ACT: With parental permission and supervision, use the Internet to search famous religious works of art. Chose a piece that appeals to you and color it (find a coloring page version), trace it, or try to copy it with art materials of your choosing.

REFLECT: Think about what the artist was attempting to reflect in the piece. What appeals to you about this work of art? What do you love about it? What does it make you think and feel?

MEET SAINT ELIZABETH

LEARN: Elizabeth was the cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was the mother of John the Baptist, who she gave birth to at an unusually old age for the time. She also was the first person to name Mary's pregnancy and declare that the baby was the son of God.

ACT: Often we hear God through other people. Go out of your way to say honest and kind things to other people today. Perhaps you will be the voice of kindness, comfort or reassurance that God wants someone to hear.

PRAY: Pray to God that you are open to God's will and God's hopes for you. Pray for the wisdom to discern what God is asking you to do and the courage to do it.

MEET SAINT WILLIAM LAUD

LEARN: William Laud was an English clergyman, bishop and Archbishop of Canterbury during the 17th century. His lifetime was fraught with religious disagreements. William Laud was the leader of a movement dubbed Laudianism that focused on the rules of ritual and making worship and the Church of England more uniform. He was a scholar, who collected scholarly religious articles. At first, he was a favorite of the Kings of England but he lost favor during the English Civil War and was executed.

ACT: Check out a liturgically high worship service –one that uses incense, bells, and a more ritualized worship style. If that isn't possible, talk to your priest or Christian formation minister about a liturgically high worship service and see if you could incorporate some elements into a service or class.

PRAY: Try out some of the liturgically high elements during your worship service - cross yourself, genuflect, kneel during the Eucharistic prayer - How does it feel? Does it help you pray?

MEET SAINT KAMEHAMEHA

LEARN: Kamehameha was the King of Hawaii during the 19th century. Hawaii had been evangelized by the Roman Catholics and Calvinists, neither denomination at the time was particularly friendly to the native culture or religion. Kamehameha and his wife Emma sought a more inclusive middle way for Christianity, which they found in the Anglican Church. During his reign, he and his wife were focused on education and healthcare, building a public hospital.

ACT: Make some cards for patients at your local hospital or nursing home. Let them know you are praying for them and thinking of them. If possible, deliver the cards yourself.

PRAY: O Sovereign God, who raised up Kamehameha and Emma to be rulers in Hawaii, and did inspire and enable them to be diligent in good works for the welfare of their people and the good of your Church: Receive our thanks for their witness to the Gospel; and grant that we, with them, may attain to the crown of glory that never fades away; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer, who with you and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. - From *Holy Women, Holy Men*

MEET SAINT BERNARD MIZEKI

LEARN: Born in present-day Mozambique, Bernard moved to Cape Colony (present day South Africa). He was inspired to convert to Christianity by a missionary group and was the first to be baptized in 1886. He became a missionary himself to present-day Zimbabwe. During the Matabeleland Rebellion, he was murdered outside his home by leaders of the native religious.

ACT: Invite a friend to church or a church program. Tell your friend what you love about church, your faith and/or God. It is okay if they say no. All you can do is invite.

REFLECT: Why do you love your church? Why do you love God? If you want, write your thoughts down and send them to your Vestry and rector.

MEET SAINT MARGARET OF ANTIOCH

LEARN: Margaret was the daughter of a pagan priest in the ancient world. After she converted to Christianity, her father kicked her out. She became a shepherdess to support herself. The prefect of the region wanted her to marry him, which she denied and he had her tortured. In legend, she was swallowed by a dragon, who was the devil in disguise, but her cross in her hand burned his throat and he spit her up. As various forms of torture failed to kill her, thousands of spectators were converted. Finally she was beheaded. She was a favorite saint of the Middle Ages.

ACT: Decorate a cross for your wall. You can use any medium you would like to. Consider putting a dragon on it to remind you of St. Margaret's bravery.

PRAYER: Say a prayer for the people all over the world who still live in places that Christianity is illegal. Reflect with your parents on where those places are and how you can be a prayerful support for them.

MEET SAINT MARGERY KEMPE

LEARN: Margery Kempe was an English Catholic and mystic during the 14th century. She had visions of Christ after she suffered postpartum psychosis after the birth of her first child. She had terrible and scary visions during that period. Christ came to her in visions expressing forgiveness for her sins and a call to step away from her intensely penitential practices. She was illiterate and paid a priest to write down her life, which is now a book.

ACT: Margery's book explains the daily life of a medieval, religious woman. It is a lot of the day to day tasks of a mother and keeper of the household. Do an extra chore that is not typically yours - doing the dishes for a parent, for instance, or sweeping and mopping the floors. Be sure to have adult permission if it is a chore that you have never done before.

REFLECT: Where can you find God in your everyday tasks?

MEET SAINT JACKSON KEMPER

LEARN: Jackson Kemper was born in the Hudson River Valley during a small pox epidemic in New York City. He studied theology and moved to Philadelphia after he finished his education and was ordained a deacon. He was selected to be a missionary bishop in the West and moved West. He focused on outreach to Native Americans, founded a seminary, and founded a new western diocese.

ACT: Think about what it would be like to be a new kid at your church, school or neighborhood. What would you need to know? What would make you feel more comfortable? Build a care package, with a notebook of instructions/helpful hints for your chosen new experience. Offer to show it to the people in charge of that ministry (leadership at your church, school or neighborhood) and see if you can work together to make it a welcoming package for new kids.

REFLECT: Consider if you were asked to move somewhere totally new and culturally different from your life now? What would you bring? Who would you want to come with you? What would be the most scary? What would be the most exciting?

MEET SAINT NICHOLAS

LEARN: Nicholas lived in 4th century Turkey. He was a bishop, known for many miracles including feeding his people during a famine by buying a barrel of grain off of a ship, however when the ship pulled out of port, the number of barrels of grain miraculously remained the same as before the sale. However he is best remembered for his generous gift of gold coins thrown into the home of a poor family to secure the daughters' dowries. He was also in attendance at the Council of Nicaea, where he vehemently defended what is now considered the orthodox position on the divinity of Christ.

ACT: Give up something that someone else needs. This item could be an actual thing you own that you can give away - a coat, shoes, etc. or it could be forgoing on a treat, maybe a weekly ice cream cone or gum ball and giving the money to a ministry or person who needs it.

PRAY: God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Prayer for Children from the *Book of Common Prayer*.

MEET SAINT JOHN

LEARN: John was the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James. They were fisherman. John was called by Jesus and was one of the twelve disciples. He, along with Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother, followed Jesus all the way to the cross. In tradition, he is the only of the twelve disciples that did not suffer a martyr's death. In the early Church, John was considered to be the same John that wrote the Gospel of John, the 3 epistles and the book of Revelation. Scholarship now indicates that those books were written after John's possible lifetime. In the Gospel of John, John is referred to as the Beloved disciple and he is asked by Jesus to care for Mary, Jesus' mother, while Jesus is dying.

ACT: Read Mark 1:16-20, and Matthew 4:18-22. What do you think that John left behind to follow Jesus? What do you like and/or dislike about his call story? How did Jesus use who John was to make him a good disciple?

REFLECT: What if Jesus came to you today and asked you to follow? Who are you? What can God use about who you are to make you a better disciple? What would be hard to leave behind?

MEET SAINT MARK

LEARN: Mark is known as an Evangelist because he wrote the Gospel of Mark. Traditionally he is known as one of the 70 disciples sent during the Great Commissioning, There are mixed assertions as to Mark's identity. It is generally agreed upon that Mark was the first of the four Gospels written. He is often represented through a winged lion.

ACT: Mark's Gospel is known for its sense of urgency. God is on the move. Spend the day considering where you see God. Keep a list, if you are able, every time you notice that God is in the moment.

REFLECT: Since God is moving all around you, how can you get moving with God?

MEET SAINT PATRICK

LEARN: Patrick is one of the three patron saints of Ireland, along with Columba and Brigit. He lived in the 5th century. Patrick was stolen from England as teenager and enslaved in Ireland. He escaped after six years and returned to England to become a cleric and monk. He received a vision and a call to go back to Ireland and bring them Christianity. Once he was able to get the permission for the missionary journey from his bishop, he began evangelizing. He even took on the king's royal decree over a pagan fire ritual, protected by God from the assaults of the King's army. His work was legendary. He was considered the saint who drove the paganism from Ireland, as personified in the legend of Patrick driving away the snakes.

ACT: Talk to your minister of music/choir director about playing Hymn 370, St. Patrick's Breast Plate. You can read it as poetry or learn the hymn.

PRAYER: Almighty God, in your providence you chose your servant Patrick to be the apostle of the Irish people, to bring those who were wandering in darkness and error to the true light and knowledge of thee: Grant us so to walk in that light that we may come at last to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
From *Holy Women, Holy Men*

MEET SAINT PETER

LEARN: Peter was a fisherman named Simon. His brother, Andrew, first met Jesus and brought Simon to meet him. Jesus renamed him Peter, which means rock. Peter followed Jesus faithfully until Jesus was arrested, then he denied being Jesus' follower three times. After Jesus' Resurrection, Peter redeems his betrayal in his faithful leadership of what will become the church. Traditionally, Peter is thought of as the first Bishop of Rome and the first Pope, although, structurally it worked differently than today.

ACT: Peter made some bad choices, but he turned back to Jesus and spent his life in the service of God's church. Make a list of all of the mistakes, bad choices and sins that you can remember. Talk to your priest about doing the Reconciliation of a Penitent rite from the *Book of Common Prayer* (or a reconciliation rite from your tradition.) If you don't read yet, let your priest know so that they can prepare as appropriate.

REFLECT: Was it hard to remember mistakes? How did you feel saying them all aloud? How did the rite make you feel before? After?

MEET SAINT PAUL

LEARN: Paul was named Saul and he lived in a place called Tarsus. He was very educated and was particularly knowledgeable about Jewish law. At first, he did not like the movement of Jews who thought Jesus was the foretold messiah. He even stood by as an angry mob killed Stephen, one of these new Christians. However, when Saul was on the road to Damascus, Syria to arrest more Christians, he was struck by a great light, fell off his donkey and saw Jesus. He was blind. He went into the city and found the follower Jesus directed him to and was healed. Saul became Paul, an ardent follower of Christ. He was called to a new mission, telling the Gospel to the Greek speaking people rather than the Jews. He wrote many of the letters in the New Testament to the early churches that he was planting.

ACT: Like Paul, sometimes our actions are not in accordance with God's dreams for us. Think about your life. Is there something in your life that you feel should shift or change? Maybe you take up too much time that you could be using more productively to watching television. Perhaps you weren't as welcoming to that new student at your school as God would have liked. When you discover something that you believe God would want you to change, change it.

PRAY: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen. From the *Book of Common Prayer*

MEET SAINT MARY MAGDALENE

LEARN: Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus' followers. In scripture, it says that he healed her of seven demons. Although we don't know the specifics of her situation or her background, some scholars have theorized that she was a wealthy widow. Other scholars have suggested that she had a more colorful past. Regardless of what we don't know, she was faithful to Jesus and even stood by him as he died on the cross, even though most of Jesus' disciples were in hiding. She also was the very first witness to the Resurrection, discovering the empty tomb, seeing a risen Jesus and proclaiming the Resurrection to the other disciples.

ACT: Host a scavenger hunt around your neighborhood for your siblings or friends. As Mary sought Jesus, you can search too. An easy scavenger hunt is from printing a list of needs from your local food pantry and asking your neighbors for items on the list. Then donate the items back to the organization.

PRAY: Say a prayer for all those people still searching for God. Pray that they may find and be found by God. Pray that you will always keep that desire to seek and serve God, in all that you think, say and do.

MEET SAINT LYDIA

LEARN: Lydia was a business woman who sold purple cloth in Philippi. In the Book of Acts, we learn that Paul first evangelized Lydia, recognizing her power and prestige in her community. Lydia had her whole household baptized and used her connections and finances to support the new church community.

ACT: Jump into a ministry at your church. Pay special attention to the various jobs and ministries in your church and see how you can be a support to that ministry. Perhaps you can learn how to set the altar with the altar guild or you can be a greeter or usher welcoming people to church.

PRAY: Discernment is the word the church uses when it means that we prayerful consider what God may be intending for us to do. Church ministry requires discernment of your God given gifts, your schedule and your interests. Pray to God for help in discerning where God wants your help in God's church. Remember the church is bigger than a building, and God could be calling you to serve people in ministries like visiting a local nursing home, animal shelter or playing with children with special needs.