

SEPTEMBER

Missionary Saint of the Month

**This month, we are inspired by:**

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Feast day:

September 5th

Patron saint of:

World Youth Day, the poor, the dying, and the Missionaries of Charity

Dear Jesus,

Help me to see You in everyone I meet, especially those who are poor, lonely, or hurting. Teach me to love with a heart like St. Teresa of Calcutta —

a heart that serves without counting the cost, and gives with joy and compassion.

May I be Your light in the darkness, and bring peace where there is pain.

Amen.

Goal of this activity:

To inspire in children a love for the saints and help them understand that we are all called to a life of holiness, inspired by those who came before us, and in whom we can trust to intercede on our behalf when we are struggling.

Materials Needed:

This lesson plan and saint biography, we encourage you print a picture of this saint to add to your classrooms “mission corner”. Depending on each month and the age of the students, other materials, such as coloring pencils, might be necessary.

Remind the students:

A saint is someone who loved God very much and tried to live like Jesus. Saints showed kindness, helped others, and shared God’s love in special ways. They are now in Heaven with God, and we can look up to them as examples of how to live a holy and loving life.

We venerate saints, which means we show them special honor and respect—not because they are God, but because they followed God so closely. When we venerate saints, we thank God for their lives and ask them to pray for us. The official recognition of sainthood also allows us to venerate them.

In the classroom:

1. Prepare the children to listen to Saint Teresa of Calcutta’s story. (Have a map posted or globe available).
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saint Teresa. Elaborate/abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners.

3. Present optional follow-up activities below. Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

4. Close the lesson with tying the life of St. Teresa to the work of the Missionary Childhood Association.



St. Teresa of Calcutta

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

St. Teresa of Calcutta, known around the world as Mother Teresa, was born on August 26, 1910, in Skopje, a city that is now in North Macedonia. Her birth name was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. From a young age, she felt a deep love for Jesus and a desire to serve Him. At the age of 18, she joined the Sisters of Loreto, a religious order of nuns, and moved to India to begin her life as a missionary.

She spent nearly 20 years teaching girls at a Catholic school in Calcutta (now called Kolkata). But in 1946, while traveling on a train, she experienced what she later described as a "call within a call." Jesus was asking her to leave the convent school and serve the poorest of the poor — the people no one else was helping, those sick, dying, abandoned, and living on the streets.

With courage and deep trust in God, she left the convent and began working in the slums of Calcutta. She had no money, but she believed that "God would provide." In 1950, she founded a new religious order: the Missionaries of Charity, dedicated to caring for "the unwanted, the unloved, and the uncared-for."

Her sisters, and later brothers and lay volunteers, opened homes for the dying, orphanages, soup kitchens, and leprosy centers all over the world.



Mother Teresa and the poor in Calcutta, India during Mission Month - October, 1979.

By the time of her death in 1997, the Missionaries of Charity had grown to thousands of members working in over 130 countries.

Though she became world-famous — receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 — Mother Teresa always remained humble. She often said her goal was "not to be successful, but to be faithful." She lived a life of simplicity, prayer, and deep compassion, always focusing on Jesus in the "distressing disguise of the poor."

Mother Teresa died on September 5, 1997, and was canonized as a saint by Pope Francis on September 4, 2016. Today, she is remembered as one of the greatest modern examples of love in action — someone who gave her whole life to bring God's light to the darkest places.



Follow-up Activities:

Younger students:

- 1.** Write a letter to Saint Teresa. Share with her one small act of kindness you can do today.
- 2.** Set up a small prayer space in your classroom with a picture of St. Teresa, candles, and quotes. Invite students to spend quiet time there writing prayers or reflecting on how they can be missionaries of love in their own lives.

Older students:

- 1.** In small groups, students act out modern-day situations where they can choose to be like St. Teresa — e.g., including a classmate who's left out, helping someone who is hurt, or speaking kindly to someone who's sad. Discuss how these everyday actions are ways we live the Gospel.
- 2.** Ask students to write simple letters (or draw pictures) for people who may be feeling forgotten or alone — such as residents at a nursing home or local shelter. Tie it into St. Teresa's mission to love the unloved. After writing letters, talk about how MCA helps children in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands. Encourage students to write one letter to Jesus and one to a child in the Missions, expressing love and friendship.
- 3.** Show where Mother Teresa lived and served on a world map. Then invite students to mark other places around the globe where the Missionaries of Charity now serve. Take note places that are also supported by the Missionary Childhood Association. Discuss what needs children might have in each place — clean water, school supplies, or safe homes — and how missionaries help provide those. Then, together pray a living World Mission Rosary for the Missionaries of Charity, and all missionaries like them. Wear the colors of the mission rosary to represent where the love of missionaries travel to.

Wrap Up: Saint Teresa of Calcutta inspires MCA Members

- She saw Jesus in every person, especially the poor and the suffering. MCA teaches children to do the same.
- She gave her life in service, just as MCA encourages children to make small sacrifices to help other children.
- She was a missionary of hope, spreading God's love through action — the same mission MCA shares with children today.

St. Teresa gave her whole life to love children, the poor, and the forgotten. The Missionary Childhood Association helps us do the same — even as kids. We can be missionaries right here, right now, through our prayers, gifts, and kindness.”

