

Sainte Marie of the Incarnation
(Marie Guyart of the Incarnation)
1599-1672

Catechetical Activity

Ages 9-11

Sainte Marie of the Incarnation (1599-1672)

Materials Needed: Copies of Sainte Marie of the Incarnation's biography (short version), pencils, and pencil crayons.

Gathering:

1. Have the children sit quietly with their eyes closed for a moment.
2. Ask the children to think about what they would like to be when they grow up. Use prompts to encourage their thinking: If you could be anything when you grow up, what would you be? Why do you want to do that? Is it because you enjoy it? Your mom or dad does it? You saw it on tv or in a movie? Why would you pick that career?

Listening:

1. Read aloud the biography of Sainte Marie of the Incarnation (short version on pages 4-5).
2. Have a short discussion with the children about vocation and what it means: being drawn towards a particular career or occupation, being called to God's service, having a special 'calling' in life, etc.
3. Discuss with the children the calling that Sainte Marie of the Incarnation had and what she was willing to sacrifice in order to follow her calling (ex. She left her family and her son, she moved to a new country, did not know what was waiting for her, picked up and left, etc.).

Doing:

1. Ask the children to imagine that they are Sainte Marie of the Incarnation and have just arrived in Canada for the first time, ready to begin the next phase of life. Have the children write a newspaper article using the template on page 6 to describe their first experiences in Canada.
2. Provide each child with a copy of the biography so they may refer to it for ideas and inspiration for their newspaper article.
3. Encourage the children to be creative and include pictures in their newspaper article and add colour as well.

Going:

1. Bring the session to a close by saying a prayer for vocation together as a group (page 7).

Sainte Marie of the Incarnation (Marie Guyart of the Incarnation, 1599-1672)

The Teresa of New France

Feast Day: April 30

Her Life

Marie Guyart was born in Tours, France, on October 28, 1599. When she was 17 she married a master silk worker. Marie's husband died only two years later, leaving her a widow with a six-month-old son, named Claude. Penniless, she went to live with her family and took care of the education of young Claude.

From this time, her prayer life grew stronger and she felt a strong presence of God. Her call to consecrated life pursued her, so in 1631 she asked her sister to look after her son, who was now 12 years old, and she entered the novitiate of the monastery of the Ursulines of Tours. She took the name in religion of Marie of the Incarnation.

In 1639, God was calling her to Canada "to create a house for Jesus and Mary." So she embarked from Dieppe on May 4, with two other Ursulines and four Hospital Sisters. When she arrived in Quebec, Marie of the Incarnation would later write, "The first thing we did was to kiss the ground of the place to which we had come to fulfill our lives in the service of God and the Indigenous people." She was never to return to France.

She organized the building of a small monastery for the consecrated community and a boarding school for First Nations and French girls whom the Ursulines decided to shelter and educate together. She welcomed and fed the Huron and Algonquin adults who knocked at the door; she gave them Christian instruction and encouraged them to share the Good News with their communities.

She wrote the Constitutions and Rule of the Ursulines of Quebec (1647), and created dictionaries, grammars, catechisms and prayer books in four First Nations languages. She maintained an ongoing correspondence with her relatives, friends and benefactors in France. Nearly 300 letters have been conserved; they are of great historical and spiritual interest.

Marie of the Incarnation died in Quebec on April 30, 1672. She was beatified by Pope (now Saint) John Paul II on June 22, 1980 and canonized by Pope Francis on April 3, 2014.

Her Spirituality

Even as a young girl Marie of the Incarnation was compassionate toward the poor and wanted to give away everything she had. It was said of her that she had been born to be charitable; everything she did was in a spirit of charity and not for her personal profit.

She lived a relationship of love with God, one based on trust, faithfulness, and mutual self-giving. She addressed God with familiarity, as her protector. Marie of the Incarnation burned with a desire that the God whom she loved should be known and loved by others.

A vertical rectangular box containing a large rounded rectangle at the top, a smaller rounded rectangle below it, and a series of horizontal lines for writing. The box is white with a black outline.A vertical rectangular box containing a series of horizontal lines for writing and a rounded rectangle at the bottom. The box is white with a black outline.



Photo credit : François-Marie Héraud, Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré Shrine

O God, thank you for the blessings of this day.

You have given me the gift of life,
and the gift of your Holy Spirit.

I wish to use them well.

Help me to hear and answer your call to serve you.

Keep my heart open to following Jesus' way of serving others.

May your Holy Spirit inspire others,
and make known your will for my life.

We ask this through
Christ our Lord. Amen.