

CONSECRATION OF CANADA TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

CATECHETICAL ACTIVITY

AGES 9-11

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Bible, copies of “Notre Dame du Canada” (Our Lady of Canada, on page 3), and copies of the *Hail Mary* prayer (page 4).

CATECHIST PREPARATION:

1. Read the lesson outline.
2. Copy the image of “Notre Dame du Canada” (Our Lady of Canada) (1 per child).
3. Think about a difficult time in your life when you knew that God was present and guiding you. Examples: the experience of being caught in a storm while driving, a time you were late for an important meeting, the illness of a loved one, etc.

GATHERING:

1. Share a story with the children about a difficult time in your life when you knew that God was present and guiding you. Examples: the experience of being caught in a storm while driving, a time you were late for an important meeting, the illness of a loved one, etc.
2. Explain to the children how you handled the situation and how you knew that God was with you in that moment.
3. Ask the children to share similar stories and experiences.
4. Ask them: How do you know that God is present in your life? How do you know what God is calling you to do?

LISTENING:

1. Throughout her life, the Blessed Virgin Mary faced many trials:
 - As a young woman who was carrying the baby Jesus in her womb, she was forced to leave her homeland and find shelter in another land in order to avoid unjust punishment. In a sense, Mary was a refugee.
 - Mary also had to witness the death on the cross of her son Jesus. This too would have undoubtedly been a hardship for her.
 - In spite of this, Mary showed the world that in those moments of trial and suffering she was called first and foremost to respond to the call of God, to be faithful to him and to believe that all would be well in due time.
2. Mary sacrificed a great deal in order to bring Jesus the Saviour into our world. She did so with grace and dignity, and by those she projected peace: the kind of peace that God wants for our world.

3. When Jesus was dying on the cross, He entrusted his mother to one of His disciples. We read in John 19:25-27:

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.
4. As Canada celebrates the 150th anniversary of its founding, as a nation we entrust/consecrate our country to Mary in the hope that she may intercede for us especially during times of trial and difficulty.

DOING:

1. Provide the children with copies of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus on page 3.
2. Show the image to the children and tell them a little bit about it.
 - a. The artist is a Canadian man named Marius Dubois.
 - b. He painted the piece in 1983.
 - c. It was the artist's interpretation of "Notre-Dame du Canada", i.e. Our Lady with the Child Jesus on her lap is holding up a maple leaf.
 - d. The painting is in Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal.*
 - e. The image can be found online at <http://www.mariusdubois.com/1980-.html>.
3. Ask the children questions such as:
 - a. What do you notice about the image of Mary?

Allow the children to share their impressions of the image.
 - b. Ask about the symbolism of the following:
 - i. The crown - Mary is our Mother and Queen - the Kingdom of God.
 - ii. The colours - Ask the children to identify the colours that they see and tell what the colours mean.

Red - passion, suffering, humanness
Green - hope, life
Blue - majesty, royalty, empress
 - c. Ask the children about the Infant Jesus:
 - i. Mary is His mother
 - ii. She is offering something to Him - the maple leaf - a symbol of Canada. Mary is entrusting Canada to Jesus.
 - iii. Jesus has his hand extended - in such a way that he is offering a blessing in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit - in other words, the Holy Trinity.
4. Remind the students that during this 150th anniversary of Canada we are entrusting or consecrating Canada to the Blessed Virgin Mary. We hope that through her intercession Canada and its people will be blessed by God with a land that is peaceful and just.

GOING:

1. End the session by praying the *Hail Mary* together (page 4).
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*Information on the Basilica and photographs can be found on its website, <http://www.basiliquenotredame.ca>



Image: Notre Dame du Canada by Marius Dubois. Used with permission.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.