

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys
Pilgrim Daughter of the Church
1620–1700

Catechetical Activity

Ages 6-8

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys 1620-1700

Materials Needed: Biography of Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys (short version), work sheets, crayons, colouring pencils, copies of the prayer sheet

Catechist Preparation:

1. Read the short biography of Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys.
2. Copy the work sheets—one per child.
3. Think of a person in your life whom you consider to be courageous, innovative, kind and selfless. Be prepared to share with the children.

Gathering:

1. Ask the children to close their eyes and sit quietly for a moment.
2. Ask them to think of a person that they know who shows courage.
3. Ask them: What makes him or her a person of courage?
4. Prompt them with: Does the person—have deep faith in God and does he or she share faith with others, take risks to help others, stand up for what is right?
5. Ask them to think of two things that make the person courageous.
6. Share, with the children, your special person and two qualities that make them courageous. In turn, ask the children to share their special person and their two qualities of courage with the group.

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, (1620-1700)

Feast Day: January 12

Shorter version for catechist to use with children

Her Life

Marguerite Bourgeoys was born in Troyes, Champagne, France, in 1620. At the age of twenty, she saw a statue of the Virgin Mary that deeply "touched and changed" her. She joined the "external" Congregation of Notre Dame in Troyes so that she could devote herself to God and good works in the world.

In 1652, Governor Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve invited Marguerite to come to Ville-Marie (Montreal) to be a teacher. She set out on a ship in 1653, carrying only a small bag. She was 33. In the course of the voyage, she nursed people suffering from illness. For four years, she worked for the Governor. She also helped Jeanne Mance at Hôtel-Dieu Hospital; she gave up her mattress and blankets to people who had less than she did, and won over the settlers, for whom she became a trusted counsellor. In 1657, she organized the erection of a chapel that would serve as a place of pilgrimage in honour of Mary. The project was completed the next year. To this day there is a miraculous statue of Notre-Dame du Bon-Secours (Our Lady of Good Help) in the chapel, which Baron de Fancamp had given Marguerite in 1672.

In 1658, Maisonneuve gave her a community stable in which to start her school. She began day classes and then a boarding school for the daughters of colonists as well as girls from the Iroquois First Nation. She formed a religious community for young women (today the Congregation of Notre Dame). She went back to France in 1659 and again in 1671, recruiting companions. Eventually she began to admit the first Canadian women, including two Iroquois into her religious community.

Marguerite and her companions taught her students about love of God and love of neighbor. She taught them to read and write. She began to send her companions in pairs to new parishes to start classes for the children of the settlers. In 1697, the Most Reverend de Saint-Vallier, who succeeded François de Laval as Bishop of Quebec in 1685, recognized the community as "daughters of the parish".

Marguerite Bourgeoys died January 12, 1700, and was acclaimed as the "Mother of the Colony". She was canonized on October 31, 1982, by Saint John Paul II.

Her Spirituality

The love of God and neighbor serves as a summary of Marguerite's life. She taught those around her about the importance of showing love for God by doing good deeds for others. She wanted her religious sisters to work together to teach the young and help the poor and the sick. Marguerite had a special devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. In all that she did she followed the example of Mary. Marguerite Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys is remembered for her love of God and neighbor, her courage, and her desire to educate and make the world a better place.

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys 1620-1700

Listening

1. Tell the story of Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys 1620 - 1700. (use shorter version on page 2)
2. Place emphasis on qualities such as: prayerfulness, kindness, courage, healing.
3. Explain that these qualities in Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys were qualities that made her a saint. God called Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys to leave her homeland and to help build a new country and faith community in Ville Marie (Montreal). She was a person of courage, who wanted to spread the love of God by teaching, helping the sick and through self-sacrifice. We too are called to be people of courage who share the gifts and talents that God has given us with our neighbours.

Doing

1. Ask the children to use the worksheets to draw pictures according to the captions.
2. In turn, have the children share one of their drawings with the group.

Going

1. Remind the children that, just as Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys was called by God to do good, we too, are called to share our gifts and talents with others.
2. Bring the session to close with a prayer to Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys.

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys 1620-1700

Prayer

Lord,

Thank you Lord for all the gifts that you have given us.

Like Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys we are pilgrim sons and daughters of the Church.

Grant us courage, so that, by our actions, we show our faith in You.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen



Portrait of Marguerite Bourgeoys "Pseudo Le Ber"

Jori Smith Palardy, 1962

Collection of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Marguerite-Bourgeoys Museum

Worksheet 1

Ages 6-8

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys Leaves France for Ville Marie



Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys Builds A Chapel in Honour of Mary



Worksheet 2

Ages 6-8

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys Opens a School in a Stable



Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys - Love of God and Love of Neighbour

