

Mission Together

Little Way Week Lesson Plan



Little Way Week

Little Way Week is an initiative inspired by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the Patron Saint of Mission. She gave to the Church a teaching called the 'Little Way'. This is a commitment to do small tasks with love every day. It is a simple way of encouraging and inviting everyone to reach out to others with the love of Jesus through seven days of witness and service.

Lesson Objective

To help children understand that saints show us what God is like and we can all love Jesus and make Jesus loved, wherever we are and whoever we are.

Introduction



Begin by asking the children what is a saint? Ask which saints they know. They might suggest the apostles or martyrs. If the school or parish church is named after a saint they may know something about their lives. It is likely that these saints are famous for doing great things for God – by giving up their lives for God, standing up for God when everyone else was against him or making big sacrifices. Now tell them that there is a saint who is so famous that not only did she become a saint very soon after she died but that the Church even made her a Doctor of the Church, which means that her writings are considered very important. She is the patron saint of Mission and her statue is in many churches all over the world. Show the children her statue (or, if you do not have one, a photograph of it). Some of the children may have seen it in church. Her name is St Thérèse of Lisieux and during her life nobody had heard of her because she lived hidden away in a convent and did nothing very important at all! Thérèse had dreamt of doing remarkable things; she even wanted to become a missionary overseas. She prayed to Jesus, 'I would like to travel the earth preaching your name...I would be a missionary right up to the end of time.' But this was not in God's plan for her. Instead, aged fifteen, she joined an order of religious sisters and entered the convent where she remained until she died, nine years later. Her life was one of prayer, contemplation and work.

Some of her duties involved working in the sacristy and doing the washing. St Thérèse accepted she would never be 'great' in the eyes of the world and determined she would make her way to Heaven little by little. She made her motto '**to love Jesus and to make him loved.**' St Thérèse set about doing this by building into her daily routine small, loving actions, so unremarkable that nobody even noticed. This is what she called her Little Way, and it is her little way that has made her the great saint we now know.

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One way Thérèse loved Jesus was by being patient with her fellow religious sisters. She had to try very hard not to get cross when one of the sisters was too rough when they washed the linen together, making the dirty water splash up into St Thérèse's face. But when she saw an injustice happen to someone else, she was not afraid to speak out.

- Ask the children if it is hard to be patient? Explain it is not always easy to be loving. What qualities did St Thérèse need? Elicit suggestions like self control, love, patience, courage and kindness. It was difficult for St Thérèse to be kind all the time so she prayed to Jesus to ask him to help her. She knew she could not follow her Little Way alone.
- Invite examples of what the children may do to **love Jesus**. Suggest ideas such as doing what they are told by their parents and teachers or by sharing, even when they do not want to.
- Now ask how they will **make Jesus loved**? Explain that St Thérèse stayed close to Jesus in prayer. As she was unable to be a missionary herself, she prayed hard for missionaries who had given up their homes to travel overseas to make God's love known to people all over the world.
- St Thérèse lived over one hundred years ago but today, men and women still give up their lives to go overseas to work and live with the poor, hungry and the weak. They share God's love and bring hope to people everywhere. Sometimes, if people live very far away, we think that we can't reach them. But St Thérèse has shown that our own small actions can make a difference.
- In **Mission Together**, the Pope's official overseas missionary charity for children, children can be missionaries. Ask them to think of ways in which they can share God's love with children overseas.
- They can say the **Mission Together** prayer (found on its website: www.missiontogether.org.uk) which asks God to look after children everywhere or, like St Thérèse, they may pray for the priests and sisters who are making Jesus known around the world through their love and service. Perhaps they can put aside some pocket money to support these men and women to help children in need? They might like to hold a cake sale or a sponsored silence to raise money for Mission Together and discover more about its work on the Mission Together website at www.missiontogether.org.uk

Activity

St Thérèse had as her motto '**To love Jesus and make Jesus loved**'. Cut out the badge template on the next page and invite the children to draw around the motto and write or draw the little ways they will use to carry it out. Remind them of what you have discussed and that they are going to need Jesus' help. Older children may like to add a prayer to ask for his help. Remind them to make their badges joyful with bright colours.



Plenary

Invite the children to discuss their badges. Perhaps your class can make a display with them. By following the example of Saint Thérèse and doing the small things of everyday life well, we can love Jesus and make Jesus loved. Remember, St Thérèse sometimes found it hard to keep to her motto but she never forgot it. When she needed help, she would just pray to Jesus to give her strength. So as we try to put our own Little Ways into action, let's ask God to help us to be missionaries like St Thérèse.

To love Jesus

and make Jesus loved

