

The Lamp Lighter



The Anglican Curriculum Supplement for Toddler/2, Preschool, Early Elementary

Fall 2007

FOR THE TEACHER:

This quarter, we investigate All Saints'.

Anglican Angle • on The Saints by the Rev. Dr. Leslie Fairfield

Let's Talk • Discussion Starter for Anglican Angle. Use in your teachers' meeting. (Answer key in Coming Up on the Church Calendar)

Let's Get Practical • Introduce All Saints' to young children

Coming Up on the Church Calendar • Holy Cross Day, St. Luke, All Saints' Day, and more

Family Activity • Ideas for families to learn about saints together

Parent Page • A word for the parents of your students

Digging Deeper • Resources for adults and children on All Saints'.

The Lamp • Reproduce and work with this MONTHLY student paper in class. Then send home for parents to review with their child.

AN ANGLICAN ANGLE ON

THE SAINTS

by

The Rev. Dr. Leslie P. Fairfield

Several thousand people packed the amphitheater, howling for the blood of the elderly man standing before the Roman proconsul's box. Ignoring the pandemonium around him, the proconsul tried to persuade the old man to deny his religion and save his life.

"Take the oath," the Roman official urged, "and I shall release you. Curse Christ."

The old man replied, "Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"



AN ANGLICAN ANGLE ON

THE SAINTS

So at the proconsul's order, soldiers tied the old man's hands behind his back, piled wood around him, and burnt him alive.

The old man's name was Polycarp. He was bishop of the Christian community in the city of Smyrna in Asia Minor (the modern Izmir in Turkey). Polycarp died in the year 156, and Christians celebrate February 23 as the day of his martyrdom. In the second century Christians began to recognize and honor certain heroes like Polycarp, especially those who had died for their faith. And so the tradition of honoring the "saints" began to emerge in the early church.

WHO ARE THE SAINTS?

All Believing Christians

In the first instance, the New Testament makes it clear that all believing Christians are "saints." For instance, St. Paul addresses his letter to the Philippians "to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi" (*Phil. 1:1*). One of the prayers in the Episcopal service of Holy Baptism acknowledges this sainthood, which we represent by God's grace when the celebrant says,

All praise and thanks to you, most merciful Father, for adopting us as your own children, for incorporating us into your holy Church, and for making us worthy to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

(Book of Common Prayer, 311)

Heroes of the Faith

Beginning with Polycarp of Smyrna in the 150s, though, Christians have recognized that certain individuals model Christlike character in an exemplary way. In the early Middle Ages there were hundreds of local "saints" who received honor in western Europe. The quality control over their appointment was not always very strict. And unlearned Christians often prayed to them as local demigods.

During the later Middle Ages, the "cult of the saints" grew to enormous proportions. Abuses proliferated. Bandits in Wales sometimes prayed to their own patron saint, as they set out to cut purses on the highway! So the Reformation in England saw a vigorous attack on prayers to the saints and the grosser features of the medieval cult. But the Church of England continued to hold the saints in honor. It pruned the roster. And it returned to the Church's original understanding of saints as models of Christlike virtue. In 1563 John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, for example, celebrated the courage of heroes like Archbishop Thomas Cranmer who had died at the stake under Queen "Bloody Mary" Tudor's Roman Catholic government. The Church of England did its best to preserve the valuable elements in the tradition of the saints, while guarding against superstition and abuse.

The Episcopal Calendar of the Church Year

In the front of the Prayer Book (1979) you may find the Episcopal Church's yearly calendar of "feast days," including special observances for

more than 130 saints (or groups of saints) from the past 1900 years. From time to time the Episcopal Church adds to this number, especially recognizing heroes from the Church in the non-Western world. The calendar also lists special days commemorating biblical heroes like Mary, the mother of our Lord, and the 12 apostles. The Episcopal Church also publishes a valuable book called *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, which contains short biographies and prayers for each saint's day.

HOW DO WE HONOR THE SAINTS?

We Give Thanks for Them

Many of the Church's saint's-day prayers give specific thanks for the saint in question. Here is the opening of a prayer from *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* giving thanks for Sister Constance and her companions, Episcopal nuns who died caring for the sick during a yellow fever epidemic in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1878.

We give thee thanks and praise, O God of compassion, for the heroic witness of Constance and her companions, who in a time of plague and pestilence, were steadfast in their care for the sick and dying, and loved not their own lives, even unto death.

(September 9, page 329)

By God's Grace, We Imitate Them

Having rehearsed the hero's achievements, the church's prayers then proceed to ask God's grace for our own lives, that we may learn to emulate the same virtues. The prayer for Sister Constance's day continues with the words,

Inspire in us a like love and commitment to those in need, following the example of

our Saviour Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever.

The Episcopal Church's prayers (like this one) recognize that all good gifts come from God, and that "our help is in the name of the Lord" alone. Therefore we do not pray to the saints, as if Jesus' death on our behalf were insufficient, or as if He were not constantly making intercession for us. The saints are models to encourage us, not mediators or intercessors for us.

We Ask God to Unite Us with the Saints in Heaven

The Anglican tradition has always been thankful for the great "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1) surrounding us, unseen but very real. And at the heart of the church's life, in the Eucharist, Sunday after Sunday we pray that God will bring us at last into the company of those heroes whom we honor during our earthly pilgrimage.

... and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

(Eucharistic Prayer A, page 363)

The "Communion of Saints," which we confess in the Nicene Creed, comprehends these millions upon millions who surround the throne of grace, these saints who are and will be our true family forever.

Photo provided by the author.



The Rev. Dr. Leslie Fairfield is Professor Emeritus of Church History at Trinity School for Ministry.



**FACT
QUESTIONS**

- 1. Who are the saints?
 - A.

 - B.

- 2. How do we honor the saints?
 - A.

 - B.

 - C.

**OPINION
QUESTIONS**

- 1. What did you learn from this article about saints? Has this article changed your perceptions of saints? If so, how?
- 2. Why do you think it is important to teach about the saints?

**CREATIVE
IDEAS**

- 1. Share with the group about a saint who has influenced your life. This saint could be a famous historical one or a saint you have personally known. How have you learned from this person's triumphs? How have you learned from this person's struggles?
- 2. Obtain *Calendar of Saints* (see Digging Deeper) or a copy of the church calendar from the Prayer Book. Look over the list. Who do you know? Who do you not know? Make a plan for getting to know the saints better.

The Lamp Lighter Parent Page

PARENT TO PARENT

God made the world to be enjoyed and gave us imagination after His image.

Preschoolers just love to dress up and believe whatever the parent or teacher says about the symbolism of the costume, so it is pretty easy. Hopefully the costume designer has some integrity and biblical knowledge. The Bible characters are very impressive to preschoolers and to adults, but you don't have to go crazy with costume design!

Simple Costume Ideas for All Saint's Eve

Dressing up as Bible characters is so easy because it is basically wearing something baggy with a towel head-covering that contains something symbolic of the character. Your old dish-towels make a great resource! A stuffed animal or a play musical instrument could be David's lamb or lyre. A cane could be Abraham's staff. A wig or red cloth could be Esau's red hair. A baby doll could serve as Mary's baby Jesus. A piece of yarn could represent Rahab's red cord. A rough material could convey John the Baptist's attire. A purple garment could represent Lydia. The list is endless. Part of the benefit of the vague attire is that it may need to be explained and so the story of the character is told and retold. Ahead of time, you may want to read with your child the Bible passages or a Bible storybook about his or her character.

In the preschool years our son would wear his dad's flannel shirt with a towel tied on his head, carrying a toy lamb or big stick to make him David or Abraham. What pleasure there is in pretending—and what foundations are built by trying to fit into those wonderful role models. Soon enough he will be too old for this and I will miss making the costumes!!!

By Molly Henning, Sewickley, PA



This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine—
even when the wind blows.

Editor's Note:

Here is a book you may find useful in dealing with Halloween. Your local Christian bookstore should be able to help you find this, or you can order through the Amazon link at www.tesm.edu.

Halloween, Is it for Real? Harold Myra. Nelson, 1997. A didactic but informative illustrated story for ages 4–10 about children in a family learning the origins of Halloween and celebrating with a party to honor Christians who have lived before them, including their grandparents.

The Lamp Lighter Family Activity

Heroes fascinate children. (Watch one of your children's favorite T. V. programs!) As Christians, we have a number of heroes to share with children, and All Saints' is wonderful time to present them.

With your children, spend some time reading about heroes. Choose one of these books as a resource, and read a section or two together. (You can continue to read sections together as time goes on.) Reading to young children yields many benefits. Your local Christian bookstore should be able to help you find these, or you can order from the Amazon link at www.tesm.edu. These books cost about \$15 each, but are hard-back, beautiful keepsakes that your children will be able to read for themselves as they get older.

- ***Hero Tales: A Family Treasury of True Stories from the Lives of Christian Heroes.*** Dave and Neta Jackson. Bethany House, 1996. There are four volumes. Choose which one you like best. Brief sketches of Christian men and women as varied as Martin Luther and Harriet Tubman. Stories highlighting specific virtues plus a relevant biblical verse and thought questions conclude each entry. Focuses on Christian Heroes from the Reformation to the modern era.
- ***Early Saints of God.*** Bob Hartman. Augsburg Fortress, 1998. A read-aloud book featuring many saints like Nicholas and Patrick with illustrations, talking points, and prayers. Focuses on earlier saints from before the 1500's.

After reading from one of these books, have a little All Saints' Party. You and your child could have a cupcake or cookies (or another favorite way you and your child have small celebrations), and say a simple prayer of thanks to God for the saint you read about.

Get this book as an extra "treat"!

- ***I Sing a Song of the Saints of God.*** Text by Lesbia Scott, illus. Judith Gwyn Brown. Morehouse, 1992. A wonderful picture book version of a favorite children's hymn. Special features include the musical setting at the end and notes about real people who fit the descriptions of saints in the verse, e.g., "a priest" is represented by John Donne and "a queen" by Margaret of Scotland.



The Lamp Toddler/2 and Preschool


September 2007

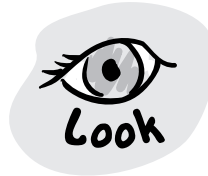


The Season after Pentecost

Pentecost is called the Growing Season. Look at the leaves. Color the leaves green.




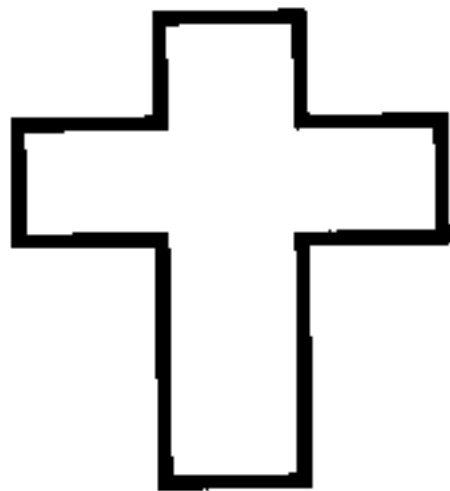
Green reminds us of growing. In church, you may see green cloth on the altar table. That's to remind everyone in church that we are to grow in loving Jesus and each other. How are you growing? Draw a  picture of yourself as a baby. Draw another picture of yourself now.



All Saints'

Saints are people who love and follow Jesus.

See the heart and cross. Color them whatever color you like to remind you of Jesus' love for you. 




Parents: Please go over *The Lamp* with your child. Soon, you will receive the Family Activity for you and your child to do together.

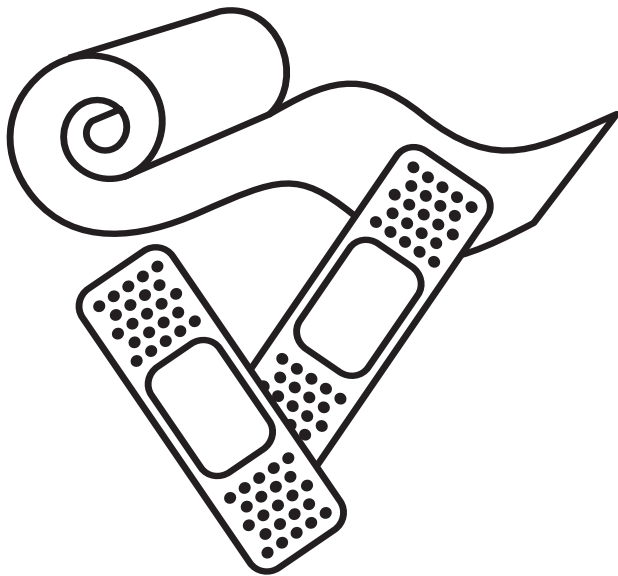
The Lamp Toddler/2 and Preschool

October 2007




St. Luke's Day (October 18)

St. Luke was a doctor. He also followed Jesus and wrote about Jesus. He wanted to help other people follow Jesus. Here are some bandages. How do doctors and nurses use bandages? 



All Saints'

Saints are people who follow Jesus. Trace

around your foot. Think about following Jesus. What kind of leader is Jesus? 

Parents: Please go over *The Lamp* with your child and remember the Family Activity.