

THE BEACON



The Anglican Curriculum Supplement for Elementary, Upper 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 elementary-age
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 Flash • 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?"*

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.



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LET'S TALK

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 BEACON PARENT PAGE

PARENT TO PARENT

What to do about Halloween?

There is too much good memory from childhood of the rare times that families and neighbors would conspire to make the scary dark of night a safe adventure for me to not wish that for my kids as well. And yet the stark reality of a neighbor frightening my five-year-old Matthew with a running electric saw was enough for me to say "no more." We have gone to the All Saints' Eve parties held by various churches ever since. Yet, there are times when the children want to go "trick-or-treat" to see what all their friends are so excited about and I am anguishing again. Would it really hurt them? Probably not. Would I be abandoning my witness as a Christian? God made the world to be enjoyed and gave us imagination after His image. We actually saw a change in emphasis at the elementary school regarding Halloween. The past two years, the name has been changed to Harvest Festival, in keeping with the trend to be politically correct, and the kids have been forbidden to bring anything even resembling a weapon and encouraged to dress as favorite story characters. Here are some simple costume ideas whether your children attend an All Saints' party or they serve as "witnesses" while trick-or-treating.

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 get these items through the Amazon link at www.tesm.edu or from Christian Book Distributors at www.christianbook.com.

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.



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

Simple Costume Ideas for All Saints' Eve

Dressing up as Bible characters is easy because it is basically wearing something baggy with a towel head-covering that contains something symbolic of the character. Your old dishtowels 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. 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

THE BEACON 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 and read it together. Reading to elementary-aged children yields many benefits including "quality" time. Or, if you prefer, obtain one of the DVDs listed below and watch it together. (You could do both a movie and a book if you wish!) Your local Christian bookstore should be able to help you find these, or you can get these items through the Amazon link at www.tesm.edu or from Christian Book Distributors at www.christianbook.com.

Suggested books:

- ***Assassins in the Cathedral.*** (Focuses on Bishop Festo Kivengere of Uganda who will probably be remembered on the Church Calendar in the future.) From The Trailblazer Series by Dave and Neta Jackson. Bethany House. This is part of a series of 32 chapter books on Christian heroes. Cost of the book would be about \$6.
- ***The Hawk That Dare Not Hunt by Day.*** Scott O'Dell. Historical fiction based on the life of William Tyndale who is featured in the elementary October *Flash* and remembered on the church calendar on October 6. BJU, Greenville, SC. 1975. Not often does a Hans Christian Award Winner and Newberry Prize-winning author write a book about a Christian hero who is also a famous Anglican.

Suggested DVDs:

- ***Chariots of Fire.*** This award-winning film from 1981 focuses on Olympic champion Eric Liddell. Some poetic license was taken with some of the history, but this wonderful film does depict Liddell's faith accurately. Better for upper elementary, and enjoyable and rich for adults.
- ***The Hiding Place.*** This classic film about Corrie ten Boom shows the courage of a Christian imprisoned by the Nazis for protecting Jewish people. Also worthwhile from the historic perspective. May be a little intense for the younger ages, but a good piece to view together with upper elementary.

Talk about these questions together:

1. How does this person show God's love and mercy?
2. What hardships did they deal with?
3. What weaknesses did they have to overcome?
4. What can we learn from their example?

A suggested prayer to say together through this quarter:

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth: Grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may always be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves to be surrounded by their witnesses to your power and mercy. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whom all our intercessions are acceptable through the Spirit, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. AMEN
(1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 250)



September 2007



Season after Pentecost

The Season after

Pentecost, also known as the Season after Trinity, is considered a “growing season”—a time when Christians should grow in their love of Jesus and each other. Green is the color used during Pentecost in church. The altar table will have a green tablecloth, and the clergy will wear green stoles. Green is used to remind us of growing plants. Name some ways you are growing.

Holy Cross Day (Sept. 14)

Christians remember that Jesus died on the cross and rose again. Many Christians make crosses to remind themselves of Jesus’ love. Draw a cross. Draw something else that shows the love of God.



All Saints’

Your challenge is to identify a saint. This person can be someone you know or a stranger. This person could have lived a long time ago or be living now. A saint must have the following qualifications:

1. Loves Jesus Christ
2. Works hard at following Jesus Christ
3. Encourages others to know Jesus
4. Is not perfect, but trusts Jesus for help at all times.

Name of Saint

Describe how this person meets the qualifications.

Parents: Please go over The Flash with your son or daughter. Soon, you will receive a Family Activity to do together.

The Flash Elementary

October 2007



St. Luke's Day (October 18)

St. Luke was a doctor who knew Paul. Paul told Luke about Jesus, and Luke became a follower of Jesus. Luke wrote two books in the Bible. What are they? Here's a hint. Luke liked to tell about how Jesus healed people and what the apostles did after Jesus went back to the Father.

Write the names of the books below.



William Tyndale

October 6 on the Church Calendar

When he lived: Around 1495 to 1536

Where he lived: England

What he did: When William Tyndale was a young man, there were practically no Bibles written in English. Tyndale could read the Latin Bible because he knew Latin. From the Bible, he learned about the love of God. He wanted other people to be able to read the Bible, even if they could not read Latin. So he started to translate the Bible into English. Tyndale had enemies, however, who wanted to stop him, so

Tyndale had to flee to Germany. Tyndale translated all of the New Testament and a lot of the Old Testament. His enemies finally had him killed on October 6, 1536.



Carol Amidi

Why is this important?

Read the following:

LUCERNA PEDI MEO TUUM VERBUM EST ET LUX ITINERI MEO.

Can you understand this? It would be hard to read a Bible like this. To translate the Latin saying above, look up Psalm 119:105.

Parents: Please go over *The Flash* with your son or daughter. Remember the Family Activity.