

All Saints Day and All Souls Day

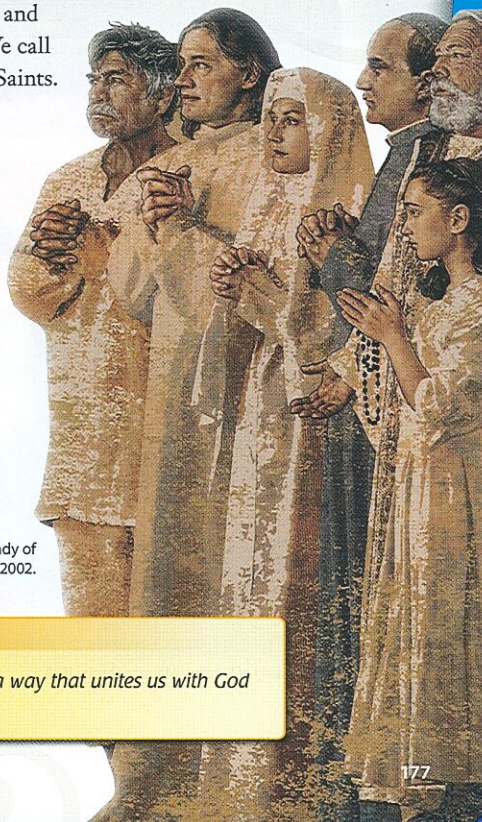
On November 1, the Feast of All Saints, we honor those who have died and live with God. This feast especially celebrates the union between those who have been saved in Jesus Christ and those who still live on earth. We call this union the Communion of Saints.

On November 2, the Feast of All Souls, we pray for those in Purgatory who are being prepared to live completely with God. These souls, too, are part of the Communion of Saints, and they need the help of our prayers.

Tapestry at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels in Los Angeles, John Nava, 2002.

Prayer

Merciful Jesus, help us live in a way that unites us with God and the Communion of Saints.



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ALL SAINTS DAY

OUTCOMES

- ▶ State what Catholics celebrate on the Feast of All Saints and the Feast of All Souls.
- ▶ Retell the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.
- ▶ Explain the term *Communion of Saints*.

1 Set the Stage

Share a story about a loved one you miss who has died or moved away. Share what you do to remember this person. Invite children to share their own stories about friends or loved ones they miss and what they do to remember these people.

2 Get Started

Draw children's attention to the picture. Say: ***This is a picture of some of the saints and other holy men and women that the Church remembers. We believe these people are holy because throughout their lives they desired to grow in their relationship with God. They give us examples of how to live as Jesus' disciples.***

Invite volunteers to read aloud the session title and the page. Explain that souls in Purgatory are being cleansed of sin so that they can experience fully the joy of Heaven. Say: ***On the Feast of All Saints and the Feast of All Souls, we remember in a special way all those who have gone before us in faith. We'll learn more about these days in this session.***

Prayer

Ask children to prepare themselves for prayer. Say: ***Pray silently as I pray aloud.*** After praying, say: ***Take a moment to pray to Jesus silently.*** Then conclude by praying *Amen* and praying the Sign of the Cross.

MATERIALS

Get Ready for the Session

Only a Bible and basic writing supplies are needed for this session. Review any If Time Allows activities you would like to include in this session for additional materials they may require.

1 Begin

Invite children to share stories about the miracles Jesus performed. If children have difficulty, you may wish to offer examples such as Jesus turning water into wine, Jesus walking on water, or Jesus healing the man who was born blind. Say: **Now we're going to read about another miracle Jesus performed.**

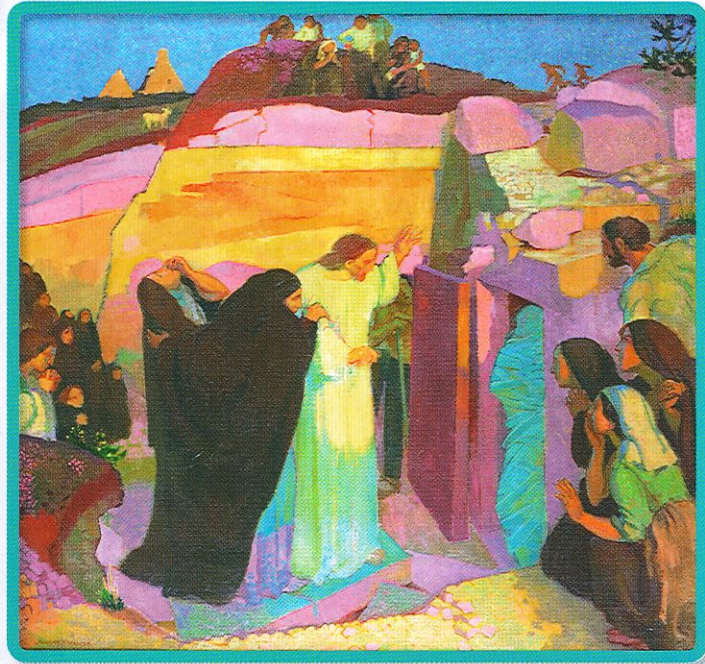
2 Connect

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the section The Gift of Eternal Life. Explain that Jesus and Lazarus were good friends and that the Gospels say Jesus cried when he first heard of Lazarus's death. Ask: **What did Jesus do when he heard that his friend Lazarus had died? (He traveled to Bethany.)** Explain that Martha was expressing to Jesus her belief that had he arrived sooner, he would have prevented Lazarus's death, but that she also believed Lazarus was now with God in Heaven. Ask: **How do you think Martha felt after Lazarus walked out of the tomb? (Possible answers: amazed, happy, thankful)** Say: **In raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus demonstrated the power of God's love. This story is about the promise of eternal life we receive through Jesus.**

The Gift of Eternal Life

When Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus had died, he traveled to Bethany, the home of Lazarus. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, greeted Jesus. She said she was sorry Jesus had not come sooner, but she believed that Lazarus would be raised on the last day and live forever with God. Jesus told Martha that he himself was the resurrection and the life and that those who believed in him would live forever. Then he called out to Lazarus, who walked out of the tomb, alive.

adapted from John 11:1–44



The Raising of Lazarus, Maurice Denis, 1919.

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IF TIME ALLOWS

All Saints Day and All Souls Day BLM

Lazarus Rises! Have children use the All Saints Day and All Souls Day Blackline Master [T-340] to act out a scene about Lazarus rising from the dead.

Research Lives of the Saints

Provide children with various resources about the lives of the saints. Invite small groups to work together to research the life of a saint about whom they would like to know more. Have groups share their findings with one another. Ask groups to make a poster to go along with their presentations.

The Communion of Saints

We all want to be part of a community. Our faith gives us the promise of a life with Jesus and God the Father in Heaven. God helps us by uniting all who have been saved in Jesus Christ. We all belong to the Communion of Saints. We are one family together with Christ and all the faithful, living and dead.

We Remember

On the Feast of All Souls, we remember all those who have died and who are part of the Communion of Saints. There are many ways we can honor all those who have gone before us. On the lines below, write what you can do to honor the members of the Communion of Saints.



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Litany of the Saints

Explain that a litany is a prayer that consists of a series of invocations prayed by the leader, followed by responses from the community. Pray together a litany of the saints.

IDEAS TO SHARE

All Saints Day

In the early Church, martyrs were considered saints who will live forever in God's presence. On the anniversary of the martyr's death, Christians would visit the person's tomb and celebrate the Eucharist. Over time this practice grew to include remembering other outstanding Christians on the days they died. Soon the entire calendar was filled with days of remembrance. In the ninth century, Pope Gregory IV designated November 1 as the day to remember all the saints living in God's presence.

Direct children's attention to the picture in the top circle. Explain that the picture shows a sugar skull, which is a decoration commonly used during Day of the Dead, or *Día de Los Muertos*, celebrations. Say: **Día de Los Muertos is a celebration of All Souls Day widely celebrated in Mexico. Family members and friends gather to pray for and remember loved ones who have died.** Invite children to share any experiences they have of celebrating the Day of the Dead. Explain that the second picture is a shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Say: **Shrines are a way to show honor and respect for our loved ones who have died. We can also light vigil lights, like those in the bottom picture on the right.**

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the section The Communion of Saints. Ask: **What does our faith give us? (the promise of a life with Jesus and God the Father in Heaven) How does God help us? (by uniting all who have been saved in Jesus Christ)** Explain that this community of people, both living and dead, is called the Communion of Saints. Say: **As Jesus' disciples we are all members of the Communion of Saints.**

Read aloud the section We Remember. Ask: **What do we remember on the Feast of All Souls? (all those who have died and who are part of the Communion of Saints)** Say: **We can honor those who have died, or gone before us, in many ways. We can pray for them and ask them to pray for us. We can have a memorial Mass said for them. We can place pictures of them in a special place in our homes.** Invite children to suggest other ways we can honor those who have died.

Distribute pens or pencils and give children time to complete the activity.


3 Close

Invite volunteers to share their responses to the We Remember activity.



Prayer Service

Before praying the prayer service, select one child to serve as the Leader and one child to serve as the Reader. Explain that when children see the R̄, they should pray the response “Lord, hear our prayer.”

 Say: **Let’s take a deep breath and take a few moments to relax and become comfortable.**

Pause for a moment to set a quiet tone for prayer. Proceed with the prayer service, pausing before and after the Scripture reading. Before the final prayer, pause to give children a moment to pray aloud any additional prayers of thanks.

When the prayer service is concluded, pause for a moment for children to pray silently. Say: **Pray a silent prayer for someone who has died. Ask that person to pray to God on your behalf.** Conclude by praying the Glory Be to the Father.



Prayer Service

Leader: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, now and forever.*

All: *Amen.*

Reader: *A reading from the holy Gospel according to John. [John 11:21–27] The Gospel of the Lord.*

All: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Leader: *Heavenly Father, please accept our prayers of thanks for the things that offer us comfort and hope. For your promise of eternal life.*

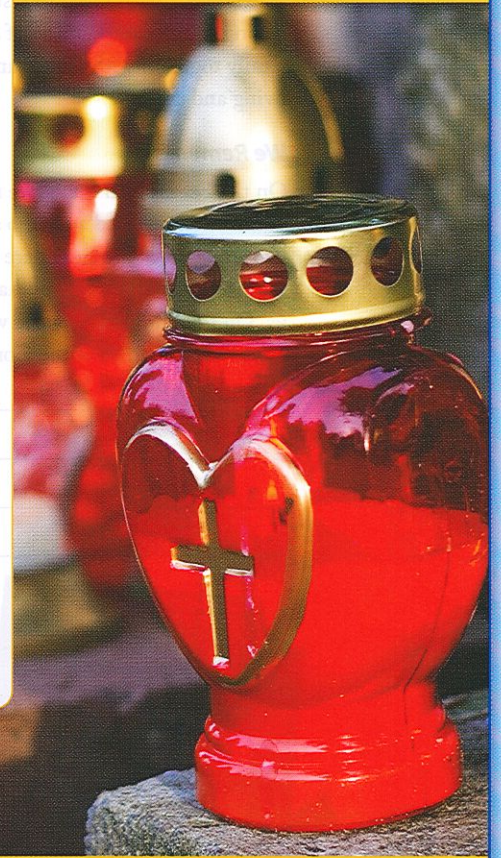
All: *We thank you, Lord.*

Leader: *For uniting us in the Communion of Saints. R̄.*

Leader: *For sending us your Son, Jesus, who is our source of eternal life. R̄.*

Leader: *Loving God, source of all holiness, renew our faith and keep us united with your saints in Heaven and with all who have died. We ask this in Jesus’ name.*

All: *Amen.*

**1 Respond**

Invite children to name two or three new facts they learned about the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls. Say: **All Saints Day and All Souls Day are special days set aside for us to remember how we are connected to one another through the Communion of Saints.**

2 Go in Peace

Collect materials and return them to the appropriate places. Say: **Our family and friends who have died are still connected to us. Stay connected to Jesus and you will stay close to them and to everyone in the Communion of Saints.**

IF TIME ALLOWS**“Who Am I?” Riddles**

Give small groups time to look through their books to review facts about the saints and holy people children have learned about throughout the year. Ask the groups to work together to make up “Who am I?” riddles about the saints and other holy men and women they have learned about. Give children an example such as “I am the apostle Jesus chose to be the visible head of the Church. Who am I?” [Saint Peter] Have each group make four or five riddles and then quiz one another.

FYI**Coaching Children to Pray**

Remind children that when we pray with and for those who have died and are living in Heaven, we are celebrating the Communion of Saints and staying united with one another and with God.