

MISSION AWARENESS LESSON PLAN (Religion Curriculum)
(Younger grades)
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER: PATRON OF ALL MISSIONARIES

Goal: To a) learn about a positive role model (Outcome 4) and b) become familiar with the term missionary and continuing the mission of Jesus (Outcome 3).

Materials Needed: this lesson plan, accompanying story, map of the world or available globe.

Objectives:

- 1 . To learn the name of St. Francis Xavier and a little of his story.
2. To learn that some Christians want to bring Jesus' Good News to people in countries other than their own.
3. To look at a map and follow the route taken by St. Francis Xavier.
4. To learn that all of us are called missionaries whenever we are continuing the work, the mission of Jesus by telling others of his good news.
5. To develop good listening skills.
6. To expand vocabulary: e.g., scholar, ordained, battered, preach-any words unfamiliar to your children.

Procedure:

- 1 . Post a world map or have a globe available.
2. Prepare the children to listen to a story of a man who is called a saint.
3. Tell or read the story of St. Francis (see accompanying sheet) as appropriate for your grade level. As you go, trace Francis' path on the map.
4. Use the follow-up questions (below).
5. Prayer: St. Francis Xavier, you were happy with all the gifts God gave you. Help me to enjoy using my gifts and talents for God and to love God with all my heart.
6. Present a follow-up activity. A few suggestions are given below.

Follow-up Questions:

- 1 . How did Francis get the idea to be a missionary — to tell the good news of Jesus?
2. What did the people of India like about Francis?
3. When Francis began his journeys, did he plan to go to Japan? What made him desire to go to Japan?
4. Why didn't the Japanese people like Francis at first?
5. Did Francis get to China?
6. What part of Francis' story did you like best?
7. If St. Francis were here today what would you like to ask him?

Follow-up Activity (select from the following or design your own):

- 1 . Illustrate one or more of these: a) what you think Francis looked like when he was a young student in Paris; b) the ship in which Francis and his companions traveled; c) what Francis looked like when he worked with the people of India.
2. Select 3 parts of Francis' story (sequence). Draw a picture or write a sentence about each. Take the pictures or sentences home or to another class and tell Francis' story.
3. Sit in groups of four or so and re-tell the story.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER **(younger students)**

About five hundred years ago (1506), there was a wealthy young man in Spain (locate on map) named Francis Xavier; he dreamed of becoming famous as a scholar. He wanted to be so well-known that people on the street would whisper as he passed by, "Look, there goes Francis Xavier, the well-known, handsome, talented scholar whose books are in ALL the libraries of Spain!" Francis knew that if this dream of his would become true, he would have to study with all the brains God gave him, and so he did. He went to the University of Paris (map) where he quickly became one of its best students. At the University, there was a man named Ignatius Loyola who wanted to go all over the world and tell people the good news of Jesus. Ignatius talked with Francis many times asking Francis to join his new group of priests. He pestered him until Francis became quite angry. But Ignatius' plan to tell the world about Jesus kept coming back to Francis' mind. Finally, he understood that it was really God calling him through Ignatius. So he decided to join Ignatius. By the time he was 31 years old (1537) he was ordained a priest. He went to Rome (map) to work as Ignatius' letter-writer; he was the first to open and read an important message from King John of Portugal (map). The King asked Ignatius to send priests to India (map) to tell the people there about Jesus. These people were missionaries. Ignatius knew he must send Francis, who was his very best worker, and he was sad, because he would miss him. He knew he wouldn't ever see him again. Francis said "good-bye" to his own family and left for a three-month trip across the Alps and Spain to Portugal, where he would board a boat for the 1 1,000-mile voyage to India. He knew it would not be a short trip, but he never dreamed it would be 13 months! Can you imagine not walking on land or even seeing trees or houses for over a year? The passengers and crew on the ship were restless and most of them were sick. Francis did his best to calm them down and let them know that God was watching over them. They experienced fierce winds and giant waves at the Cape of Good Hope, which badly battered the ship. It was necessary to dock at Mozambique (map) for repairs, which took a long time to accomplish. Finally-13 months after leaving Lisbon-Francis and his companions arrived in India at a town called Goa. Francis worked with the native Indians, telling them the good news of Jesus. He lived as they did: slept on the ground, ate little but rice and water, washed his own clothes and cleaned his own pots. They loved him for this. He had a funny way of getting people's attention in the villages where he preached. He would go through the streets ringing a little bell and, when the children and mothers came running, he would tell the story of Jesus and his mother in little rhymes for them to hum while they worked. He let them know that Jesus wanted them to be happy. Shortly after arriving in India, Francis met a man from Japan who was called Anjiro. He told such interesting stories about his country that Francis felt a great desire to go to Japan to preach the gospel to the people there. After some years, Francis' dream came true and he and other missionaries set sail for Japan (map). It took him a long time to learn the Japanese language. But even when he did learn to speak the language, the Japanese looked at him with scorn and then turned away so they wouldn't have to look at him at all. Francis sat down one day, scratched and bruised from stones thrown by children, and thought about this situation. Why was this happening? Then he heard an idea from God. The Japanese, being a very proud and respectable people, would not listen to a beggar who wore the same rags day after day, no matter what important message he brought. He knew what he must do. He dressed in the most handsome robes he could find and, with his fellow priests also dressed well, he presented himself to the ruler as a prince from Portugal. He gave gifts to the king-a music box, a pair of velvet slippers, a cuckoo clock and a letter from King John, explaining who he was and why he was here. The king was pleased and gave Francis permission to teach anywhere in the country. He even gave him an old temple in which to live. After this he found the Japanese people to be gentle and gracious. They became Christians and friends. Eventually Francis felt it was time for him to go to China; a friend told him of a Chinese pirate who would smuggle him into Canton (map). Francis waited for him on a hot island off the China coast for three months. But the pirate never came. Francis caught a fever. As he lay on the island shore in sand that burned his skin, he felt a touch cool as rainwater on his eyes and he heard a voice that said, "Never, mind, Francis; think of all those happy people who know Jesus because of you. Don't worry about China. Just close your eyes; it's time to come home." And he did.

MISSION AWARENESS LESSON PLAN (Religion Curriculum)
(Older grades)
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER: PATRON OF ALL MISSIONARIES

Goal: To a) learn about a positive role model (Outcome 4) and b) become familiar with the term missionary and continuing the mission of Jesus (Outcome 3)

Materials Needed: this lesson plan, accompanying story, map of the world or available globe.

Objectives:

1. To learn about a saint who is a missionary and patron of the missions.
2. To see the ways in which the Spirit of God inspires some people to spread Jesus' good news to others.
3. To grasp the reality of travel five hundred years ago-in terms of time and modes of transportation.
4. To learn that **anyone** who shares the good news of Jesus with others by word or action is a missionary.
5. To grasp some new vocabulary, e.g., papal decree, apostolic nuncio; lower-caste, Buddhist, latent, convents, etc.-any words unfamiliar to your students.

Procedure:

1. Post a world map or have a globe available.
2. Either read the story of St. Francis to your class or ask a few good readers to alternate reading.
Ask students to note down in writing what seem to be the most important parts of the story.
3. At the completion of the reading ask one or two students to trace St. Francis Xavier's journey on the map-Spain to Paris to Rome, back across the Alps and Spain to Portugal, Portugal to India, India to Japan.
4. Use follow-up questions (suggestions below).
5. Prayer: St. Francis Xavier, you respected the religion of others and still shared the Christian message in Japan. Help me to be respectful of all people and share God's love with all I meet. Amen.
6. Option: Present a follow-up activity (suggestion below).

Follow-up Questions:

1. What motivated St. Francis Xavier to join Ignatius' group of missionaries?
2. If St. Francis Xavier was living now, how do you think he would have gone to India?
3. Why did the people of India love Francis?
4. How did Francis show that he respected the culture of the peoples he was with?
5. If St. Francis Xavier Were here today, what would you ask him?

Follow-up Activity:

1. Ask for a group of volunteers to act out a skit based on the live of St. Francis Xavier. Act out for your class or a younger grade.
2. Write a letter to a missionary priest or sister or lay missionary. Thank him/her for what she is doing.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER (older students)

In 1506 a boy was born in Spain who would someday be a great missionary. His name was Francis Xavier. As a young boy and man he was a great athlete, a champion runner, and a school leader. His greatest desire was to become a famous scholar and philosopher and write books that would fill the libraries of Spain. So when it was time for higher study he went to the University of Paris. He became one of the top students. While he was there he met a man named Ignatius Loyola who was a former soldier and who continually asked Francis to join a new group of priests he was forming called the Society of Jesus. Ignatius pestered and haunted Francis and made him angry. Finally one day Francis went to Ignatius and said, "I know you are a holy man and that God is speaking to me through you." So Francis agreed to join Ignatius as one of the first members of the Society of Jesus. Francis was ordained in 1537. He traveled to Rome to work with Ignatius. While in Rome they got a letter from King John of Portugal requesting priests to go to India as missionaries to carry the good news of Jesus. Francis was chosen as the leader of the group to go to Goa in India. In 1541, armed with a papal decree naming him apostolic nuncio to Asia, he embarked on a perilous journey to Goa. It was the beginning of one of the greatest of all missionary journeys, lasting 11 years, and one from which he would never return. When Francis left Rome it took him three months to cross the Alps and Spain to get to Portugal where the ship was waiting that would take him to India. It would be an 11,000 voyage but Francis never dreamed it would take 13 months. In Goa (in India) Francis began learning the local languages and traveled out from Goa along the southern coasts of India. Through his preaching, Francis brought the good news of Jesus to many people—mostly poor, tribal and lower-caste people. He lived as they did: slept on the ground, ate little but rice and water, washed his own clothes, and cleaned his own pots. The people loved him. By 1546 Francis had begun to receive reports of the highly advanced kingdom of Japan. Determined to make Japan his next mission field, he eventually landed there, after many adventures, on August 15, 1549. He quickly recognized the sophistication of Japanese culture, and realized that special methods would be needed in order to preach the gospel to such a people. The experience of the Japanese culture induced a change in Francis' approach to mission. He found a friendly and religious people who had been worshiping God faithfully through their Buddhist religion. Previously he saw himself as building on barren ground; now he felt a need to comprehend the local culture, to discover its latent strengths and virtues and to find ways of connecting these with the gospel message. The people listened carefully to his preaching, and many were baptized and became Catholics. Many people say that the reason St. Francis Xavier was so well received by the people of Japan was because he respected their culture and their Buddhist religion. He saw God in Buddhism. Francis Xavier knew that he was not **starting** God's work; he was simply **continuing** it. Francis remained in Japan for 27 months, long enough to establish several small groups of converts. In the meantime, however, Francis had set his sights on yet another great, and as yet virtually unknown, frontier: China. At that time China remained closed to foreigners. Nevertheless Francis believed that this would be the greatest of all his missionary endeavors. But it was not to be. In 1552, after finally finding a ship to take him to China, he became seriously ill. He was taken off the ship on the unpopulated island of Sancian near the Chinese coast. His condition deteriorated, and he died on December 3 at the age of forty-six. He was canonized in 1622. In 1927 he was named, along with St. Therese of Lisieux, patron of foreign missions. St. Francis Xavier is buried in Goa in India.