

MISSION AWARENESS LESSON PLAN

ST. ANTHONY MARY CLARET: A MAN ON FIRE FOR THE GOSPEL

Goals: To provide a lesson for students about a missionary saint who went many places and did many things but who realized that he could be a missionary in his own country.

To provide the students with an opportunity to realize that the order of missionaries founded by St. Anthony Mary Claret serve in our Archdiocese (www.claretians.org)

Materials needed: the enclosed story of St. Anthony Mary Claret, this lesson plan, a world map, picture of St. Anthony Mary Claret.

Objectives:

1. To become familiar with a missionary saint that students may not have heard about
2. To observe how God intervenes in our lives in ways that are not our ways, as God did in St. Anthony's life
3. To observe the life of a person who acted out of a perspective of social justice
4. To help children respond appropriately to the question: Who is a missionary?
5. To see the life of a saint in the context of the history of the time in which he lived
6. To observe on a world map the places St. Anthony traveled (Spain, Rome, Canary Islands, Cuba)
7. To develop good listening skills
8. To expand children's vocabulary, as appropriate: **weaving, apprentice, publish, drought, pamphlet, infallibility, confessor**

Procedure:

1. Post a world map or have a globe available; post a picture of St. Anthony Mary Claret.
2. Prepare the students to listen to the story of a saint (a positive role model, Outcome 4, Religion Guidelines).
3. Tell or read the attached story, using the map (adapt for grade level).
4. Ask follow up questions (suggestions below).
5. Prayer (paraphrased from Apostolic Prayer of St. Anthony: **O God Grant that I may know you, and make you known; that I love you and bring others to love you; that I serve you and persuade others to serve you, that I praise you and work that all you creatures praise you.**)
6. Present follow-up activity below (optional). Any follow up activity can be substituted.

Follow-up Questions: (add, omit, re-word as appropriate for your grade level; *= lower grades)

1. * What happened to Anthony when he was in Barcelona that caused him to have devotion to Mary?
2. * What was Anthony's family's business? How many of you have ever woven something/done some weaving?
3. * Can you tell 3 things about St. Anthony Mary Claret?
4. * Can you remember why Anthony burned two pieces of paper—one white and one black?
5. What were some of the evils of the time of the Industrial Revolution?
6. What are some of the ways that Anthony had to change his plans because of things that occurred in his life?
7. What do you think of someone who goes on a journey with only a map, rosary, and clothes?

Follow-up Activity:

Younger Children: During art class, guide the children in a simple weaving activity with paper. Exhibit some textile weaving. Let children illustrate their favorite part of the story of St. Anthony.

Older Children: Anthony was a pastoral bishop who cared about human dignity and the religious freedom of the people. Give examples of people you know who have taken a stand on human dignity and/or religious freedom. Anthony realized people could learn about God from their reading. Write a few sentences about a book from which you learned more about God.

(bold print for younger children)

The well-liked Spanish priest, **St. Anthony Claret, was the fifth of eleven children in a poor but hard working family** in Sallent, Spain. **Weaving was the family trade. Anthony's early memories of home were praying the rosary and going to church with his family.** Anthony Claret became a saint in the midst of the real world of people and their problems. Restlessness and change were characteristics of the time in which Anthony lived. The Industrial Revolution had uprooted crowds of people from quiet rural areas and thrust them into the noisy confusion of big cities. The armies of Napoleon were invading all of Europe, sparking wars. These set the stage for many of the social and moral evils that plagued Anthony's time, and which he sought to combat. Here is his story:

Antonio Claret was born in 1807. As early as six years old he knew he wanted to be a priest and from his earliest years he was always ready to help anyone in need. He became an apprentice weaver in his father's textile business and went to Barcelona to improve his skills. While there he went to the beach and a giant wave took him out to sea. He didn't know how to swim; he prayed to Mary and was saved. By age twenty-one, Anthony had been educated and was in much demand for his skill as a weaver. But he still wanted to be a priest. His father was sorry to lose him from the business but gave him permission and a blessing.

Anthony was ordained a priest on June 13, 1835. **He went to minister in his native town,** constantly reaching out to anyone in need. **After a few years he asked to give up his position in the parish to go to the missions.** In 1839 **he traveled to Rome to pursue his desire to be a missionary.** There he decided to join the Jesuit Order. **But after four months he acquired a mysterious illness of pain in his right leg. When this did not improve he was sent home to Spain but after he got home, the pain disappeared. He was told to preach in all the parishes of the diocese. "Even in one's own country it is possible to be a missionary," he was told. He went to other dioceses; he walked everywhere he went, carrying only a map, a rosary, and a few clothes.** His preaching was so wonderful that many people returned to God. He began to realize that people could be reached through other forms of communication. He began to publish. His book *The Catechism Explained* drew interest from **the Bishop of the Canary Islands who asked him to go and preach there; he went. Since there was a drought there, he prayed with the people for rain and it came.** He became well loved by the people of the Canary Islands. **After 15 months he returned to Spain. And at that time (1849) he asked to begin a missionary order of priests and brothers, known as the Claretians. He had just begun this when he received word that he had been named Archbishop of Cuba.** It was at this time that he added his patroness' Mary's name to his. He was now Monsignor Anthony Mary Claret.

In December of 1850 **he began the 50-day trip by boat from Spain to Cuba. As bishop of Cuba he spent his time visiting the poor and sick.** He founded technical and agricultural schools, organized children for the Sacraments, helped parishes organize savings banks for the aged who were poor, as well as many other works. **One day he saw a dark-skinned person being beaten; he took the offender and this is what he did: Anthony burned up two pieces of paper—one black and one white. Looking at the ashes, he said to the offender: "Now tell me where the white paper is found. Before God we are equal; God does not pay attention to the color of skin."** While in Cuba he also founded the Claretian Missionary Sisters. He was so popular that some jealous people began to hate him and attempted to kill him. **After serving for six years in Cuba, Bishop Claret was sent back to Spain to be Queen Isabella II's confessor.** Unhappily he obeyed, for **Anthony had no interest in court functions. The queen agreed that he would not have to live at the palace and that he would come only to hear her confession and instruct the children. This gave him time to serve the poor.** There were more unsuccessful attempts on his life at this time. He opened a religious publishing house and wrote over 200 books and pamphlets during this time.

In 1886 a revolution took place, and all those associated with the court were being accused of treason. Anthony fled to Rome, where Vatican Council I was in session. He used his brilliant speaking abilities to defend the infallibility of the Pope. **He became ill and returned to a Cistercian monastery in Spain and stayed there until his death on October 24, 1870.** He was canonized in 1950. As a promoter of social justice, an archbishop, a publisher, a queen's confessor, a writer, a religious founder, a missionary and a weaver, **Anthony was an outstanding and humble leader. He is remembered particularly as the spiritual father of Cuba. Anthony's feast is celebrated October 24 (during Mission Month).**