

Please duplicate for your teachers

MISSION AWARENESS LESSON PLAN
BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA: FIRST BEATIFIED NATIVE AMERICAN

Goal: To provide a lesson for children about a saint who exemplifies a deep relationship with God and the ability to share it.

Materials Needed: the enclosed story of Blessed Kateri, the lesson plan, a map of North America, and possibly a table with Kateri's picture, Bible, a rosary, other beads, corn kernels or berries to remind us of Kateri's work in the fields, Kateri's biography *Lily of the Mohawks*.

Objectives:

1. To assist children in developing the understanding that God's people are called to reach out to one another and help them as Jesus did-that is, to be missionaries
2. To help children respond appropriately to the question: What is a missionary? (One who: loves and respects everyone in God's family, teaches others about Jesus, lives like Jesus)
3. To introduce a special friend of God: Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha (see attached brief biography)-telling as much of, or parts of, the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level
4. To learn that Kateri was a missionary because she spread Jesus' Good News
5. To learn some traditional Indian values
6. To learn that beatification precedes canonization (where age-appropriate)
7. To help the children develop listening skills
8. To expand children's vocabulary, as appropriate: **longhouse, Great Spirit, rosary, betray, beading, harmony, generosity, traditional, value, hoe**

Procedure:

1. Prepare a space for Kateri's picture or any items you may have to enhance the lesson.
2. Prepare the children to listen to a story of one of God's special friends, one who has been declared blessed in the church.
3. Read, or have read, the attached story of Kateri Tekakwitha. Use the follow up questions (below).
4. ***Prayer: 0 God, may we be enriched by the example of Kateri May her beatification make us aware of the needs of our Indian brothers and sisters who have been exploited by personal and national greed. We pray for all those working for justice in Indian communities. Help us to imitate Kateri's virtue of generosity to others.***
5. 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)

1. Tekakwitha means "putting things in order." What things did Kateri put in order?
2. What are some traditional Indian values that Kateri lived?
3. How did Kateri's life stay the same after she was baptized? How did it change?
4. A missionary is one who shares the Good News of God's love. What did Kateri do that showed she was a missionary?
5. What did you especially like about Kateri?

Follow-up Activities:

1. Younger students: Kateri told stories about the life of Jesus. She made the stories seem very real. What is your favorite story about Jesus? Tell this story as if it were happening right now. Illustrate.
2. Older students: The Iroquois founded a League to maintain peace and resolve disputes between its members. Its primary law was called the Great Law of Peace. Write your own Great Law of Peace for **your** nation.
3. Any level depending on degree of sophistication: BEADING is a traditional Native American craft. Bracelets and necklaces are often made of beads. Beads are placed next to each other in a pattern according to color or size or shape. Think of how you would like to design a pattern of beads to create a necklace or bracelet. Draw your finished jewelry on a sheet of white paper. Kateri prayed as she beaded. Say a prayer for a child who is hungry.

Related websites: <http://www.cin.org./kat8.html> • <http://www.cin.oriz./katchild.html> • <http://www/cin.org.kat5.html>

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha (please duplicate for your teachers)

Kateri Tekakwitha was a member of the Turtle Clan of the Iroquois tribe. Tekakwitha is the name she was given when she was born—a name that means "putting things in order." She was born in 1656 in what is today called New York; in those days it was Indian country. When the white people came to Tekakwitha's land, they brought terrible sickness with them. The diseases they brought were ones the Indian people had never seen before and sometimes a whole village of Indians would die. Families were wiped out by measles or small pox and children were left without parents. That is what happened to Tekakwitha. Her parents died when she was only four years old and she was adopted by her uncle.

He took good care of her, but she was little and weak. She had marks all over her skin because she had small pox, too. Sometimes her eyes could not stand the sunlight, or were blurry because of the disease. But she tried to work hard around the longhouse getting water, cooking corn meal, getting firewood. She went with the other women to the fields to plant and hoe the corn. In the fall, she helped pick the corn and put it away for the winter. It was hard work, but Tekakwitha wasn't afraid to work hard to help others. **Working hard so that everyone could stay alive was a traditional Indian value** and she believed in it.

One day, some strange white men came to visit Tekakwitha's village. The people called them "Black Robes" because that is what they wore all the time. They did not come to trade things like the other white men did. They asked the chiefs if they could talk to the people about God, the Great Spirit. They said they had some GOOD NEWS about Him for the people to hear. The black robes stayed among the people and spoke often about Jesus. Tekakwitha heard these men speak and she felt her heart go out to them and to their words. She was 12 years old. She had many questions; the black robes' answers went straight to her heart.

The black robes were there for the next eight years. Tekakwitha wanted to ask to be baptized, but she knew that it would displease her uncle and she did not want to hurt him. But she finally felt that she must do what God was calling her to do. True to her name, she put God first in her life and she was baptized on Easter in 1676. Her new name was Kateri, the Iroquois form of Catherine. From then on she felt very close to God and prayed to Him often.

At first, Kateri's life did not look different. She still worked as hard as ever and took care of her relatives. But gradually, some of her people began to make fun of her, because they felt that she was betraying the Indian people and going over to the whites. She tried to tell them that God, the Great Spirit who made all people, belongs to everyone. They did not understand her and called her names. It was a hard time for Kateri but she put up with it because she loved God. Her family tried and tried to get her to marry and when she refused, they punished her.

She often went to the woods alone to speak to God and to listen to God in her heart and in the tall trees and quiet sounds. **Being in harmony with nature was an Indian value.** Kateri loved the rosary and carried it around her neck always. She used to sing the prayers in the Indian way, as she went around all the beads. But all this time, her people continued to try to convince her to give up her promise to God. Eventually she realized that things were not going to change. She decided it would be better if she left home. Some of her people who were already Christian lived in another village. So, without telling anyone, Kateri went away with them to their village. It was a long trip, traveling on foot and by canoe for many days.

In the new place Kateri's days were busy, working as usual to help others. She worked in the cornfields, gathered firewood, and went to the woods to pick berries with the other women. They used to tell her to take it easy, that she was too weak to do so much work, but Kateri did not listen to them. She was generous and wanted to take care of them. **Generosity was an Indian value.** Kateri was good at beading and used to make beautiful things which she gave away. Sometimes she would make something beautiful for God and put it in the chapel for Him. She knew that God loved praise in the Indian way. The Great Spirit had taught Kateri many things in her heart, and she had good advice for others when they asked for it. Often they would say to her: "Kateri tell us a story," and she would. She remembered everything she had learned about the life of Jesus and his followers. She would tell these stories as if they were happening.

Gradually, Kateri's health grew worse. She had to stay in bed. People still kept coming to see her. They would pray with her. They did not want to think that she was going to die. But she was not afraid to die. Instead of making her feel sad, the idea of dying made her feel good. She said that it was like "going home." Finally Kateri died on April 17, 1680 at the age of 24. It was springtime, when mother earth is giving new life to trees, plants, and animals; God was giving new life to Kateri Tekakwitha. After Kateri was dead, those who were with her noticed a change—the skin on her face that had been full of scars and marks from small pox looked smooth and fresh. They knew that this was a sign from God of His love for Kateri and that she was with God now.

In 1980 Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha became the first Native American to be declared a blessed. She is patroness of the environment and ecology, and her feast is July 14. Someday she will be declared a saint.