

MISSION AWARENESS LESSON PLAN
ST. MARTIN DE PORRES: AN AMERICAN SAINT

Goal: To provide a lesson for children about a saint who exemplifies the message of Jesus to share God's love, the Good News, with everyone

Materials needed: the enclosed story of St. Martin de Porres, the lesson plan, a world map or globe, and possibly a table with St. Martin's picture, a few items that represent healing (gauze, etc.), a picture of some animals

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
Thus, we are all missionaries.
3. To introduce a special friend of God: St. Martin De Porres (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 present a saint of the Americas—using a globe or map to illustrate both North and South America as The Americas.
5. To help the children develop listening skills
6. To assist children to see that the church is universal-worldwide
7. To expand children's vocabulary, as appropriate: **nobleman, healing/curing, apprentice, surgeon, penance, admission, monastery, infirmary, herbal, miraculous, bondage, compassion, infested, lay brother, supernatural, levitation, clairvoyance, bilocation**

Procedure:

1. Prepare a space for Martin's picture and any items you may have related to healing or animals
2. Prepare the children to listen to a story of one of God's special friends, one who has been named a saint in our church.
3. Read, or have read, the attached story of St. Martin de Porres (bold print sections are more appropriate for younger children).
4. Use the follow up questions (below).
5. **Prayer:** *St. Martin, we ask you to continue to intercede with God for the people that you served on earth—the wounded, the poor, the mistreated, the sick, those in prison, those being persecuted and all those who are treated unjustly and who treat others unjustly. Help us to be kind and help others as you did.*
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)

1. Why can we say that St. Martin was a good missionary?
2. In what part of America did Martin live? (continent of South America, country of Peru, city of Lima)
3. Why did Martin's mother apprentice him (have him trained by) a barber?
4. What kinds of people were Martin's special friends?
5. What did you especially like about Martin?
6. What virtue(s), characteristic(s), trait(s) of Martin can you imitate?

Follow-up Activity:

Younger Children: Either draw your favorite part of Martin's story OR Children can bring to class colorful leaves they find on the ground. Discuss the way each leaf is fashioned similarly and yet each leaf has a particular beauty. Point out that God creates a many-splendored variety of both leaves and people. Allow the children to talk about their favorite colors and to describe the colors God gave them: eyes, hair, skin and so on. Martin realized the beauty of all people regardless of their differences. That is what God asks all of us to do.

Older Children: Write about a place or situation where you know of others that are in need of help. What would Martin have done in this situation? What can you do—i.e., how can you imitate St. Martin de Porres?

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES (please duplicate for your teachers)
(bold print: read these parts to young children)

We know that a missionary is one who brings the Good News of God's love to others. The missionary of today's lesson is a man who showed God's love to every person and animal he met. His name is Martin-St. Martin de Porres. Martin lived in Peru in South America where he was born in the 16th Century. Martin's father was a nobleman; his mother was Anna, a black woman who had come to Peru from Panama. His father did not like Martin's dark skin and he abandoned him.

From the time he was very young, Martin knew that all that he wanted to do with his life was to give it to God. He lived with his mother and his sister, Juana. They were very poor and Martin helped his mother in every way he could. He was also very generous—he was too generous according to his mother. He gave away to the poor the money she gave him to buy food. When Martin was 12, his father sent money to Anna for his education. She apprenticed Martin to a barber, because he had already shown a gift for healing. In those days barbers were also surgeons who sewed up cuts, set bones, cured fevers and applied medicines to wounds to cure infections. Martin was very good at this work. He was satisfied that he would spend his life curing all those who came to him. This would be his work for God. But God told Martin he wanted him to do more. God said, "Martin, I want you to use your gifts for helping others, but first I want you to serve me with prayer and penance."

Martin understood; at the age of 15 he applied for admission to a nearby Dominican monastery. He asked to join, not as a priest or brother, but as a servant of them all. But Martin could not hide his gifts and talents, especially his medical skills. He was put in charge of the infirmary. He used his knowledge of herbal remedies and homemade medicines, but it was obvious that he also had miraculous healing powers. Martin was also put in charge of giving away the money to help the poor because he was a completely honest person. Every week he used every bit of \$2000 for food and medicine and clothing for the poor. He was taking care of the poor outside the monastery and the aches and pains of the monks inside the monastery. His reputation as one who could heal people spread around and soon there was a long line of people with ills and diseases at the monastery gate.

Martin's charity was especially poured out on all those who were counted as nothing—the Indians, the poor, the sick. He had a special ministry to African slaves, to whom he would deliver gifts of food and drink, healing their sick, consoling them in their miserable bondage.

As part of God's family, even animals received Martin's compassion. Sick and hungry dogs, donkeys and turkeys were among his patients. And it is said that he was able to communicate with such creatures. When the monastery was once infested with mice, Martin caught one and respectfully asked it to lead its fellows out of the monastery and into the garden where he would personally provide for their needs. Within minutes, a horde of mice abandoned the monastery, just as he had requested. Ever after, Martin kept his side of the bargain, bringing food and leaving it for them.

Martin created an institution for needy children so that they could go to school and learn a trade. He provided an open garden with fig trees in it that was accessible to all the needy.

After nine years Martin's superiors finally prevailed on him to become a full lay brother. It was recognized by all his brothers in the monastery, and before long throughout Lima, that **Martin was one of God's special friends.** Many witnessed his supernatural gifts. These included the power of levitation (ability to rise in the air and stay there) during prayer, the gifts of healing, of miraculous learning, of clairvoyance, and the power to pass through locked doors and to become invisible at will. **Whenever Martin was needed, he was there,** as if he had some special antenna that signaled an emergency. This ability led to an even more incredible gift—the gift of bilocation, which means that he could be in two places at one time. You know that this sounds impossible. But while people saw him busy at work in Lima, he was traveling all over the globe, learning about new medicines in France, soothing the wounds of black slaves in Algeria, helping persecuted Christians in China and Japan. Wherever he was needed, he appeared.

Yet **when you see pictures of Martin,** he is not doing anything as spectacular as flying through the air or walking through walls. **You will see him with a broom in his hands and a mouse or two playing at his feet. Martin de Porres died on November 3, 1639. All Lima, from the viceroy to the beggars on the street, mourned the passing of a saint. Pope John XXIII declared him saint in 1962 and also named him the patron of all who work for interracial and social justice.**