

Witnesses to the Faith

Engage: Page 19

- ▶ Together brainstorm well-known slogans such as “Just do it.” Explain that organizations use slogans as ways to express their identity. **Say:** *As Jesus’ followers, we need to have a clear understanding of our Christian identity so that when we face challenging situations, we know what we believe.* Invite your child to make up slogans that identify who we are as Jesus’ followers.
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and discuss the questions in the blue box. **Say:** *In this session we are going to learn about early Christians who witnessed to the faith by becoming martyrs.*
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 20–21

- ▶ Discuss ways that your family and other families you know celebrate birthdays. **Ask:** *Why do we often celebrate birthdays in special ways?* (Possible answer: to celebrate the life of a person) **Say:** *We continue to celebrate the lives of the early Christian martyrs through feast days.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the title The Martyrs and the Communion of Saints and the first four paragraphs. Point out the vocabulary word. **Say:** *By refusing to worship false gods, the Christians remained true to their faith and practiced the First Commandment.* **Ask:** *Why might we say that the sacrifice of the martyrs was good for the Church?* (Through their deaths, the martyrs witnessed to the truth of the Gospel message and encouraged other Christians to remain true to the faith.)
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the next two paragraphs. Remind your child that everyone who believes in Jesus and follows his teachings is a member of the Communion of Saints. Emphasize that the Communion of Saints reminds us that we are never alone in our faith.
- ▶ Read aloud Honoring the Martyrs on page 21. **Say:** *When we venerate someone, we show that person honor and respect.* **Ask:** *Why did the Christians venerate the martyrs?* (to ensure that the memories of the martyrs’ witness to the faith would not be forgotten)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Ready for Confirmation feature. Point out that we can always pray to the members of the Communion of Saints to give us the courage to practice our faith.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

Explore: Pages 22–23

- ▶ Write these situations on note cards and place them facedown: *when I am not feeling well, when I want to learn how to play a new game, when I don’t understand my schoolwork.* Ask your child to turn over each card and together brainstorm to whom he or she might turn to for help in each situation. **Say:** *We can always turn to the example of the martyrs and other people within the Communion of Saints for help living as disciples.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the title The Early Martyrs and the first paragraph. **Ask:** *What did the Apostles appoint deacons to do?* (oversee the daily distribution of alms) Name organizations in your parish that help people in need by distributing alms.
- ▶ Read aloud Saint Stephen. Emphasize that Stephen had been preaching the Gospel. **Ask:** *What did Stephen model through his last words?* (Possible answer: forgiveness)

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Sacred Art feature. Together look online at images of stained-glass windows that depict scenes from Scripture. Ask your child to explain how the windows can be used to teach others about the Catholic faith.
- ▶ Read aloud the section Saint Polycarp on page 23. **Ask:** *Why was Polycarp condemned to death?* (He would not turn his back on Jesus. He would not say that the Roman emperor is lord.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Saints Perpetua and Felicity. Explain that a catechumen is any unbaptized person who is in the process of becoming Catholic. **Ask:** *What can we do when we are tempted to stray from our convictions?* (Possible answers: practice the virtues, pray for strength, follow the example of the martyrs)
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

Reflect: Pages 24–25

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the title and the paragraphs in the left column. **Say:** *We can take courage in the example of the martyrs when we feel persecuted or misunderstood because of our religious beliefs.*
- ▶ **Say:** *We are going to pray a litany, a prayer in which the leader prays aloud an invocation. In this Litany of the Saints, we'll respond to the first three and the last two invocations by repeating the phrase.* Pray aloud each invocation and give your child a moment to respond. Conclude by praying *Amen*.
- ▶ Read aloud the introductory paragraph and the title in *Where Do I Fit In?* on page 25. Write the sentence *Exercise is good for you.* **Ask:** *How do you know this is true?* (Possible answers: I feel better after I do it. Doctors tell us it is true.) **Say:** *We often take at face value the things we are told by authorities. As we grow, God gives us a desire to find out about important things on our own.*
- ▶ Together read aloud *What Do I Stand For?* Point out that regardless of whether people always agree with one another, we need to take time to find out as much about one another's opinions as we can. **Say:** *When we do this, we can express our opinions with conviction and help others form sound opinions of their own.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud *A Journey of Faith* and complete the activity independently.

Respond: Page 26

- ▶ Read aloud the directions. Remind your child to use the page references to help him or her look for details. Have your child complete the activity independently.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under *Say What?* Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud *Now What?* **Say:** *Remember, not only can we follow the example of other people, but we can also set examples for the people in our lives.* Have your child complete the activity and then pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.