

All Saints Day Readings & Background

Today's Readings

First Reading :

Revelation 7:2-4,9-14

John describes his vision: those who have endured the trials worship the Lamb.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 24:1-2,3-4,5-6

Those who seek the face of the Lord shall be rewarded.

Second Reading

1 John 3:1-3

We are God's children now.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus teaches what it means to be happy.



Background on the Gospel Reading

Every year the Church recalls the example, witness, and prayer of the holy women and men who have been identified by the Church as Saints. These saints are more than just role models; they are family members with whom we continue to share relation, in a bond of prayer, called the Communion of Saints.

Every year when we celebrate this day, the Gospel we proclaim recalls for us Jesus' teaching about happiness, *the Beatitudes*. We quickly note in this reading that *none of those Jesus names as "blessed" or "happy" are expected* . . . the *poor in spirit, the meek, the persecuted*. Jesus' blueprint for happiness reflects little of what the world might call happiness.

What does Jesus mean when he uses the word "*blessed?*" This word is sometimes translated as "*happy*" or "*fortunate*" or "*favoured*." In other words, Jesus is saying *that divine favour is upon those who are poor, who mourn, who are persecuted*. This might have been welcome and surprising news to the crowds who heard Jesus that day.

The Beatitudes can be understood as a **framework** for **Christian living**. Because of this, it is natural that we proclaim this *Gospel on the Feast of All Saints*.

Saints are people who lived the spirit of the Beatitudes as Jesus lived.

On this day, we too are challenged to model our lives on the spirit and promises of the Beatitudes.



All Saints Day

Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Gospel Reading *Matthew 5:1-12*
Jesus teaches what it means to be happy.

Children of this age are still looking to others to determine their behavior. As they try on various behaviors, there are both miscues and successes. We can encourage and challenge young children by exploring with them the traits and behaviors of those who follow Jesus.

Materials Needed

- Pictures of various animals (examples: lion, bird, fish, dog)
- Picture of Jesus
- Copy of Litany of the Saints or a prepared short litany



Preparation for Scripture Readings

1. Have the children sit in a circle. Place pictures of a lion, a bird, a fish, and a dog on the floor in front of them.
Ask them to name some traits of each animal that make it different from the others.

Write the traits on slips of paper and place them in a line extending from the animal they describe.

2. After the children have named a few traits for each animal, ask [as you take a slip of paper from one line and place it in another line]:
Can a baby dog roar? [if this is one of the traits named for the lion] or, ***Can a baby lion fly?*** [if this is a trait named for the bird], and so on.
Then say: ***Of course not. A baby belongs to its family and acts like its parents.***

3. Place a picture of Jesus on the floor and ask for his traits.

Write them on slips of paper as the children name them.

Say: ***Jesus is God and God is our Father, so we should act like Jesus.***

In the Gospel this week, Jesus calls "blessed" those who are kind, unselfish, and caring like him, and he promises to reward them.

4. Read today's Gospel, Matthew 5:1-12.
Then say: ***On All Saints Day, we think of all people who have died and who are saints because they followed Jesus' example.***

Ask the children if they can name any saints, perhaps a saint for whom they were named.

Then say: You can be a saint, too, by acting like Jesus.
[Point to the line of traits under Jesus' picture.]

5. Conclude by praying a Litany of the Saints. (For example, the leader prays, "St. Elizabeth," and the children are invited to reply, "Pray for us.")

All Saints Day

Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)

Gospel Reading *Matthew 5:1-12*
Jesus teaches what it means to be happy.

Children of this age group are in search of role models. Popular stars, sports figures, and others from popular culture are often idolized and emulated.

Our Catholic tradition also ***offers a rich history of people who provide models for Christian living.*** More than role models, however, the tradition of the **Communion of Saints provides a basis for connection and real relationship with those who have gone before us in the faith.** This tradition can capture the imagination of our young people and foster their maturation as Christian disciples.

Materials Needed

- Each of the Beatitudes written on a separate slip of paper
- Copy of Litany of the Saints or a prepared short litany



Preparation for Scripture Readings

1. Ask the group: ***What are some of the traits of a happy person?*** Write this list on the board.
2. Introduce today's Gospel in this way: ***Jesus taught us what it means to be happy. Let's listen to what he said.***
Distribute the various slips of paper with the Beatitudes written on them. Invite readers to read their Beatitude aloud.
3. Ask the group: ***Is this what you expected that Jesus would teach about happiness? How is Jesus' teaching like the traits we named? How is it different?***
4. Say: ***Every year when our Church celebrates the Feast of All Saints, we proclaim this Gospel. To be a saint means to live in the spirit of the Beatitudes.***
5. Conclude by praying a Litany of the Saints. (For example, the leader prays, "St. Elizabeth," and the children reply, "Pray for us.")

All Saints Day

Making the Connection (Grades 7, 8, and 9)



Gospel Reading *Matthew 5:1-12*
Jesus teaches what it means to be happy.

Making the Connection (Grades 7 and 8)

Young people at this age often seek ways to do only the bare minimum, but at the same time they are attracted to heroes who go above and beyond the call of duty. **In the Gospel for All Saints Day, Jesus teaches the Beatitudes, which challenge his followers to go beyond the minimum requirements of the Law.**

Materials Needed

- None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Ask the young people to define the word *hero*. (someone who is admired for showing great courage in accomplishing a difficult task to help others)
2. Point out that heroes are people who “go the extra mile” and selflessly accomplish things that are above and beyond the call of duty.
3. As a group, brainstorm some examples of contemporary heroes, such as people who risked their own lives to save another person.
4. Tell the young people that in general, laws do not require people to be heroic; laws state the minimum requirement.
5. Point out that Jesus' message in the Beatitudes challenges us to go beyond the minimum requirements of the Law.
6. Invite volunteers to read aloud Matthew 5:1-12.
7. Say: ***Every year when our Church celebrates the feast of All Saints, we proclaim this Gospel. To be a saint is to live in the spirit of the Beatitudes.***
8. Conclude by praying a Litany of the Saints. (Example: A leader prays “St. Elizabeth,” and the young people reply “Pray for us.”)

All Saints Day

Family

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus teaches what it means to be happy.

Family Connection

One of the great gifts of our Catholic tradition is remembrance of and prayer with the saints. The Church offers us an official canon, or list, of saints. On All Saints Day, we recall and pray with these saints. It is important to continue to tell these stories of saints and saintly people to our children so that they have ample models of people of faith for their own lives.

Together as a family, name and tell the story of favorite saints. Together prepare a list of some of the traits that these people have in common (generosity, courage, prayerfulness, and so on) After preparing this list, read together today's Gospel, Matthew 5:1-12. Identify how the attitudes described in the Beatitudes are reflected in the lives of the saints and people you named.

Pray together as a family a Litany of the Saints. (For example, the leader prays, "St. Elizabeth," and the children are invited to reply, "Pray for us.") Include in your list the saints and holy people you named in your discussion.

Conclude by praying that your family will follow the example of these people as disciples of Jesus.