



The Communion of Saints and You

Family Handout

Our relationship with the Communion of Saints makes our lives richer and brings us closer to God. In this handout, you can learn more about the Communion of Saints and find ways to include the saints in your daily family life.

The Communion of Saints includes all those who have been saved in Jesus Christ—those who are living here on earth and those who now live with God in eternity. “Communion” means that we share in the life of Christ, brought about by the action of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God the Father. Even though each of us is a unique individual, we are joined together in a common love for God, common worship, and common work for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

We should take care of our relationships with one another in the Communion of Saints in the same way we take care of our family relationships. We want to help one another in our common pursuit of God. For example, those of us on earth and in heaven can offer prayers and sacrifices for the holy ones in purgatory as they wait to join God and all the saints in heaven. The saints in heaven intercede for us before God, and they help us by giving us a model of how to live Christian lives.

Celebrating the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, is an important way to stay united in the Communion of Saints. Other ways to nourish our communion with one another and with God include:

- ✦ praying for all the saints of God, our families, loved ones, and for those in need;
- ✦ reaching out to those who are in need, especially people who are suffering or sick and those burdened by poverty or violence; and
- ✦ learning about God and our faith through the reading of Scripture and spiritual books, and talking with other Catholics about our faith journey.

When you do any of these things, it affects not only you but the whole Communion of Saints. Because we are one in Christ who died for all, whatever any one of us “does or suffers in and for Christ bears fruit for all” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #961).





Getting to Know the Saints

Family Handout

There are many different ways to get to know the saints. Here are a few ideas to get your family started.

1. Celebrate All Saints Day (November 1). One of the great gifts of our Catholic faith is our rich tradition of honoring our heroes with sainthood. On All Saints Day, we recall and pray with these saints. It is important to continue to tell the stories of saints and saintly people to our children so that they have ample models of people of faith for their own lives.
2. Together as a family, name and tell the story of favorite saints. 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 Matthew 5:1–12, which is the Gospel proclaimed on All Saints Day. Identify how the attitudes described in the Beatitudes are reflected in the lives of the saints and in people you named.
3. As a family, create your own book of saints. Have each family member choose a favorite saint and create a “chapter” about him or her that may include a description, a drawing, or whatever helps to convey your experience of the saint. You might also focus on how this saint showed unusual courage, or devotion, or dedication to others, and how we can learn from his or her example. Assemble each “chapter” into a book. Create a decorative cover for your book and display it in a prominent place in your home.
4. Create an inspiration box based on the lives of the saints. On small cards or strips of paper, write an inspiring quote from a saint or something about a saint you particularly admire (such as “Saint Teresa prayed even on days she felt God was far away”). Use any kind of container (such as a woven basket, a decorated box, or a plastic container) to hold your inspirational words. Whenever you are in need of an inspiring or motivational word, you can read one of the cards.
5. Pray a Litany of the Saints as a family. For example, a parent prays “Saint 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.





Who's in Your Saint Posse? Activity Center

Family Handout

Research your own patron saints using the list of saints in this handout and other available reference materials. Record information about your patron saints on the worksheet that can then be used at home.

A Posse of Patron Saints

The saints are our companions on life's journey and can be our guides in following Jesus. Within the Communion of Saints—all of those, dead or living, who have been saved in Jesus Christ—each of us has particular saints who are watching out for us. We call those special saints our patron saints.

What Is a Patron Saint?

Here on earth, "patrons" are people who give a lot of support and encouragement to certain causes or groups they really know, love, and care about. Saints are heavenly patrons. They give special care to people, places, professions, and institutions. They often are patrons of things that were important to them in life, but they can become patrons for other reasons too. A saint will be your patron if you just ask!

Examples of Patron Saints

Saint Jerome is the patron saint of libraries because he wrote translations of great theologians, histories, and biographies. That means that if you are a librarian or doing some work at a library, Saint Jerome is especially watching out for you. Or maybe you have a headache that just won't quit. Saint Teresa of Ávila is the one to pray with because she used to have extreme migraine headaches. You might be named after a saint. If so, that person is your patron saint. What's the name of your parish? That person is your patron saint because you are part of the parish that bears his or her name.

God and the Saints

We are always in God's presence and can relate to God directly through Jesus. But from time to time, it's nice to have models of people who struggled like you and me in our common goal of following Jesus. Having patron saints or asking a saint for help is not about giving glory to that particular person but about giving glory to God. We ask the saints for their help so that we might better know, love, and serve God. The saints are not people who would want to replace God or to be "hero-worshiped," because they recognized that their whole life was a gift from God. We also recognize that our life is a gift from God, and we pray that everything we do gives glory to God.



Who's in Your Saint Posse? Activity Center *Family Handout* (continued)

List of Patron Saints

TOPICS	SAINTS
Accountants	Matthew
Actors	Genesius, Vitus
Advertisers and advertising	Bernardine of Siena
Air travelers	Joseph of Cupertino
Altar servers	John Berchmans
Animals	Francis of Assisi, Nicholas of Tolentino
Archaeologists	Damasus
Archers (bows and arrows)	Sebastian
Architects	Barbara, the apostle Thomas
Artists	Luke, Catherine of Bologna, Blessed Fra Angelico
Astronauts	Joseph of Cupertino
Astronomers	Dominic
Athletes	Sebastian
Aviators and aviation	Our Lady of Loreto, Thérèse of Lisieux, Joseph of Cupertino
Babies	The Holy Innocents, Maximus, Nicholas of Tolentino, Philip of Zell
Bakers	Elizabeth of Hungary, Nicholas of Myra, Honoratus
Bankers	Matthew, Bernardino of Feltre
Barbers	Cosmas and Damian, Louis, Martin de Porres
Baseball	Rita of Cascia (unofficial)
Beekeepers	Ambrose
Birds	Gall
Blind people	Raphael the Archangel, the apostle Thomas, Cosmas and Damian, Lucy
Blood donors	Our Lady of the Thorns
Book business	John of God
Bookkeepers	Matthew
Boy Scouts	George
Boys	Dominic Savio
Brides	Nicholas of Myra
Broadcasters	Gabriel the Archangel
Builders	Vincent Ferrer, Barbara, the apostle Thomas
Building business	Stephen
Businesspeople	Homobonus
Businesswomen	Margaret of Clitherow
Canada	Anne (mother of Mary), Joseph, the martyrs of North America
Cancer patients	Peregrine Laziosi
Carpenters	Joseph, the apostle Thomas
Cats	Gertrude of Nevelles

Copyright © 2007 LOYOLA PRESS.

Continued on next page





I'm No Saint . . . or Am I?

Family Handout

Although the Church gives certain people the official title of "saint," we are all called saints because we are part of the Communion of Saints, all people who have been saved in Jesus Christ. Let's think about some of the things that make us saints.

My greatest strengths as a person are

If I were to describe myself in one word it would be _____.

People can count on me to

I work to make the world a better place by

Things I do to keep my friendship with God healthy and strong are

I would make a good patron saint of _____

because _____.





Who's in Your Saint Posse? Activity Center

Worksheet

As you research and identify your patron saints, use this worksheet to record their information. Continue your research at home to grow your relationship with these saints.

Saint

Patron of

Saint

Patron of

Saint

Patron of

My name is:

My interests are:

Saint

Patron of

Saint

Patron of

