

ALBAN

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Mural paper, pens, markers, pencil crayons
- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: VILLAGE BLUEPRINT

Bring in a generously sized piece of mural paper (or make one by taping smaller pages together). Tell your teens that they are creating a blueprint for a new village, including all of its landmarks. With as much creativity as they can muster, ask them to draw streets, parks, schools, hospitals, churches, shops – anything that they think the village might need. Ask them to give particular attention to the names of the institutions and streets: trying to incorporate as many namesakes from the group, the parish and your larger community as they possibly can.

FOR GROUPS OF FIVE OR LESS, ALLOW THE TEENS TO WORK TOGETHER DIRECTLY ON THE LARGER PAPER. FOR BIGGER GROUPS, SPLIT THE TEENS INTO GROUPS OF 3-5 AND ASSIGN EACH GROUP ITS OWN SECTION OF THE MAP (YOU'LL HAVE TO DIVIDE IT INTO PIECES). FOR GROUPS OF MORE THAN 30 YOU MAY WISH TO HAVE MULTIPLE BLUEPRINTS.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order for service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: LEAVING LEGACIES

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What is a legacy?
- Are there people that you have known, but who are no longer a part of your life, who have had a lasting effect on you?
- What sort of legacy would you like to leave behind when you leave your school?
With random people you encounter? When you die?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *A legacy is something lasting that you leave behind when you're gone. It is how you are remembered. Sometimes we talk about legacies in terms of money that is donated, but its meaning is much broader. It's the idea that even though a person is gone or dead, the impact they have on others and on the world can continue. A legacy can be good or bad.*
 - *Most of us can remember people who have impacted us, sometimes for better, and sometimes for worse because of words they spoke or because of what they did. For most of us, the people that we know best and spend the most time with, especially when we are young, have a lasting impact on us. We never forget the things that they taught us. This is a great opportunity to give a personal example of your own.*
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- *It's easy to forget that the way we live now (the words we speak, the choices we make) has an impact on those that we encounter that may far outlive this moment in time. Hopefully our lives are a testimony of our faith, shining a light in the world around us, but if we're honest, that's not always the way we live or what we care about. Giving some thought to the legacy we want to leave is one way to avoid building the wrong kind of legacy instead as we go through life day by day.*

THE LESSON: A LEGACY OF FAITH

Lessons 13-42 follow a slightly different format from previous lessons. The story of the saint being studied is interspersed with verses from scripture that provide added perspective. You may prefer to read the lesson text aloud together as a group, or ask the teens to read it silently to themselves.

*Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)*

It was the year 304 – or thereabouts. The Roman empire still stretched from modern day Iraq, throughout northern Africa, and up to the southern tips of Britain and Russia. But now the emperor was Diocletian, and he had just embarked on a campaign to wipe Christianity from the empire. A severe persecution took place during the next eight years. Church buildings were destroyed, scriptures burned, and clergy arrested.

It's worth noting that though Diocletian caused great hardship and death to Christians, he failed utterly to stop the expansion of the faith. In fact, it was not many years after Diocletian's reign that another emperor (Constantine) would actually convert to the faith.

*Jesus said, "Whoever would save his life will lose it,
but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
(Matthew 16:25)*

During the terrible time of the Diocletian persecution, Alban was a Roman soldier stationed in what is now Hertfordshire, England. Though not a Christian himself, he took in a Christian priest to hide him from his pursuers. In the days that followed, Alban came to faith in Christ and was baptized by his new houseguest.

Then one day, word got out that the wanted man was concealed in Alban's house, and the soldiers came for the priest. Alban put on the priest's clothes and pretended to be the man they were looking for so that the priest could escape. It didn't take long for the authorities to figure out that Alban, too, had become a believer.

*"Take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand
in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."
(Ephesians 6:13)*

The account of Alban's martyrdom, found in the writings of Bede, says this:

"St. Alban... was not at all daunted by the prince's threats, but putting on the armour of spiritual warfare, publicly declared... 'If you desire to hear the truth of my religion, be it known to you, that I am now a Christian... and I worship ever and adore the true and living God, who created all things.'"

When they realized that neither argument nor abuse would cause Alban to deny his Lord, he was condemned and executed by beheading.

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*“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”
(Zechariah 4:6)*

Alban’s influence did not stop at his death. Tradition tells us that the crowds who came to see the cruel spectacle of his execution became witnesses to miraculous evidence that this man was a saint, so that even one of his executioners was converted. In due course, the very town where Alban was put to death came so to revere him that its name was changed from Verulamium to St. Albans. No one could have predicted such a legacy for a Roman soldier. But we know that God is able to do far more through us than we could possibly accomplish by our own efforts. Today, there are many churches, hospitals and schools throughout the world named for St. Alban.

(SOURCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: THE VENERABLE BEDE, “THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE”, TRANS. A.M. SELLAR | DAVID FARMER, “OXFORD DICTIONARY OF SAINTS” | JUSTO GONZÁLEZ, “THE STORY OF CHRISTIANITY, VOLUME 1” | GERARD SAMPSON, “LAYMAN’S BOOK OF SAINTS”.)

Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- In those days, how do you think people saw Diocletian? How do you think they saw Alban?
- How do you think these two different men are remembered now?
- What do you think we can learn from Alban’s example?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *Diocletian was the ruler of an empire, strong and powerful. People would have revered him and seen him as a great man. Alban was simply a soldier, executed for his faith, like so many other Christians. The world would not have regarded him as anyone of note. No one would have expected this man to end up with an extraordinary legacy.*
- *Diocletian is of course remembered by scholars of ancient Rome, but if his name is known to others, it is likely associated with the persecution that he leveled against believers. Beyond the suffering and death that he inflicted on the innocent, Diocletian’s efforts to strengthen the empire by this means were ultimately futile, since a later emperor converted and after that the empire itself fell and is now ancient history. On the other hand, Alban’s legacy is remembered with honour as valued institutions continue to be named for him the world over.*
- *Alban is an extraordinary example for us of many things. He chose to offer refuge and hospitality to someone who was hunted. He risked his own life so that the priest could make his escape. And in the end he stood firm, accepting death rather than abandoning the faith that had come to him so recently but was precious beyond life itself.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

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Review today's lesson. Choose a line of scripture or a phrase from the story of Alban that you find edifying, inspiring or instructive:

Throughout this week, spend some time prayerfully reflecting on the phrase you've chosen. Close your time of reflection with a prayer of gratitude for the witness of Alban.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through the following collect.

Almighty God, by whose grace and power thy Martyr Alban was enabled to witness to the truth and to be faithful unto death: Grant that we, who now remember him before thee, may likewise so bear witness unto thee in this world, that we may receive with him the crown of glory that fadeth not away; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(SUPPLEMENTARY COLLECT OF A MARTYR, P. 310)

CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", the final prayer in the booklet.