

CALLED TO BE SAINTS

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- A stack of old newspapers and magazines, scissors, paper and glue
- 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: ZANY FAMILY TREE

Bring in a stack of old/unwanted newspapers and magazines. Invite the teens to cut them up to create together an imaginary family tree for an imaginary person. In the newspapers they should look for photos of people, as well as words that can be used for names. Allow your teens a great deal of licence to have fun and be creative. Encourage them to come up with little stories about their fictional tree-members.

IF YOU HAVE A GROUP OF SIX OR MORE, BREAK THEM INTO GROUPS OF THREE TO FIVE AND HAVE EACH GROUP PRESENT BRIEFLY WHEN THEIR FAMILY TREE IS COMPLETE.

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: ERAS AND ANCESTORS

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.

- Are there any interesting stories in your family about distant ancestors?
- In what ways are the times they lived in different from ours? The same as ours?
- Do you feel a special connection to any of your ancestors? Who and why?

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

- *Perhaps some of your kids can trace their roots back to someone who is famous, or grandparents who did great or outlandish things. They many have ancestors who traveled to live in a new country or fought in wars or won local competitions for growing the largest turnip.*
- *Feel free to leave this question hanging if your teens struggle to find an answer. The lesson will speak to the fact that though some things change with the times, other things do not change.*
- *Perhaps your teens have heard stories about a long-dead ancestor who shares certain physical or personality traits with them, people they may have been named for or “take after”. Even though these people are gone, we may still feel a connection to them and a sense of being influenced by them.*

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THE LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 1

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

What is a “saint”? And what do *we* have in common with someone like that? The word “saint” literally means a “holy one”, and in the scriptures it is used to describe all faithful believers. When we look at the saints of the Church, we find that they were people who faced very human dilemmas and made very human mistakes. But regardless of those challenges and failings, they put their trust in God, and through them he did wonderful things.

So what do we have in common with the saints? We serve the same unchanging God. We share the same foundation. And God’s providential care is helping us towards the same goal. These people from far-flung eras and places are our *family*. We have a lot in common with them, and a lot to learn from them.

Refer to 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, 26-31.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: 1 CORINTHIANS 1.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

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

- What can we learn from the way that St. Paul addresses his readers?
- What are St. Paul’s readers *not* supposed to take pride in?
- What does St. Paul want his readers to focus on instead?
- How does this text apply to us today?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *The Corinthian church was notorious for being filled with serious problems that required pastoral correction. Yet St. Paul addresses them as “sanctified in Christ Jesus”, and “called to be saints”. In spite of the fact that they are mired in sin, he wants to remind them of their status in Jesus and the holiness to which they are called. Both in his address and later on in the chapter St. Paul levels the playing field, making it clear that his readers cannot claim any special status.*
- *St. Paul seems to be taking his readers down a few notches. He wants to remind them that not many of them were wise, powerful or from important families. They were not chosen because they had any special status or merit to commend them. Instead, all the grace they’ve received is God’s free gift.*
- *St. Paul wants his readers to set aside their (very human) desire to try to assign themselves special status, by pointing them towards the grace of God. He wants them to fix their eyes on Jesus. Instead of trying to set themselves apart from their fellow saints, he wants them to enter into that fellowship, remembering the generosity of God, growing in knowledge and giftedness, but trusting unreservedly in God to see them through.*
- *Human beings can easily fall into two traps. They can either become so focused on their personal failings that they struggle to believe that God loves them and has chosen them to be a part of the fellowship of saints, or they can become proud and start to believe themselves especially deserving of God’s favour. As Warren Wiersbe points out,*

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“God chose them not because of what they were, but in spite of what they were”. Like the Corinthians, we often need to be reminded that “by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

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))

Spend some time this week reflecting on Psalm 30:4-5. Remember that *you* are one of “his saints”:

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger is but for a moment, and his favour is for a lifetime.

Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O eternal Lord God, who holdest all souls in life: We beseech thee to shed forth upon thy whole Church in Paradise and on earth the bright beams of thy light and heavenly comfort; and grant that we, following the good example of those who have loved thee and served thee here and are now at rest, may at the last enter with them into the fulness of thine unending joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, PAGE 56)

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.

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1 CORINTHIANS 1: **ONLY ONE THING TO BOAST ABOUT**

¹Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, ²To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord...

²⁶For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”