

MARGARET OF SCOTLAND

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Sticky notes, pens, yarn, tape
- 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: LIFE ROLES INFOGRAPHIC

As your teens arrive, provide them with a stack of sticky notes (or paper and tape) and something to write with. Together they will be creating a sticky-note-collage about the roles they play in life (this can be on a board, a wall, or the floor, depending on what you have available). The goal is to populate the collage with as much information as possible. Each note should list one item only and be illustrated with a stick figure representing the person who wrote it. Some examples might be “brother”, “babysitter”, “friend”, “team member”, “customer”, “neighbour”, etc. Teens should not duplicate what others have written, but instead add their own stick figure to someone else’s sticky note if it’s a role they share as well. In addition to this, ask your teens to connect with the yarn any roles that they sometimes play simultaneously (such as “sister” and “daughter”). Your end graphic should be a very busy visual web.

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: THE ROLES WE PLAY

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 are some of the roles that we play in life?
(If you did not do the ice breaker, you may want to spend a bit more time with this question, otherwise feel free to do a quick review of your infographic).
- Which roles do you like the best? The least?
- Do you have goals related to any of the roles you play? What are they?
- What holds all of your roles together?

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

- *We all have numerous roles that we play every day: roles in relation to our families, our schools, our places of employment if we work, the activities that we are involved in, and the larger world. Each of these roles carries with it some responsibility on our part.*

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- *Some of the roles we play carry rewards, while others are challenging. We may enjoy our role as a babysitter because the work is fun and the pay is good. But we may have a harder time with our role as a sibling, especially if we find our brothers and sisters tiresome.*
- *Whether we realize it or not, we form goals around our roles, even if it is just to avoid some and to seek out others. Hopefully in many of our roles (if not in all of them), we want to do our best and honour God in our choices and interactions.*
- *You are what holds all of your roles together – the common element. Whatever is most important to you will begin to flow out in all of these different directions. If you are a believer and are sincerely seeking to live in a way that honours God, then it will begin to impact each aspect of your life.*

THE LESSON: IN ALL THINGS, AT ALL TIMES

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.

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”
(Romans 12:21)

The “Dark Ages” were not a peaceful time. Much of the old Roman empire had been conquered by Islamic forces in the seventh and eighth centuries. This upheaval was followed by two centuries of invasion by Vikings throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. The Viking raids in England resulted in a temporary period of exile for Anglo-Saxon royalty while Danish kings ruled. In many regions throughout the west it was the monasteries that preserved order, learning, and culture, offering education, medical aid, food assistance and hospitality to the surrounding communities. In spite of the turbulence of these times, Christianity continued to spread in the north, as well as in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Nubia (modern-day Sudan). It was during these “dark” times that Margaret lived.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”
(Psalm 46:1)

Margaret was born in 1045. She was an English princess, but she was born in Hungary, where her family had been exiled. She was still a child when the family was called back to England, though her father died almost immediately after they arrived, and they had not been home for many years before another invasion made it necessary to flee into Scotland and accept the protection of King Malcolm III.

Now this Scottish king was a widower with two sons, and the young Margaret had wished to become a nun. Nevertheless, in 1069 they were married, a marriage that proved to be happy and a source of blessing to the kingdom.

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)

Margaret was a pious wife and mother. She had great influence over her husband so that, in the words of her biographer, “by the help of God she made him most attentive to the works of justice, mercy, almsgiving, and other virtues”. She was careful to see that her children were not over-indulged, but well behaved, and

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prayed fervently for them to come to faith in Christ. She spent a great deal of time in prayer, in the reading of scripture as well as in ecclesiastical embroidery – making beautiful textiles for use in worship. Bishop Turgot of Durham, who penned her biography, wrote that we need not wonder “that the queen governed herself and her household wisely when we know that she acted always under the wisest of masters, the guidance of the Holy Scriptures”.

While Margaret is a model for the faithfulness with which she conducted her private life, she is also a model in how she carried out her public duties as queen. Margaret worked to bring the liturgy of the Celtic Church into closer harmony with the Roman Church. She founded monasteries, churches and hostels. She petitioned for the release of slaves, and she gave generously to the poor.

*“The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart
and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”*

(1 Timothy 1:5)

Margaret only lived to the age of 47. It is said that, already weak, she died of grief on hearing of the death of her husband and one of their eight children, both of whom were killed in battle on the same day. Nevertheless, during the years of Margaret’s reign she shone as a loving wife, a devoted mother, and a conscientious leader. Three of her children went on to become rulers, including David I, who continued Margaret’s work of building and supporting the Scottish monasteries, in addition to bringing about many beneficial reforms.

(SOURCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: DAVID FARMER, “OXFORD DICTIONARY OF SAINTS” | JUSTO GONZÁLEZ, “THE STORY OF CHRISTIANITY, VOLUME 1” | GERARD SAMPSON, “LAYMAN’S BOOK OF SAINTS” | TURGOT, BISHOP OF ST. ANDREWS, “THE LIFE OF ST. MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND”, ED. WILLIAM FORBES-LEITH, SJ.)

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

- What were some of the different roles that Margaret had to play in her life?
What was the unifying factor in all of them?
- What were some of the challenges that Margaret faced?
What evidence can we find that God was at work in spite of those difficulties?
- What can we learn from Margaret’s example?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *Margaret was a daughter, a princess, and an exile in a foreign land. Then she became a refugee, then a wife, a queen, and a mother. Based on what we know of Margaret, she sought to be obedient to the word of God in every aspect of her life.*
- *Margaret faced a childhood in exile, the early loss of her father, then the experience of having to flee her homeland and take refuge in Scotland. Margaret, who was celebrated for her intellect, reading and prayer, became a wife when she’d hoped to become a nun. There were numerous demands on Margaret, as a wife, a mother, and a leader of state, in addition to her commitment to prioritize personal piety. The reality of war and the threat of harm coming to family must also have been a source of anxiety. In spite of all these things, Margaret was a living witness in a dark time. She was given the opportunity to influence those around her for God, and to improve life for those who came under her rule.*
- *Margaret is a wonderful model of someone who embraced the range of roles she’d been given and worked to honour God in each and every one. Modern Christians often struggle with “compartmentalizing” their faith. Our faith can become something that we only allow to govern one small aspect of who we are, rather than letting it permeate every part of life. Margaret was someone who lived out her faith “in all things, at all times”.*

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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).)

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

Throughout this week, spend some time prayerfully reflecting on the phrase you've chosen.

Decide on one concrete action you can take this week based on your reflections, *and* share your reflections and your plan of action with a friend.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through the following prayer.

O God, who by thy Holy Spirit hast given unto one man a word of wisdom, and to another a word of knowledge, and to another the gift of tongues: We praise thy Name for the gifts of grace manifested in thy servant Margaret, and we pray that thy Church may never be destitute of the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (SUPPLEMENTARY COLLECT OF A DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH, POET, OR SCHOLAR, P. 317)

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.