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LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: THE CHILD IS INVITED TO DISCOVER HOW HE OR SHE IS PART OF THE LARGER STORY OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: THE MYSTERY OF PENTECOST SHELF, TOP SHELF, TO THE RIGHT OF "THE MYSTERY OF PENTECOST" (VOL. 4)**
- **PIECES: BASKET OF SAINT FIGURES, WOODEN "CIRCLE OF THE CHURCH YEAR" (FROM THE FOCAL SHELF)**
- **UNDERLAY: A RUG (FROM THE BOX OF RUGS IN THE CLASSROOM USED BY THE CHILDREN DURING WORK-TIME)**

BACKGROUND

Every part of the Christian tradition has its special people who are looked up to and respected as examples of what each denomination or group best exemplifies. These heroes are called by different names. The classic term used to identify such people is to call them *saints*, which is the term we use here.

We realize that this term, *saints*, may be strange or even objectionable to some. Please don't let this terminology problem get in the way of enjoying the stories of the remarkable people included in this volume. You may want to add the special people from your denomination to those celebrated here and we encourage that. You may also want to add your own special people and Lessons 15 and 16 in this volume are provided for you and the children to do just that.

The most important point about the lessons in this volume is to develop a larger sense of saints—living and dead, known and unknown—of which you are one. Thanks be to God for you and for this community that can be so life-giving in times of celebration and sadness.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

This lesson is told on a rug from the box of rugs in the classroom used by the children during work-time. This lesson shares a tray with Lesson 2 (*Vol. 7*), an expanded introduction to the communion of saints. The tray sits on the top shelf of the Mystery of Pentecost shelf, to the right of “The Mystery of Pentecost” (*Vol. 4*). The tray holds a small basket containing the twelve figures needed for this lesson and other materials used for Lesson 2 (*Vol. 7*). You will also use the wooden “Circle of the Church Year” (*Vol. 2*) material that sits on the Focal shelf.

SPECIAL NOTES

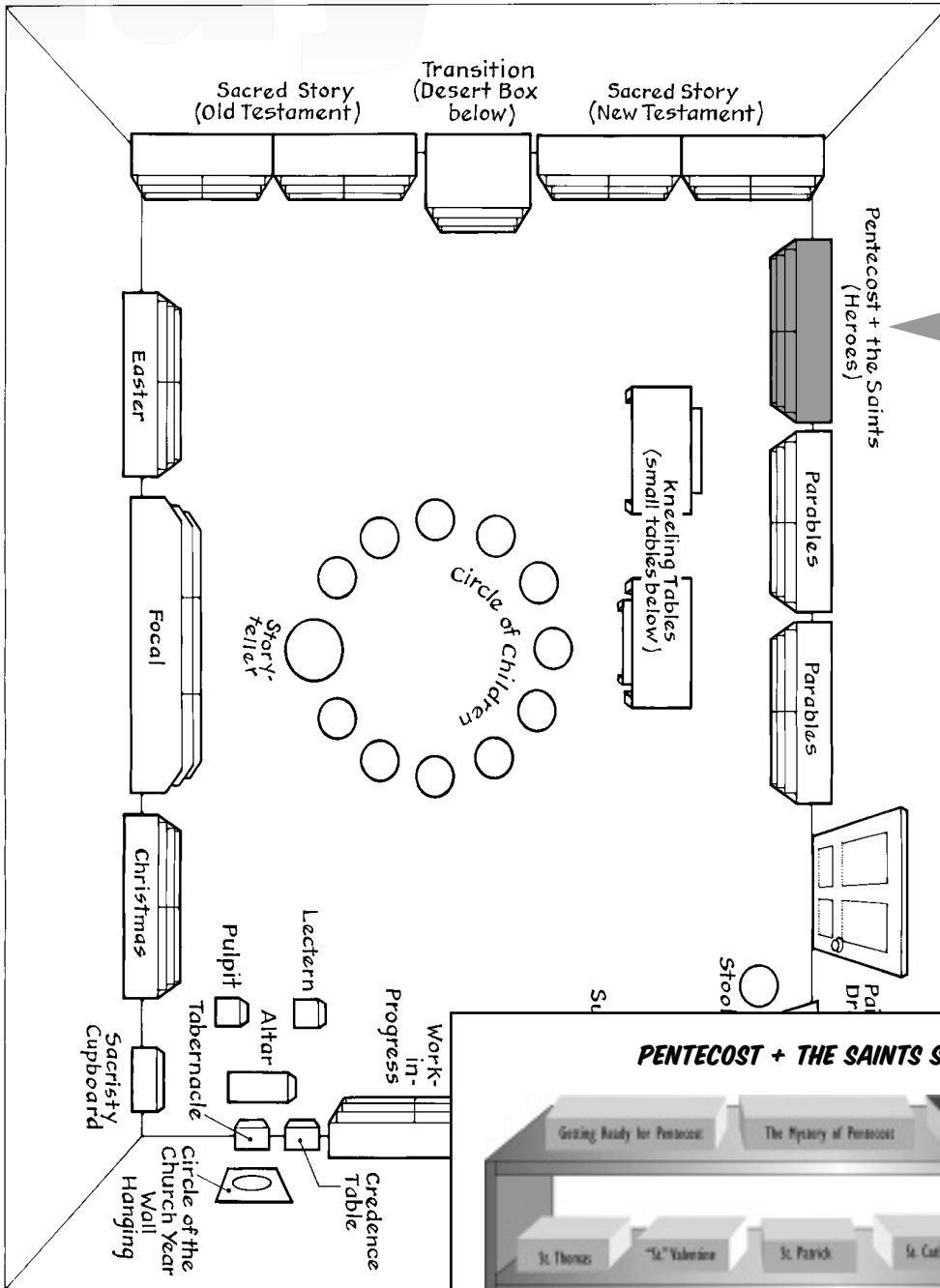
This lesson serves as an introduction to the communion of saints’ for children new to Godly Play. It could be told on All Saints’ Day (celebrated in early November), after telling “The Mystery of Pentecost” (*Vol. 4*), or anytime during the season of Easter. There is a saint for each month of the secular calendar.

A NOTE ABOUT DATES FOR THE SAINTS

There is scholarly debate about the dates for the lives of many saints. We have had to make decisions about these dates for pedagogical reasons. We hope the children will continue to learn more about the saints all their life long, including their dates. The basis for the dates used in this volume is how they are remembered liturgically. This has been established by custom in the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and other traditions. We usually follow the dates that are found in the Episcopal publication called *Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2006*. This book is also a reference for remembering saints for most days in the year and for children (and adults) to continue to learn more about the saints, using this liturgical orientation.

You can order this book at www.morehouseeducation.org or by calling: 1-800-242-1918.

WHERE TO FIND MATERIALS



MOVEMENTS

WORDS

Move with deliberation to the box or basket of work rugs. Return to your spot in the circle and unroll the rug in front of you.

Watch. Watch where I go. First we need a rug.

Move with deliberation to the shelf where the material waits.

Now let's see. What else do we need?

Pick up the basket of saint figures from the tray containing the materials for both Lesson 1 (Vol. 7) and Lesson 2 (Vol. 7) and return to your spot. Place the basket of saint figures on the rug and say:

We need one more thing.

Turn around and get the wooden "Circle of the Church Year" (Vol. 2) from the Focal shelf and place it on the rug to the left of the basket of saints' (Storyteller's perspective).

Now we have everything we need.

Look around and wait for children to settle.

Look around our circle. You see a circle of friends.

As you speak about the circle gesture to the children seated on the floor with you.

Did you know that there are more people in this circle than you can see? They come to join us from the whole story of the Christian people.

Look around the room. You can see lessons about some of these people, but there are many more.

Many of these people the church remembers as saints. They are special friends, who loved God and people very well.

Hold up the basket of saint figures then set it down again and pause.

Today we will remember just twelve of them. Six boys and six girls. And here they are.

Pick up the Circle of the Church Year and then put it down again.

We don't know exactly where the months are in this circle, but there is a remarkable person for each month.

Pick up each saint figure beginning with St. Thomas and place them facing inward on the circle next to the time in our year when we remember that saint.

Here is St. Thomas, who thought for God.

Here is "St." Valentine, who loved for God.

MOVEMENTS

Note: The Circle of the Church Year does not correspond exactly with the secular calendar, but we know that January is right after Christmas, and so on. Place Thomas right after Christmas and the saints that follow about four blocks apart.

WORDS

Here is St. Patrick, who traveled for God.

Here is St. Catherine of Siena, who showed people how to be fair for God.

Here is St. Julian of Norwich, who was quiet and wise for God.

Here is St. Columba of Scotland, who loved books and people for God.

Here is St. Elizabeth of Portugal, who was peaceful and made peace for God.

Here is St. Augustine, who was restless and found rest in God.

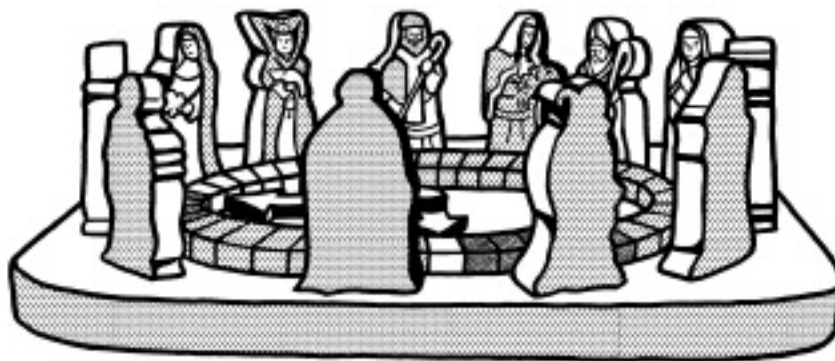
Here is Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who cared for the sick and poor for God.

Here is St. Teresa of Avila, who was strict but laughed for God.

Here is St. Margaret of Scotland, who cared for her own children and the people of her country for God.

Here is St. Nicholas, who gave gifts for God.

They all prayed and came close to God. And they all did amazing things.



COMPLETE LAYOUT OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

MOVEMENTS

Point to the sequence around the “Circle of the Church Year.”

As the children answer you can show them which saint is remembered during the month they were born.

Pause. Look around the circle once again and begin the wondering.

When the wondering winds down, model how to put the material away. Start by placing the saint figures in their basket. Bring that back to its spot on the shelf. Put the “Circle of the Church Year” back on the Focal shelf. Roll up the rug and return it to the rug basket. Name each item as you put it away.

Return to your spot in the circle and begin to help the children decide on and move to their work.

WORDS

▶▶▶ See, there is one for each month.

▶▶▶ Now, what month were you born in?

There is a saint close to each one of your birthdays. That’s your special friend.

▶▶▶ I wonder what part of this circle of saints you like best?

I wonder what part of this circle is most important?

I wonder what part is especially about you?

I wonder if there is any part of this circle that we could leave out and still have everyone we need?

▶▶▶ Here are the saints—one for each month. They go back on the Pentecost shelf.

Here is the “Circle of the Church Year.”

And here is the rug. Remember we roll up the rugs, and they go back in the basket.

▶▶▶ Now, I wonder what you’d like to make your work today?