Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Love that refuses indifference

Ages about 7-11 | Video 4:49 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Love for Jesus calls us to notice others and share our gifts with courageous compassion.

Learning goals Recall Kolbe's missionary work and care for fellow prisoners; explain why cruelty is wrong; choose a safe sacrifice of time or attention.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask what makes someone a hero without superpowers. Invite examples of people who give time, attention, or help when another person needs it.

Watch and notice

Notice the two-crowns tradition, magazines and missionary work, sharing with prisoners, and Kolbe's offering to take another man's place.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. How did Father Maximilian share faith before imprisonment?
He used publishing and missionary work to help people know Jesus and Mary. His gifts became a form of service.

2. How did he care for people in the camp?
He shared, prayed, and encouraged fellow prisoners. He offered himself in place of a man who feared for his family.

3. Did his love make the guards' cruelty acceptable?
No. The persecution and killing were wrong. His charity reveals the victims' dignity and refuses indifference.

4. What can you safely give to help someone?
Time, attention, or a share of an activity with adult guidance. Children should not seek harm or imitate deadly situations.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Choose peaceful care scenes and a safe act of generosity today.

Read & Write Recall ministry and compassion, then plan a safe act of charity.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: use an adult's gentle summary and focus on sharing time and care.

Ages 9-11: distinguish an extraordinary historical sacrifice from safe responsibilities children have today.

Time for another person | Optional 4 minutes

Draw a small clock. Around it name three safe ways to give time: listen, help, or include. Choose one person and an adult-approved action to practice this week.

Look for understanding Look for compassion without pressure to prove love through suffering. Giving attention can be a real act of charity.

Closing prayer Jesus, help us notice people who need care. Give us generous hearts and protect those facing cruelty. Saint Maximilian, pray for us. Amen.

At home Choose a safe shared task with an adult and give it your attention. Pray for people treated unfairly.

Handout answer notes Gifts: magazines, radio, missionary work. Prisoner care: sharing, prayer, encouragement, and his free offering. Personal plans must be safe and adult-guided.

Teach with care

Preview the Auschwitz imprisonment, starvation, and death. Use a gentle summary if needed; do not ask children whether they would choose to die. The two crowns are a devotional account, and childhood dialogue is dramatized. Kolbe's extraordinary free act must not be used to pressure children into self-endangerment. Do not reenact the camp. Describe Auschwitz as a site of Nazi persecution and mass murder with age-appropriate care.

Words to explain Franciscan: a member of the religious family following Saint Francis. Charity: love expressed in care for others. Martyr: someone who gives witness to Christ even through death.

Sources for the leader

Story source: Servus Dei video and English transcript

Shrine biography: National Shrine of Saint Maximilian Kolbe