A heart close to Jesus

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha: The Lily of the Mohawks

Ages approximately 6-10 | Video 9:38 | Lesson 30-40 minutes

Central truth

We can grow close to Jesus through prayer, the sacraments, kindness and a willingness to receive help.

Learning goals

Retell two choices Kateri makes; identify how prayer and kindness belong together; choose one safe, practical act of love.

Prepare

Have the film, a Bible, crayons or pencils, and one student activity per child. Preview the story: it includes childhood bereavement, illness and a peaceful death. Let children pass on personal questions.

Welcome and watch | about 12 minutes

Ask: What helps you listen? Give a viewing purpose: Notice when Kateri prays and when she helps another person. Watch the full story.

Talk together | about 8 minutes

1. Who first teaches Kateri to pray?
2. What does Kateri ask Father Lamberville to help her learn?
3. How does she respond when some people are unkind?
4. How does she care for people in her new community?
5. What wise advice does she accept when her body grows weak?

Read and respond | about 10 minutes

Read John 15:12 together. Jesus calls his disciples to love as he loves. Connect this to Kateri caring for the sick, sharing food and praying for others. Choose Draw & Tell or Read & Write. Invite a voluntary explanation.

Pray and choose | about 5 minutes

Jesus, help us listen to you, receive your love and care for others. Saint Kateri, pray for us. Amen.
Invite each child to choose one small act of kindness for this week.

Help children make connections

Answer notes, care in teaching and take-home ideas

Listen for understanding

Kateri learns prayer from her mother. She asks to follow Jesus and receive Baptism. She tries to answer unkindness with patience and prayer. She serves through ordinary care. She accepts advice to rest and moderate severe practices. Accept accurate answers in children's own words.

Teach with care

Respect Kateri's Mohawk and Algonquin heritage. Speak about specific people and events; do not generalize the opposition she faced to an entire people or culture. Native Christians are active members of her community, not merely background figures.

Prayer, health and help

The film includes severe penances and correction from a spiritual adviser. Children should choose ordinary, safe acts of love, with trusted adult guidance. Faithfulness includes eating, resting and receiving appropriate care. Do not invite children to imitate harmful fasting or physical suffering.

Illness, grief and the final scene

Answer questions calmly without graphic detail. No child needs to share a personal loss. The story recounts witnesses reporting a change in Kateri's face after death; present this as the reported sign of grace in the story. A person's dignity and holiness do not depend on appearance.

Student activity notes

Draw & Tell: Children draw a story scene and a safe act of kindness; allow dictation.
Read & Write: Sequence answers, top to bottom: 3, 1, 4, 2. Accept prayer, help with daily tasks, visiting or encouraging someone with an adult, sharing and listening as loving responses.

A small act of kindness

Make a class kindness garden: each child draws a flower and adds one action such as welcoming a classmate, helping set the table or praying for someone. Share voluntarily. No competition or promises of heroic sacrifice are needed.

Take home

Retell a favorite moment. Pray the Our Father together. Ask an adult to help choose one practical act of care. Younger children may point, draw or dictate; confident readers can explain how John 15:12 connects to the story.

Sources for adults

Pope Benedict XVI: Kateri canonization homily (2012)

Love one another: John 15:12