

Saint Teresa of Avila

Prayer as friendship with God

Ages about 7-11 | Video 5:18 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Prayer is a growing friendship with God that shapes how we live and love.

Learning goals Recall Teresa's childhood adventure and later prayer reforms; explain the interior castle as imagery; practice a brief honest prayer.

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 how a friendship grows through listening and honest conversation. Explain that prayer can include speaking, silence, Scripture, and asking for help.

Watch and notice

Notice the uncle bringing the children home, Teresa's deeper prayer, simpler communities, and the castle image used in her writing.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What did Teresa learn after her childhood adventure?

There were other ways to serve God. Children belong in safe care and should not run away or seek danger.

2. What did she want her communities to renew?

A life of prayer, simplicity, and faithful love. The retelling shows her helping people give God their attention.

3. Is the interior castle a building we visit?

No. It is an image for the soul and growing friendship with God. God is not trapped inside a room.

4. How can you begin a simple prayer?

Tell God something true: thanks, a worry, or a need. Listen quietly for a moment and ask a trusted adult for guidance.

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

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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 Draw peaceful prayer and daily kindness; explain the castle as an image.

Read & Write Recall reform, distinguish imagery, and compose a simple prayer.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: choose a prayer invitation with a picture and dictate a sentence.

Ages 9-11: discuss how a comparison can help while still having limits.

A friendship doorway | Optional 4 minutes

Draw a doorway labeled Prayer. Around it add four invitations: thank you, help me, I am sorry, and I am listening. Choose one and pray a brief sentence; quiet participation or passing is welcome.

Look for understanding Look for honest prayer and recognition of imagery. Friendship and healthy recreation are good; prayer does not require refusing all conversation or joy.

Closing prayer God, you welcome us into friendship. Help us pray honestly, listen with care, and live with love. Saint Teresa, pray for us. Amen.

At home With an adult, choose a quiet moment and offer one thank-you prayer. Ask how prayer can guide a kind action afterward.

Handout answer notes Reform: prayer, simplicity, faithful love. Castle: the soul's friendship with God, not a literal building. Accept honest, brief prayers without requiring disclosure.

Teach with care

Preview the childhood attempt to leave home seeking martyrdom. State clearly that running away or seeking danger is unsafe and is not the activity's model. Teresa's childhood plan must not be imitated or used to portray Muslims as enemies. The video adds dialogue and simplifies her reforms. The interior castle is spiritual imagery, not a literal map of God. Her experience of prayer does not mean every child must have visions, special feelings, or long periods of silence.

Words to explain Carmelite: a member of the religious family to which Teresa belonged. Reform: changing a practice to return to its purpose. Interior castle: Teresa's image for the soul's life with God.

Sources for the leader

Story source: [Servus Dei video and English transcript](#)

Vatican biography: [Benedict XVI: Teresa of Avila, February 2, 2011](#)

A doorway to prayer

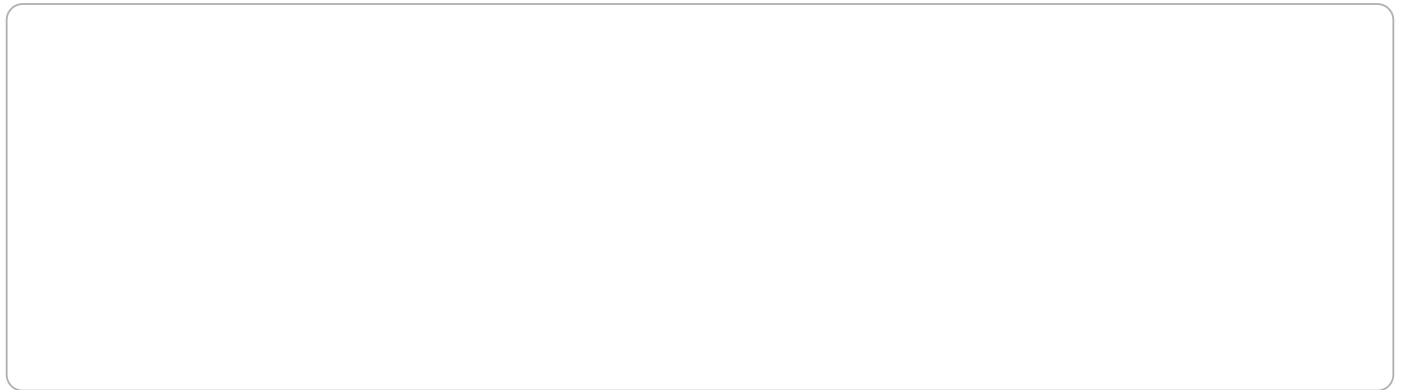
Saint Teresa of Avila

Teresa invites us to grow in friendship with God.

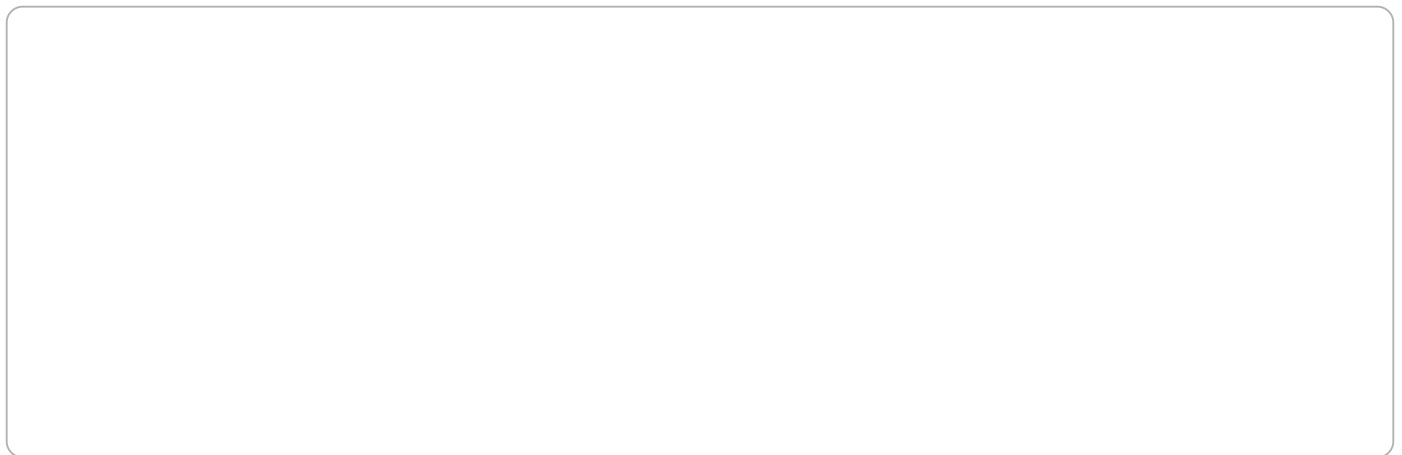
Name _____

Adult helper Read aloud. Invite drawing, pointing, or spoken answers. Writing is optional.

1 Draw Teresa peacefully praying or writing about prayer.



2 Draw yourself saying thank you to God and choosing a kind action.



Tell What could you say honestly to God? Who helps you learn to pray?

Pray God, help me speak honestly and grow in your love. Amen.

At home Share your picture and one thing you learned about God or following Jesus.

Growing in friendship with God

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Think about Teresa's prayer and the images she used.

Name _____

1 Recall her reform

What did Teresa want her communities to give more attention to?

She wanted them to renew ...

2 Explain the image

What does an interior castle help us think about?

The castle is an image for ...

3 Pray honestly

Write a brief prayer of thanks, help, or sorrow.

God, I want to tell you ...

Pray God, help me speak honestly and grow in your love. Amen.

Go deeper How can prayer change the way we listen and respond to another person?