

YEAR

6

UNIT L

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MARY & THE SAINTS

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit we explore some of the Church's beliefs about the Blessed Virgin Mary and the feasts that are celebrated in her honour. The children will consider why her role in the life of Christ was so important.

Children will also learn about Mary and the saints being united with Christ in heaven. They will explore devotions and prayers in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on lots of previous work about the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the lives of the saints.

PRIOR LEARNING

It would be helpful if the children have:

- some prior knowledge of Bible stories about Mary
- some prayers in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

SKILLS

Research skills, discussion skills, writing skills, thinking skills.

VOCABULARY

Mary, saints, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady, Assumption, Litany of the Saints.

ASSESSMENT

At the end of this unit:

	A.T.1	A.T.2
Most children will know about the Church's feasts in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and understand why such importance is attached to them. They will know that Mary and the saints enjoy the life of heaven and will also know some of the Church's prayers to honour them.	4a 4b 4c	4a 4b 4c 4d
Less able children will know about some of the feasts of the Church in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and some of the Church's prayers asking her intercession.	3a 3b 3c	3a 3c 3d
More able children will have a greater understanding of what the Church is celebrating on some of the feasts in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They will know that Mary and the saints enjoy the life of heaven which God's People on earth hope to enjoy in the future. They will be able to recall prayers that honour the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints.	5a 5b 5c	5a 5b 5c 5d

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

TEACHING STRATEGIES

C4 The Church's celebration of significant events in the life of Christ.

C2 Community prayer through taking part in and preparing simple celebrations.

C12 A variety of prayers and prayer forms, formal and informal used for personal and community prayer.

- Children to consider the key role that their parents and family play in their lives.
- What role do you think that Mary and Joseph played in the life of Jesus? Help the children to map the part that they would have played in his life.
- Explain to the children that the Church has always had a great regard for Mary the Mother of Jesus and the part she played in his life and ministry.
- The Church celebrates different parts of her life and the life of Jesus at different times of the year.
- Children to research dates for the following Feasts of Mary: Immaculate Conception, Birthday of Mary, Annunciation, Visitation, Birth of Jesus, Assumption into heaven.

- Find out about the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Read the prayers and the Preface from the Sacramentary for this Mass. What do they tell us about Mary being free from sin?
- Why do you think that Catholics believe that God kept Mary perfect?
- Does the story of her life in some way reveal her need to be kept free from sin?

- Find out about the Feast of the Assumption. Read the prayers and the Preface from the Sacramentary for this Mass. What do they tell us about this feast day?
- Explain to the children that for centuries different titles have been given to Mary to describe the person she is. Find out names of different churches dedicated to Mary and the titles she has been given
- Look at different stories from the Bible about the life of Mary and her sharing her life with Jesus. Include the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, and Presentation in the Temple, Finding in the Temple, Wedding at Cana, and Standing at the Cross.
- From these stories identify titles that you might want to attribute to Mary. Why do you think they are important?
- Create a litany style prayer using the titles that you have chosen.

- Catholics believe that Mary and the saints share in the life of heaven and this is the hope of all who believe in Christ after death.
- Read *Revelation 7: 2-4, 9-14*. What vision of heaven might this offer?
- Read *1 John 3: 1-3*. What do you think about the possible vision of heaven found in this reading?

- Having considered the two readings, ask the children to think of their own vision of heaven. Do some painting of possible scenes of heaven and write a short explanation of images of heaven.
- Prayer to the saints and remembering the saints on different days of the year has always been an important Christian custom.
- Find out the feast day of the patron of your school and parish.
- Find out some feast days for other important saints in the near future.
- Why do you think it is important to remember these people on special days?

- Catholics ask Mary and the saints to pray for them through a special prayer called the Litany of Saints.
- Children to Create a Litany of Saints from some of the information they have researched about saints during the school year.

- Introduce the children to other forms of prayer and devotion to Mary the Mother of Jesus.
- Explore the words of the Hail Holy Queen, Memorare and the Angelus.
- What do we ask of Our Lady in these prayers?
- Why do you think that it is important to pray these words?
- Share with the children different images of Our Lady from religious art. Children to choose the one they like the best and make a drawing or painting of it. Write a reflection about the image and what it might remind us about Our Lady.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

C4 Of the customs and traditions of major liturgical feasts and seasons; that the celebration of significant events expresses thanksgiving and joy in growth and change.

- Know that the Church celebrates the Life of Mary the Mother of Jesus through different feasts.
- Be able to identify different feasts and explain what is being celebrated.

C2 Of how to participate in and prepare celebrations.

- Know stories about the life of Jesus and Mary.
- Understand the special role that Mary played in the life of her Son.
- Be able to write some titles that describe her.

- Know the Catholic belief of Mary and the saints sharing the life of heaven.
- Understand some reasons why Christians believe in eternal life.
- Be able to explore and describe their own images of heaven.

C12 Of some traditional prayers; of the variety of forms of prayer in the Church.

- Know a range of Church prayers to honour Mary the Mother of Jesus.
- Understand the meaning of some of the words in the prayers.
- Be able to write their own prayers and reflections about the life of Mary.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

It would be helpful if these feasts were highlighted throughout the school year in collective worship.

Revise previous work from Year Four on the Rosary and expand the children's knowledge and understanding of the structure of the prayer.

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Lk. 1: 26-38 – The Annunciation

Lk. 1: 38-45 – The Visitation

Mt. 1: 18-25 – The Birth of Jesus

Lk. 2: 22-38 – The Presentation in the Temple

Jn. 25-27 – Mary at the Cross

Jn. 2: 1-12 – Mary at Cana

Revelation 7: 2-4, 9-14 – The Saints and Eternal Life

1 John 3: 13

OTHER LINKS

School-parish links with patron saints

Look at some of the images of Mary found in the church building.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Use the litany prayers created as part of Collective Worship.
- Use some of the Marian prayers identified in the unit.
- Learn some hymns about the saints and Our Lady.

EVALUATION

What went well?

Which areas of planning need to be developed/adapted next time?

What needs to be revisited/developed in a later unit?