LESSON 8

The Saints

Learning Objectives

In this lesson you will:

- Connect the ancestors of our Maronite Church directly with Jesus.
- Realize that saints are followers of Jesus who lead lives of heroic virtue.
- Grow in your desire to imitate Maronite saints in following the way of Jesus.

Opening Prayer

O Lord, help us to follow you in all that we do, so that we may learn from your saints and become saints ourselves. Help us to live with you for ever in heaven. Amen.

Opening Activity

Scan the QR code to access the online resources.

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Introduction

One of the best ways we can follow Jesus is by learning from the saints, our brothers and sisters who now live in heaven. From the heart of our Maronite Church sprung many saints that you will learn about in this book. They were men, women and children. Some of them were popes, bishops, monks, sisters, married, or single. Some of the saints even died for Jesus. The saints followed the teachings of Jesus and thus show us how we can be better disciples of Christ.

Saints are born in all places and at all times. How amazing it is that we are all called to be saints! Do you want to be a saint?

Reflection Questions

1. *When you hear the word "saint," how does it make you feel?*
2. *Who is your favorite saint and why?*

Point 1

Jesus and the Phoenicians

The ancient people of Lebanon were called Phoenicians. They were especially good at building boats. These boats allowed them to reach distant shores. Some Phoenicians actually saw and heard Jesus preach! After Jesus began his public ministry, word about him reached Lebanon. Some people from the cities of Tyre and Sidon got into their boats and sailed to Galilee to meet him. They probably sat on the shores of the Jordan River or the Sea of Galilee. They heard Jesus and asked for his healing.

During this period, Jesus came to Tyre and Sidon with his disciples. Jesus visited Lebanon! You can read the story in Mark 7:24-30.

Point 2

Following Jesus

The word "**disciple**" means "student." Disciples wanted to learn from Jesus and follow his way of life. They wanted to give witness to him by their own words and actions. When they did that, they became known as holy people, or saints.

Some saints were so brave that they chose death rather than give up their faith in Jesus. We call them **martyrs**, a word that means "**witnesses**." The Church has been blessed with many martyrs and saints who are now in heaven with God. We can ask them to help us follow Jesus as they did. The Church declares a person to be a saint in a process called **canonization**. Each saint has a **feast day**, and on that day, the Church honors the saint during the liturgy. We can ask all of the saints to help us follow Jesus as they did.

Point 3

What We Believe

The Twelve Apostles and the saints throughout history have held certain beliefs about Jesus. We sum up these beliefs in a statement called the **creed**. A creed is a profession of faith.

After the homily at the divine Liturgy, the people stand to sing or recite the creed starting with “We believe.” We call this creed the Nicene Creed because it was written by a Church Council that met in the city of Nicea. In this creed, we find a statement about who Jesus is: “We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.”

In the fifth century, the Council of Chalcedon said Jesus was one person with two natures: human and divine.

Activity 1

Patron Saints

Directions: *Share with the class if you're named after a saint and what you know about them. If not, share a saint you admire and why!*

Activity 2

Find a Saint

Directions: *Find a statue or image of a saint in your Church and find out who it is. Ask that saint to pray for you.*

My Prayer:

Maronite Hymn

The 350 Martyrs

Syriac: ehnono noohro shareero

Countless hermits who loved the Lord
lived in great austerity,
without rest, in the open air,
bound to fasting and to prayer.
Contemplating Jesus Christ, they lived pure as ascetic lives.
They renounced all worldly ways in pursuit of holiness,
strong in faith, like Saint Maron.

Listen to the hymn.
FaithOfTheMountain.org/grade4/lesson8/hymn

My Role Models

The 350 Maronite Martyrs

One day the monks from the monastery of Saint Maron went on a pilgrimage. Along the way the monks were attacked by “one-nature” Christians, those who thought Jesus was only one nature: divine, not human. That day, 350 monks were killed for their belief about Jesus. These three hundred and fifty martyrs gave their lives for Christ because they believed what the Council of Chalcedon taught: that Jesus was one person with two natures (human and divine). The 350 Maronite Martyrs’ feast day is July 31.

The 350 Maronite Martyrs, pray for us.

Recall

Use the words below to complete these sentences.

1. The _____ is a profession of faith.

2. Jesus is one _____.

3. Jesus has two _____.

4. God is a _____.

5. Jesus is both God and _____.

Creed | **Man** | **Natures** | **Person** | **Trinity**

Weekly Journal

Look up the story of a Maronite saint and reflect on his or her life.

Write: Compose a prayer for that saint.

Concluding Prayer

O loving Jesus, you blessed the Maronite martyrs with courage and faith. You made them strong so that they could be faithful to your true teaching. May we imitate their courage and be your true witnesses, now and for ever. Amen.

Climbing the Mountain

Bonus Materials for Students & Teachers

Mt 15:21–28

The Canaanite Woman's Faith

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Reflection

One day Jesus journeyed to Tyre and Sidon (present-day Lebanon) with his disciples! It was about fifty miles away from Galilee. In Tyre and Sidon, a woman asked him for help. She begged Jesus to heal her daughter. This mother was not Jewish, but a Canaanite. Jesus rewarded this mother's persistence by driving the demon out of her daughter. Most likely the woman in Lebanon became a faithful disciple of Jesus.

Saintly Quote

"The reason why sometimes you have asked and not received is because you have asked amiss, either inconsistently, or lightly, or because you have asked for what was not good for you or because you have ceased asking." — *Saint Basil*

Questions

1. How do you feel about the way Jesus responded to the Canaanite woman?
2. What was something that you begged God for?

Reaching the Summit

For Teachers & Parents

"It is in the Church, in communion, with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. From the Church he receives the Word of God containing the teachings of 'the law of Christ.' From the Church he receives the grace of the sacraments that sustains him on the 'way.' From the Church he learns the example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary; he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it; he discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints." — CCC 2030

Martyrdom

Usually, martyrs die for their faith because they are persecuted by non-Christians. But sadly, there have been times of fighting inside the Church. Church members have held differing beliefs about Jesus. Sometimes they have killed one another because of these differences, as seen in the lives of the 350 Maronite Martyrs.

Early in the fifth century, Church members disagreed about who Jesus was. They all agreed that Jesus was both God and man. But they disagreed about what this meant. Some people believed Jesus was one person with one human-divine nature. Other people believed Jesus was one person with two natures (human and divine).

A Church Council in Chalcedon (in present-day Turkey) settled the matter. Jesus was one person with two natures. He never stopped being a divine person even when he took on our human nature.

What is a Church Council?

Since the Church's founding by Jesus Christ, there have been twenty-one ecumenical councils. Ecumenical describes something that is universal. The first council was the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. These councils are solemn meetings involving the bishops throughout the world. And the Holy Father has authority to preside over them. These councils are called for various reasons, especially when the Church is facing an attack over a certain teaching, as seen in the Council of Chalcedon.

Discussion Questions

1. How can you instill a love for the saints in your child?

2. How can you delicately talk about the idea of martyrdom with your child?

Words to Know

Q. What is a **creed**?

A. A statement of what we believe. Maronites pray the Nicene Creed at the Divine Liturgy. The Nicene Creed is also professed at the Mystery of Baptism and Confirmation. By reciting it, we are affirming what we believe.

Q. What is a **disciple**?

A. The word "disciple" means "student." A disciple is a follower of Jesus.

Q. What is a **martyr**?

A. Someone who is put to death because of their faith. Almost all the apostles were martyred. The word means “witness.” Christian martyrs give witness to the Gospel of Jesus.

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