


GOD CALLED OUR FATHERS

UNIT ONE: Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham.

Lesson 6:**Saints Who Said Yes to God****CONTENT:**

1. Just as God called Abram, he called others to leave their homes. Jesus called Simon, a fisherman, to leave his boats and do work for God. Simon obeyed. Later Jesus renamed him Peter and put him charge of his Church. He became a great saint.
2. God also called a young college student called Francis Xavier through another student, Ignatius. Francis left his country, Spain and travelled to far off lands, including India. Francis loved God so much that he was wanted to serve him and tell others about him.
3. God used Francis to bring thousands of people to believe in Jesus and become Christians. He worked great miracles through him to show that he was with him.
-  4. Saints are holy people who did what God asked them to do (Lived lives of fidelity). We try to be like them and ask them to pray for us (They are models and intercessors) [CCC 828]

ASSIGNMENT: Ask your family and write down the names of 3 saints. Find out something about them. Read the handout at home. Have a litany to the saints with your family.

REFERENCES: Luke 5:1-11; CCC 828; Facts from www.olrl.org

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts.

I. STARTER:

- At our last class we heard about Abram and how he left his home to go to the place God called him. In this lesson we are going to hear about two more men who heard God calling them to leave their homes and to go off to do his work. The first man was a fisherman and the second was a college student.

II. DEVELOPMENT: [Jesus Calls a Fisherman]

- Have you ever seen fishing boats on the beach? Maybe in Goa or Mumbai..Have you seen the fishermen cleaning their nets or mending them; or sorting out the fish into baskets? Close your eyes and make a picture like this in your mind.

Many years ago there lived a fisherman named Simon. He and his brother were washing their fishing nets one day on the beach. Suddenly Simon heard the sound of lots of people talking and shouting. He looked up and saw a huge crowd coming closer and closer. In front of them was a man dressed in white. The people were all shouting and pushing and trying to get close to the man.

The man came right up to Simon and said, “Will you take me out in your boat, a little away from the people?” Simon liked the man’s face and the way he spoke to him. “Yes I will!” He helped the man to get into his boat and then rowed the boat out a little way. “Stop here!” the man said.

Simon stopped rowing. The people stopped pushing and sat down on the sand. Then the man started talking and everyone listened quietly. He told them wonderful stories about God. Simon also listened. He had never heard anyone talk like this before. He felt something happening inside his heart.

When the man had finished talking, he turned to Simon and said, “Row out to the deep water and put your nets into the water.” Simon said, “We have tried fishing the whole night, but caught nothing at all... But if you tell me to do it, I’ll try again.”

He and his brother rowed out and threw the nets into the water. Then they began to pull them in again, but they couldn't! The nets were so full of fish that they had to call for help. Their friends came up in another boat and soon both the boats were FULL of fish.

Suddenly Simon realised what was going on! He turned and looked at the man in white. (Have you guessed who he was?..He was Jesus!) Simon fell down on his knees and cried out, "Now I am sure you are someone very great. You sent the fish into my nets. Don't come near me, because I am a bad person. You are too good for me!"

Jesus smiled. He said, "Don't be afraid, Simon. Leave your boats and come with me. I'll make you a different kind of fisherman. Instead of fish you will catch people for God!"

Simon said, "Yes! I will come with you!" He left his boats and nets and went with Jesus. Jesus changed his name to Peter and he put him in charge of his followers. We call him Saint Peter because he loved God so much and did whatever God asked him to do.

- Why do we call Peter Saint Peter? Who is a saint? [*Saints are people who do whatever God asks. They love God very much. When they die God takes them to heaven. There are many saints in heaven with Jesus.*]

Home assignment:

Ask your family and write down the names of 3 saints. Find out something about them.

NEXT CLASS:

[Story: Francis Xavier Comes to Goa]

Today I'll tell you about another young man who said yes to God. He was a college student and his name was Francis. He was a very clever young man and very good at sports also. His home was a big castle in Spain. (That's a country in Europe).

In college, Francis had a friend called Ignatius who kept telling him about Jesus. He said, "Jesus wants us to put him first. He said, 'What is the use of getting everything in this world, but losing your soul?'" At first Francis used to make fun of Ignatius, but one day God's words touched his heart. He realised that God was calling him to serve him and tell others about him.

Francis left his home and family and became a priest (a Father). Then he went off to far off countries where people had not heard about Jesus. In those days there were no planes or buses or trains. Francis travelled by ship for many months. On the ship he lived with the poor sailors and taught them about God. He cared for those who were sick and shared his food with them. At last, after 13 months they landed in.... Goa, in India!

In Goa, Francis would walk through the streets ringing a bell. The children would come running to him and he would take them into a church and teach them about Jesus. He went to other places too and there also he would first call the children. They helped him to bring the big people to Jesus. (You can do it too!)

God was very happy with Francis and he showed that he was with him, by working many miracles. (A miracle is something like magic.. something wonderful that only God can do.)

Once a boy called Anthony was fast asleep when a poisonous snake bit him. His friend saw the snake and screamed with fright. He ran to Father Francis. When Father Francis came, he saw that the boy was dead. His skin had turned purple and his heart had stopped beating. Father knelt down and prayed. Then he called out, "Anthony, in the name of Jesus Christ, get up!" At once the boy jumped up perfectly well!

Once an enemy army came to fight with Francis' friends, who had all become Christians. The people got ready to fight, but Father Francis went out all alone to ask the enemy to go away. Francis was a short man, but when the soldiers looked up they saw a huge giant 100 feet tall walking towards them, holding a cross in his hand. They were all so frightened that they ran away as fast as they could.

Another time a very big crowd of people gathered to hear Father talk. Father didn't know their language, so he got the help of an Indian to explain what he was saying. The people began to ask him many questions and it became difficult to answer them all. Then God helped with a miracle. As Francis opened his mouth to talk, the people heard the answers in their own language. They realised that Jesus was the true God and they asked Francis to baptise them so that they could become Christians.

For 10 years, Father Francis brought thousands of people to Jesus. Then he got sick and died. (*Do you know what happens to an animal or person's body after they die? The body gets spoiled and starts smelling and it turns into dust after some days.*) But God worked another miracle for Francis. His body didn't get spoiled at all. When the people opened the coffin to take his body to Goa, they found his body fresh and soft as if he was still alive. For hundreds of years Francis' body remained like this. Then everyone realised that he was a saint.

Now we call him Saint Francis Xavier and celebrate his feast on the 3rd of December. If you go to Goa you can visit the church where Saint Francis Xavier's body lies.

[Give out handouts. Read the written matter. The children fill in the missing words in the call-outs: PEOPLE and JESUS CHRIST. Talk about saints and ask the children to share what they have found out about saints.]

III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

- The saints are our family in heaven. They are close to God and help us to reach heaven. We can ask them to help us and pray for us.

[Have a litany to the saints. Each child takes it in turn to say one saint's name and all respond 'Pray for us'. Make a sign of the cross and begin with the saints from this lesson:]

Saint Peter.. Pray for us.

Saint Francis Xavier...Pray for us.

Home assignment:

Read the handout at home. Have a litany to the saints with your family.