

Virtues in Practice



Faith

GRADES 3—5

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DOMINICAN SISTERS OF ST. CECILIA CONGREGATION
Nashville, Tennessee

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What is Virtue?

A virtue is a good habit.

If we practice thinking about what is right and opening our hearts to grace, we make good choices and develop virtues. If we often do things that are wrong we develop bad habits, or vices. Vices can trap us. Virtues free us to be our best selves, which makes us happy and holy.

There are three virtues that are called *theological virtues*. These virtues are given to us by God, lead us toward God, and open our hearts for God to live within us. We receive these virtues in baptism and develop them as we grow in holiness. They give life to all the other virtues. The theological virtues are *faith, hope, and charity*.

There are four virtues that are called *cardinal virtues*. "Cardinal" is from a Latin word that means "hinge", like the hinge on a door. All the other virtues rely on these. The cardinal virtues are *prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance*.

Who are the Saints?

A saint is a person who is in heaven.

The Catholic Church *canonizes* some saints. "Canon" means list; canonized means someone is added to the list of saints. One of the first steps in the process for canonization is an investigation to see if the person lived a life of "heroic virtue". In the last step of the process, the Church prays for a miracle through the intercession of the person. *Blessed* and *Venerable* are titles for people who are almost canonized. The Church gives us canonized saints as role-models and intercessors, but every single one of us is called by God to be a saint.

YR./MO.	VIRTUE	DEFINITION	GR. PK-2 SAINT	GR. 3-5 SAINT	GR. 6-8 SAINT
FAITH	(Theme: Service)				
SEP.	FAITH	Believing in God and all He has revealed	St. Martha	St. Jerome	St. Augustine
OCT.	REVERENCE	Showing your deepest respect for things of God	St. Hyacinth	St. Tarcisus	St. Margaret Clitherow
NOV.	STEWARDSHIP	Returning to God the first fruits of your time, talent, and treasure	St. Elizabeth of Hungary	Bl. Fra Angelico	St. Joseph Moscati
DEC.	GENEROSITY	Giving without counting the cost	St. Nicholas	St. Mary Magdalene	St. Maximilian Kolbe
JAN.	GRATITUDE	Seeing everything as a gift and being thankful	St. Francis of Assisi	St. Julie Billiart	St. Josemaria Escriva
FEB.	HONESTY	Being trustworthy and true	Bls. Jacinta & Francesco Marto	St. Kateri Tekakwitha	St. Athanasius
MAR.	MERCY	Caring for those who suffer	St. John Vianney	St. Faustina	Bl. Teresa of Calcutta
APRIL	JUSTICE	Being fair and giving each his due	St. Anthony of Padua	St. Katharine Drexel	St. Thomas More
MAY	ZEAL	Being driven by an intense love for God	St. Paul	St. Dominic	St. Francis Xavier
HOPE	(Theme: Study)				
SEP.	HOPE	Trusting in God's loving plan	St. Joseph	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Bls. Louis & Zelie Martin
OCT.	STUDIOUSNESS	Seeking knowledge to grow closer to Truth	St. Albert the Great	St. Thomas Aquinas	St. Edith Stein
NOV.	HUMILITY	Accepting your limitations and God-given talents	St. John the Baptist	St. Pio of Pietrelcina	St. Therese of Lisieux
DEC.	PATIENCE	Waiting or enduring without complaint	St. Monica	St. Isaac Jogues	St. Rita of Cascia
JAN.	FIDELITY	Being faithful to promises and commitments	St. Cecilia	Bls. Luigi & Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi	St. Gianna Molla
FEB.	CHEERFULNESS	Looking on the bright side	St. John Bosco	St. Philip Neri	Bl. Miguel Pro
MAR.	TEMPERANCE	Enjoying things in a proper, balanced way	St. Teresa of Avila	St. Camillus de Lellis	Ven. Matt Talbot
APRIL	OBEDIENCE	Saying "yes" to the loving will of God and those He has set over us	Our Lady	St. Juan Diego	St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
MAY	DILIGENCE	Doing your best and working hard until you're finished	St. Andre Bessette	St. Francis de Sales	St. Catherine of Siena
CHARITY	(Theme: Community)				
SEP.	CHARITY	Loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself	St. Gertrude	St. Vincent de Paul	Ven. Laura Vicuna
OCT.	FRIENDSHIP	Sharing a mutual love that seeks the good of the other	Sts. Benedict & Scholastica	Sts. Basil & Gregory	Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati
NOV.	COURTESY	Being thoughtful of others	St. Martin de Porres	Ven. Solanus Casey	Ven. Pierre Toussaint
DEC.	PURITY	Keeping your soul free of sin	St. Dominic Savio	St. Agnes	St. Maria Goretti
JAN.	FORTITUDE	Being brave and strong in the face of trials	St. Bernadette	St. Joan of Arc	Sts. Paul Miki & Companions
FEB.	PRUDENCE	Making good decisions in specific circumstances	Bl. Junipero Serra	St. John Neumann	St. John XXIII
MAR.	RESPECT	Recognizing the dignity of all people	St. Jeanne Jugan	St. Damien of Molokai	St. John Paul II
APRIL	FORGIVENESS	Pardoning those who offend you	St. Patrick	Bl. Margaret of Castello	St. Josephine Bakhita
MAY	RESPONSIBILITY	Being reliable in your duties and accountable for your actions	St. Peter	St. Henry II	Bl. Bartolo Longo

Table of Contents

September: FAITH , St. Jerome	8
October: REVERENCE , St. Tarcisius.....	12
November: STEWARDSHIP , Bl. Fra Angelico.....	16
December: GENEROSITY , St. Mary Magdalene	20
January: GRATITUDE , St. Julie Billiart	24
February: HONESTY , St. Kateri Tekakwitha.....	28
March: MERCY , St. Faustina.....	32
April: JUSTICE , St. Katharine Drexel.....	36
May: ZEAL , St. Dominic.....	40
Image credits.....	44
Acknowledgements	45

September

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Faith: believing all that God has revealed

Faith is one of the theological virtues that God gives to us in baptism. Through it, we are able to believe everything that God says through His Word in Scripture and in Sacred Tradition. We increase our faith in God by studying and thinking about what He has told us and then turning to Him with our whole heart and saying, "Lord, I believe, increase my faith!"

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

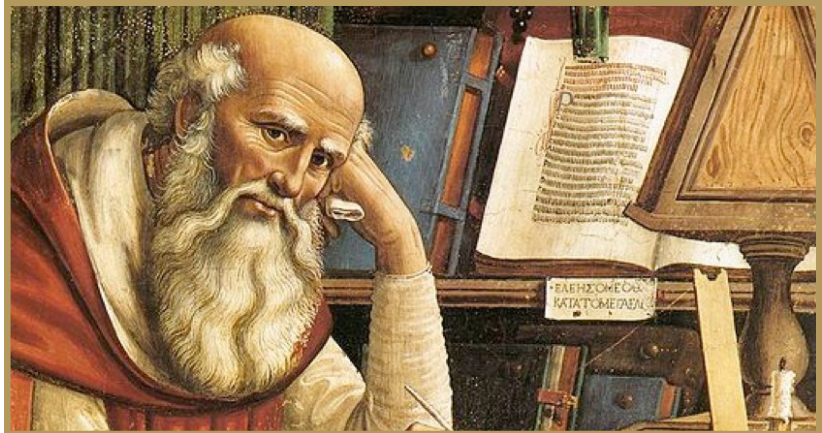
Saint Jerome

(347-419, Israel)

Feast: September 30

Saint Jerome was born into a wealthy pagan family and studied in Rome, where he became a lawyer. Because of his great intelligence, Saint Jerome came to believe in God in his *mind*—but

not in his *heart*. After he was baptized, he began to study about God, and it was then that he finally had a true conversion. Saint Jerome then lived for years as a hermit in the Holy Land, and people said a lion lived with him. This is why the saint is shown with a lion in most paintings. Saint Jerome became so famous for knowing Scripture that the pope asked him to help translate the Bible into Latin so that more people at that time and place could read it.



Saint Jerome in His Study, Domenico Ghirlandaio (1480)

FAITH : believing in God and all He has revealed

DISCUSSION:

What is a theological virtue?

If a theological virtue is a gift from God, can we still help it grow?

HOME PROJECT: Due September ____

PRAYER:

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to receive God's living Word. (Read aloud Luke 18:35-43.)

How are faith in God and receiving healing from God connected?

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

Practice faith. Role-play these situations:



1. A friend from your neighborhood asks you if you believe in God and why you believe in God.
2. You play soccer for the city league. A teammate asks if you are Catholic. When you say yes, he asks what Catholics believe.
3. Remember that we are surrounded by saints and angels (not just canonized saints, but everyone in heaven!). Think of three different things you do each day, and how you might do them differently if you could see the saints and angels around you. Role-play some of your ideas.

When you see this symbol,
remember to invoke your guardian angel!



FAITH : believing in God and all He has revealed

PRAYER:

Pray the First Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Annunciation, and reflect on Our Lady's faith.

REVIEW:

What is faith?

Who is Saint Jerome?

GROWTH IN FAITH:

Describe what you did to grow in faith this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on most to grow in faith this year?

FAITH : believing in God and all He has revealed

October

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Reverence: showing your deepest respect for God and the things of God

When we have the virtue of reverence, we show in our words and actions that we have respect for anything that has to do with God—His Holy Name, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Holy Eucharist, and all the holy objects found in a church or that have been given a special blessing. We also show reverence for God when we show reverence for each other, because we are all made in His image and likeness.



Saint Tarcisus by Tracy L. Christianson

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Saint Tarcisus

(4th century, Italy)

Feast: August 15

Although not much is known about the life of Saint Tarcisus, it is believed that he lived in the third or fourth century in the Roman Empire and could have been a deacon. While taking Holy Communion to some prisoners, Saint Tarcisus was attacked by a group of people who did not believe in Christ, and he died defending the Sacred Host. When those who had killed him searched Saint Tarcisus, the Eucharist he was carrying had miraculously disappeared!

REVERENCE : showing your deepest respect for God and the things of God

DISCUSSION:

If you had been there, how could you have helped Tarcisius?
Why does it show reverence for God when we are reverent to people?

HOME PROJECT: Due October ____



PRAYER:

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to receive God's living Word. (Read and discuss Psalm 99:1-5.)

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

A *sacramental* is a blessing or a blessed object. The seven sacraments give grace; sacramentals open our hearts to receive grace.

How many sacramentals can you list? Try on your own, then share as a class and add to your list.

When an object is blessed, it is set apart for God and prayer. As a sign of reverence, we never put a blessed object on the floor, or in the trash, even if it is broken. As an act of reverence, when holy articles are broken, we dispose of them by burning or burying them. Do you have broken holy articles at home? Bring them to school and practice how to reverently dispose of them as a class.

Discuss with your teacher and decide as a class—what should you do if holy water spills on the floor in your classroom?

REVERENCE : showing your deepest respect for God and the things of God

PRAYER:

Saint Tarcisius, give us your attitude of reverence. Help us to defend all that is sacred, and to honor all that is holy. Amen. Saint Tarcisius, pray for us!

SAINT ACTIVITY:

The ordinary minister of the Eucharist is a priest. When laymen and laywomen help to distribute Holy Communion at Mass or to homes, hospitals, and prisons, they are called *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* (extraordinary means “out of the ordinary”). They are trained at church, and require special approval by the bishop.

Brainstorm questions to send to an Extraordinary Minister. If possible, invite an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to your classroom to answer the questions and tell about their experiences. Or, send your questions to an Extraordinary Minister and ask them to write back.

Questions for an EMHC:

REVERENCE : showing your deepest respect for God and the things of God

PRAYER:

Pray the Fifth Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary, the Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord. Reflect on the great reverence of Our Lady and the holy women as they prepared the Lord's body for burial.

REVIEW:

What is reverence?

Who is Saint Tarcisius?

GROWTH IN REVERENCE:

Describe what you did to grow in reverence this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on most to grow in reverence this year?

REVERENCE : showing your deepest respect for God and the things of God

November

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Stewardship: Returning to God the first fruits of your time, talent, and treasure

A steward is someone who is given the responsibility to care for and protect things that belong to someone else. Because each of our lives is a gift from God, we are all “stewards” who will give our lives back to God when we go to heaven. So while we are on earth, we must take care of and use wisely all the time, talents, and material things with which God has blessed us, using all for the benefit of others and the glory of God.



*Blessed Fra Angelico,
icon by Jody Cole*

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Blessed John of Fiesole or Fra Angelico
(1387-1455, Italy)

Feast: February 18

Blessed John of Fiesole joined the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) as a young man. He was a very talented artist who painted large, beautiful images of Jesus, Mary, and many of the saints. His paintings have become so famous that copies of them can be found all over the world today—perhaps even in your school!

Blessed John believed that to paint a true image of Jesus Christ, the painter had to be Christ-like, and so he began all his paintings with *prayer*. The beauty and the prayerfulness of his paintings earned him the nickname by which he is known today, “Brother Angel”—Fra Angelico.

STEWARDSHIP : returning to God the first fruits of your time, talent, and treasure

DISCUSSION:

Is it possible to draw or sing something holy without actually praying while you do it? Can you see or hear the difference when people *pray* while they draw or sing?

HOME PROJECT: Due November _____**PRAYER:**

Read Genesis 1:27-31. What does it mean that God gives us “dominion” over plants and animals? How can we be good stewards of God’s creation today?

Read the story of the widow’s mite (Luke 21:1-4). What is the difference between giving from surplus and giving from want? If you are poor, is it foolish to give part of your money to God?

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

1. Practice recycling in your classroom.
2. What is one thing you can do as a group to better care for your individual supplies or the school property in your classroom?
3. Tithing: If you earn an allowance, get birthday money, babysit, etc., is that money a gift from God? Do the math: what percent would be an appropriate amount to return to God by giving to the Church and charity? Role-play situations where you earn or receive money and decide to give a portion to God before spending it on yourself. (Remember, don’t choose what you want first and just give God the leftovers!)
4. Role-play using your talents for God. Chose an area of talent such as reading, writing, math, science, humor, politics, art, singing, playing an instrument, athletics, drama, cooking, languages, etc. Act out a situation where you could use that talent for God.

STEWARDSHIP : returning to God the first fruits of your time, talent, and treasure

PRAYER:

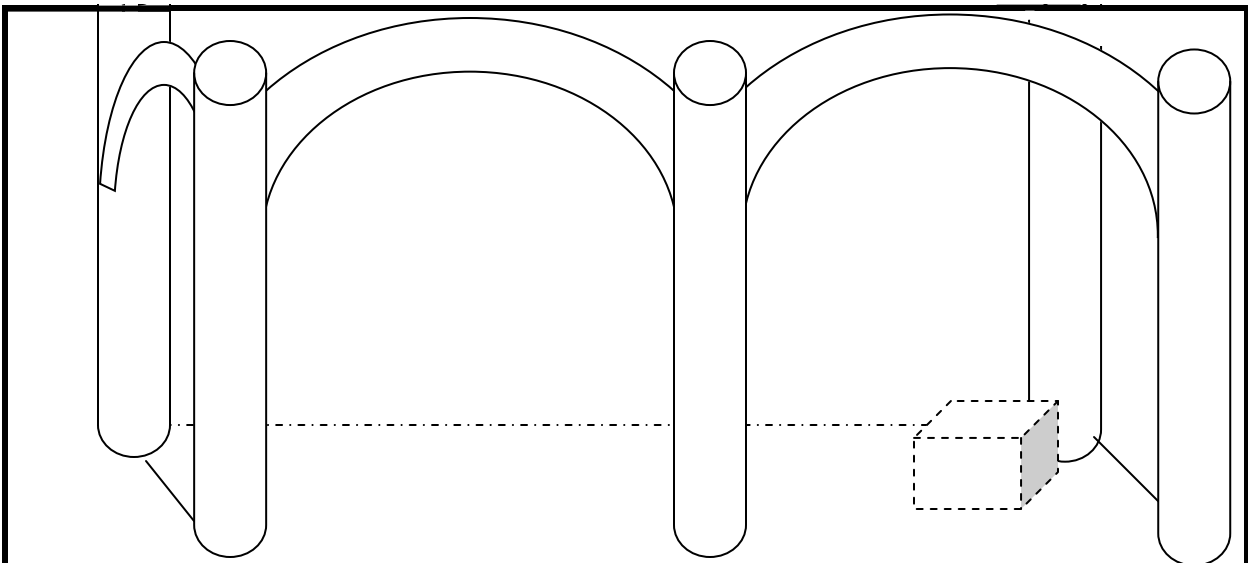
Blessed Fra Angelico, thank you for using your artistic talent to give the world heavenly images for prayer. Help the artists of today to seek true beauty in all their work. Help each of us to use our talents for God's glory as you did. Amen. Blessed Fra Angelico, pray for us!

SAINT ACTIVITY:

Three things stand out in the artwork of Blessed Fra Angelico:

1. His paintings seem filled with grace and peace (angelic).
2. He was one of the first artists to use perspective (buildings at angles to make things look 3-D instead of flat).
3. If you look closely, many of his paintings of Jesus or Mary include a person who was not alive at the time of the story. Why? When we pray, we enter into the mysteries. For this reason, Fra Angelico painted Saint Dominic or other Dominican Saints praying in the corners of his pictures. Sometimes they are looking at the scene; sometimes they are reading Scripture, thinking about the scene.

Within the archways below, draw the Angel Gabriel inviting Our Lady to be God's Mother. In the background, draw yourself looking at Mary. Use the small box as a bench for Mary to sit on. You may look at one of Fra Angelico's paintings of the Annunciation to help you.



STEWARDSHIP : returning to God the first fruits of your time, talent, and treasure

PRAYER:

Pray the Fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. Reflect on the way Joseph and Mary offered their firstborn Son to God, and how we can imitate them.

**REVIEW:**

What is stewardship?

Who is Blessed Fra Angelico?

GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP:

Describe what you did to grow in stewardship this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on most to grow in stewardship this year?

STEWARDSHIP : returning to God the first fruits of your time, talent, and treasure

December

PRAYER: *Act of Faith*

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Generosity: giving without counting the cost

When we truly love someone, we want to give them all kinds of good things without worrying about how much time or treasure it will cost. Jesus Christ gave His own life for all of us without counting the cost—the best example of generosity ever!

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Saint Mary Magdalene

(Time of Jesus, Israel)

Feast: July 22

Saint Mary Magdalene was looked upon as a great sinner. Jesus healed her of seven devils (Luke 8:2) and many people think she is the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears (Luke 7:38). Yet she became one of Jesus' closest followers. In fact, she was one of only a few people besides the Blessed Mother and Saint John the Apostle who stayed with Jesus during His crucifixion and death.

Saint Mary Magdalene is often shown holding a jar of perfume because she anointed the body of Jesus at His burial (Mark 16:1) and so many people think it is she who anointed Him at Bethany (John 12:3). In return for the great love she showed Him, Saint Mary Magdalene was one of the first people Jesus appeared to on Easter Sunday, and it was she who ran to tell the Apostles, "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:18).



Resurrection Reunion
by Sister Mary Grace Thul, O.P.

GENEROSITY : giving without counting the cost

DISCUSSION:

If we give someone a little help instead of a lot, is that wrong?

How does the virtue of faith help us to practice generosity?

HOME PROJECT: Due December _____

PRAYER:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love and open our minds to Your Truth. (Read and discuss Luke 6:37-38.)

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

Share with the class ways that your families and others you know practice generosity at Christmas time. Write down ideas that you would like to suggest to your family.

Do you think God might be calling you to give him your ALL as a priest, brother, nun, or sister? If someone your age feels called to dedicate his or her life to God, what should they do now to prepare?

GENEROSITY : giving without counting the cost

PRAYER:

Saint Mary Magdalene, you supported Our Lord and His disciples with your wealth, never counting the cost, because you had found the pearl of great price. Fearless and steadfast, you stood at the foot of His cross. Help us to be generous with our love, so that we too might be witnesses to the good news of the Resurrection. Amen. Saint Mary Magdalene, pray for us!

SAINT ACTIVITY:

Read the following selections about Saint Mary Magdalene in the Gospels and fill in the blanks below. If you finish early, see if you can crack the code on the alabaster jar.

1. (Luke 10:39) To learn from Christ, Mary sat at His _____.
2. (Luke 7:38) In sorrow for her sins, the sinful woman washed Jesus' _____ with her tears.
3. (John 12:1-7) Not counting the cost, Saint Mary Magdalene broke an alabaster jar of perfume, and anointed Jesus' _____.
4. (Luke 8:1-3) Supplying for His needs, Saint Mary Magdalene followed in Christ's _____ steps.
5. (John 19:25) As Christ was dying, Saint Mary Magdalene stood at the _____ of His cross.
6. (Matthew 28:1-9) Overcome with joy when Christ rose from the dead, Saint Mary Magdalene and the other women fell at His _____ and worshipped Him.

Bonus:

At home tonight, when no one else is watching, hold a crucifix and kiss the feet of Jesus. Ask Saint Mary Magdalene to help you stay always near to Him as she did.

Key

A=C
B=D
C=E
D=F
etc.

Crack the code to find a message from Saint Mary Magdalene!

cv vjg dktvj qh Oa nqtf, c mkpi cnuq
Icxg jko rgthwog hqt jku dwtkcn.
lguwu ku eqokpi uqqp cv ejtkuvocu!
fkf jku oqvjgt mpqy, yjgp uig tgegkxgf
vjku oattj, vkcv jg yqwnf ucxg wu htqo
qwt ukpu da jku uwhhgtkpi cpf fgcvgf?

GENEROSITY : giving without counting the cost

PRAYER:

Pray the Third Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Nativity, and reflect on God's generosity in sending His only Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.

REVIEW:

What is generosity?

Who is Saint Mary Magdalene?

GROWTH IN GENEROSITY:

Describe what you did to grow in generosity this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on most to grow in generosity this year?



GENEROSITY : giving without counting the cost

January

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Gratitude: seeing everything as a gift and being thankful

When we receive gifts from others, we respond by saying, "Thank you!" To have the virtue of gratitude means to always have a "thank you" in your heart, especially to God, Who has given us the gift of life.

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Saint Julie Billiart

(1751-1816, France)

Feast: May 13

As a young girl, Saint Julie was so poor that she did not go to school very much. In spite of this, she knew her faith very well and would often teach other children about God.

She promised her life to God when she was 14 and spent the rest of her life serving and teaching the poor. She started a group of Religious Sisters whose purpose was to teach young girls, and the name she gave her community was the Sisters of Notre Dame—the Sisters of Our Lady.

Saint Julie was known for always smiling, even though she was bedridden for 22 years until cured by a miracle. Saint Julie once said she was ashamed that she had not already died of gratitude to God for all He had done for her!



Saint Julie Billiart,
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

GRATITUDE : seeing everything as a gift and being thankful

DISCUSSION:

Saint Julie Billiart is known as "The Smiling Saint". Do you think there is a connection between being grateful and being happy? Explain.

HOME PROJECT: Due January ____

PRAYER:

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to receive God's living Word. (Read and discuss Colossians 3:17 and Psalm 118:28-29.)

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

Role-play these situations. Practice saying "thank you" to the person *and* pausing to thank God in your heart.



1. Your mom gives you advice.
2. Your teacher creates a fun project for you.
3. A classmate invites you to join a game.
4. Your brother or sister helps you with your homework.
5. You enjoy a beautiful sunset.
6. Your dad trusts you with a new responsibility at home.
7. Your friend gives you a compliment.

GRATITUDE : seeing everything as a gift and being thankful

PRAYER:

Saint Julie, you were confined to bed for 22 years and yet were still joyful and grateful to God. Help us never to take our many blessings for granted, but to thank God in every moment. Help us to transform moments of suffering by counting our blessings and praising God. Amen. Saint Julie Billiart, pray for us. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

SAINT ACTIVITY:

When she was young, Saint Julie saw someone try to murder her father. She was so shocked that it affected her nervous system. For over 22 years, she was paralyzed. Isn't it amazing that "the Smiling Saint" was someone who could not even walk, and that someone confined to bed began a religious order that founded so many schools?

Saint Julie Billiart was cured from her paralysis through faith and obedience. A priest told her to pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She began a novena, and on the Feast of the Sacred Heart she was miraculously healed.

Saint Julie was grateful to God for her cure—but she had the virtue of gratitude even during her sickness. What are some things you think she was grateful for while she was unable to walk?

As a class, list things you would be unable to do if you were confined to bed for many years. Imagine what your day would be like, from waking in the morning to falling asleep at night. Imagine what your year would be like, including summers and Christmas. Pray for those who are home-bound, and make a resolution not to take for granted all the opportunities we have because of our health. Look at your list of things of things a paralyzed person could not do, and remember to thank God the next time you are able to do each of them.



GRATITUDE : seeing everything as a gift and being thankful

PRAYER:

Blessed Mother Mary, when you greeted your cousin, Elizabeth, you sang a hymn of gratitude to God for His goodness. Be with us and pray for us, that we too may have hearts filled with songs of gratitude and praise.

Pray the Second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Visitation.

REVIEW:

What is gratitude?

Who is Saint Julie Billiart?

GROWTH IN GRATITUDE:

Describe what you did to grow in gratitude this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on to continue growing in gratitude this year?

GRATITUDE : seeing everything as a gift and being thankful

February

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Honesty: being trustworthy and true

Everyone wants to be a man or woman of integrity. To have integrity, we need to let our faith carry through to every part of our lives. When our words match our actions, we are trustworthy and true. The eighth commandment, "You shall not bear false witness", commands us to be honest in all we say and do. Yet a mature person also knows when it is better to say nothing at all: we might sound good, but no one really thinks we're virtuous when we say something unkind followed by, "but it's true!" That actually makes us sound untrustworthy—the opposite of honesty. It shows others that we are *saying* we are virtuous (telling the truth) while *acting* out of vice (being mean). This is the opposite of integrity. If you want to be a person of honesty and integrity, the next time you're hesitant to say something, ask yourself these three questions: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it helpful?

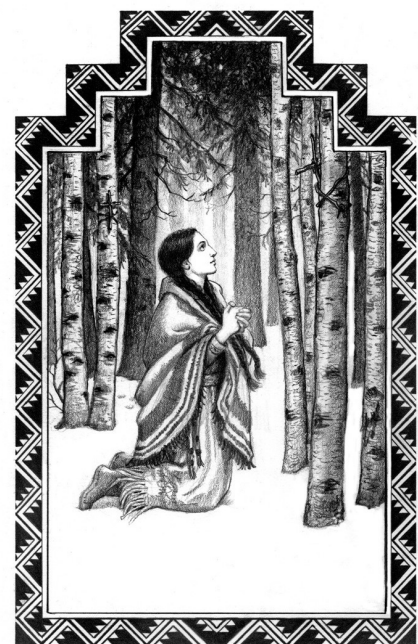
SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

(1656-1680, North America)

Feast: July 14

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha belonged to a Native American tribe near New York state. Kateri's mother was a Christian but her father was not. When her parents both died and left her an orphan, Saint Kateri asked to be baptized and then promised her life to God.



Saint Kateri by Ruth Sanderson

HONESTY : being trustworthy and true

Her non-Christian relatives made fun of her belief in God, but Saint Kateri remained true to her faith. She journeyed over 200 miles on foot to a Christian settlement of Native Americans and lived the rest of her life there, praying for and serving the people. After her death, people prayed to her for help, and miracles were performed through her intercession.

HOME PROJECT: Due February ____

PRAYER:

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds His disciples of the commandment, "You shall not lie or speak falsely to one another. You shall not swear falsely by My Name" (Leviticus 19:11-12). Going further, Jesus tells them, "Say 'Yes' when you mean 'Yes' and 'No' when you mean 'No'. Anything beyond that is from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).

Pray silently about this passage for a moment. Ask God: "Lord, what do you mean?" Then share with a classmate.

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

Role-play the following situations in front of the whole class. After each role-play, take a class vote on whether or not you think the person is being honest. If they are being honest, give them three cheers for integrity! (Remember, it's not polite to "boo" for the others.) If they are not being honest, do a retake to show how the person should have acted with honesty and integrity in that situation.

1. Your teacher is giving a Religion test that is really unfair; the questions are totally different from what was on the study guide. Your best friend always aces Religion and you are not sure you're going to pass. Her seat is right in front of yours, so you lean forward to peek at her answers. Not cheating, exactly, just to make sure you're on the right track.
2. Your basketball team is one game away from the city championship. You get so caught up in the game that you push someone on the other team. He gets mad, pushes back, and you fall. The referee sees

HONESTY : being trustworthy and true

you fall, and gives your team a free throw. The score is tied: your win hangs in the balance—but you tell the referee it was your fault, since you pushed first.

3. Your mom and dad put you in charge of cleaning the basement with your little brother and sister. You know that your mom wants the basement swept and mopped, but it's so clean after it's swept and you're all so tired of cleaning that you tell the kids just to go have cookies and not mention it; mom will never notice.
4. It's really late at night and your science paper is due tomorrow. You find a perfect website: you could just cut-paste it, word-for-word . . . Instead, you write an apology note to your teacher and ask how much credit you can get if you turn it in a day late.

PRAYER:

Saint Kateri, help us to act with honesty even in the face of persecution. Help us to have integrity and to practice what we preach. Help us to be trustworthy so that others can rely upon us. Pray for us, that we may have the strength of God's grace and be pure and simple in our hearts, as you were. Amen. Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

SAINT ACTIVITY:

Choose one of these three activities:



1. Kateri loved to make crosses out of little sticks and place them throughout the woods to remind her to pray. Gather some little sticks and tie them into a cross with some thin pieces of bark. Take them home to place around your yard.
2. When Kateri was four years old, her mother died of small pox. Kateri caught the disease, too, and it left marks on her face for the rest of her life. When she died, at the age of 24, all the marks miraculously disappeared. Draw a before and after picture of Kateri, with a slogan like: *Virtue is beautiful!*, *Holiness is beautiful!*, or *Become beautiful—become a Saint in Heaven!*
3. Write a poem, song, or rap about how Kateri, "The Lily of the Mohawks", lived a life of honesty and integrity, and why we should all strive for these virtues.

HONESTY : being trustworthy and true

PRAYER:

Pray the Fourth Sorrowful Mystery, the Carrying of the Cross, and reflect upon how Our Lady and only a few others were honest enough to show by their presence that they were disciples of Jesus and knew He was innocent.

REVIEW:

What is honesty?

Who is Saint Kateri Tekakwitha?

GROWTH IN HONESTY:

Describe what you did to grow in honesty this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on most to grow in honesty this year?

HONESTY : being trustworthy and true

March

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Mercy: caring for those who suffer

"Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). Whenever we are hurting—either through our own fault or because something bad has happened to us—we want relief...we want MERCY! Jesus has told us that we must show mercy in two ways: physically (for the body) and spiritually (for the soul). When we feed someone who is hungry, we show mercy; when we forgive someone who has hurt us, we show mercy. Jesus showed us this mercy when He forgave sins (spiritual) and cured the sick (physical). As Jesus did, so we must do. Blessed are the MERCIFUL!

SAINT OF THE MONTH:



Photograph of St. Faustina

Saint Faustina (1905-1938, Poland)

Feast: October 5

Saint Faustina grew up in a big family in Poland and joined the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy when she was a young woman. She was always mindful of how others suffered and wanted to help them. She offered many sacrifices, sufferings, and prayers for souls who needed God's mercy. Many times she did not know the souls for whom she was suffering.

On February 22, 1931, Our Lord appeared to Saint Faustina in a vision and instructed her to paint Him as He appeared to her and include the motto, "Jesus, I trust in you." He wanted her to proclaim the message of His mercy—Divine Mercy—to the whole world, which she faithfully did until her death.

MERCY : caring for those who suffer

DISCUSSION:

How did St. Faustina spread the message of God's mercy?

HOME PROJECT: Due March _____

PRAYER:

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to receive God's living Word. (Read and discuss Matthew 25: 31-46.)

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

Discuss the greatest suffering, sin. Why do we need Jesus' mercy? Pray together the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, asking God's mercy on those who suffer, especially in sin. If you want to pray the chaplet often, see if someone you know can teach you how to sing it!

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Use a five-decade rosary. Begin with an *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, *Glory Be*, and the *Apostles Creed*.

On each Our Father bead, pray:

*Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of
Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ—
in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.*

On each Hail Mary bead, pray:

*For the sake of His sorrowful Passion—
have mercy on us and on the whole world.*

After finishing the fifth decade, pray three times:

*Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us,
and on the whole world.*

Closing prayer:

*O Blood and Water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a
fountain of mercy for us, I trust in you!*

MERCY : caring for those who suffer

PRAYER:

Jesus said to Saint Faustina, "I am giving you three ways of exercising mercy toward your neighbor: the first — by deed, the second — by word, the third — by prayer. In these three degrees is contained the fullness of mercy, and it is an unquestionable proof of love for Me. By this means a soul glorifies and pays reverence to My mercy." (*Diary of Saint Faustina*, 1317)

Saint Faustina, help us to practice mercy in our words, in our actions, and by our prayers. Help us to pray for sinners as you did, so that all souls may go to heaven. Pray for us, that we may have great confidence in God's merciful love for us in moments of suffering, and that we may show His mercy to others. Amen. Saint Faustina, pray for us.

SAINT ACTIVITY:

Several artists have tried to create an image of Jesus as he appeared to Saint Faustina. Draw your own image of Divine Mercy. 

- Draw Jesus standing, facing you, with His arms stretched out to you.
- He is wearing a long, white robe.
- From His heart are shining two beams of light, one red and the other white.
- Below your image, write the words: "Jesus, I Trust in You!" or write it in Polish: "Jezu, Ufam Tobie!"

MERCY : caring for those who suffer

PRAYER:

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning, and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

R. *that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

REVIEW:

What is mercy?

Who is Saint Faustina?

GROWTH IN MERCY:

Describe what you did to grow in mercy this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on to grow further in mercy this year?

MERCY : caring for those who suffer

April

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Justice: being fair and giving each his due

To be just means to make sure every person receives what he or she needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter. This even includes obeying those in authority, playing games fairly, and respecting what belongs to someone else. Being fair doesn't always mean giving each person *exactly* the same things—for instance, not everyone needs glasses to see well. But because we are all made in God's image and likeness, justice also means showing each person dignity and respect.



*St. Katharine Drexel with African American students
in Port Arthur, Texas, 1927.*
Archives of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Saint Katharine Drexel
(1858-1955, United States)
Feast: March 3

Even though Saint Katharine was born into a very wealthy family, she was always taught to love and help the poor. When she grew up, she inherited a large portion of her family's fortune.

Moved by her deep faith in God and the injustice suffered by many people in this country, she started the Sisters of Blessed Sacrament to help teach the Native Americans

and African Americans, who were denied a good education because of

JUSTICE : being fair and giving each his due

their race. She helped start many schools for Native Americans and African Americans in 13 different states, including Xavier University in New Orleans.

DISCUSSION:

How did Saint Katharine Drexel practice the virtue of justice?

HOME PROJECT: Due April ____

PRAYER:

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to receive God's living Word. (Read and discuss Isaiah 1:16-17.)

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

Problem-solve:

In a small group, discuss how to respond to these situations with justice.

1. Most of the family is gone for dinner, but you are home with your mother and brother. Your mom worked hard to prepare the meal. It is your brother's turn to wash the dishes, but he says it's your turn, and hides in his room. You know he's wrong, and you want to go complain to your mom.
2. You have to distribute five chocolate muffins, two blueberry muffins, and three cups of yogurt among 15 Pre-K students. Three of the students have wheat and nut allergies.
3. It is recess, and your class wants to play soccer. There are three girls in the class who are award-winning soccer athletes; no one else has ever played on a soccer team. Some of the boys and girls don't even know the rules. The three award-winners say they want to play boys against girls and use all the technical rules. What should you do?

JUSTICE : being fair and giving each his due

PRAYER:

Saint Katharine, help us to recognize injustice, and give us the motivation to work for justice and peace. Help the leaders of our world to see the needs and rights of all God's children. Pray for each of us, that we may see with the eyes of Jesus, as you did. Amen. Saint Katharine Drexel, pray for us.

SAINT ACTIVITY:

Saint Katharine's family set a good example for her in the virtue of justice. Her parents opened their home to the poor several times a week, her older sister opened a trade school for orphans, and her younger sister started a school for underprivileged African American children. Consider yourself and your own family and answer these questions: What do my family members do to show the virtue of justice? What are some of the things we could do as a family to live out this virtue?

As a class, list the types of people throughout the world who are treated unjustly and why this might be the case. Discuss. What is something you could do right now to help any one of these groups of people? If you had millions of dollars, how would you spend it in a way that was just and fair?

Notes from class discussion:

JUSTICE : being fair and giving each his due

PRAYER:

Pray the Fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. Reflect upon the ways that Mary and Joseph practiced justice, and how we can imitate them.

REVIEW:

What is justice?

Who is Saint Katharine Drexel?

GROWTH IN JUSTICE:

Describe what you did to grow in justice this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on to continue growing in justice this year?

JUSTICE : being fair and giving each his due

May

PRAYER:

Act of Faith

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH:

Zeal: being driven by an intense love for God

When we hear the word "intense," we think of people or things that are strong and forceful. The weather can be intense: think of wind and storms, especially lightening! When athletes are focused on winning, they can also be intense, straining their bodies with rigorous practice to make sure they achieve their goal. When we have this kind of energy for God, we are *zealous*. The writer of Psalm 69 said of God, "Zeal for Your house consumes me." Let us all be zealous for God and His truth so that we can share His love with others. .

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Saint Dominic de Guzman

(1170-1221, Spain)

Feast: August 8

Saint Dominic was so energetic about spreading the faith that he is sometimes called the "athlete of Christ"! Saint Dominic wanted to make sure everyone knew the truth about God. To do this, he started the Dominican Order to teach everyone about God and His good news of salvation. Saint Dominic and his Dominican brothers travelled to many places in Europe on foot, spending their days and nights teaching and preaching about God to the people, some of whom were spreading confusion and error about God and His Church.

ZEAL : being driven by an intense love for God



Saint Dominic
by Father Thomas McGlynn, O.P.

At one point these people tried to kill Saint Dominic, but his only response was to rejoice that God found him worthy to suffer for the truth in imitation of Jesus. Because of Saint Dominic's zeal, his brothers and sisters continue to teach about God throughout the world.

DISCUSSION:

How does the virtue of faith help us to be zealous?

HOME PROJECT: Due May ____

PRAYER:

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to receive God's living Word. (Read and discuss Acts 2: 1-4, 37-41 & 1 Corinthians 9:24-25.)

VIRTUE ACTIVITY:

Role-play these situations to practice acting with zeal.

1. The music teacher at school is helping you learn a new hymn to be sung at Mass, and some sections of it are difficult—and you're tired.
2. You've been asked to help contribute your time to help out with a fundraiser for a parish mission trip to Kenya. You don't know that much about the purpose of the mission, or where it's actually going, but you do know someone in your parish who is from that area.
3. You play sports for a city team. Some of your teammates are talking about religion and whether they should become Christians.

ZEAL : being driven by an intense love for God

PRAYER:

Saint Dominic, give us your zeal for souls! Give us your joy and your boundless energy to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth! Help us to know and love Jesus and to be ready to witness His truth to others. At your death, you promised your brothers that you would be an even greater help to them from heaven. Keep your word, and aid us by your prayers. Amen. Saint Dominic, pray for us.

SAINT ACTIVITY:

The early friars noticed that Saint Dominic prayed with his whole body, using different positions for different types of prayer. They wrote down examples and these have become known as the “Nine Ways of Prayer” of Saint Dominic. Try them out!

1. Bowing deeply from the waist before the altar, in reverence for Christ
2. Lying flat on the ground, with sorrow for sins
3. Striking himself, in reparation for sins (Saint Dominic did this in a way that hurt his back, as a sacrifice—you could just strike your breast as we do during Mass.)
4. Standing, looking at Jesus on the Cross, kneeling down and standing up over and over
5. Standing before the altar with his hands in front of him, palms up (as if holding a book), sometimes holding his hands in front of his eyes and hunching over
6. Arms stretched out like Jesus on the Cross
7. Standing on tiptoe, with his hands folded high over his head, like an arrow pointing to heaven
8. Sitting, reading; meditating and talking aloud to God about the reading
9. Walking along the road, quietly thinking of God, then singing

ZEAL : being driven by an intense love for God

PRAYER:

Pray the *Memorare* for an increase in the virtue of zeal, and for opportunities to grow closer to Jesus over the summer:



Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

REVIEW:

What is zeal?

Who is Saint Dominic?

GROWTH IN ZEAL:

Describe what you did to grow in zeal this month and whether it helped you.

What do you need to work on to continue growing in zeal this year?

ZEAL : being driven by an intense love for God

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Page 36: St. Katharine Drexel

St. Katharine Drexel in Port Arthur, Texas, in 1927, photograph, [Archives of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament](http://www.archivesofthesistersoftheblessedsacrament.org). Used with permission.

Page 40: St. Dominic de Guzman

McGlynn, Father Thomas, O.P., *St. Dominic*, bronze statue located on grounds of the motherhouse of the [Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation](http://www.dominicansisters.org) in Nashville, Tennessee. Photograph courtesy of Sister Mary Justin Haltom, O.P.

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Acknowledgements

The *Virtues in Practice* program was originally written by a team of parents and faculty members at St. Gertrude School in Cincinnati, Ohio in 2005, and implemented beginning with the 2006 academic year. The program began as a nine-year cycle with students in kindergarten through eighth grade learning about a different virtue, and a saint who exemplified that virtue, each month. It was intended only for the use of St. Gertrude School, but within a short time it became clear that many schools desired the use of such a program.

To make the program accessible to a wider audience, Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia from St. Gertrude School, St. Mary's School in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Newport News, Virginia, and St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School in Woodbridge, Virginia worked together with faculty and staff volunteers in those schools to create the current program which follows a spiraling curriculum that repeats the same virtues over a three-year cycle while introducing new saints each year. To all who have contributed time and talent to the creation of this program, we are deeply grateful.

This program is the fruit of grace and collaboration, and is offered free of charge to those who wish to use it in their home or school. It is our prayer that all who read it will be inspired to pattern their lives more faithfully on that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May our lives radiate His virtues, so that others may come to know and believe in the life and love He offers freely! To that end, we offer this work to His glory through the patronage of Mary, our Mother, and Star of the New Evangelization.

~ The Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation
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For questions related to the *Virtues in Practice* program,
please contact the Office for the New Evangelization at neoffice@op-tn.org.



Eight centuries ago St. Dominic de Guzman, inspired by the Holy Spirit in response to the needs of his time, founded an Order with the mission of preaching for the salvation of souls. Dominic's love for God and neighbor continues to inspire the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation today, as they joyfully embrace the Church's call to the New Evangelization. Through their teaching apostolate, the Sisters serve over 16,000 students in 41 schools in the United States, Canada, Australia, Italy, and Scotland.

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe
that You are one God in three divine Persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe that Your divine Son became man
and died for our sins and that He will come
to judge the living and the dead.

I believe these and all the truths
which the Holy Catholic Church teaches
because You have revealed them
Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.
Amen.