

Lesson Plans that Work
Margaret of Scotland
Lesson Plans for Older and Younger Children
Feast Day, November 17

Margaret of Scotland
c. 1045-1093

The saints are “the lights of the world in every generation,” people whose lives and deeds have shone brightly and helped others more closely follow God. There are saints who lived long ago and there are saints living and working in the world today, saints who are known by the church and saints who are known only to God. We say that the church—we—are part of the Communion of Saints, the company of all faithful people, connected through our baptism to those Christians who have died, those who are alive now, and those who haven’t yet been born. The word “saint” means holy.

In the Episcopal Church we have a Calendar of Saints, holy men and women we remember in prayer and with readings from the Bible on their feast day.

Supplies needed: white cloth for prayer table, a candle. For older children: a Bible, 12 pint-sized zip-lock bags or mason jars with lids, an assortment of dried beans, peas and lentils (pinto beans, kidney beans, lima beans, black beans, white beans, pink beans, lentils, split peas, black-eyed peas to equal 14 pounds), a ¼ cup measure, 12 bay leaves, 12 bullion cubes, 12 printed copies of the bean soup recipe. For younger children: two or more crowns and materials with which to decorate them, a basin with warm water, a towel.

Prepare: Prepare your prayer/gathering space with a small table, or space with a piece of cloth. On this cloth place a white candle. You may wish to place an image of Margaret on the table.

Welcoming the children: Gather the children around the prayer space and ask some wondering questions: I wonder what kind of person is called a saint? I wonder what the work of a saint might be? (You may wish to share the introduction above.) Today we will hear the story of Saint Margaret, Queen of Scotland.

Light the candle.

Opening prayer: Jesus, your saints are the lights of the world in every generation. Help us to shine as they do, letting your light glow in us that through us others might see you. Amen.

Tell the story:

Margaret of Scotland was an English princess born in exile (away from her own country) in Hungary in the eleventh century (more than 900 years ago). The ship on which she was travelling from Northern England back to Europe landed in Scotland because of a storm, and Margaret and her family came under the protection of Malcolm, King of Scotland. Margaret wanted to serve God as a nun, but Malcolm and her family convinced her to marry him after two

years. Margaret then found ways to serve God as a wife, mother, queen and scholar. Margaret taught her husband and children to love and serve God. Although Malcolm never learned to read, he respected her holy learning so much that he kissed her books and had her favorites covered in gold and silver and decorated with jewels, including an illuminated (colorfully decorated) copy of the four gospels (the books of the Bible that tell of the life and teachings of Jesus) that can still be seen today in the library at Oxford University. Margaret rebuilt churches that were falling down, gave them gifts of beautiful chalices and crosses, and supervised the making and embroidery of fine vestments (the clothing that is worn by priests and deacons in worship) and altar cloths. Because of Margaret's influence, Scottish churches began to worship the way Christians worshipped across Europe, and scholars came from all over to help her with her studies. She spent hours each day in prayer and in acts of kindness and generosity. She and Malcolm bent down and washed the feet of visitors to the castle just as Jesus did at the Last Supper, they fed the hungry from their own table, and gave clothing and money to those in need, as many as three hundred each day. Margaret founded schools, orphanages and hospitals. She died three days after Malcolm and her eldest son were killed in battle. All eight of her children continued in her good works, and for 200 years, Scotland was ruled peacefully and well by Margaret's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Reflection Questions

- I wonder what part of Margaret's story you like best?
- I wonder what part of Margaret's story you think is the most important?
- I wonder what part of Margaret's story is also about you?

You may move to another space with tables for the activity time.

Activity for Older Children: One of the readings appointed for Margaret is Deuteronomy 15:7-11. Have the children read it from the Bible:

7 If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your needy neighbor. 8 You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. 9 Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near', and therefore view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing; your neighbor might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. 10 Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11 Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.'

Margaret and Malcolm fed the hungry from their own table and gave food from their pantry to those who needed it. These jars of bean soup mix can be given to a local food pantry. Have the children measure out $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each of 8 kinds of beans in each pint jar. Top each jar with a bay leaf and a bouillon cube. You may wish to tie a ribbon around each jar with this recipe attached:

Set aside bouillon cube and bay leaf. Rinse and sort beans in a large pot. Add 6-8 cups cold water. Let stand overnight, or at least 6 to 8 hours. Drain and rinse beans. (To soak beans

quickly, Rinse and sort beans in a large pot. Add 6-8 cups of hot water. Bring to a rapid boil, and boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 1 hour. Drain and rinse beans. Place beans in a large pot. Add 6 cups water 1 can (14 oz.) chopped tomatoes in juice, bay leaf and bouillon cube. Simmer over low heat until beans are tender, about 2 hours. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Talk together about other ways that the children, the church and the community can serve those in need.

Activity for Younger Children: Have children decorate at least two paper crowns or one crown for each child. In pairs, wearing their crowns, invite them to wash the feet of their friends in the basin of warm water. Even though Margaret and Malcolm were royal, they did as Jesus commanded, every day. Talk together about other ways we show kindness and help people in need.

Gather/Ending: Return to your prayer space and gather in a circle to pray.

Prayer for Margaret of Scotland: O God, who called your servant Margaret to an earthly throne that she might advance your heavenly kingdom, and gave her zeal for your church and love for your people: Mercifully grant that we who commemorate her this day may be fruitful in good works, and attain to the glorious crown of your saints; though Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for Younger Children:

Dear God, (Dear God),
may we with your help (may we with your help)
follow Margaret (follow Margaret)
who learned and taught others about Jesus (who learned and taught others about Jesus)
with words and with deeds(with words and with deeds)
and loved your Church and your people (and loved your Church and your people).
Amen. (Amen.)

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