

Meet the Saints

Family Storybook



Meet _____ **the Saints** _____ **Family Storybook**

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and
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Introduction

Welcome to *Meet the Saints: Family Storybook*! If you are a parent or teacher reading this, you are blessed to have God's young ones in your care. And if you are a kid reading this, you are blessed because Jesus holds children very close to his heart.

In this storybook, you will meet some of the great **saints** of our church (You can even color some of them!). These saints are not always what you would expect. Some of them were priests, but some were poets. Some were monks, and some were musicians. Some were old and some were young. Some lived in Jesus' time, while others lived only a few years ago.

All of them were tough, brave—and most of all, **faithful**. They loved God with all their hearts and souls and minds and strength. And they loved Jesus so much they were willing to follow him wherever he led, even if it wasn't safe.

The lives of the saints were not always easy. They had hard times, were hurt or sad, and even died. Yet they have much to **teach** us, for we also live in hard and difficult times. Sometimes we feel hurt or sad or scared. Sometimes people we love get sick or even die.

And it is in those times, most of all, that we need our faith. It is in those times that Jesus holds us more tightly than ever. The lessons of our spiritual ancestors—the saints of God—help us to know how to be brave, how to survive, how to help others, and how to always call on God.

The truth is, the saints of God aren't just people who lived long ago and far away. The saints of God are just folks like you and me. They surround us, a great cloud of witnesses, the communion of saints. As we learn about them, we learn about the life of faith. As we grow close to them, we grow close to Jesus, who **loves** each of us, calls us by name, and makes us his saints.

So let's get ready to **celebrate** the saints. Have fun and hold on to your hats, because the journey of following Jesus is always a wild ride.

Blessings,

Melody Wilson Shobe &
Lindsay Hardin Freeman

Meet the Saints



Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your servants may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last we may with them attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 250)

Tell me a story

Lesbia Scott loved her children very much, and she loved music very much. When her children were small, they would ask her to write songs for them. “Write us a song about the birds singing,” one child would ask. And she did. “Sing to us about our picnic!” another child would beg. And she did.

Lesbia Scott also loved God very much. So, many of the songs that she wrote were hymns: songs of praise to God, songs about love and faith and hope. Lesbia wanted her children, and children everywhere, to learn about God, and she knew that one of the best ways to learn about something is to sing about it!

One day, Lesbia decide to write a song for her children about saints. She wanted them to learn about and remember what saints are like, how they live, and where they can be found. So she sat down with her pen.

“What are saints like?” Lesbia wondered. And as she read the Bible and studied the lives of the saints in history, she learned: Saints are patient, and brave, and true. They know Jesus and love Jesus. But saints aren’t superheroes. They are folks like us, people who are doctors, or shepherds, or soldiers, or moms. They don’t have special powers. They do amazing things, not because they are powerful, but because God is powerful, and it is God working through them who does the amazing things. Saints aren’t perfect. They sometimes stumble and fall; they sometimes mess up. But even when they fail, they return to God, and try once again to follow Jesus, their Lord.

“How do saints live?” Lesbia wondered. And as she prayed the prayers in *The Book of Common Prayer* and observed the feast days of the saints, she realized: Saints live all sorts of different lives. Some are teachers, and some are students. Some are princes, and some are poor. Some live long lives, and some die young. Some are boys, and some are girls. But all saints, no matter where they come from or who they are, try to do the right thing, even when it’s hard, because they want to follow Jesus no matter what.

“Where can saints be found?” Lesbia wondered. As she looked at the witness of history and tradition and opened her eyes to the world around her, she discovered: Saints are in all places and all times. Some lived a long time ago, and many live still today. Sometimes saints spend their times in churches, and sometimes they spend their time at the mall or at school or in the park. Sometimes, saints are the people who you would least expect, and they are found in the last place you would think to look.

Lesbia thought about all these things, and as she thought, a song began to come together in her mind. It was a song that would teach her children, and teach thousands of children in ages to come, about what it means to be a saint. Here’s some of what she wrote:

*I sing a song of the saints of God, Patient and brave and true, Who toiled and fought and lived and died
For the Lord they loved and knew. And one was a doctor, and one was a queen, And one was a shepherdess
on the green; They were all of them saints of God, and I mean, God helping, to be one too.*

Let’s talk

The songs that we learn as children shape us in special ways. What are some of your favorite songs you learned when you were little? What did they teach you?

Who are some of the saints that you know about? What do you remember about them?

Peter & Paul



Almighty God, whose blessed apostles **Peter and Paul** glorified you by their martyrdom: Grant that your Church, instructed by their teaching and example, and knit together in unity by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 241)

Tell me a story about Peter

First, let's share a story about Peter, who fished for a living, and how he came to know and love Jesus. A strong and rugged man, Peter and his partners had spent all night out on Lake Gennesaret fishing—or rather, trying to catch fish. Sadly, their nets remained empty.

But little did he know who would need his boat that morning: Jesus. Hundreds of people had come to hear Jesus talk, and he needed a safe spot from where he could teach. Rather than get pushed into the water by the excited crowd, Jesus got in Peter's boat and asked him to take it from shore.

When Jesus finished talking, he looked over at Peter, then pointed toward the horizon. "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

"But we fished all night and caught nothing!" said the tired Peter. Then he looked one more time at Jesus.

"At your word, I will let down the nets," Peter said.

Within minutes, the nets were so full of fish that they began breaking. Peter yelled for his partners to come help, and their boats became completely full—in fact, they almost sank under the weight.

When Peter finally reached shore, he fell on his knees, for he had seen a miracle. The rough-and-tumble fisherman turned from the job he knew and began a new life: following Jesus. In time, he would become one of Jesus' most important disciples.

Tell me a story about Paul

Sometimes people are hard to figure out. And early on, Paul was an angry and bitter man. Known first by the name of Saul, he didn't like people who followed Jesus and did everything he could to arrest them and throw them in jail. At that time, it was against the law to be a Christian, and Saul went after Christians with a vengeance.

Armed with arrest warrants in his bag and hatred in his heart, Saul headed for Damascus, sure that he could find Christians there. As he approached the town, a blinding light from heaven flashed all about him, throwing him to the ground. In that blaze of light he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Paul replied: "Who are you, Master?"

"I am Jesus, the one who you are chasing down. Get up, and go into the village, where you will be told what to do."

Slowly Saul stumbled to his feet. From the outside, he looked the same, save a few bruises. But from the inside, he knew things had gone terribly wrong, for he was blind. To Damascus he went, but he did not eat nor drink.

Little did he know that a man named Ananias (An-na-Nigh-us) had also heard from God.

"Go right over to a street called Straight Avenue," Ananias heard God say. "There you will find a man named Saul, who is dreaming you will lay hands on him so that he can see again."

"Saul is a terrible person!" said Ananias. "He will arrest us and persecute us!"

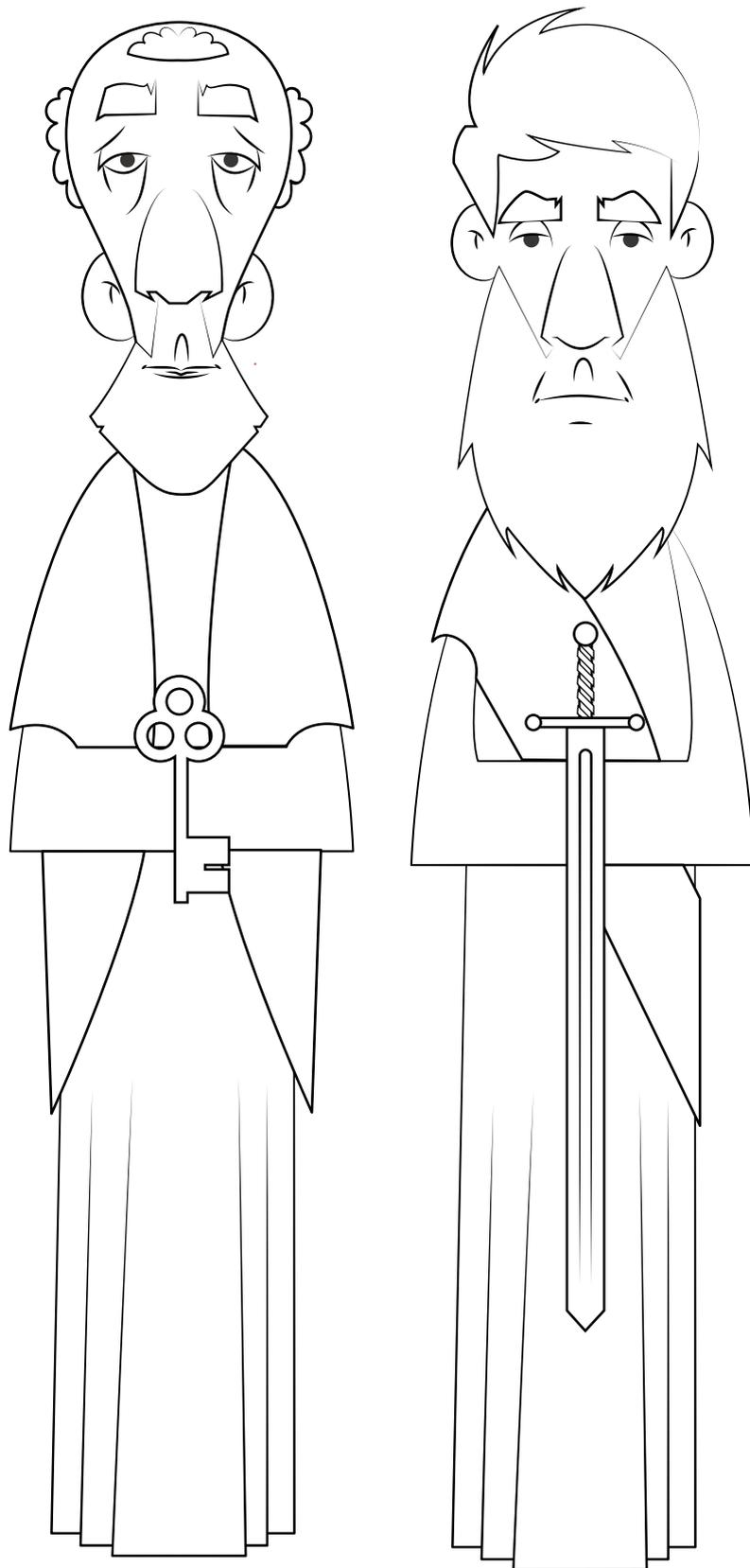
“Go,” said God. “Go. I’ve chosen Saul to be my special representative. He will do good things that you cannot even dream of.”

Ananias did as God had commanded. He put his hands on Saul’s eyes, and large scales dropped away from Saul’s face. Not only could Saul see, but he was on fire for Jesus. For the rest of his life, he was known by the name of Paul, and he worked tirelessly to bring people to God. He founded churches throughout the region and often wrote letters to the new congregations, letters that we continue to hear in church every Sunday.

Let’s talk

Both Peter and Paul turned away from their old lives and went onto new lives, following and helping Jesus. What might their decisions mean for you? How can you follow Jesus?

Both Peter and Paul used skills they already had to serve Jesus. Peter caught people for Jesus, much like he used to catch fish. Paul used the fire in his soul to turn people toward Jesus, instead of away from them. What skills and gifts do you have that you might use as you follow Jesus?



Peter & Paul

resources

Meet the Saints: Family Storybook can be used as part of a Christian formation program or for families and children at home. A Facilitator's Guide is available for teachers and leaders at www.forwardmovement.org. Additional resources can be found at www.livingdiscipleship-fm.org.

Picture Book Suggestions

Below is a list of picture books on various saints that can be used along with the curriculum.

Mary, the mother of Jesus

- *Mary* by Brian Wildsmith. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2002.
- *Mary, Mother of Jesus* by Mary Joslin. Loyola Press, 1999.
- *Mary: the Mother of Jesus* by Tomie dePaola. Holiday House, 1995.
- *The Story of Mary, the Mother of God* by Dorrie Papademetriou. St. Vladimirs Seminary Press, 2000.

Patrick and Brigid

- *Patrick: Patron Saint of Ireland* by Tomie dePaola. Holiday House, 1992.
- *Brigid's Cloak* by Bryce Milligan. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2002.
- *The Life of Saint Brigid: Abbess of Kildare* by Jane Meyer. Conciliar Press, 2009.

Hildegard of Bingen

- *Hildegard's Gift* by Megan Hoyt. Paraclete Press, 2014.
- *The Secret World of Hildegard* by Jonah Winter. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2007.

Claire

- *Clare and Francis* by Guido Visconti. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

Martin Luther

- *Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World* by Paul Maier. Concordia Publishing, 2004.
- *Martin Luther: What Should I do?* by Catherine MacKenzie. CF4Kids, 2010.

J.S. Bach

- *Sebastian: A Book about Bach* by Jeanette Winter, HMH Books for Young Readers, 1999.

Martin Luther King Jr.

- *Martin's Big Words: the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* by Doreen Rappaport. Hyperion Book CH, 2001.
- *I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King Jr.*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Schwartz & Wade, 2012.

Below is a list of children's books that explore saints more broadly.

- *Loyola Kids Book of Saints* by Amy Welborn. Loyola Press, 2001.
- *Can you Find Saints?: Introducing Your Child to Holy Men and Women* by Philip D. Gallery. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2003. Available through Forward Movement.
- *115 Sainly Fun Facts* by Bernadette McCarver Snyder. Liguori Press, 1993.
- *The Church History ABCs: Augustine and 25 Other Heroes of the Faith* by Stephen J. Nichols. Crossway Press, 2010.

about the authors

Melody Wilson Shobe is an Episcopal priest who has served churches in Rhode Island and Texas. A graduate of Tufts University and Virginia Theological Seminary, Melody is currently working on curriculum development for Forward Movement. Melody, her husband, and their two daughters live in Dallas, Texas, where she spends her spare time reading stories, building forts, conquering playgrounds, baking cookies, and exploring nature.

Lindsay Hardin Freeman is a Minnesota-based Episcopal priest, author, and mother. She is the author and /or editor of six books, including the award-winning *Bible Women: All Their Words and Why Matter* and *The Scarlet Cord: Conversations with God's Chosen Women*. She also has written a children's book, *The Spy on Noah's Ark and Other Bible Stories from the Inside Out*. She is married to the Rev. Leonard Freeman (a poet, priest, and teacher) and has two sons and four stepchildren.

about Forward Movement

Forward Movement is committed to inspiring disciples and empowering evangelists. While we produce great resources like this storybook, Forward Movement is not a publishing company. We are a ministry.

Our mission is to support you in your spiritual journey, to help you grow as a follower of Jesus Christ. Publishing books, daily reflections, studies for small groups, and online resources is an important way that we live out this ministry. More than a half million people read our daily devotions through *Forward Day by Day*, which is also available in Spanish (*Adelante Día a Día*) and Braille, online, as a podcast, and as an app for your smartphones or tablets. It is mailed to more than fifty countries, and we donate nearly 30,000 copies each quarter to prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes. We actively seek partners across the Church and look for ways to provide resources that inspire and challenge.

A ministry of The Episcopal Church for eighty years, Forward Movement is a nonprofit organization funded by sales of resources and gifts from generous donors. To learn more about Forward Movement and our resources, please visit us at www.forwardmovement.org (or www.adelanteenelcamino.org).

We are delighted to be doing this work and invite your prayers and support.



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