

All Saints – By Lee Ann Lella

October 27, 2016

It is difficult to go into a store this time of year and not see all the decorations and costumes for Halloween. As Catholics, we clothe ourselves in special ways also, but in the context of the Communion of the Saints. Just as children dress up like a person they would like to be like when they grow up (such as a police officer, firefighter, or doctor), we look to the saints as an example for us in our daily lives.

In my son's Catholic school each November, he has an opportunity to choose and dress up like a saint. This leads to great conversations as the time approaches regarding, who he would like to be and why. In Kindergarten, he chose to dress up like Saint Nicholas, a familiar saint who was popular because of gift-giving. As my son grew older and began to learn more about the saints, his choices became saints such as Saint Luke (patron saint of artists) and Saint Maximilian Kolbe (who displayed great love by giving his life for another).

It is good for all of us to learn more about saints of all kinds. Their stories teach us what it means to live the Gospel. They also give us hope. They were people with struggles just like us, and yet they persevered through the difficult times. One of my favorites is Saint John XXIII. He referred to himself as a "simple parish priest", and yet when he became pope he helped to bring about the Second Vatican Council.

Saints are ordinary people who live extra ordinary lives. We see this in the Communion of Saints, of which we are all a part. I would encourage you to visit the Cathedral in Los Angeles, where the tapestries of the saints (some famous and others not) envelop the worship space. In that place, you feel like you are truly a part of the Communion of Saints. (The ecclesiology module for Echoes of Faith 3.0 was recorded there. Learn more and subscribe at EchoesofFaith.com.)

So how can we prepare for All Saints Day? Let me suggest a few possibilities:

- 1) Take time to learn more about the saints, and share your discoveries with the children/teens in your classroom. SaintsResource.com is a great place to start.
- 2) Research your patron saint. Find out when his/her feast day is and celebrate it.
- 3) Have a "Saints Day Party" for the families in your community. Encourage everyone to dress up like a saint. Go all out with religious medals, a saint scavenger hunt, cupcakes with pictures of the children from your class (for they are saints, too).
- 4) As a class, put together a Litany of the Saints that you can use for the entire month of November. Include patron saints, favorite saints, etc. Perhaps you could even have the music teacher or parish musician help put your litany to music.

5) Decorate pumpkins (with safe tools, of course). Have pairs of students design a pumpkin to resemble a specific saint. Then display each pumpkin with a brief description of the saint it represents—a great way to catechize the rest of your school or parish community.

6) Encourage families to learn more about the saints. Wonderful resources based upon the liturgical year can be found in [Our Family Prays](#).

It is easy for us to get caught up in the decorations and events for the secular holidays this fall. Don't miss the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Days of our Church as well.