Three Wise men Feast
Putting our faith into practice

Grades: K-2nd

Goal: To have the students set goals on how to better live their faith as missionary disciples this new year. Following the example of St. Francis de Sales to spread the message of the Gospel.

Material: Choose the handout that is most appropriate for your students to set goals for the new year. Pencil and crayons or markers to decorate it.

Instructions: Read with your students the life of St. John de Sales. Highlight the fact that his ‘out of the box’ thinking lead him to use the available resources of his time to spread the Good News of the Gospel. St. Francis de Sales expressed his love to God by guiding others to a better relationship with Christ. Ask your students how they can also develop a better relationship with Christ and help others do the same this year?

Christ is born! During this Christmas season we are reminded of how important it is to seek God and his wisdom. He gives us the tools needed to answer our baptism call to spread the Good News of the Gospel to all. As missionary disciples we are called to see the presence of God in all. Let us rejoice and like the three magi, who came to adore Jesus in the manger, let us seek God among us.

Their journey was long and it took them far away from home. Ours is a lifetime journey of walking with God. The magi or three wise men presented the child Jesus with gifts. The gifts they presented were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold because Jesus is the Kings of Kings. Frankincense was presented to Jesus because he is God. Myrrh, a fragrance typically used during burials, because Jesus was to die for our sin.

“The feast reminds us that we are responsible for sharing the Church’s gift, especially the gift of Christ to the world. [We are to share our faith and gifts with everyone regardless of culture or nationality.] We are to have an ecumenical outlook. We are to reach out in prayer, sacrifice, and active charity with the vision that God’s kingdom is for everyone.” (Saint and Feast Days, Loyola Press p. 161)

St. Francis de Sales life is an example of how we can share with others the gift that Christ was to the world. Knowing Christ changed his life completely and fostered a desire in him to let others know about Jesus. This desire lead him in becoming a priest, taking the Good News of the Gospel to unexpected places. He used his gift for writing and for speaking in public to help him achieve his goal. Using the printing press he was able to take the message of the Gospel beyond many close doors and allowed him to share what he knew with a very large audience. St. Francis was always looking for ways to expand his efforts for the Lord and through his writings he was able to help many grow in their relationship with God. He realized that it was not just about helping people know Jesus, but of building a trusting relationship with Him to help them trust and look for the God in all they did.

One of the things that St. Francis de Sales was known for were his writings and sayings. He is the patron saint of writers and journalists. He would say, “You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other ways deceive themselves.” We must put into practice what we learn to learn it well. As we learn about our faith we must also put it into practice.

As the New Year starts we are going to set goals for the year to help us put our faith into practice. Keep in mind that our faith can be put to practice in any aspect of our lives. When you help your parents at your house you are practicing your faith. When you are kind to someone else in school you are practicing your faith. When you go to mass and when you share what you learn about Jesus you are carrying out your faith. Helping the needy is also practicing our faith. Think of one or several things you can do to grow closer to God, develop a better relationship with Jesus Christ, and help others do the same.
“I proclaim the good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.” Luke 2:10-11

This New Year I will grow closer to God by

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Read the quote below from St. Francis de Sales. He reminds us that we must put our faith into practice to live it better. Think of some goals for this new year to help you put your faith into practice and develop a better relationship with Jesus, helping others do the same.

"You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other ways deceive themselves."

**This New Year as a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ I will put my faith into practice by ...**

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Missionary Childhood Association – January 2018

www.missionsla.org/mca
Goal: Have the students make new years resolutions that will help them share the Gospel with others and grow in holiness. Follow the example of St. Francis de Sales to use the resources available in his time to help him share the message of Jesus Christ with others.

Materials: Handout and pencil. Color pencils or crayons to color nativity scene if the students have time.

Instructions: Read with your students the life of St. Francis de Sales. He was a person that heard and answered the call to share the Good News of the Gospel with all. Using his gift for writing and using what was available to him, the printing press. Let your students think of ways they can share the Gospel using the technology we have today. How can we share the Good News with others and seek God’s wisdom?

Pope Francis visited Bangladesh in December and during his address to the young people he said the following: “Wisdom of God reinforces the hopes in us and helps us to face the future with courage. We Christians find this wisdom in our personal encounter with Jesus in prayer and in the sacraments, and in our concrete encounter with him in the poor, the sick, the suffering and the abandoned. In Jesus we discover the solidarity of God, who constantly walks by our side” This wisdom that he speaks about is something that we are all seeking in our faith journey.

Pope Francis also said, “We receive that wisdom when we start to see things with God's eyes, listen to others with God's ears, to love with God's heart, and to judge things by God's values.” During this Christmas season we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany. During this feast we celebrate the three wise men who traveled from very far to pay homage to the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. We are reminded that we too must go and seek God among us. Then share with others the knowledge of his presence among us through prayer, sacrifice and active charity. For it is in these actions that we show the world who God is and that we are his children.

In the biography of St. Francis de Sales we learn of the wisdom he had from God in his actions through out his life as a priest. Although he had a privileged life, when he met Jesus his life changed and he fervently sought to share the Good News of the Gospel with others. He had to overcome many obstacles that at times would have deterred many like him. Can you imagine going into a place where Catholicism was not accepted and then having those who came to work with you be discouraged and leave because of all the challenges. This was the case of St. Francis de Sales when his cousin Louis, also a priest, decided to go back home when he saw that the progress they were making was too slow in Chablais. St. Francis instead of being discouraged became more determined.

A lot of doors were being closed to St. Francis so he had to find a way for God’s message to be heard. He was able to do this by writing down what he wanted to share about the Good News and then having that copied with the printing press. During this time the printing press was something new that was being used to preserve things in history. However, St. Francis saw it as something that could be used to spread the message to reach those behind the doors he was not able to enter. When his message was heard, the doors and the hearts of the people were opened to receiving Jesus Christ in their hearts. Everything that St. Francis de Sales did was with faith. Thanks to his faith in God and his willingness to bring the presence of God to others he was able to do many things with success. He was not only able to convert many back to Catholicism, he was then appointed Bishop of Geneva. His news status allowed him to maximize his efforts of making the message of the Gospel be heard. St. Francis de Sales is the patron saint of writers and journalist.

When we sometimes think of sharing our faith, we cannot get pass the obstacles that are in our way. As we begin this new year let us think of ways to help us spread the Good News of the Gospel with as much zeal as St. Francis de Sales did. Using today’s resources and relying on the wisdom that comes from God to guide us in answering our missionary call to share the Gospel with all.

You can find Pope Francis full speech to the youth at Notre Dame College in Bangladesh at this website: http://en.radiovatican.va/news/2017/12/02/bangladesh_journey_pope_notre_dame_university_young_people/1352461
This New Year I will seek God’s wisdom to help me grow in holiness by ________________________________________
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"I proclaim the good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord." Luke 2:10-11
God’s Wisdom

Seeking God’s Wisdom in our faith journey

Grades: 6th—8th

Goal: To help students reflect on ways they can seek God’s wisdom to be better missionary disciples of Christ. Recognizing that this wisdom is part of living in community, living our sacraments, and making sure that all members of the community are well.

Material: Handout “Seeking and growing in God’s wisdom”

Instructions: St. Francis de Sales is the patron saint of writers and journalists. Let the students think of ways that they can grow in holiness this new year. This can be done using the handout given in this packet or using their classroom journals if they have one.

Share with your students the story of Pope Francis’ visit to Bangladesh in which he addressed a group of young people. In his address Pope Francis spoke about the wisdom that comes from God and what it means to choose the right path. “It means “journeying” through life, and not “wandering aimlessly.” Our life is not without direction, it has a purpose given to us by God.” St. Francis de Sales journey led him to see his purpose in life as a person that helped everyone see their potential to grow in holiness. His efforts to help others develop a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ lead him to think of innovative and new ways of sharing the message of the Good News of the Gospel.

His first assignment as a priest was to go into a community where Catholicism was not accepted. Instead of going with a mentality of ‘I will show them they are wrong and I am right’ he adopted an attitude of humility that allowed him to be listened. As Pope Francis shared “It is sad when we start to shut ourselves up in our little world and become inward-looking. We use the “my way or the highway” principle and we become trapped, self-enclosed. When a people, a religion or a society turns into a “little world”, they lose the best that they have and plunge into a self-righteous mentality of “I am good and you are bad”. It is important that we do not let this happen to us as we strive to be active and productive members of the body of Christ. We have to rely on the wisdom of God to open up our hearts to others and to allow us to look beyond our personal comforts and the false securities that blind us to those grand ideas that make life more beautiful and worthwhile.

St. Francis de Sales used his ability of writing to help him open the doors that were being closed to him in that first community he worked in. His words of gentleness and love touched the hearts of people and would make them want to know more of the Catholic Faith. Pope Francis spoke of the wisdom that comes from knowing and following God. How this wisdom is passed down to the young through their parents and their experiences. This is what St. Francis de Sales did when he was speaking to the people of Chablais. He was sharing the wisdom that came from his following of God. Pope Francis also shared that, “We Christians find this wisdom in our personal encounter with Jesus in prayer and in the sacraments, and in our concrete encounter with him in the poor, the sick, the suffering and the abandoned. In Jesus we discover the solidarity of God, who constantly walks by our side.” St. Francis de Sales saw the importance of this encounter with God which is why he would make sure that those who were priest and the laity would have proper training and would have the preparation needed to better serve the church.

When we seek wisdom, we seek information. From our friends, our family, our social media, and the news. A lot of time wisdom comes from life experience and from our failures and successes. Through all of these things, our daily routine and by living out our sacraments we encounter God who is always present in our lives even when we do not acknowledge him. This new year let us think of ways that we seek God’s wisdom to help us grow in our faith. Let’s set goals for the year that will help us grow in holiness.

You can find Pope Francis full speech to the youth at Notre Dame College in Bangladesh at this website: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/12/02/bangladesh_journey_pope_notre_dame_university_young_people/1352461