Video:  Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Length:  9 minutes, 32 seconds

Target Audience:  Grades 6 - 10

A Loyola Productions Presentation from the video series:  Who Cares About the Saints?

Narrator:  Father James Martin, SJ

Objective:

Through watching the video Saint Ignatius of Loyola, students will learn about the life of St. Ignatius, and will understand that the spirituality St. Ignatius discovered as he changed his life from one of vanity and selfishness to one of dedication and service to God, can help us find room in our active lives for contemplation and find God present in all of creation that surrounds us.

Overview of the video:

Inigo Lopez de Loyola, who later took the name Ignatius, was the youngest son of a nobleman of the mountainous Basque region of northern Spain. Born in 1491 Ignatius was sent as a page to the household of an influential man. Spending many hours at court, Ignatius became attached to all it represented, especially gambling, women and swordplay. His vanity became well known. Serving as a soldier, Ignatius was wounded in battle. During the difficult recuperation that followed, his only reading material was a book of the lives of the saints. Remarkably, Ignatius’ life changed completely as he saw that doing great things for God appealed to him. Mystical experiences, founding the Society of Jesus, and writing The Spiritual Exercises marked the changes in St. Ignatius’ life from a vain man concerned only with himself to a spiritual man who found room for contemplation in an active life and saw God’s presence in all creation.

Resources for planning your lesson:

Websites:

The Life of St. Ignatius of Loyola  
http://norprov.org/spirituality/lifeofignatius.htm

Ignatian Spirituality  
http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-voices/st-ignatius-loyola/

Word Search:  
At the end of this guide
YOUR LESSON

Leading or Essential Question:

Read the following quotation to the class and ask the students to reflect on what it means.

Opening quotation:

“Teach us to give and not to count the cost.”
St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)

Is there only a financial cost when we give to others? What other costs might we incur? Why would Ignatius pray that God will help us give and not “count the cost”?

POST VIDEO DISCUSSIONS

1) Vanity is frequently mentioned as a characteristic that keeps us from doing God’s will. What is vanity? Be specific in your definitions. How does vanity limit a person’s ability to give? When Ignatius read the lives of the saints, what qualities do you think he saw in the saints that would influence him to put aside his own vanity and serve the Lord?

2) Define discernment – a dictionary check might be very helpful here. On the board list some specific examples of what St. Ignatius discerned about his life, and what steps he took to turn his actions and behavior into goals he could achieve by doing great things for God.

3) The Society of Jesus (S.J.), the order of the Jesuits, is recognized throughout the world. Most recently the Jesuits made news when Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J., was the first Jesuit ever elected Pope. Jesuits throughout the world follow the Order’s motto of Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam – “For the greater Glory of God.”
As a soldier, St. Ignatius fought literal battles to support worthy causes, while today’s Jesuits fight for social justice. In his mystical experiences, St. Ignatius saw God as a school master, a teacher. Today’s Jesuits are educators at universities throughout the world.
Do some research on the Society of Jesus. What social causes are they especially concerned with (e.g., immigration reform and poverty)? What colleges/universities are run by the Jesuits?
POST VIDEO ASSIGNMENTS

Use one of the following for written reflection:

1) The video is filled with beautiful pieces of art that show images of St. Ignatius’ life. Think about one piece that you were impressed with/remember. Describe the artwork and tell what it showed you about the life St. Ignatius led.

2) Father Martin says that St. Ignatius of Loyola’s world view of finding God in all things and making time for contemplation appeals to us today because we lead such busy lives. Select someone you know and write about that person’s daily activities. Then help that person include Christ more significantly in his/her day by pointing out places where God might be found in everyday things and times when there is an opportunity to stop for a moment and contemplate God’s love and goodness.

WRAPPING IT ALL UP

The main collection of St. Ignatius of Loyola’s writings is The Spiritual Exercises. These writings are considered by many to be his great gift to the Church. The collection includes a series of meditations in which you place yourself in various Gospel scenes so that you can follow Christ as He moves through His earthly life.

Try a “spiritual exercise.” Select a Gospel scene (e.g., the miracle of the loaves and fishes, a cure that Christ performs, the Last Supper, the crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, etc.) On the board make five columns, one for each of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.) Have students give as many examples as they can of what their senses experience as they follow Christ through the Gospel scene you have chosen.

Prayer:
Let us prayer with St. Ignatius:

Prayer for Generosity
St. Ignatius of Loyola

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,  
Teach me true generosity.  
Teach me to serve you as you deserve:  
To give without counting the cost,  
To fight heedless of wounds,  
To labor without seeking rest,  
To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward  
Save the knowledge that I have done your will.  

Amen.

WHEN YOU GO HOME

You and everyone else in your family probably lead very active lives. Each day is a busy one. Perhaps the rapid pace of each day keeps you from taking time to appreciate all of God’s gifts and to be aware of the beauty of His creation. 

What can you do to help your family pause and be aware of Jesus in their lives? Maybe you can start by telling them what you’ve learned about St. Ignatius of Loyola’s way of looking at life. Make time for contemplation and find God in all of creation. Then over the next few weeks try to show your family what Ignatius meant. If you go out for a walk or a drive, pick out things in nature that reflect the glory of God. When you experience a moment of closeness with someone in your family, tell that person your relationship is evidence of God’s love. What other ideas do you have to help your loved ones find God and make time to do His will in their already busy lives?

GOT TIME?

There’s a Word Search on the next page!
SAINT IGNATIUS of LOYOLA

CONTEMPLATIVE
DISCERNMENT
EXERCISES
IGNATIUS
JESUITS

LOYOLA
MANRESA
MEDITATIONS
SPIRITUALITY
VANITY

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