

Overview

Themes: pets, garbage, recycling, the marginalized (through poverty, mental health, disability, immigration, etc.), Peru, Alpine Ecosystem and creatures

Through discussion after hearing the story, students will examine what our society considers to be disposable. For younger students, this may focus on disposable products; for more mature students, this can focus on animals or people who are marginalized and why. By creating a collage, students will become more aware of what we throw away, then reflect on how Jesus calls us personally to treat creation and the marginalized with love and compassion.

Educational Objectives:

- Students will understand what “disposable” means and, through discussion, think critically about whether throwing these away is what we are called to as Christians who care for God’s creation.
- Students will be able to understand why and how animals and people become marginalized, then reflect on how we can help them.

Materials:

- *Amazing Friendships Between Animals and Saints* book
- world map
- (optional) online read-aloud image of border art to project on a screen
- a collage handout for each student
- newspaper flyers advertising products, and magazines
- glue and scissors

Directions

Step 1 – The Story

Together, find Peru on the world map. Compare this to where you live.

Read about Peru’s ecosystem and issues today (see additional online resources provided).

Project the border art on a screen.

Read the story of Saint Martin and the Dog.

Can you find the Magpie and creatures in the illustrated border?

Read the Fun Facts about each creature as it is found.

Step 2 – Discussion

*Always choose questions appropriate to the age of your child(ren).

1. What are your reactions to this story?
2. How does it make you feel?
3. What do you find inspiring in the story?
4. Where did Saint Martin live? Read about his ecosystem (see additional online resources

provided)

5. Can you find the Magpie and creatures in the illustrated border?

Read the Creature Profiles (in the online resources) about each creature as it is found.

6. In this story, the dog is considered to be “disposable.” In our society, what do we throw away or consider to be disposable?

7. Who do we consider to be disposable and why? Often these people or animals are described as “marginalized.” What are the characteristics of someone who is marginalized?

8. How does an animal or person become marginalized? Why?

9. How did Jesus treat marginalized people? By his example, how are we called to treat the marginalized? What concrete things can you do to live this out?

Contemplative Activity – ‘Disposable?’ Collage and Reflection

Educational Objectives

- Students will be able to actively engage in a new spiritual practice of collage as prayer.
- Students will deepen in empathy for the marginalized by reflecting as they create the collage.
- Students will reflect on how they are called as Christians to live love.

Opening Prayer

Creator God, you have given us such a wonderful and amazing world to live in. As we make this collage, may we appreciate that so we can better live out your love on earth.

Amen.

As a reminder that all creatures and people are good, read the creation story in Genesis 1.

Introduction and Instructions

Based on the previous discussion, students will create a collage (images and/or words) below the silhouette of Saint Martin carrying the dog over the garbage pile. The images or words they cut out and glue on will create the garbage pile.

Younger students may focus on products we throw away (prompting a discussion about recycling and consuming less), while older students may use words from the discussion – naming who (animals, people) is considered to be marginalized and why (through poverty, mental health, gender, race, disability, immigration, etc.).

After creating the collage, students will reflect on what they personally can do about this. Each student will complete the sentence at the bottom of the page: Jesus calls me to...

Younger students might fill in something simple such as: Jesus calls me to ... “Care for creation.”

Older students may fill in something more complex, such as: Jesus calls me to ... “love the poor, be loving towards those who are different than me, etc.” Older students could also make a journal entry or write on the back of their collage listing things they could do to live this out.

For example, “I could help at the food bank, donate used clothing from our household to a shelter, etc.”

Closing Prayer

Creator God, Everything you made is good. Help us to know that and to treat all of your creation with dignity and respect.

Amen.

Extension Activity

Visit a food bank, crisis centre, refugee family or animal shelter to learn more about the marginalized in your community and how you might help them.